Identifying population-level domestic violence prevention strategies in Maryland

Aamir Bharmal, MD  
MPH Candidate  
Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

Supervisor: Russ Montgomery, PhD  
Office of Population Health and Improvement, DHMH

May 8, 2015
Project Introduction & Overview

• Maryland State Health Improvement Process (SHIP)
• Domestic Violence Indicator
• Identify strategies for domestic violence prevention
• Develop evidence-based report on best practices
Public Health Significance

- Domestic Violence:
  - Common
  - Significant downstream health effects
  - Major cause of female homicides
  - Preventable

Photo source: http://bernieslilwomencenter.org/tag/domestic-violence/
Methods/Approach

- Interviews with stakeholders:
  - Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence
  - Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence
  - DHMH Maternal and Child Health Bureau
  - Expect Respect
  - Baltimore City Health Department

- Identify best practices and evidence-based recommendations

- Focus on primary and secondary approaches that could be applied to wider populations
Civilian Advocates Program

- Trialed in UK by Domestic Violence Matters
- Community health workers in police stations
- Provide after-hours support and advocacy
- Take advantage of window of opportunity when victims are seeking help
# Civilian Advocates Program

## Benefits and Limitations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Limitations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Fewer return calls</td>
<td>• Developing connections with another department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increased shelter use</td>
<td>• Progressively increasing caseloads of clients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increased support service use</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increased legal advice use</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Civilian Advocates in Maryland Context

- Could be tied to Lethality Assessment Program
- Administer through Rape Recovery Centers
- Role for program on college campuses

Expect Respect Program

- School-based program with three phases:
  1. School-wide campaign on bullying, harassment, and violence
  2. Leadership training for select students to become advocates against violence and change school culture
  3. Support groups for high-risk students with skills building for relationships

Expect Respect Benefits and Limitations

**Benefits**
- Better knowledge of healthy relationships
- Improved relationship skills
- Skills awareness
- Talks about bullying
- Focused on victims AND perpetrators

**Limitations**
- Need school buy-in
- Fitting into curriculum
- Program attendance
Expect Respect in Maryland

Context

• Standardizes school-based programming
• Can apply to areas with high violence rates
• Adjunct to Dating Matters program in Baltimore City
• Needs school engagement
Project Connect

- Already administered by Maternal and Child Health Bureau
- Builds on USPSTF recommendations for violence prevention
- Train health care providers at family planning centers with the four C’s:
  - Confidentiality
  - Conversation
  - Card
  - Connect

Photo Source: http://womenshealth.gov/project-connect/images/project-connect.png
### Project Connect

#### Benefits/Limitations

**Benefits**
- Reaches high-risk family planning center population
- Already in Maryland
- Preliminary surveys promising

**Limitations**
- Evaluation ongoing
- Need more data on provider screening behaviors
Limitations and Challenges

- Difficult to measure domestic violence outcomes and gauge effectiveness of interventions
- Some indicators are problematic (e.g. ER visits) and are in the process of being changed
- Success hinges on culture change

Bottom Line

- Domestic Violence is a serious societal problem that is preventable
- Prevention strategies that are integrated in schools, health centers, and law enforcement can reach vulnerable groups in many areas of society
- Difficult to measure effectiveness but suggested programs rooted in prevention principles
Acknowledgments

- DHMH
  - Russ Montgomery
  - Laura Herrera
  - Alice Bauman
  - Diana Cheng
  - Casey Fay
- Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence
  - Michaele Cohen
  - David Sargent
- Baltimore City Health Department
  - Olivia Farrow
- Expect Respect Program
  - Barri Rosenbluth
- Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence
  - Lucy Rios
References


