

Batterer Intervention Program Advisory Committee
February 5, 2015 9:00 to 12:00
Capitol City Business Center – Grand Canyon Conference Room

In Attendance:

Shannon Sivell, Vivian Bliss, Chris Hoy, Chris Huffine, Jeremiah Stromberg, Priscilla Marlowe, Audrey Broyles, Hardy Myers, Jayne Downing, guest: Margaret Braun (Oregon Youth Authority)

Attending by phone: Eric Mankowski (left at 9:45), Steve Berger

Attending by video: Rebecca Orf, guest: John Hamilton (Jackson County Public Defender)

Minutes: Sherree Rodriguez

Welcome and self-introductions

Approval of minutes from meetings held on 11/13/2014 and 01/16/2015.

Yamhill County Demonstration Project Evaluation

Eric Mankowski suggested moving through the questions of the Demonstration Project Evaluation Form to process the review.

(a) Identify the specific section of the Batterer Intervention Program Rules (OAR 137-087-0000-137-087-0100) that this project approval would waive and explain why the BIP is requesting a waiver of these program rules:

Areas suggested to be in conflict with the OARs include:

- Couples counseling
- Failure to adequately ensure victim safety (use of telephone and internet for screening surveys, and concerns about victims' tendency to take responsibility for the violence)
- The OARs prohibit mandating victim participation – the screening tool appears incomplete at this time. Therefore, there will be battering victims involved in this process. As such, how can there be any assurance that a victim is “voluntarily” participating in the couples counseling?
- The abbreviated BIP curriculum reduced from 36 to 14 weeks.

The committee did not reach consensus as to whether each of these points represented a departure from the OARs.

Even if there is deviation from OARs, the question of sound research with sound theory, clear academic research and standard practices should be taken into consideration.

(b) Identify/list relevant research, professional experience, or other credible data that demonstrates that the batterer intervention method proposed for the project is an effective and appropriate means of intervention, and that under no circumstances shall the project require actions that shall jeopardize the safety of women, children or the community, collude with the participant, or require victim participation:

Failure to receive curriculum for review impedes ability to evaluate safety concerns. Further dialogue with the Yamhill group would be helpful.

The larger context, political issues and characterization of the Duluth curriculum model should be considered since this research will be influential on a larger scale than Yamhill County.

Evidence that screening will clearly define situational abuse from characterological abuse was not convincing. The screening tool will potentially allow victims whose partners have threatened to kill them, to be selected for the study.

Telephonic and internet interviews present clear safety concerns without adequate protections built into the protocol for assessing whether the victim is alone when responding and is not being coerced. Misclassification of some women into 'situational' violence type, even a low percentage, is a safety concern; the co-treatment of the victim could imply blame of victims and would complicate the dynamic and environment of any ongoing abuse.

Screening is a major complication; solid screening could be re-routed through the courts or corrections to differentiate offenders.

(c) Explain what expertise and training the BIP has to conduct the proposed project and the BIP's ability to maintain such expertise for the project's duration:

The training and expertise of the researchers is well established.

(d) Explain how you plan to evaluate, independent of the BIP, the effectiveness of the project; what partnerships or Memorandums of Understanding have you put in place to monitor the program:

Victims' advocate groups' lack of active support could be a reason for concern in this area. Outcome measures such as recidivism are cited in application paperwork.

(e) Detail the BIP's record, if any, of conducting and completing other programs or demonstration projects for private or public entities, including the BIP's record of cooperation in resolving problems identified by such entities:

The BIP has run for years but we are unaware of any other demonstration projects run by this entity.

(f) List the following:

- i) Geographic location to be served*
- ii) Participating persons, agencies and organizations, and their respective roles in the project*
- iii) Length of time for the proposed project (max. 24 months)*
- iv) Expected outcomes*

All OK

(g) Detail the position of your local community-based victim advocacy program(s) on the implementation of this project and how you have involved them in the design and planning of this project:

Dr. Warford said she spoke with the directors of the local victim advocacy program and that the director said she did not believe she could comment on the Demonstration Project for fear of compromising their funding. It was also suggested that the program generally didn't have any concerns about the DP. Both the funder in the room and the other victim service program represented on the AC believe that statement regarding funding to be inaccurate and therefore concerning. The AC expressed their intention to follow up with Henderson House to see if they had thoughts/concerns/ involvement with the DP.

(h) Detail the position(s) of the LSA, MA and DV Council on the implementation of this new project. How have you involved these community partners in formulating the project?

The Domestic Violence Council was not addressed. Yamhill County District Attorney Brad Berry provided a letter of support.

ACTION: To provide a summary response to the Yamhill Demonstration/ Research Project, BIP AC members will forward key issues to Eric and Shannon as soon as possible to allow time to respond to the project within one week.

Further Discussion:

Philosophical differences were expressed regarding the Demonstration Project program and its foundational principles. However, the conversation repeatedly came back to the OARs. The OARs are the basis of the BIP AC work. Our role is to provide a context for the OARs.

Apart from evaluating the Yamhill County presentation, the following issues were discussed at the AC meeting:

- Several people in the room have concerns that there isn't a comprehensive evaluation of ALL offenders prior to any offender being referred to a BIP.
- Is there any tool that sufficiently differentiates between situational and characterological offenders? Eric and others believe there are tools available but they have not accumulated substantial validation across multiple study samples, and they are commonly referenced against only the frequency and/or severity of discrete abusive acts. Some of the other differences hypothesized to distinguish "situational" and "characterological" abuse or abusers have not been demonstrated (e.g. stability over time among 'situational' in low level of severity (non-escalating pattern: low likelihood of fatal violence in 'situational'.)
- If this Demonstration Project intends to only work with people engaged in "situational" violence, why would those people have been ordered to take a BIP in the first place?

- Long standing concerns on the part of some members that there isn't enough evidence that BIPs work at all, thus why are we constrained to the standards in the OAR? Shouldn't we encourage people to try new programs?

A suggested deadline of six weeks may be given as a response time to the BIP AC summary to the Yamhill Demonstration Project.

ACTION: Co-chairs will draft a letter to Dr. Warford. They plan to have a draft completed within the week and will send it to the entire AC for review.