

BATTERERS INTERVENTION PROGRAM STANDARDS OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Meeting of February 10, 2014

Open session

Minutes Draft

Voting Members Present (6): Shelley Cortese, RI Department of Corrections/Chair; Deb DeBare, RI Coalition Against Domestic Violence; Veronica Hobbs, Supreme Court Domestic Violence Training & Monitoring Unit; Beatriz Perez, RI Department of Health; Anthony Ward-Smith, Justice Assistance; Mary Osborne, BIP Representative.

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

Additional Participants (6): George Sheehan, RI-BIP; Karen Lubo, Probation & Parole; Emily Daniels, Probation & Parole/BIPSOC; Dan Dupuis, Probation & Parole; Rachel Orsinger, RI Coalition Against Domestic Violence; Deb Ferrante, EBCC; Tatiana Ortiz, Intern/ Probation & Parole.

Materials Distributed:

Meeting Agenda: February 10, 2014

Meeting Minutes: December 2, 2013

Summary Comprehensive Re-Certification: RI-BIP

Materials Made Available:

RI-BIP Application for Renewed Comprehensive Certification

Shelley Cortese, Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 2:08 pm.

Review of Minutes

Minutes from the meeting of December 2, 2013 were reviewed.

Deb DeBare made a motion to adopt the December 2, 2013 minutes Mary Osborne seconded the motion. All votes in favor; none opposed. Motion carried.

Review Subcommittee Report

Emily reported that the Comprehensive Certification process for RI-BIP is complete. The outstanding issue of continuing education hours has been resolved. Linda Hurley has submitted a plan to attend two trainings provided by the RI Coalition Against Domestic Violence on 3/25/2014 and 4/8/2014. The Review Subcommittee is recommending a vote to grant Comprehensive Re-Certification.

Anthony Ward-Smith made a motion to grant Comprehensive Certification to RI-BIP. Beatriz Perez seconded the motion. All votes in favor; Mary abstained; no objections. Motion carried.

Emily reported the process of Comprehensive Re-Certification for Bridgemark is underway. The Review Subcommittee is in receipt of the application and curriculum. Group observations have been scheduled for 2/20/2014 and 2/27/2014.

Rules & Standards Subcommittee Report

A meeting date of February 20, 2014 has been set. The meeting will be held at 3pm in the Dix Building second floor conference room.

Member Issues/Announcements

BIP & Block Island Residents:

Shelley reported the issue of difficulty for probationers to attend batterer's intervention when their permanent residence is Block Island recently came to light again. The counselor, Paul Boorum, contacted Shelley regarding the Court's decision that individual sessions he provided for his client did not fulfill the court ordered requirement to complete a batterer's intervention program.

Shelley reported this issue was also brought to light in 2006. Shelley stated she reiterated the conclusion from 2006, that each case must

be decided on its merits. Under the Comprehensive Standards amended in 2007 the determination of valid exceptions is decided by the Court and not the referral source. In the recent case the Court has already ruled that individual counseling is not an acceptable alternative. Shelley informed Mr. Boorum that the Oversight Committee does not have authority in this matter.

Shelley stated she is reporting this to the Oversight Committee to ensure there is consensus with her response.

Veronica asked if there are circumstances when exceptions have been made and individual counseling is accepted by the Court in lieu of a certified program. Emily reported in cases when the client has mental health issues that prevent them from being able to participate in a group setting. Rachel stated there are instances when a person speaks a language for which no groups are provided. In all instances the matter is to be brought before the Court for approval of the alternate plan.

Sentencing on Technical Violations/ Comprehensive Standards:

There have been several occasions of technical violations when the Court has ordered the offender to attend two groups per week so the program can be completed prior to the expiration of the probation. RIGL 12-29-5.2 states: The duration of batterers intervention programs shall be a minimum of forty (40) contact hours over the course of twenty (20) weeks.

The Comprehensive Standards make an exception in 5.1.4:

Programs may elect to establish varied attendance schedules to accommodate client circumstances that present significant obstacles to attending weekly group sessions. For example, out-of-state travel for periods of time, medical incapacity for some time period, probation terms of six (6) months or less, or other legitimate scheduling conflicts may lend themselves to programs enabling clients to attend more than one (1) session during given weeks and/or not attending any sessions during some weeks. In these instances, the program in consultation with the referral agency shall make every reasonable effort to maintain the duration of program participation over the course of twenty (20) weeks, as well as to ensure the continuity of program content and the accountability of the participant.

DV High Risk/Critical Case Team:

Emily reported the Team continues to receive case referrals from participating agencies. A plan is developed for each case and these plans have resulted in monitoring of offenders while out on bail and violations of probation.

Upcoming Meetings

Review Subcommittee:

Thursday February 13, 2014 at 9:00am in Dix Building, Cranston, RI.

Rules & Standards Subcommittee:

Thursday February 20, 2014 at 3:00pm in Dix Building, Cranston, RI.

DV High Risk/Critical Case Team:

Wednesday February 26,2014 at 3:00pm in Dix Building, Cranston, RI.

Oversight Committee:

**April 7, 2014 at 2:00pm in Dix Building, 18 Wilma Schesler Lane,
Cranston, RI 02920.**

Meeting Adjourned

Deb DeBare made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

**Anthony Ward-Smith seconded the motion. All votes in favor; none
opposed; no abstentions. Motion carried.**

Meeting adjourned at 2:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Emily Daniels, Probation & Parole Officer

Batterers Intervention Program Standards Oversight Committee