

Reading the Signs

For participants in the MNADV's Lethality Assessment Program for First Responders

Lethality Participants

The following jurisdictions in Maryland have implemented or are preparing to implement the Lethality Assessment Program:

- Kent County Sheriff's Office (10/1/2005), Queen Anne's County Sheriff's Office (11/1/2005), Cambridge (11/1/2005) and Easton (2/8/2006) Police Departments working with the Mid-Shore Council on Family Violence
- Harford County Sheriff's Office and the Sexual Assault/Spouse Abuse Resource Center (SARC) (11/15/2005)
- Garrett County Sheriff's Office and the Dove Center (2/1/2006)
- Baltimore PD (North East District pilot) and the House of Ruth (4/16/2006)
- Washington County Sheriff's Office, Hagerstown PD, Hancock PD and CASA (5/15/2006)
- Cumberland PD and the Family Crisis Resource Center (5/15/2006)
- Calvert County Sheriff's Office and the Crisis Intervention Center (5/15/2006)
- Cecil County Sheriff's Office; Police Departments in Elkton, North East, Rising Sun, Perryville and Port Deposit; and the Family Violence Program in Cecil County (7/1/2006)
- Frederick County Sheriff's Office (trained 7/28/2006), Frederick PD and Heartly House
- Prince George's County Sheriff's Office and the Family Crisis Center

About This Newsletter

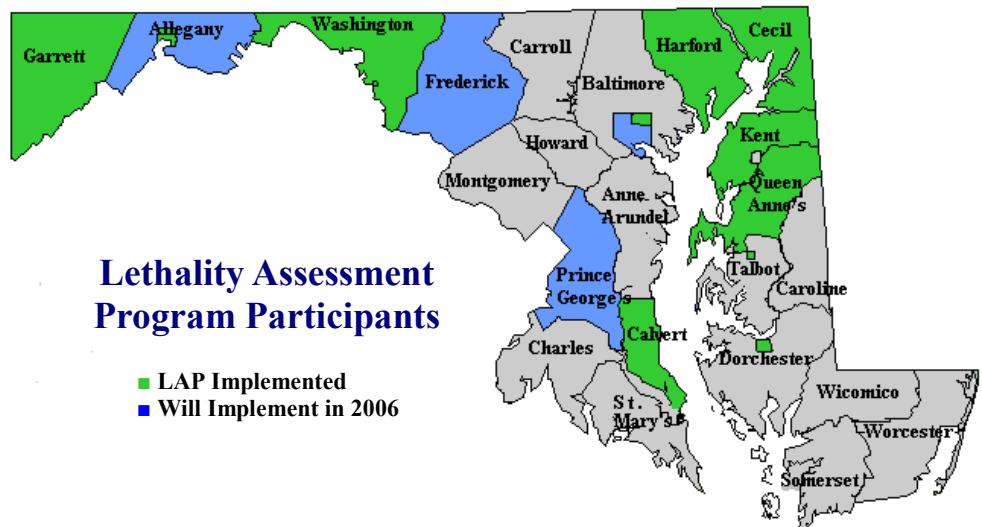
This newsletter is a product of the Maryland Lethality Assessment Participants' Committee (LAPC). The Committee, which is coordinated by the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence, monitors the domestic violence Lethality Assessment Program (LAP) in Maryland and sets the standards for it. The Committee consists of agencies and providers participating in the LAP and others who have been involved in its development.

Participants' Meeting Held in Bel Air

The second meeting of the statewide Lethality Assessment Participants' Committee (LAPC) took place on April 19, 2006 in Bel Air. The main reports and discussions concerned 1) the opening of the Harford County Family Justice Center; 2) implementation of the LAP by additional law enforcement agencies; 3) trends and issues related to implementation; 4) consolidation of the Domestic Violence Supplemental Report and the Lethality Screen; and 5) publication of the first LAPC newsletter. The group decided to meet again in September. The location and date will be announced.

Expansion on the Eastern Shore

Ron Russum of the Mid-Shore Council on Family Violence reported that by the end of 2006, it is possible that all 22 law enforcement agencies in the 5-county mid-shore region will have implemented lethality assessment. He is developing a training schedule. Statewide, 21 agencies are currently on board, and by the end of the year there should be at least 36 agencies participating, representing 14 counties.



The Protocol: When to Initiate a Screen

Initiate a lethality screen in **intimate-partner relationships ONLY** (spouses and ex-spouses, girlfriends and boyfriends, ex-girlfriends and ex-boyfriends, same-sex partners, dating situations, persons with children in common.) Do



NOT initiate a screen in other family situations such as siblings, parents and grandparents. The screen does not apply in those relationships, as the factors were developed by Dr. Jackie Campbell and others through analysis of thousands of fatal and near-fatal intimate partner relationships.

Meeting Outcomes

The Tally

In Kent, Queen Anne's, Harford and Garrett Counties, and Cambridge and Easton between January 1 and March 31, 2006:

- 160 screens were administered
- 80 victims screened in (50%)
- 70 of those who screened in spoke with a counselor (88%)
- 17 of those who spoke with a counselor sought services (24%)



Of particular interest is the result that 88% of those who screened in high danger spoke with a counselor, and all four "high danger" victims who spoke with a Dove Center counselor in Garrett County sought services. These results indicate that officers are doing a good job of encouraging victims to speak with a counselor.

Heather Hanline, Executive Director of the Dove Center, indicated that all four Garrett County victims were eager to utilize services,

but had been so controlled by their abusers that seeking help from a domestic violence provider would not have been an option.

Forms Consolidation

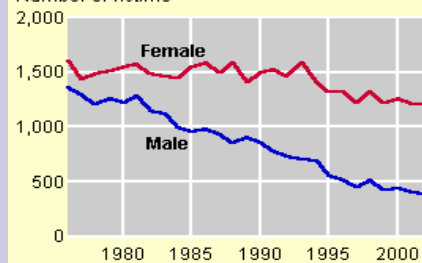
Ron Russum offered the LAPC a draft based on the Easton Police Department's consolidation of the supplemental report and the lethality screen. The Committee decided to send it to all law enforcement agencies, state's attorneys, and domestic violence providers for comment.

Did you know . . .

The Bureau of Justice Statistics reports a significant long-term reduction in the number of men killed by intimate partners in the U.S., but a much smaller reduction in women killed by their partners. It seems that significant improvement in "femicide" will require special efforts, such as the Lethality Assessment Program. For more information see the BJS website, <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/homicide/intimates.htm>

Homicides of intimates by gender of victim, 1976-2002

Number of victims



Remember To . . .

Apply the Principles

Communicate, coordinate and cooperate! Supervisors should:

- Notify your partner agency and arrange some form of recognition — a commendation letter, addressing a roll call or staff meeting, etc. — if an officer or counselor has done an especially good job. Getting to know and appreciate one another will foster a constructive relationship.

*The Mid-Shore Council on Family Violence recently sent a letter to the Easton Police Department commending **Officer Brian Dadds** for his service to a high danger victim of domestic violence. Besides taking extra time with the victim and giving her assurances, Officer Dadds appeared at the protective order hearing and was prepared to offer testimony. These supportive acts by Officer Dadds likely bolstered the victim and created such a positive impression that she will probably never forget them. Thank you and congratulations to Officer Dadds.*



- Tell officers and counselors not to let a bad experience during a phone call or response fester, but to notify a supervisor immediately. Supervisors should contact one another immediately and resolve the problem!

Keep current

Read Dr. Campbell's and Dr. Webster's article, "Assessing Risk Factors for Intimate Partner Homicide," at www.ojp.usdoj.gov, search term 'journal 250'. They found that: "...women who were threatened or assaulted with a gun were 20 times more likely than other women to be murdered. Women whose partners threatened them with murder were 15 times more likely than other women to be killed."

News

Harford County Family Justice Center

One of the most beneficial effects of the LAP has been improved communication and cooperation between law enforcement and service providers. Nowhere is that more evident than in Harford County, where the Sheriff's Office Domestic Violence Unit, the State's Attorney's Office Domestic Violence Unit, SARC, and the Child Advocacy Center will be co-located in the new Harford County Family Justice Center.

Protective Orders and Lethality

Maryland has recently experienced several domestic violence deaths following service of protective orders. In its annual report, the Calvert County Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team noted that protective orders were in effect in four of six cases it reviewed in 2005. The period in which protective orders are issued is clearly a dangerous time. Participating agencies are encouraged to develop a protocol and administer a Lethality Screen at the time an interim or temporary protective order is issued.

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**Maryland Network
Against Domestic Violence
(301) 352-4574**