

**Batterer Intervention Program Advisory Committee**  
**January 16, 2015     9:00 to 12:00**  
**Department of Justice Legal Office – Burnside Conference Room**

**Members in Attendance:**

Eric Mankowski, Shannon Sivell, Steve Berger, Vivian Bliss, Don Chapin, Chris Hoy, Chris Huffine, Jeremiah Stromberg, Priscilla Marlowe

**Member by phone:** Jayne Downing

**Member by video:** Rebecca Orf

**Minutes:** Sherree Rodriguez, Valerie Smith

**Guests:** Yamhill Demonstration Project: Patricia Warford, Todd Baltzell, Julia Babcock, Debra Bridges; Guest of Jeremiah Stromberg: Margaret Braun

**Welcome and self-introductions**

**Yamhill County Demonstration Project**

*Patricia Warford's presentation:*

Dr. Patricia Warford, a psychologist from Building Healthy Relationships in Newberg, introduced the Yamhill County Demonstration Project, emphasizing the group's position that it is a research project rather than a demonstration project. She introduced her support team:

- Debra Bridges, Director at Yamhill County Victims Assistance Program
- Sargent Todd Baltzell; Newberg PD; Newberg/Dundee Sexual Assault Response Team
- Dr. Julia Babcock; Associate Professor University of Houston

The project is based upon the research and work of Drs. John and Julie Gottman of The Gottman Institute, Seattle, Washington. Victim safety is a foundational commitment. Dr. Julia Babcock has been seeking a location to conduct the research project described below. Her research work provides impetus for this project.

*Debra Bridges' presentation:*

Yamhill County has developed a robust victims' service program with partnership among agencies including Dr. Warford's practice, the Newberg/Dundee Police Department, and the Yamhill County District Attorney's Victims Assistance Program. They provide cross-agency training to further strengthen their response.

Victims' services are able to reach out to families early in the process and provide services without arrests in cases of low-level, situational violence without one clear aggressor. This allows them to proactively work with families who are determined to avoid dissolution of relationships. These are cases without one partner fearing the other or the presence of characterological violence. This approach allows prevention of further violence and crimes.

Debra was initially resistant to the idea of couples counseling; but after speaking with Patricia, looking through the project paperwork, meeting with community partners, and considering the safety protocols in place, she has become a strong supporter. She sees this as a new model to provide support for the families of Yamhill County who want to reunite. She states this is not a program for characterological abusers, who will not be eligible.

*Todd Baltzell's presentation:*

When he was promoted to Sargent in 2010, the agencies response to domestic violence was substandard. Domestic Violence training within the police department led to more informed interactions in situations of domestic violence, and the ability to better determine if power and control are present. In many cases power and control is not present and the relationships remain together even though there is abuse present. The objective is to provide this new approach as a resource for families to learn how to communicate better in order to prevent escalation.

Approximately 80% of the time, it is very difficult to determine the primary aggressor; both partners have situational violence. Debra Bridges cites a similar experience.

*Julia Babcock's presentation:*

There are different types of violent couples. The Duluth Curriculum is based on characterological violence by an offender. However, research has found that in many cases women are equally to blame and couples with a situational violence pattern have a different dynamic. There is a low level of abuse and the women are as violent as the men and are not fearful of their partners.

She proposes this research project to determine if an alternative treatment can be conducted for these couples who do not have characterological violence. She feels the Duluth curriculum is not highly effective (approximately a 5% cessation of violence), and new ideas need to be researched and tried.

Screening is vital for victim safety and is designed to exclude:

- Couples (one or both individuals) who do not want to reconcile
- Those who are fearful or reluctant to participate
- Characterological violence
- Anti-social or borderline individuals
- Individuals with substance abuse issues or mental illness

*Further Discussion and Explanations:*

- All supporting documents, including definitions, content, control group information, and evaluation and screening tools will be forwarded to Advisory Committee members following the meeting. All safety and screening protocols are explained in detail in this documentation.

- The project treatment is 36 weeks; the first 14 weeks in a men's only group and 22 weeks in couples counseling. The 14 week segment provides for additional screening through behavioral observation. Those eliminated during the first 14 weeks are channeled back into the regular men's only group to complete the 36 weeks.
- Yamhill Demonstration Project advocates presented: For victim safety, if a couple is screened out at any point during the project, it is done in such a way that the victim will not be blamed.
- Yamhill District Attorney, Brad Berry contacted Shannon Sivell to express his full support for this project.

*Other:*

- Margaret Braun is here as a researcher with a strong interest in this area and will be attending the next BIP AC meeting.
- Next meeting: February 5, 2015. The AC will discuss the Yamhill Project and draft a response. The official response to Yamhill County is due by February 13, 2015 (four weeks after the presentation).
- Shannon noted all future meetings will be held in Salem, unless there is a special need to be in Portland.