

A Comprehensive Counseling Program in Collaboration with Law Enforcement

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Description of Program

- Innovative, multifaceted approach to assistance, counseling, and advocacy for victims of domestic violence.
- Award-winning program, housed within a law enforcement setting.
- Array of counseling services and resources have been developed, through a biopsychosocial approach, to assist a diverse population of victims.

History and Background

- In 1994 the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department (MNPd) was one of the first in the country to develop a specialized investigative division for crimes of domestic violence.
- The Counseling Section was a part of the Domestic Violence Division (DVD) initially in order to provide an array of individualized advocacy and counseling services.

Purpose and Goal of DVD

- The purpose of the Domestic Violence Division is to provide domestic violence reduction and awareness products to all persons affected by domestic violence so that they can lessen the risk of becoming a victim of future domestic violence.
- The goal of this division is to provide skilled and courteous service to victims of domestic violence, while accessing the support that is available through the criminal justice system and the community.

Domestic Violence Division

- The DVD receives over 25,000 reports of domestic disturbances each year.
- Law enforcement staffing includes: captain, lieutenant, two sergeants, and 20 detectives, who conduct follow-up investigations on incident reports of domestic disturbances.
- Crisis counseling staff supervised by a psychologist includes: 5 full-time, Master's level therapists, and a number of graduate interns, who provide outreach and counseling services to victims.

Patrol Officer Duties

- Respond to calls for service.
- Interview victim, suspect, and witnesses.
- Determine primary aggressor.
- Investigate crime scene.
- Generate incident report.
- Obtain criminal warrant.
- Arrest suspect if present.
- Forward report and information to DVD.

Detective Duties

- Crisis response.
- Interview victims and witnesses, collect statements.
- Photograph injuries or property damage.
- Gather physical evidence.
- Obtain criminal warrants.
- Serve warrants and arrest perpetrators.
- Assist with civil orders of protection.
- Testify in court.
- Community education and in-service training.

Orders of Protection

- Civil order issued for purpose of preventing violent or threatening acts or harassment against, contact or communication with, or physical proximity to, another person.
- Ex parte order is granted by a commissioner.
- Notice of order served by sheriff's department.
- Court hearing is held within 15 days; judge may grant the order for one year.
- Violating of an order of protection is a criminal offense.

Criminal Warrants

- Obtained by officer after filing police report and investigation is completed.
- Warrants are obtained by police on behalf of victim.
- Once incarcerated, sheriff's department will notify victim if suspect is to be released on bond.
- Victim will be subpoenaed to appear in court to testify.

Mission of Counseling Section

- The mission of the DVD Counseling Section is to provide counseling, advocacy, outreach, and community education to victims of domestic violence, free of charge.
- The counseling section recognizes that when a domestic crime occurs, the entire family may be affected. Therefore, any non-perpetrating family members may also be entitled to our services.

Counseling Services

- Crisis response and assistance with shelter.
- Trauma debriefing.
- Short and long-term counseling.
- Grief counseling.
- Assist with civil orders of protection.
- Safety planning.
- Court support.
- Resource and referrals.
- Community education and in-service training.

Areas of Specialty

- Child Trauma Specialist.
- Teen Dating Violence.
- Elder Abuse Therapist.
- Shelter and community housing liaison.
- Bilingual counselor for Spanish-speaking victims.
- Services for disabilities, e.g. hearing impaired.
- Clinical supervision of graduate interns.

Crisis Response

- Counselors are on call to respond to hospital or crime scene 24/7.
- All are certified in Critical Incident Stress Debriefing.
- Assistance with shelter and other emergency interventions.
- Orders of protection and safety planning.
- Solution-focused short term counseling is free.

Therapy Provided

- Psycho-educational information on DV and PTSD; safety planning.
- Short or long term individual counseling.
- Trauma-focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT).
- Eye Movement Desensitization & Reprocessing (EMDR).
- Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT).
- Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT).

- Counseling for grief and complicated grief.
- Sexual assault counseling.
- Forensic Interviewing (for child abuse).
- Child-Parent Psychotherapy (CPP) (Age 0-6 years)
- Art Therapy.
- Play Therapy.
- Weekly support groups, e.g. "Choices," "A Partir de Hoy."

Awards

- 2003 Appreciation Award; John E. Reid & Associates
- 2004 Appreciation Award; Nashville Coalition Against Domestic Violence
- 2009 Excellence in Victim Services Award; International Association of Chiefs of Police.
- 2009 Susan Canon Long-term Provider Award; Nashville Coalition Against Domestic Violence.
- 2011 Victims Advocate of the Year; Tennessee Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Assault
