

GEORGIA DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

FATALITY REVIEW PROJECT

GeorgiaFatalityReview.com

Recommendations for Family Violence Intervention Programs

Family Violence Intervention Program providers are uniquely positioned to impact safety for victims and accountability for perpetrators of domestic violence.

The Georgia Domestic Violence Fatality Review Project has developed recommendations geared to reduce incidents of domestic violence and domestic violence-related homicide. To affect change, local communities must work diligently to implement these recommendations, which were developed by fatality review teams across the state. Acting on established best practices and calls to action from the Project's 15-year history is how Georgia will see real change in the future.

Engage in the Coordinate Community Response to Domestic Violence

- + The importance of the perspectives offered by Family Violence Intervention Programs (FVIPs) in the work of task forces and other coordinated community responses cannot be overstated. Engage with your community to ensure the understanding that accountability for perpetrators goes hand in hand with victim safety.
- + To comprehensively address the problem of domestic violence, all systems responders must assess their unique position to determine how they can impact change. All stakeholders must take immediate steps to address abusers' issues of non-compliance with court orders or new incidents of abuse.
- + Ensure there are FVIPs in every jurisdiction. As of November 2018, eight judicial circuits lack a certified program. Those locations include Lookout Mountain, Northern, Oconee, Pataula, Southwestern, Tallapoosa, Towaliga, and Waycross.
- + Ensure FVIP providers receive ongoing culturally specific training and information addressing the intersection of domestic violence and marginalized and underserved communities. In addition to training by the organizations providing services to immigrant and refugee victims, training options exist to address the needs of all types of marginalized communities.
- + Examine your program's policies and practices which may prevent members of underserved populations from accessing your services. Examine your program's intake forms, questionnaires and outreach materials for accessibility and visibility for different languages, abilities and cultural representations. Ensure Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act is being followed. Develop a language access plan to ensure language services are provided for all Limited English Proficient (LEP) people and develop a plan to better work with perpetrators with disabilities.



Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence | 114 New Street, Suite B, Decatur, GA 30030 (404) 209-0280 | gcadv.org

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Curriculum

- + Incorporate information into your curriculum on the impact witnessing domestic violence has on children.
 - + FVIP expects the groups to be gender separated, with all male or all female participants to enhance the group dynamics that are required for successful discourse which minimizes victim blaming and maximizes offender accountability.
 - o Consider expanding your work to include specialized groups for participants in LGBTQ relationships, and for non-English speakers.
 - + Implement specialized FVIP curriculum specific to women’s use of violence.
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Co-occurring issues

- + Despite clear connections between threats or attempts of suicide among domestic violence perpetrators and the high rate of murder-suicide incidents, depression and suicidal ideation in domestic violence perpetrators are often overlooked by helping professionals as a serious indicator of danger. It also appears screening for depression and suicidal ideation in abusers is not routine.
- + Ensure all facilitators are trained on and aware of connections between domestic violence and mental health issues or suicidal ideations and how this can increase risk for victims.
- + Cross-train with other professionals responding to domestic violence, substance abuse and mental health incidents. Because of the high likelihood that your respective populations of clients will experience multiple co-occurring issues, Georgia’s professionals should be equipped not only to provide triage to a co-occurring issue outside of their expertise, but also be knowledgeable on the local, state and national resources appropriate to provide additional support alongside their targeted interventions.
- + Discuss with participants how mental health and substance abuse are co-occurring issues which often require partnering treatment interventions with Family Violence Intervention Program.
 - o Expand awareness that co-occurring issues increase risk of lethal incidents of domestic violence. Include messaging that while other issues co-occur with intimate partner violence, they do not cause it.
- + Review and follow the FVIP Suicide Protocol available from the Georgia Commission on Family Violence for instructions on notifying victim liaisons when safety concerns arise. Refer to “Intervention Strategies When Working with Abusers” on page 60 of the 2014 Annual Report, available at GeorgiaFatalityReview.com



Stalking

- + FVIP facilitators play a key role in recognizing stalking behaviors in the acts of abuse described by class participants. Facilitators must take the time to tease out the stalking behaviors and talk with the class about why stalking is not acceptable.
- + Be on the lookout for stalking behaviors when talking with participants about their relationships. Ask for more details when participants mention other parties who may be engaging in proxy stalking for them.
- + Prepare to have conversations with participants about how their stalking impacts the victim.
- + Incorporate examples of stalking behaviors into your curriculum.
- + Discuss the stalking behaviors with the victim liaison, particularly in cases where monitoring may be happening currently.

Firearms

- + Ask participants about their access to firearms and include questions about access on your intake paperwork. Share concerns about abusers' access with your victim liaison.
- + Participants must sign a contract including a provision they will remove all weapons from their home. Assist the participant with locating safe alternatives, such as safekeeping with a local law enforcement agency, or selling weapons.
- + Participate in the development of countywide protocols with your local task force or coordinated community response to establish how each agency will cooperate to restrict access to firearms by domestic violence offenders and protective order respondents. Georgia's communities must carry the torch for this important issue until legislative and legal system actions catch up with the risk firearms pose to citizens of our state.

Victims in FVIP

- + Work with your local Family Violence Task Force to address the issue and reduce the number of domestic violence victims being sent to FVIP programs.
- + Make brochures and materials on domestic violence program services available in offices. Provide warm referrals to domestic violence advocates for ongoing supportive services and safety planning.



Use the Georgia Domestic Violence Fatality Review Project Annual Report

+ Read and Remember

- Read the fatality review reports and remember the stories of those who have lost their lives to domestic violence.

+ Share with Others

- Copies of this report and prior reports are available at GeorgiaFatalityReview.com. Email the link to coworkers, advocates, judges, police officers, mental health professionals, substance abuse counselors, attorneys, health care workers, religious leaders, teachers, family, and friends.
- Print the sections you think are relevant to others' work and share these sections with them.
- Print sections as handouts and use them in community presentations.

+ Discuss with Coworkers

- Discuss the report during a staff meeting at your workplace.
- Identify which recommendations are most relevant to your agency, and develop specific steps forward and work toward their implementation.

+ Incorporate into Strategic Planning

- Use the recommendations as a tool for strategic planning.
- If you work in a nonprofit agency, share the fatality review reports with your board of directors.
- Identify other agencies with which you want to collaborate, and discuss specific goals you can work toward together.

+ Develop Task Force Initiatives

- As a group, identify areas in which the community is doing well and areas in which improvement is needed.
- Identify two to four recommendations that are priorities for your community and implement them.
- Create a subcommittee for your priority areas and report your progress to the Georgia Commission on Family Violence.

+ Increase Community Awareness



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- Create discussion groups in your community to talk about the fatality review reports and recommendations for change. These groups can be interdisciplinary groups of professionals or groups of community members interested in making their communities safer and healthier.
- As a group, identify action steps toward implementing the recommendations in this report.
- Contact the Georgia Commission on Family Violence or the Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence for further conversations and presentations.

+ Alert the Media

- Alert the local media about fatality review findings, recommendations, and local work being done to help victims of domestic violence.
- For additional suggestions about working with the media download our Domestic Violence and The Media tip sheet here GeorgiaFatalityReview.com/resources/.



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