

BULLET BACKGROUND PAPER
ON
DOMESTIC ABUSE / DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AFFECTING SERVICEWOMEN

PURPOSE

To provide written response to the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS) Request for Information #8 (June 2019), regarding domestic Abuse/Violence affecting Servicewomen.

QUESTION SYNOPSES (A.-F.) AND RESPONSES

- a. *Request for annual fatality review report:*

- Each Service conducts an annual review of domestic abuse/violence-related fatalities
- This review is briefed to cross-service the Air Force Family Advocacy Program (FAP) leadership, as well as FAP leadership at the Office of the Secretary of Defense level (a.k.a., OSD FAP)
- Reports for 2014 through 2018 are attached for review (Attachments 1 through 5). These reports have been redacted in accordance with OSD legal review and guidance obtained by OSD FAP, to ensure release of these reports does not violate pertinent restrictions (e.g., restrictions regarding Personally Identifiable Information and case-specific narratives). Also, most information related to child fatalities has been redacted to maintain the primary focus on adult domestic abuse/violence.

- b. *Request for data pertaining to an expanded definition of intimate partners:*

- The Air Force has been collecting data on intimate partners beyond spouses
- Categories include former spouses, couples who share children, cohabitants, and intimate dating partners
- A slide depicting referral data for these categories is attached for review (Attachment 6).

- c. *Prevention programs:*

- i. *Training for potential domestic abuse/violence bystanders:* Historically, Air Force FAP has employed prevention specialists (a.k.a. Outreach Managers) to cover the spectrum of prevention activities. The Air Force is in the process of transitioning how it performs population-based, primary prevention. Line assets from the A1 community are assuming a primary role for integrating base-wide violence prevention efforts. Our FAP teams are refocusing their efforts more on secondary prevention activities (i.e., focusing efforts on those individuals, couples, and families identified as being most at risk for family maltreatment and engaging them more directly in services). Specific training on domestic

abuse/violence has been, and will continue to be, a priority mission for FAP. Training in this context targets two basic groups: installation leaders (e.g., Squadron Commanders and First Sergeants) and installation agencies (e.g., Child Development Centers, medical professionals, law enforcement and investigative authorities). These are the entities on the “front line” in terms of noting possible signs of abuse and making a referral, so training is provided to them initially and/or on at least an annual basis. Training them on what to watch out for and how to refer are of paramount importance.

- ii. *Adopting prevention programs from non-military entities:* Air Force FAP is committed to evidence-based programs to prevent and address domestic abuse/violence. The source for such programs can be internal (e.g., program development in collaboration with university research partners) or external (e.g., pre-existing programs from non-military entities). Such externally-accessed programs include:
 - Prevention and Relationship Education Program (PREP)
 - Strength at Home – Couple’s Program
 - Parenting with Love and Logic
 - Active Parenting of Teens
 - Dads: The Basics
 - Air Force FAP has been exploring evidence-based options for an anger management curriculum. Though focused more on substance abuse and mental health clients, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) curriculum is the primary resource recommended by Air Force FAP on the topic. Air Force FAP is currently partnering with Kansas State University to develop a more tailored program.
 - Post-incident, Air Force FAP has also accessed external programs to standardize delivery of domestic abuse/violence treatment. Two specific programs are in use at this time: The Vista Program (for women who use control, force, or violence in their intimate relationships) and CHANGE STEP (to help men end abusive behaviors and replace them with healthy actions).
- iii. *Partnering to assess effectiveness:* Air Force FAP has historically had a strong relationship with university research partners who assist with program evaluation.
 - For programs that fall more in the psychoeducational realm of services, pre and post-tests to assess changes in knowledge are common.
 - To assess the effectiveness of clinical prevention services, such as preventive therapy or the New Parent Support System (NPSP), tools have been researched, developed, and implemented to assess changes in a client’s beliefs and behaviors over time. The two primary tools utilized for this purpose are the Milner Child Abuse Potential (CAP) inventory and the Rogge Couple Satisfaction Index (CSI). These tools are used in the FAP treatment program as well.

- d. *Encouraging Servicewomen to report:* This is an ongoing challenge. It is very similar to the challenge we face when individuals say they don't want to go to the Mental Health Clinic to deal with combat trauma or to report a sexual assault to law enforcement. Reporting "secretive" aspects of life, or aspects that are perceived as "shameful," is a significant barrier. Furthermore, concerns for privacy and safety compound the issue.
 - Step one is to continue to work with our installation leaders and helping agency network to ensure the population is aware of FAP and what the program can offer.
 - Finding ways to engage clients voluntarily in other FAP services is crucial as well. For example, a Servicewoman expecting a child can engage in the NPSP. If a Servicewoman is engaged in such a prevention program, perhaps this will make it easier to return to FAP to report abuse if an abusive incident later occurs.
 - Restricted reporting has been extended as an option for victims of domestic abuse/violence. This option may, in certain cases, allow for access to victim support and treatment without the need to notify command or law enforcement.
- e. *Ensuring Servicewomen feel safe to report:* Aspects described above regarding how to encourage Servicewomen to report can apply here as well.
 - Restricted reporting can be a tool used to support this purpose
 - In unrestricted cases, options available through law enforcement and command can be put into action (e.g., Military Order of Protection)
 - The introduction of Domestic Abuse Victim Advocates (DAVA) into Air Force FAP has made a significant impact with regard to victim support
 - The Air Force is currently developing policy to enact National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) direction to offer Expedited Transfers to domestic abuse/violence victims, to potentially allow victims to quickly proceed to another duty station/location
- f. *Communicating available FAP resources:* Air Force FAP encourages installation FAP offices to actively engage the leadership and helping agency networks across the installation. While outreach, marketing, articles, and events can be helpful (and may be necessary), the relationships developed throughout the military community are paramount. This is another benefit to the training mission previously described – it affords FAP the opportunity to move beyond some faceless agency to a tangible, identifiable resource. DAVAs are either presented as part of the training or are direct participants in it. As the Air Force A1 community takes a more prominent role in the primary prevention of violence for the installation, Violence Prevention Integrators will become critical partners in more broadly communicating what FAP has to offer to the base population.

SUMMARY

The Air Force will continue to sustain, and enhance the effectiveness of, all programs and processes related to Domestic Abuse / Violence prevention throughout the Service.