Domestic Violence Coordinating Council
Treatment Committee
DRAFT MINUTES
January 15, 2020, 10:00 AM
Middletown Police Department

Committee Members Present: Brendan O'Neill (Office of Defense Services), Ava Carcirieri (Family Court), Juan Rodriguez (People's Place), Ann Altemus (CHILD Inc.), Blanche Creech (People's Place), Vanessa Bennifield (DOC)
DVCC Staff: Dayna Belfiore
Community Partners: Ursula McCullough (DPBHS & Cert. Panel Member), Cecilia Gonzalez, LCSW(Veterans Court)
Public Attendees: None

Minutes: There are no changes to the October 16, 2019 minutes. October 2019 minutes were unanimously approved.

I. Old Business

a. Certification Panel Annual Review Meeting Summary: The Committee reviewed the recommendations and decisions of the 2019 Annual Certification Panel meeting. There were no questions about the recommendations and decisions of the panel. As provided for in the Certification Panel Rules and Procedures (revised 2019), the following DVI programs shall be considered "preliminarily certified" until approved by the Coordinating Council at the next Council meeting. Of note, Catholic Charities will no longer be offering a DVI program. As such, their certification will expire on 3/31/20 to allow for current enrollees to finish their program.
    1. People's Place II (Turning Point)
    2. CHILD Inc
    3. Catholic Charities with certification to expire on 3/31/2020

b. DVI Certification Panel membership: The Certification Panel is made up of 11 panel members. Of the 11 panel members, 9 representatives have been confirmed. DVCC Staff will continue to identify a representative from DSCYF, Division of Youth Rehabilitative Services. The last seat will remain open until a 3rd certified treatment provider is identified.

c. Certification Panel Rules and Procedures revisions: Revisions to the Certification Panel Rules and Procedures were unanimously approved by the Council at the December 2019 meeting.

II. New Business

a. Court Diversion Programs-Probation Before Judgement (PBJ) Program and Domestic Violence First Offender Program (DVFOP): Brendan O'Neill with Office of Defense Services (ODS) shared there have been recent concerns/challenges raised by the Department of Justice (DOJ) around the PBJ program—which includes a potentially short-term of probation and requires only anger management classes-- and the DVFOP—which requires a longer term of probation and completion of a DVCC Certified Domestic Violence Intervention (DVI) Program. The concern is that the more intensive DVFOP is available for less serious domestic violence offenses while the less intensive PBJ program is available for more serious offenses. As such, DOJ has begun a discussion around expanding the charges eligible for the DVFOP and removing PBJ as a diversion option in CCP and Family Court. Brendan O'Neill shared concern that there may be too few DVCC Certified DVI programs to handle the prospective increase in court mandated referrals resulting from an expansion of charges under the DVFOP.

b. Certified Provider List: The Committee discussed the existing certified DVI providers in the context of the recent DOJ and ODS discussions. It was clarified that the existing programs and classes offered (mainly People's Place and Child Inc.) are not currently at capacity. Both programs report they can absorb the 100 or so referrals per year resulting from Catholic Charities discontinuing their DVI program and accommodate additional referrals that may result from changes to the DVFO statue.
    i. Blanche Creech (People's Place) reported in the past year, People's Place has seen a 25% drop in referrals. There are plans to expand classes offered to the Middletown area in addition to classes currently offered in Dover, Milford, Seaford and Georgetown.
    ii. Ann Altemus (CHILD Inc.) reported that classes are not currently at capacity but may near capacity at the end of the month as a result of the unexpected closing of the Catholic Charities' DVI program. Still, Ann reports Catholic Charities can expand to accommodate extra referrals which may result from changes to DVFOP. CHILD Inc. also plans to expand classes to Middletown and Western Middletown (Hockessin area)
    iii. At the conclusion of the discussion, Committee members agreed that the current number of DVI providers is not cause for immediate concern with regard to potential changes to the DVFOP, however; there is still benefit in working to expand the number of certified treatment providers available in the state.

c. Expanding resources or availability of Certified Treatment Providers: Members are committed to exploring the possibility of expanding resources, programing and availability of certified treatment programs.
    i. Blanche Creech (People's Place) with agreement from Ann Altemus (CHILD Inc), shared that the existing programs could likely offer "tiers" of treatment (i.e low risk track which may include less than 24 session hours or a high-risk track which may include more than 24 session hour) but not without receiving additional collateral information from the referral source. Additional information needed would be used to be more discriminate in determining a participant's level of need. Information requested by providers includes some or all of the following: a copy of the DVSIR risk assessment tool administered by probation, HOPE report, plea forms, sentencing orders, any agreement under the DVFOP, prior

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criminal history, previous and current criminal and civil no contact orders. The committee discussed the validity of the DVSIR. Concerns were raised that the DVSIR is not a fair predictor of risk.

ii. DVCC Staff Dayna Belfiore noted that the current standards suggest referral sources provide much of the information requested. Dayna will bring this topic up to the DVI Standards Revision Workgroup to explore barriers to information sharing and the possibility of revising the standards to improve information sharing. Dayna will also research the DVSIR, other risk assessments, and Probation's policies and procedures around disclosure of criminal histories and releasing a copy of the DVSIR to providers.

iii. Blanche Creech (People's Place) shared that People's Place had attempted to create high-risk groups, however; there were not enough participants to populate the groups (less than 8 participants per group). Also, due to low numbers, high risk groups couldn't be offered in all locations, so participants often had to travel further to attend their groups. Blanche suggested, if/when DVFOP expands, People's Place could potentially run a "First Time Offender" group, so long as enough collateral information is provided by the referral source.

iv. Cecilia Gonzalez (Veteran's Court) did not speak during the meeting but later shared there are discussions around the VA Way Home Program possibly applying for certification.

v. Dover AFB has submitted their 2020 report for recertification.

vi. Dayna provided a written summary of about 10 different DVI treatment approaches used throughout the United States. Approaches ranged from use of the evidence-based Risk Need Responsivity model to individual therapy/counseling to treat domestic violence offenders. There was mixed response and concerns raised as to the use of individual therapy as a treatment approach. Members agree that it would be beneficial to hear from other states/providers/researchers who are involved in different treatment approaches in an effort to expand services and attract more providers. The first approach that will be explored is individual therapy as a treatment approach. Dayna will conduct research and invite researchers/providers with experience in individual therapy to share information with the group and/or present at the next Committee meeting.

III. Agency Reports

a. Family Court: Ava Carcirieri announced that Family Court is formalizing the way they receive participant's certificates of completion and provider letters. Moving forward, instead of faxing a certificate or letter to the Child Advocates Office, designated email boxes will be created to receive the information. Certificates and letters sent by providers and participants should be sent to the County specific email box. The date the change will go in effect has not been determined. Ava will update providers once an effective date is established.

IV. Public Comment

i. None

V. Future Meetings: *(Please note the time change from 10:00am to 1:00pm.)*

May 20, 2020 1:00 pm
August 19, 2019 1:00 pm
November 18, 2020 1:00 pm

All will meetings will take place at the Middletown Police Department

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