



Zonta Club of Charleston
Member of Zonta International
Advancing the Status of Women Worldwide



Summary Report

**THE ZONTA BREAKFAST:
Collaborating to Prevent Violence Against Women**

September, 2009

***If you cannot imagine a different reality,
you can neither desire it nor work towards it.***

- Patricia Warner, Zonta Breakfast Chair

Little things can make a big difference.

- Malcom Gladwell, The Tipping Point

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Domestic Violence Facts:

1. Every 13 seconds, a woman is beaten by her husband or boyfriend in the US.
2. There were 39,803 cases of domestic violence reported in SC in 2002.
3. In 2003, thirty-six women were murdered as a result of domestic violence in SC.
4. In 2001, SC ranked first in the nation with the highest homicide rate for females by male offenders - more than twice the national average.
5. Domestic violence is the leading cause of injuries to women age 15 to 44, more common than automobile accidents, muggings, and cancer deaths combined.
6. Thirty-seven percent of women who sought treatment in emergency rooms were injured by a current or former spouse or partner.
7. Six million American women are beaten each year by their husbands or boyfriends. Four thousand of them are killed.
8. One in four American women report being raped or physically assaulted by a husband or boyfriend at some point in their lives.
9. Approximately 8,800,000 US children are at risk for witnessing domestic violence annually.
10. The cost of domestic violence, including rape, physical assault and stalking, exceeds \$5.8 Billion each year.

I. Workshop Details

1. Why Focus on Preventing Violence Against Women?

According to Justice Department statistics for the U.S., three women are killed each day by their husbands or boyfriends. Such killings account for about a third of *all* female homicides in the United States as reported in the *Chicago Tribune* by Arelis Hernandez, July 17, 2009.

South Carolina ranked number one in the nation in 2001 for female homicides by known assailants. South Carolina is now number three in the nation for reported incidents of domestic violence.

2. Why the Zonta Club of Charleston Became Involved.

We belong to Zonta International, a worldwide organization of professionals committed to raising the status of women worldwide. Founded in 1919 in Buffalo, NY, we are currently represented by 1,200 clubs in 69 nations. Zonta International focuses all of its resources on three important areas: health, education and preventing violence. In view of the statistics for South Carolina, The Zonta Club of Charleston decided to collaborate with our communities on violence *prevention*.

3. Attendees

The Zonta Breakfast: Collaborating to Prevent Violence Against Women was held at the Harbour Club on June 11, 2009 from 8 - 9:30 a.m. We invited a cross-section of community leaders from the following groups to sit at seven tables for a discussion on violence prevention.¹

1. Clergy and religious advisors
2. Advocates from police departments
3. Members of the legal professions
4. Educators and Guidance Counselors
5. Organizations supporting victims of violence
6. Groups such as Zonta that provide funds and support to existing organizations
7. Local leaders from organizations that work with girls like Girls Scouts and the YWCA

¹ A Directory of all attendees is included with this report as a separate Excel file.

II. Workshop Results

Many excellent organizations give support to victims of violence. We wondered what would happen if we presented the following two questions for the attendees to discuss.

Question One

Based on your experience and knowledge, what activity or initiative is currently working to *prevent* interpersonal and domestic violence in our communities?

Question Two

What is *one thing* that could be done to more quickly eradicate interpersonal and domestic violence in our homes and communities?

At the end of the workshop, each table voted amongst themselves for the *top answer* to each question. The votes were captured on a flip chart in the front of the room. The results are summarized on the next page.

Top Answers

Question One

What works in our communities?

- Identifying domestic violence as a crime.
- Existing resources – 211 hotline, cell phone program.
- Emergency care centers: My Sister's House.
- Public awareness and training is increasing.
- Encouraging community dialogue using music.

Question Two

What one thing could be done?

- Require early education for all children about caring, effective, non-violent interpersonal behavior and communication.
- Teach all ages how to identify violence and the consequences of violence.
- Better screening and effective referrals.
- Keep community resources connected locally and across counties using meetings and technology to communicate.
- Awareness campaigns.
- Stronger sentencing guidelines. Train law enforcement – focus on judges.

III. Workshop Discussions: Eight Topics of Importance

The remaining inputs were collected and tabulated. The responses fell neatly into eight topics of importance and are divided further by what is working and what needs to be improved. Each participant, and their related organizations, can review this information to stimulate new thinking and future collaboration. The topics are as follows:

1. Raise awareness about domestic violence locally, regionally and statewide.

What is working?

Participants noted that the following activities *are* working to raise awareness: vigils, *Stop the Violence* seminars, discussions and education efforts by age group. Domestic violence advocates agreed that their efforts to raise awareness have been successful. Activities such as music education help bring a community together so that issues of violence can be discussed openly.

What could be improved?

Participants noted areas that need improvement. Existing brochures frequently do not get the message across clearly. A more direct, personal approach could be more effective. Use well-known spokespeople from a variety of fields, to promote the message that domestic violence touches as many lives as breast cancer or drug abuse. The community needs more training forums and education platforms. Creating opportunities for former abuse victims to share their experiences and describe how they changed their lives could raise public awareness. Information on what constitutes a healthy relationship should be part of any awareness campaign. Finally, implement and fund more programs for all parts of a community: schools, adults, churches and community organizations.

2. Reinforce the concept that interpersonal violence is a crime and not socially acceptable. Highlight its impact on the individual and the family. Show that anger and violence is not a substitute for mature communication.

What is working?

Identifying domestic violence as a crime has been an important step in working to prevent violence. Public awareness campaigns such as public service announcements on billboards, radio and television play a role in letting abusers know that violent behaviors are not acceptable or tolerated. Community programs such as music education helps participants, young

and old, learn what appropriate communication looks and sounds like. These kinds of programs provide positive role models for young people. They create an atmosphere in which an open dialogue about interpersonal violence and healthy behaviors is possible.

What could be improved?

Violence is about both perpetrators and victims. The dynamic will not change as long as the community has to focus all its resources on protecting victims. Perpetrators need to understand and experience the consequences of their actions. Families break down, youth violence increases and the cycle repeats itself in subsequent generations. Abusers need to feel the full impact of the law and be required to attend special programs such as anger management and training about healthy relationships. Fifteen seconds of uncontrolled anger can land a person in jail for the rest of his or her life. If social services become involved, their children may be removed from the home. The victims should not be the only ones whose environment must change. Promote strategies for deflecting and defusing violence that the whole community can anonymously access – children or adults.

3. Provide early education about interpersonal violence for boys and girls.

What is working?

Participants agreed that early education is important. Studies have shown that early education programs do work. There were no comments about what is working in our communities.

What could be improved?

We must break the cycle early with young children to prevent domestic violence from occurring in the first place. Children need to learn that domestic violence is not their fault; their parents must also be educated on the issues. Awareness training should be consistent across age and social groups throughout a community. Specific suggestions include: identify, implement and fund effective prevention education at various grade levels (six comments). Locate programs in other communities or states that are already successful to help keep costs and implementation challenges to a minimum. Develop activities in schools that promote healthy relationships. Use guidance counselors to reach middle and high school students. Put up posters targeting girls and boys in the schools. For girls, “How to spot an abuser.” For boys, “What can you do to prevent violence?”

4. Provide education for first responders - teachers, police, health care professionals, caregivers, day care centers, managers, lawyers, judges, men's groups, women's groups and hairdressers.

What is working?

Mandatory training of police and law enforcement officers is working. Programs to raise awareness and sensitivity in handling domestic violence situations have resulted in the police doing a better job. Screening and referrals are effective in helping victims.

What could be improved?

The attendees mentioned the following two concepts frequently:

- Awareness training needs to be expanded so that health professionals, pharmacies, firefighters, religious leaders, teachers, corporate management, hairdressers, day care providers and any other first responder know how to screen for domestic violence and make referrals.
- A grassroots education plan for possible first responders and their clients should include training to recognize inappropriate behaviors and signs of abuse or abusers.

5. Provide a linked continuum of services, legal, social, residential, educational and financial for victims to stay safe and succeed.

What is working?

Participants noted that a number of programs in the Tri-County area are working:

- 211 Hotline
- My Sister's House
- Hope Line
- Crime Victims Center
- Orders of Protection
- Free 911 cell phone program
- Current resources for Latino and immigrant community
- Stop the Violence
- Project Unity
- Darkness to Light
- Posters on domestic violence in public restrooms
- Domestic violence support groups
- VAWA funding and similar funding mechanisms that support prevention and intervention education. These funds are collected from perpetrators.

- Low Country Children’s Center – strongest child advocacy center in the nation
- Transition housing
- Emergency shelter and care
- Police
- Exchange Clubs active in child abuse prevention
- Programs on safety on computers and internet
- Prevention of Shaken Baby Syndrome

What could be improved?

Improve dissemination of information about these services to victims of domestic violence. Provide a directory of all services for providers of assistance to domestic violence victims. Create a well-defined path for victims once they enter the system.

6. Make it easy for all agencies and the public to access available resources within the community.

Integration of services and improved communication among providers and agencies was identified as an immediate concern for the breakfast participants.

Of the fourteen comments, seven (7) noted the need for improved communication and connection among service providers and agencies. Recommendations included establishing a board, council, task force and monthly or quarterly meetings to include all community organizations that would facilitate the linking of resources and encourage networking. In addition, four (4) comments mentioned using technology, such as establishing a Google Group, to link resources and to facilitate communication among participants between regular meetings. Three (3) comments identified the necessity of finding funding to implement these suggestions. One (1) person commented that the United Way is encouraging organizations to work together: funding may thus not be difficult to obtain. Finally, identify and develop an action plan to achieve these goals.

7. Align legislation, enforcement, prosecution and sentencing.

The breakfast generated thirteen (13) comments relating to the legal system and the prevention of violence. Existing effective laws require mandatory arrest for domestic violence and permit the victim to avoid the hearing. Five (5) comments related to better enforcement of existing laws. Training and education for law enforcement officials, judges and attorneys is necessary to align the legal system with community focus. More pro-bono attorneys are needed for low-income victims of domestic violence.

Three (3) comments called for stronger consequences and increased or mandatory time behind bars for abusers. Other attendees called for laws that mask victims' personal information from public records on the Internet.

8. Benchmark effective programs in other cities, states and agencies.

Four (4) comments from participants noted that other locations might already have effective programs in place. Charleston and South Carolina would benefit from investigating the existence of these programs. We also might look at resources from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the Exchange clubs or other national organizations.

IV. Next Steps

As noted by the participants, the logical next step will be to develop a road map that incorporates the important tasks generated at the breakfast.

The Zonta Club of Charleston will decide how our efforts can best dovetail with local organizations and service providers to support new and on-going activities. These can include:

- Raise funds
- Research successful programs in other jurisdictions
- Identify community leaders to whom we can present a proposal
- Foster the foundation and development of a Domestic Violence Coalition or Coordinated Community Response (CCR) - see CDC citation in Appendix
- Maintain a directory of all Inter-Personal Violence (IPV) resources in the Tri-County area
- Establish a Web presence for IPV prevention in the Tri-County area
- Host on-going networking forums

Appendix: Information and websites that may be helpful for your organization

The following two local links cover the Zonta Breakfast Workshop -

Teaming Up to End Violence Against Women

By Megan Fink, Zonta Club of Charleston Member
The Catalyst, MUSC, June 26, 2009

<http://www.musc.edu/catalyst/archive/2009/co6-26teaming.html>

Preventing Domestic Violence

By Kristen Hankla
Moxie Section, Post and Courier, June 9, 2009

http://www.postandcourier.com/news/2009/jun/19/round_table_brings_agencies_together_tac86427/

for Disease Control

Centers

The Domestic Violence Prevention Enhancement and Leadership Through Alliances (DELTA) program

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/DELTA/>.

The CDC administers federal funds used to address Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) through Coordinated Community Responses (CCRs).

Centers for Disease Control

Detailed report on the cost of Intimate Partner Violence

http://docs.google.com/gview?a=v&q=cache:4sTUf4WlbtsJ:www.cdc.gov/ncipc/pub-res/ipv_cost/ipvbook-final-feb18.pdf+cost+of+domestic+violence+cdc&hl=en&gl=us

Domestic and Sexual Violence Data Collection: A Report to Congress under Violence Against Women

<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/dvsal.htm>

Extent, Nature, and Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey

<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/pubs-sum/181867.htm>

How Can Practitioners Help an Abused Woman Lower Her Risk of Death?

NCJ 196545, November 2003, NIJ Journal, by Carolyn Rebecca Block

<http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/jr000250c.pdf>

AARDVAR

An Abuse, Rape and Domestic Violence Aid and Resource Collection

<http://www.aardvarc.org>

Transforming Communities

Making the Case for Domestic Violence Prevention Through the Lens of Cost-Benefit: A Manual for Domestic Violence Prevention Practitioners (and the State and Local Policy-Makers They Present to)

http://www.transformcommunities.org/cdvp/CDVP_toc.html

Homicide inside the Home

'06 Slayings Spotlight S.C. Domestic Violence

By Jill Coley

The Post and Courier

Monday, September 24, 2007

http://www.postandcourier.com/news/2007/sep/24/homicide_inside_home16995/

American Bar Association

Commission on Domestic Violence

Survey of Recent Statistics

<http://www.abanet.org/domviol/statistics.html>

Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS)

VTS is included here because it is a nationally acclaimed school curriculum and teaching method that nurtures cognitive skills related to observation and critical thinking. The facilitated discussion model of VTS fosters respectful, democratic, collaborative problem solving skills that transfer to interactions in and out of school. Children learn appropriate communication skills through example and practice. They gain confidence in expressing their own ideas while respecting those of others. This unique program also has significant positive impact on observation skills and academic achievement, including reading and vocabulary, at all levels. It has been implemented, tested and verified in a variety of settings including curricula from Kindergarten through Medical School.

<http://www.vtshome.org/pages/what-is-vts>

<http://www.blogtalkradio.com/brothermarcusshow>

Brother Marcus – Domestic Violence 2009

Air Date: December 21, 2008

U.N. Chief Warns Cost Of Violence Against Women ‘Beyond Calculation’

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=30118&Cr=women&Cr1=secretary-general>

Women’s Day Marks Crisis of Poverty, Violence for Some

<http://www.commondreams.org/headline/2009/03/08-3>

International Women’s Day

<http://copywriteink.blogspot.com/2009/03/hearing-voices-international-womens-day.html>

Notes: