

**BATTERERS INTERVENTION PROGRAM STANDARDS
OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

Meeting of August 2, 2010

Open session

Approved Minutes

Voting Members Present (6): Shelley Cortese, RI Department of Corrections/Chair; Deb DeBare, RI Coalition Against Domestic Violence; Mary Osborne, BIP Representative; Elaine Dorazio, Supreme Court Domestic Violence Training & Monitoring Unit; Dennis Langley, Urban League; Beatriz Perez, RI Department of Health.

Seats Not Represented (7): RI District Court; Justice Assistance; Governor's Office; RI Justice Commission; RI Police Chiefs Association; Office of the Attorney General; RI Supreme Court.

Additional Participants (10): Emily Daniels, Probation & Parole/BIPSOC; Micheline Lombardi, Supervisor Probation & Parole; Sharon Schwartz-Vanderhoff, Probation & Parole; Chris Frenier, Probation & Parole; Bryan Riley, FVI; Anita Corley, EBCC; Kathy Carty, Vantage Point; Debra Stacey, Vantage Point; Julie Walsh, Vantage Point; Jen Rocha, Vantage Point.

Materials Distributed:

Meeting Agenda: August 2, 2010

Meeting Minutes: April 5, 2010

Summary Comprehensive Re-Certification: Vantage Point

Summary Comprehensive Re-Certification: FVI

Memo to Batterers Intervention Programs: Anger Management Referrals

Memo to Batterers Intervention Programs: Excused Absences

Materials Made Available:

Letter from MAP's Clinical Director Paula Trice

Vantage Point Application for Renewed Comprehensive Certification*

FVI Application for Renewed Comprehensive Certification*

***for review only; in accordance with the Rules of Practice & Procedures**

Shelley Cortese, Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 2:15 pm and noted that a voting quorum had been met. As there were many attendees who did not regularly attend the Oversight meetings Shelley asked that participants introduce themselves and their place of employment.

Review of Minutes

Minutes from the meeting of April 5, 2010 were reviewed.

Deb DeBare made a motion to adopt the April 5, 2010 minutes. Elaine Derazio seconded the motion. All votes in favor; none opposed. Motion carried.

Review Subcommittee Report

Shelley reported that the review process for Vantage Point's Renewed Comprehensive Certification is complete; a copy of the summary was distributed. Emily reported on the Vantage Point summary; acknowledging volunteers Sonia Mendoza, Anita Corley, Deb Ferrante and Jessica Seitz who assisted in the re-certification process. Emily went over the main points of the summary including clarification of supervision of Vantage Point staff and the observation that the complexity of some lessons presented at the group sessions was at a level too difficult for group members to understand. The review subcommittee is asking for a vote granting Vantage Point Renewed Comprehensive Certification.

Deb DeBare made a motion to grant Renewed Comprehensive Certification to Vantage Point. Elaine Dorazio seconded the motion. All votes in favor; none opposed; no abstentions. Motion carried.

Shelley reported that the review process for FVI's Renewed Comprehensive Certification is complete; a copy of the summary was

distributed. Emily reported on the FVI summary, acknowledging volunteers Micheline Lombardi, Sonia Mendoza and Jessica Seitz who assisted in the group observation process. Emily stated that all documents and records submitted and reviewed during the certification process meet the Comprehensive Standards. Emily communicated the program certification status to President Bryan Riley on July 27, 2010. Emily requested that outstanding training hours for FVI facilitators be submitted. The outstanding hours were submitted at today's meeting. The review subcommittee is asking for a vote granting FVI Renewed Comprehensive Certification.

Elaine Derazio made a motion to grant Renewed Comprehensive Certification to FVI. Deb DeBare seconded the motion. All votes in favor; none opposed; no abstentions. Motion carried.

Shelley announced that MAP is no longer accepting referrals to their Batterers Intervention Program and will be ending groups prior to when the certification expires on October 4, 2010. Shelley made available the letter received from MAP's Clinical Director Paula Trice.

Member Issues/Announcements

Notice to BIP Regarding Anger Management Referrals

Shelley distributed the memo to attendees. Shelley explained that the memo was sent electronically to voting members for review prior to the meeting but that she wished to get feedback and approval from

members during this meeting before sending the notice to all Batterers Programs. Attendees reviewed the memo.

Dennis Langley asked why attendance at a Batterers Intervention Program would not fulfill a court requirement for anger management counseling as anger is a component of battering. Shelley explained that anger management intervention and batterer's intervention are philosophically different approaches. The Batterers intervention approach focuses on the batterer's use of power and control and the batterer's belief that he or she has the right to control others through abusive behavior as causal whereas the anger management approach focuses on loss of control as a causal. Dennis stated he believes the two to be intertwined. Shelley stated that although anger may be present and correlated with battering much like the substance use it is not considered to be the primary cause of battering. Beatriz stated that the two approaches are not interchangeable; anger management counseling does not address battering and vice versa. Dennis stated that it can be an issue for low income offenders to address both issues separately due to the cost of counseling. Shelley stated that there is a conflict between the two approaches; domestic violence is about power and control while anger management implies a loss of control which can put a victim at risk as it excuses abusive behavior. Dr. Carty stated that mood is addressed in the Batterers Intervention curriculum but that anger management is not given to batterers because of the differing approaches.

Dennis asked what agencies provide anger management if the Batterers Intervention Programs don't. Shelley stated she understands that there is a need for providers of anger management counseling but there are mostly individual counselors who provide anger management currently. Shelley stated that Batterers Intervention Programs have not been able to consistently sustain anger management groups due to the lack of volume in consistent referrals. Emily stated that Bridgemark, Vantage Point and Kent Center all provide separate individual anger management counseling. Dennis asked who provides anger management at lower rates for the uninsured. Dennis also expressed concern that if the anger management was not provided through a Batterers Intervention Program than there are no standards present to ensure clients are getting appropriate counseling. Shelley explained that the issue of having an appropriate approach comes up in discussion about all types of counseling where there is not a standardized approach; such as sex offender counseling, anger management counseling and mental health counseling.

Beatriz asked what happens to Batterers Intervention Programs who had anger management clients attending the Batterers Intervention groups. Shelley stated the programs have been made aware that they are not to accept anger management referrals into Batterers Intervention groups and those clients already in the Batterers

Intervention groups that have a court ordered condition of anger management counseling were sent back to the referral source for an appropriate referral.

Shelley stated the Probation and Parole staff has been directed not to refer probationers required to attend anger management counseling to Batterers Intervention Programs.

Voting members in attendance agreed that the final draft of the memo could be distributed to certified Batterers Intervention Programs.

Notice to BIP Regarding Excused Absences

Shelley distributed the memo to attendees. As attendees reviewed the memo Shelley explained that the memo addressed the issue of Batterers Intervention Programs giving excused absences to offenders when BIPSOC Representatives would be present to observe groups. Shelley stated the topic had been discussed at length during the Oversight Committee meeting in April.

Julie Walsh asked how the Oversight Committee was aware the absences were excused for offenders. Shelley stated that she was informed by observers that offenders were told the absence would be excused for the group during which observation was scheduled to take place. Dr. Carty stated that she believes there was an ethical issue with having the observers being the Probation Officers supervising the majority of offenders enrolled in the group. Dr. Carty stated the absences were not excused; the offenders who chose not to attend the observed group must make-up the missed group within

the week or the absence would be unexcused. Shelley stated that in many cases Review Subcommittee Representatives are also Probation Officers and in the past there has not been an issue with Batterers Programs having Probation Officers, serving Review Subcommittee Representatives, observe groups in which offenders from that Probation Officer's caseload are in attendance. This model of intervention is a coordinated response model which is consistent with national best practice in this area. Shelley also reiterated that the groups are not clinical in nature. Shelley further explained that the practice of allowing offenders to choose not to be present for the observation due to their assigned Probation Officer being the observing representative sends a message to the offender that is not consistent with the coordinated response model and gives a compromised sample of how groups are running. Shelley stated Programs should work in synch with Probation & Parole and the courts as we are all committed to victim safety.

Voting members in attendance agreed the final draft of the memo could be distributed to certified Batterers Intervention Programs.

Batterers Intervention for Repeat Offenders

Shelley stated that attendees at the last meeting had discussed the possibility of creating an approach for repeat offenders within the parameters of the current Comprehensive Standards: Shelley report that she, Emily Daniels and Chris Frenier of Probation & Parole, as well as Bryan Riley of FVI had met over the past couple months to discuss possibilities of a Recidivist BIP Format. Shelley stated she

would save discussion of the proposals for a meeting when Judge Bucci, RI District Court Representative, was able to attend. Shelley would like the Judge present to provide feedback as the proposals, while mainly program based, include a key role for the courts and Probation & Parole

By-Law Proposal

Shelley stated that with the reduction of BIP programs and the increased efficiency of reviewers the Oversight Committee is regularly running into circumstances of not needing to meet four (4) times per year as the By-Laws require. Shelley asked the Committee if it makes sense to amend the By-Laws to have the Committee meet when there are only formal items to vote on. Shelley stated in order to amend the By-Laws a meeting would need to be called for this purpose with at least one month's advance notice, a quorum would need to be present and the simple majority would need to agree to the change. Deb stated a minimum number of meetings would need to be required to ensure the Committee meets no less than two (2) times per year. Bryan asked if the change would affect the Re-Certification process. Shelley stated all scheduled votes would be held on time with the scheduled Oversight meeting, with meetings scheduled as needed if there were matters that came for a vote. Voting members present at today's meeting agreed an amendment of the By-Laws

could be considered at the next scheduled Oversight Committee meeting on October 4th, 2010.

Post –meeting it was clarified that the number of meetings could be no less than (4) per statute.

Upcoming Meetings

Review Subcommittee:

TBA

DV Critical Cases Review Team:

September 14, 2010 at 3:00pm in Bernadette Building

Oversight Committee:

October 4, 2010 at 2:00pm in Bernadette Building, 15 Fleming Rd., Cranston DOC.

Meeting Adjourned

Deb DeBare made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Elaine Derazio seconded the motion. All votes in favor; none opposed;

no abstentions. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 3:05 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Emily Daniels, Probation & Parole Officer

Batterers Intervention Program Standards Oversight Committee