



# South King County Community Network

## Review of Community Efforts Update

**Focus of Reviews:** Children exposed to domestic violence

**Communities Involved:** Federal Way (2004- present) and Tukwila (Jan. 2007 – present)

**Partnering Agencies:**

Federal Way	Tukwila
SKCCN board members & staff City: Police chief Systems information manager Crime analyst Human Services Dept. City manager Prosecutors office – DV liaison Other systems: King County lead DV prosecutor FW Schools assistant superintendent Faith communities Service Providers Coordinated Community Response Team Child Abuse Prevention agency Community mental health agency School counselor Batterers intervention provider Victim service provider Survivors	SKCCN board members & staff City: Police chief & investigator Human Services Dept. Prosecutor’s office DV advocate Other systems: Faith communities- liaison Service Providers DV Task Force Child Abuse Prevention agency Community mental health agency Victim service providers

### Locally Determined Questions to Answer

Federal Way	Tukwila
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do we know about children being exposed to DV? (numbers, %, gender, ages, school connections, CPS, referrals for service)</li> <li>• What is happening now for those children? (What kind of data exists to tell us what kind of services currently exist?)</li> <li>• What does the community believe should be happening for these children?</li> <li>• How can the community move from what is happening now to what they believe should happen?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do we know about children being exposed to DV? (numbers, %, gender, ages, school connections, CPS, referrals for service)</li> <li>• What do we know about non-offending parents? (relationship to perpetrator, age, residence, 5 seek services, % with Protection Order, history of DV, ethnicity)</li> <li>• What do we know about alleged perpetrators? (history of DV, drug/alcohol abuse, residence, any long term follow up, employment, relationship to victims, ethnicity, primary language)</li> </ul>

**As stated in the accepted Service Reports:** Start and End: 7/1/2005 to 2/28/06 and 3/1/2006 to 6/30/2007

**Our Goal:  
Healthy Families in Caring Communities**

**Measurable Results (Outcome)<sup>1</sup>:**

City officials and the grassroots community of Federal Way will understand the scope of the problem of children being exposed to DV in their community and will develop a vision of the desired formal and informal responses they believe children exposed to DV should receive.

Resources will be sought to implement the desired formal and informal responses.

The Police Department will implement plans to create specialized training on children who witness DV and will institute changes in their data system as a result of the thorough review of their own data during Phase I.

**Results (Outcome) Indicators<sup>2</sup>:**

- Findings from a review of police data will be presented to a broad community group in Feb. 2006.
- The advisory group will include at least 2 DV survivors.
- A broad-based community advisory group will be formed by Mar. 2006 with representation from survivors and service providers.
- The advisory group will review best and promising practices, then devise the plan that will best fit Federal Way's needs.
- Police officers will increase their skills in dealing with children at DV scenes.
- Police data processes will improve so that children present at DV scenes are more readily identified.

**Measurable Results:**

- Findings and responses for the review of police data was presented to a broad community forum Mar. 6, 2006.
- Police have continually monitored the effectiveness of their training and revised information system. Minutes of the community advisory group reflect the process and progress.
- Publication of a written plan (see attached) was delayed until fall 2006 due to complexity of issues studied. While survivors did participate in community forums and occasionally in Community Team meetings, we were not successful in guaranteeing their participation on a regular basis. This mirrors SKCCN's experience in attempting to establish a Survivors' Council to advise the SKCCN Board on policy issues. Despite intensive outreach by an intern, survivors' lives continued to have so many challenges that they could not commit to regular participation. However, SKCCN is proud to have at least one survivor as a Board member and several members who experienced DV as children. Furthermore, the SKCCN Board now includes DV advocates.

Two SKCCN Board members served on both the Steering Committee and the Community Advisory Group. Written monthly staff reports and occasional verbal reports from participating Board members kept the Board advised.

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1

*Measurable Result: Short-term child and family result/outcome means a measurable change in the knowledge, skills, attitude, behavior, or status of a child or family that can be expected to occur within one to two years, and with sufficient scale and duration, may be logically related to a long term result; or Community Result means a change in the skills, practices, awareness, and/or response to human needs on the part of service providers, policy, and other decision makers, systems, organizations, and communities that can be expected to occur within one or two years and with sufficient scale and duration, is expected to lead to long-term results in the lives of children and families.)*

<sup>2</sup> *Result Indicator: A precise statement of what will be observed or asked that would give data for reporting results.*

*Examples: What is the number of parents who use appropriate disciplinary techniques? What is the number of families who have at least one person to assist in respite care for child?*

**Our Goal:  
Healthy Families in Caring Communities**

## **Highlights of Federal Way Findings from 2004 Police Records**

1. DV had been in the top five calls-for-service for the past ten years
2. 2140 total DV reports, including 1365 “domestic disputes” (verbal) – 64% of total
3. 36 felony level assaults (of which 26 fit the criteria of the Review)
4. In 73% of cases adult males were the identified suspects
5. 12 of the 26 felony cases had children present (46%)
6. alcohol and/or marijuana were present in 46% of the cases involving children
7. African American families were disproportionately represented: 57% of suspects and 49% of victims compared to 7.9% of the population
8. 53% of misdemeanor cases were located in multi-family locations and 34% in single family homes. This suggests possible sites to focus on with intervention/prevention efforts.

## **Federal Way Achievements**

With the Review process serving as a catalyst, the city of Federal Way made great strides in their response to children exposed to domestic violence:

1. Extensive analysis of DV incidents in the City providing valuable information as to where to direct resources and services, foster enhanced collaboration and coordination, and improve upon the efficiency and effectiveness of the system
2. Reviewed extensive research on the most progressive and promising programs to address the crime of DV and victimization across the country through consultation with Dr. Jeffrey Edelson, national expert on the impact of DV on children.
3. Training (by now Chief Wilson and King County lead DV prosecutor, Gary Ernsdorff) of all police personnel in the most progressive investigative techniques across the country.
4. Enhanced communication, cooperation and collaboration between police, prosecutors,, advocates, Child Protective Services, and service providers regarding the investigation of DV and the protection and safety of victims and families.
5. Enhanced police reporting regarding children being present and/or witnessing incidents of DV through implementation of an improved DV Supplemental report form and improvements to their information system.
6. Enactment of a local ordinance establishing DV in the presence of children and strangulation as a gross misdemeanor which served as the model for state legislation passed enhancing penalties for strangulation.
7. Mobilization of Federal Way community members against DV and a community “Call to Action” and education process to eliminate DV in the community.
8. Presentation by community members throughout the City regarding this DV initiative, led by the Federal Way faith community.
9. Over thirty Federal Way school counselors were trained in the impact of DV on children, mandated reporting laws and in Adverse Childhood Experiences research.

## **Report on 8 Required Elements**

1. **What is the status of families, children, and the community relating to the Review focus – rates of problem behavior(s), causes and predictors of problem behavior(s), pathways for resilience or escalation of problems?**

See above Highlights from Findings

2. **How are the services and community efforts conducted with regard to the population/issue of concern?**

Prior to this Review there had been no community efforts to look at children exposed to domestic violence. A Coordinated Community Response Team had been in effect since 2001 but focused almost exclusively on adult victims and perpetrators. Services for children are scattered among mental health providers, some school counselors, and private for profit and not-for-profit service agencies. A survey of providers in fall 2006 found that:

**Our Goal:  
Healthy Families in Caring Communities**

- Fourteen agencies reported directly serving children and/or their parents with 24% of those providing primarily housing services. In total those agencies serve approximately 400 children at any given time (300 of those were reported from one mental health agency). Mental health agencies were not able to break out numbers of children who had experienced DV. When considering results of Adverse Childhood Experiences studies, it makes sense to treat all trauma as connected. However, there are some dynamics of DV that require specific knowledge in order to improve child safety.
  - Training specific to DV was routinely reported only by DV service providers. Other service agencies reported widely varied levels of training. Mental health therapists discourage separating out different kinds of trauma.
  - DV specific services can serve only 75 children per year, excluding Valley Cities Counseling and Consultation. Capacity to serve is primarily determined by funding levels. There is very little capacity for home visiting.
  - Costs for services vary, but many programs have no fees. Mental health agencies accept Medicaid or sliding fees. Insurance is accepted only by major mental health programs.
  - Culturally relevant services are claimed by virtually all agencies with most reporting one or more bilingual staff and/or use of interpreters.
  - Several agencies indicated the need for a more consistent collaboration among agencies.
- 3. To what degree are services integrated and coordinated with other efforts designed to achieve similar results, prevent the same problem or serve a similar population?**
- There was in integration. The closest system to recognize the challenges of children operated in near total vacuums from each other. That is, mental health agencies collected information about exposure to DV but organized its services around general exposure to trauma. A 2005 survey of mental health therapists by Jennifer Self found that fewer than half had any formal training in DV. On a more hopeful note, with the encouragement and financial support of SKCCN two specialized programs had begun in South King County, the YWCA Children's DV home-visiting model and Domestic Abuse Women's Network (DAWN)'s Kids Club, an evidence-based program developed with close consultation with Jeffrey Edelson, national expert. School counselors were aware of some of the impacts but requested, and were given, specialized training on the impact of DV on children and mandated reporting requirements. (Note: Exposure to DV in and or itself does not constitute child abuse or neglect.) An impressive two year effort yielded the King county DV and child Maltreatment Guidelines that were adopted in March 2007. Once DSHS and community professionals are fully trained in the protocols, integration and coordination of efforts should improve dramatically.
- 4. How flexible and relevant are the resources currently applied to achieve desired results?**
- All resources for children exposed to DV are rigidly divided by funding sources. Furthermore, there is on-going concern among the DV advocacy community that any specialized funds for children could compete for funding from adult victim services. Principles adopted by participants for this Review include the premise that the most important way to help children is to help their non-offending parents provide a safe home.
- 5. To what degree do services and community efforts build, nurture, honor and use relationships as a strategy for success?**
- While reflecting on this Review the Steering Committee concluded that the most important result was the formulation of relationships from which has developed many improvements including work between CPS workers and police and between county prosecutors and local police. Furthermore, while SKCCN was facing constant obstacles in attracting school districts to coordinated efforts, in Federal Way, thanks to the relationships developed through the Review process, school counselors immediately opened their doors to three different specialized training topics. It is important to note that relationships were important both at the district superintendent's level, as well as the individual school level.

**Our Goal:  
Healthy Families in Caring Communities**

**6. To what extent is this service, or this constellation of services and other efforts, the best fit for the community, its needs and priorities?**

Federal Way's Community Team chose to focus first on a Community Call to Action to recruit a cadre of volunteers to learn about the impact of DV on children and to take the message out to small community groups. A special pilot project to demonstrate a community-based effort to support schools especially heavily impacted by homelessness and domestic violence, has been planned for the coming year. Improvements to victim services, as well as improved accountability for perpetrators, is a tall order that cannot happen in a short haul. It will take the Federal Way community years of iterations to build the complete system they have begun through their community campaign, "There is no place for domestic violence in our community."

**7. To what extent is the service or effort able to optimize positive results? Are the needed management tools in place to support learning, improvement, responsiveness?**

In large measure, despite the Review having begun in 2004, the Federal Way community is still in the early phases of service revision and measuring results. A systematic evaluation of the new ordinance passed in June 2006 will be conducted during the fall of 2007. It can be said that Federal Way's greatest strength – of enthusiastically facing the issue and quickly moving toward local solutions (building upon results of the review, but not necessarily using the Review Steering Committee structure to vet policy changes), is also its greatest weakness in not having included planned evaluations of its initiatives. The Review Steering Committee is now in a position to encourage (but not force) Federal Way to evaluate the results of their efforts.

**8. What options are available to address specific barriers to success or to make improvements? Is decategorization of funds, or local exception to rule, an appropriate or necessary step toward improvements?**

Due to the Community Team's priority to first address community awareness, efforts to specifically address decategorization have been delayed. SKCCN will work with city and community leaders to encourage a more systematic review of barriers and options for system improvement beyond those already taken by the City. SKCCN is considering an option of reviewing decategorization issues on a regional basis, rather than city by city, since all service providers operate on at least a South King County, if not King County, wide basis.

### **Preliminary Tukwila Findings**

Tukwila began their Review process in January 2007, identified questions to answer, and conducted their police data analysis in May and June 2007. Highlights include:

1. Nearly 2/3 of all victims receive information on resources.
2. Although numbers of police reports vary between months, there are no statistically significant differences.
3. 91 cases that met this Review criteria (21%) had documentation that children were present.
4. Only 60% reported ages of children and only 43% reported gender.
5. Notes on behavior of children better express the reality of what they experience and its probable impact. Some officers try to soften the impact by holding children or preventing them from seeing their parent in handcuffs. Could more officers be encouraged to tend to children's emotional needs? Chief Haynes replied that securing the safety of the scene is #1.
6. Dating and ex-dating relationships accounted for 54% of all incidents compared to married or separated that account for only 40%. The ages of the adult victims (78% were in 20-39 age ranges) reflect the fact they are of child rearing ages.
7. 74% of non-offending parents listed a Tukwila home address – a surprise since in other crime categories an estimated 80% live outside Tukwila. Interestingly 59% of the suspects listed Tukwila as their home address, again far from the 20% rate seen in other crimes.
8. Only 12% noted drugs and alcohol were involved – thought to be a low estimate. One DV advocate noted that women's addiction can be a way to control the family.

### **Our Goal:**

### **Healthy Families in Caring Communities**

9. Employment of the non-offending parent and suspect parent was not able to be collected since few reports include the information.
10. Criminal history is limited to convictions only. Tukwila Municipal Court looks at similar prior offenses when ordering sentences
11. Systems questions arose: e.g. Is education available to judges on risk factors for DV and on which cases are most likely to escalate? What do we know about how DV is viewed by different courts? DV is a regular topic for judicial training. The real issue is how judges interpret training issues.
12. Where does DV occur most often in Tukwila?
  - 78% where people live
  - 4% in motels/hotels
  - 9% parking lots
  - 4% while driving
  - 2% on or in the street
13. Racial/ethnic breakdowns are very limited The Review Stakeholders recognize that reported DV incidents are only the tip of the iceberg.
14. Of the 91 cases only 8 were felony offenses. Do felonies typically occur later in the escalation phase of DV? Not necessarily. Many women report that early serious physical injuries make them fearful so they avoid reporting or they call early in the cycle to avoid what they know is coming (more serious physical assault). Also many threats involve getting custody of the children – something that happens often. These very real threats also discourage victims from reporting.

It is estimated that only 3% of all victims ever end up in shelter services and that fewer than 10% of DV incidents are ever reported to the police. Tukwila is planning to collect data from a second source, victim service agencies, in order to gain a fuller picture of what is happening to children. Data from a confidential shelter, transitional shelters, specialized children's services (YWCA Children's DV Program and DAWN's Kids Club) and focus groups of survivors will shed more light on real family experiences.

### **Key Learnings**

1. It took considerably longer than anticipated to get through Phase I of the Federal Way Review, largely because it took time to develop the relationships that were critical to achieve success and to figure out what the data told us. When asked how to improve the process, Chief Wilson replied that relationships were the critical ingredient.
2. The legal definition of domestic violence was adopted by the Federal Way Steering Committee; however, the cases reviewed were only those which involved violence between intimate adult partners. Cases where children were the targets of the abuse or where children assaulted an adult were excluded from the Review.
3. The Review process should encourage local ownership. Initial agreements need to clarify who "owns" the data and who can decide what data to release. In the case of Federal Way and Tukwila it was determined that the police department owned their own data and that no data related to the Review would be released without consensus of the Steering Committee.
4. Providing resources to assist local governments to pull and analyze their own data is a powerful tool that engages local communities in finding "meaning" in the data. The analysis became an iterative process in Federal Way as each data set served as a catalyst for additional questions.
5. Engaging schools was a major challenge. Although an assistant school superintendent

**Our Goal:  
Healthy Families in Caring Communities**

participated from Federal Way participated on the Steering Committee, follow-up work with schools was difficult because of schools' focus on Washington Assessment of Student Learning tests. A local school counselor who became involved as part of the community forum provided a break-through and opened access to training school counselors. Further work is planned in Federal Way to pilot a community-based inter-agency team to meet around children being exposed to DV.

6. Engaging Child Protective Services representatives was also a challenge. Research conducted by Diana English<sup>3</sup> found that 47% of the referrals accepted for CPSD investigation have some indication adult DV in the child's home. Finding a CPS supervisor who had the time to participate on a regular basis was a major challenge. However, the occasional participation of CPS began a relationship that led to CPS workers meeting with police personnel. Federal Way now reports a far more effective and coordinated response between CPS and police. Simply learning about their respective roles and requirements led to much improved services.
7. Policy changes can, and often should, begin at the local level where policy can be tested before attempting to mandate a change statewide. The national consultant for the Federal Way Review, Dr. Jeff Edelson of the University of Minnesota, was helpful in summarizing major approaches to legislative action from different states. The Review process served as one of several catalysts for the Federal Way Council to ask the city attorney to draft an ordinance to protect children exposed to DV. While the Review Steering Committee as a whole was not consulted, the ordinance followed one that had been reviewed by Dr. Edelson. When that same ordinance was forwarded by the Attorney General's Office for possible statewide implementation, there was such opposition from the DV advocacy community that sections relating to "in the presence of children" were never introduced. However, a bill that related to strangulation (also modeled after that Federal Way ordinance) gained broad support and was passed.
8. New laws are passed routinely without any required follow-up measurement of its effectiveness. E.g. (SHB 1181, Sec. 1, (4) 27) and the related Washington Administrative Code, 388-60-0245, states requiring batterer intervention providers to educate batterers about the impact of their violence on their children was passed in 1999. Sara Clements-Sampson, an intern from the University of Washington Policy Studies (Bothell) conducted interviews of key informants around how the law was implemented (available upon request). She found that there was no consistency in implementation. Some providers gave minimal attention to the issue, while others used evidence-based curricula.
9. Despite widespread recognition that children exposed to DV are at much higher risk for a host of problem behaviors (school problems, suicide, youth violence, and substance abuse), data on children is sorely lacking. Mental health agencies, while they ask about DV, keep no statistics on the number of children impacted by DV. Schools do not keep track, other than indirectly by counting homeless students (DV accounts for 50% of homeless children). CPS, while also recognizing DV as a risk factor, do not keep separate statistics. Police reports, in jurisdictions where special DV supplemental report forms have been implemented, can supply some minimal estimates of the number of children exposed to DV. It is striking that data about a problem that is widely associated with serious future problems is not readily available.

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<sup>3</sup> English, D., Edleson, J. & Herrick, M. (2005, Domestic Violence in one state's child protective caseload: A study of differential case dispositions and outcomes, Children and Youth Services Review 29(2005), 11983-1201.

## **Review of Community Efforts as an Iterative Process**

While SKCCN initially planned for a 1-2 year process, the involvement in Federal Way is about to celebrate its three year anniversary. Looking at police data was only the first step. The City responded amazingly (see earlier list of achievements) to Phase I where police data was analyzed, resulting in their receiving an Award of Excellence in Public Safety from the Association of Washington Cities. Phase II was focused on engaging the broader community. It was kicked off with a community forum in March 2006 where approximately fifty (50) interested citizens gathered to hear what the City had done. A Community Team of twenty volunteers was identified and spent nearly a year reviewing best practices approaches from around the country (see attached summaries provided by Dr. Jeff Edelson). They, then created a community response plan (see attached) with four major foci:

1. city government (already formulated and implemented)
2. schools- educating school counselors about DV and a pilot project to demonstrate the effectiveness of a community/school team to improve responses to children exposed to DV.
3. social services – a survey of services related to children exposed to DV, a listing of current services and establishing ties with the Federal Way Coordinated Community Response Team
4. grassroots community- a community “Call to Action” led by faith community representatives to identify a cadre of volunteers to take educational materials to a variety of community groups to spread the word the “DV has no place in our community” and to train people how to respond if they believe a family, friend or neighbor is experiencing domestic violence.

Phase II will lead to Phase III, as called for in the approved Review plan. It calls for the community to determine how to move from its current level of response to improved responses that are embedded in the community responses recommended by the Community Team in a community forum conducted in March 2007. The partnership between SKCCN and the City of Federal Way has laid the foundation for on-going efforts to improve responses to children exposed to DV. Each phase builds on earlier lessons and takes advantages of the trusting relationships built over time.

## **What’s Next?**

### **A. Complete the Tukwila initial review process**

### **B. Review decategorization options**

Both Federal Way and Tukwila teams need time to better analyze options for decategorization. It may serve SKCCN purposes better to invite both cities to examine this issue since victim services are primarily either county, state or federally funded.

### **C. Continue work with Federal Way**

It is time to evaluate the outcomes from their recent efforts, including the impact of the new ordinances. Furthermore, there is an outstanding commitment to work with Federal Way Schools to demonstrate a community-based team approach to improving responses to children exposed to DV. Finally, the community Call to Action campaign needs to be evaluated and expanded on if initial efforts have been successful.

### **D. Expand Review process to more cities**

Other South King County cities, and others from outside SKCCN boundaries thanks to publicity surrounding the Association of Washington Cities award, are expressing interest in a Review process of their own. SKCCN has worked closely with seven city DV task forces to develop collaborative relationships and regional activities (e.g. now annual Walk-a-thon to raise funds for children’s services). SKCCN will study the feasibility of broadening the Review process to run through the Collaborative so that more cities can take advantage in the near future.

**Our Goal:  
Healthy Families in Caring Communities**

**D. Test the Safety & Accountability Audit model as a tool for future Reviews.**

SKCCN has become aware of, and has sent a team of three to be trained in, the Safety and Accountability Audit process. This audit is a method of assessment and analysis for exploring institutional responses to domestic violence: how workers within agencies and systems are organized and coordinated to think and act on cases. This approach has been developed by Praxis International, an Office on Violence Against Women-designated technical assistance provider. More information is available at [www.praxisinternational.org](http://www.praxisinternational.org). This type of audit examines *institutional* responses related to domestic violence. It is not an evaluation or performance review of individual employees in particular agencies. Courts, victim service providers and batterer intervention providers face many challenges to ensure safety for victims and accountability for perpetrators of domestic violence. When children are also exposed, there are any even greater challenges. State batterer intervention regulations are intended to help protect victims and hold batterers accountable. They call for educating batterers who are parents about the impact of their violence on their children. An audit would help our community understand how the system is going in our community. The South King County Community Network is recommending that a community partnership be formed in South King County to conduct a safety and accountability audit to explore the following question:

*How do batterer intervention programs address batterers' violence and its impact on their children?*

SKCCN is hopeful that this kind of audit will prove to be a valuable tool in conducting future Reviews of Community Efforts on a variety of topics.