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Document Title: Evaluating a Multi--Disciplinary Response to Domestic Violence: The DVERT Program in Colorado Springs, Final Report

Author(s): Craig D. Uchida ; Carol A. Putnam ; Jennifer Mastrofski ; Shellie Solomon

Document No.: 188261

Date Received: 06/18/2001

Award Number: 98-WE-VX-K010

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98-WE-VX-K010

Evaluating a Multi-Disciplinary Response to Domestic Violence: The DVERT Program in Colorado Springs

Final Report

Submitted to the
Colorado Springs Police Department and
The National Institute of Justice

By

By Craig D. Uchida
Carol A. Putnam
Jennifer Mastrofski
Shellie Solomon

ACCEPTED AS FINAL REPORT

Approved By: Angela Marie Pamb

Date: 4/30/01

June 2000

FINAL REPORT

Approved By: [Signature]

Date: 5/14/01

P.O. Box 12279
Silver Spring, MD 20908
(301) 438-3132
Fax: (301) 438-3134
Email: cduchida@aol.com

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Introduction

The Colorado Springs Police Department (CSPD) has a lengthy record of implementing new programs to combat domestic violence and for documenting and testing the efficacy of those programs. In the 1980s, CSPD participated in the replication of the Minneapolis spouse assault experiment. It was one of six sites that implemented a randomized experiment to test the notion that arrest of domestic violence perpetrators could reduce subsequent recidivism. Learning from that experience, CSPD formed a non-traditional domestic violence unit in 1996, the Domestic Violence Enhanced Response Team or DVERT. Through grants from the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) and the Violence Against Women Grant Office (VAWGO), DVERT assists victims of the most serious domestic violence incidents.

In 1998, 21st Century Solutions received a grant from the National Institute of Justice to form a “researcher-practitioner partnership” with DVERT. The idea was to build a research capacity within DVERT and to conduct a process evaluation of the program. In addition, it was hoped that the process evaluation would set the stage for an impact evaluation through the collection of baseline data. Over the last 18 months a strong working relationship has developed between 21st Century Solutions and DVERT. New databases have been developed, baseline data have been collected, and computers have been purchased to analyze data by DVERT staff.

This study is the result of an 18-month evaluation that examined the inner workings of DVERT. We rely on data from case files, interviews with DVERT partners and victims of domestic violence, and observations of the activities of the participants.

The report is divided into four sections: 1) Background, 2) Research Methods, 3) Findings, and 4) Concluding remarks. The Background section sets the stage for the process evaluation. Here, we describe the CSPD, discuss the DVERT concept, and examine previous research to provide a context for the evaluation. The section on Research Methods describes the data that were collected and the way in which those data were analyzed. The third section presents our findings and includes a discussion of each of DVERT's three levels of operation, describes the perceptions of DVERT staff, and gives the views of victims of domestic violence. The final section, Concluding Remarks, briefly discusses the next stage of development for DVERT and lays the groundwork for an impact evaluation.

Background

The Colorado Springs Police Department has over 750 employees, including 528 sworn officers who are responsible for a population of nearly 350,000. About 40% of the officers respond to calls for service on a regular basis. For the last twelve years Chief Lorne Kramer has led the department and has followed a community policing philosophy. CSPD's community policing approach includes community engagement, organizational adaptation and an emphasis on "total problem-oriented policing." In 1997 the department received funding from the COPS Office from a Community Policing Demonstration Center. With those monies, the department has invested in a new

computerized case management system, developed innovative programs, and advanced problem oriented policing.

The department has decentralized a number of patrol and investigative functions through its three divisions -- Falcon, Gold Hill, and Sand Creek. Each substation, located in different sections of the city has a commander, crime analysts, investigators, traffic, neighborhood policing units, and patrol officers. Over the years, CSPD has transformed itself from a traditional agency to a community policing department.

Since 1996 the Colorado Springs Police Department has received federal funds to establish and institutionalize the Domestic Violence Enhanced Response Team (DVERT). The program involves a partnership and collaboration with the Center for the Prevention of Domestic Violence (hereafter called the Center), a private, non-profit victim advocacy organization, and at least 25 other city and county agencies.

The DVERT Program was first funded by a grant from the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office). In the years that followed, the Violence Against Women Grant Office (VAWGO) and the Victim Assistance and Law Enforcement (VALE) have continued to fund the operation.¹ Under the first COPS Office grant, DVERT responded to system deficiencies and breakdowns, enhanced law enforcement and prosecution in domestic violence cases, and increased the safety of victims and containment of perpetrators.

With VAWGO monies, DVERT has addressed additional areas of need for intervention, outreach and expansion of services. The VAWGO grants provide funds for metropolitan and rural police agencies for overtime and for equipment, computers, and software. In addition, DVERT has used monies for advocate and caseworker positions

and to expand legal advocacy services. Finally, a key component of these grants is the development of comprehensive domestic violence training programs for law enforcement, prosecutors, parole and probation officers, victim advocates, and caseworkers.

Key Issues in the Response to Domestic Violence

The research context for the DVERT program can be found by examining the police response to incidents of domestic violence over time. In particular, Colorado Springs, has a unique history of involvement in “cutting-edge” domestic violence programs.

In general, the police response to domestic violence has been slow and inconsistent over the last 150 years. This attitude appears to mirror the way in which society has looked upon spouse abuse as a criminal act (Hirschel, et al. 1992). Over the last two decades, however, the public debate about spouse assault has led to dramatic changes in the way in which police respond to incidents of domestic violence.

This change has been fueled, in part, by the findings of the Minneapolis Spouse Assault Experiment conducted by the Police Foundation in 1981-82. Sherman and Berk’s field experiment (see Sherman and Berk, 1984a and 1984b, and Berk et al., 1988) assessed the effects of different police responses to individuals apprehended for spouse assault. They found, using a six-month outcome period, that arrest was the most effective of three standard methods used by the police (mediation, separation and arrest) to reduce domestic violence. This experiment led to an intense debate over arrest as the preferred response to misdemeanor domestic violence. As a result of this ground-breaking

¹ From these three sources DVERT has received almost \$3.2 million.

experiment, the National Institute of Justice funded six sites to replicate the Minneapolis experiment: Dade County, FL (see Pate, et al 1991), Atlanta, GA²; Charlotte, NC (see Hirschel et al., 1992a and 1992b); Milwaukee, WI (see Sherman et al, 1991 and Sherman et al, 1991); Omaha, NE (see Dunford et al., 1989, Dunford et al, 1990 and Dunford, 1992); and Colorado Springs, CO (see Berk et al., 1991 and 1992).

The six replications led to mixed results. In Charlotte, researchers concluded that arrest was not a significant deterrent for misdemeanor spouse assault (Hirschel and Hutchison, 1992). In Omaha, arrest did not appear to deter subsequent domestic conflict after six months any more than separation or mediation (Dunford, 1992). But longer term follow up shows that arrest can even create more violence in Omaha (Sherman, 1992). In Miami, victims reported that arrest had a strong deterrent effect, similar to the Minneapolis experiment (Pate et al, 1991).

In Milwaukee, Sherman found that arrest makes some kinds of people more frequently violent against their cohabitants. "The evidence shows that while arrest deters repeat domestic violence in the short run, arrests with brief custody increase the frequency of domestic violence in the long run among offenders in general. The evidence also shows that, among cases predominantly reported from Milwaukee's black urban poverty ghetto, different kinds of offenders react differently to arrest: some become much more frequently violent, while others become somewhat less frequently violent" (Sherman, et al., 1992:139).

Sherman (1992a) sums up the findings of these experiments and further analyses in his book on *Policing Domestic Violence*:

² A final report was not produced by Stuart Deutsch at Georgia Tech.

- Arrest increases domestic violence among people who have nothing to lose, especially the unemployed;
- Arrest deters domestic violence in cities with higher proportions of white and Hispanic suspects;
- Arrest deters domestic violence in the short run, but escalates violence later on in cities with higher proportions of unemployed black suspects;
- A small but chronic portion of all violent couples produce the majority of domestic violence incidents; and
- Offenders who flee before police arrive are substantially deterred by warrants for their arrest, at least in Omaha.

Of importance to our evaluation is the experiment in Colorado Springs. Here, suspects apprehended for misdemeanor spouse abuse were assigned at random to one of four treatments: 1) an emergency order of protection for the victim coupled with arrest of the suspect; 2) an emergency order of protection for the victim coupled with immediate crisis counseling for the suspect; 3) an emergency order of protection only; or 4) restoring order at the scene with no emergency order of protection. Berk et al (1992) found that the balance of evidence supports deterrent effect for arrest among “good risk offenders,” who presumably have a lot to lose by being arrested (1992:172). They also found that according to official data, arrest did not deter repeat domestic violence, while in victim interviews, they found that arrest did deter repeat domestic violence.

Despite the confusion over the findings from the six sites, feminist groups and others concerned with domestic violence demanded a stronger criminal justice response to spouse assault. At the same time, a more comprehensive and inclusive strategy has developed to respond to domestic violence. Rather than simply relying upon the criminal justice system to react to spousal assaults, battered women’s shelters, victim advocates,

and other entities have worked to respond to domestic violence in a more holistic or systemic way. This is evident in the development of DVERT.

In March 1996, Chief Kramer and his staff made a decision to press the local law enforcement response to domestic violence to an even more comprehensive level by establishing a domestic violence coordinator position within the department. Chief Kramer selected Detective Howard Black for this position. Det. Black's experience as the project director for the Colorado Springs replication experiment made him well suited for the job. He was knowledgeable about data needs and had built up a reputation for working with community groups and victim advocates. As part of his duties he evaluated domestic violence policies, procedures and protocols and recommended necessary revisions and improvements. He evaluated state domestic violence and stalking laws, developed more efficient responses to victims of stalking, and participated in the establishment of a state-wide tracking system for domestic violence perpetrators. Additionally, in keeping with the Colorado Springs Police Department's philosophical orientation toward community policing efforts, Det. Black facilitated community-based efforts to refine and enhance the collective responses in the investigation of domestic violence. The DVERT program emerged from these developments in the mid-1990s.

DVERT is a systemic and multi-disciplinary response to spouse assault. It involves the coordination of criminal justice, social service, and community based programs (National Resource Council, 1998). DVERT's operations incorporate and combine many of the proven strategies studied in three locations in the last decade.

Three evaluations of the systemic response to spouse assault have been recently documented. One study looked primarily at process variables – that is the impact of

coordinated efforts on arrest rates, prosecution rates, and rates of mandated counseling (Gamache et al., 1988). The study found a statistically significant increase in the percentage of calls that resulted in arrest and the percentage of arrests that resulted in prosecution following establishment of a community intervention project in each of three communities. There was also a significant increase in the percentage of men mandated to counseling in each of the communities, indicating that coordination among various parts of the criminal justice and social service systems may increase criminal justice responses to domestic violence. However, arrest, prosecution, and treatment do not necessarily ensure a reduction in future violence.

The second study examined the impact of public education and joint police/social worker home visits on recidivism and the use of services (Davis and Taylor, 1997). Residents of New York City public housing projects in three police districts were randomly assigned to receive public education about domestic violence services or to a control group. At 6-month follow-up, no significant differences were observed in the number or severity of victim-reported incidents of repeat violence between the experimental and control groups; however, both of the experimental groups were significantly more likely to call the police for the repeat violence than were control groups.

The most recent systemic approach to the domestic violence problem is documented in "Beyond Arrest: The Portland, Oregon Domestic Violence Experiment" (Jolin et al., 1998). The program in Portland operated under the expectation that domestic violence could be reduced by increasing prosecutions and enhancing victim empowerment. Jolin and her colleagues examined whether program interventions

increased prosecutions of misdemeanor domestic violence cases, increased victim empowerment, and led to reductions in domestic violence. They also tested the notion that arrest followed by enhanced support services for the victim, reduces the recurrence of domestic violence more effectively than arrest alone.

The researchers used a "double-blind" randomization design to assign eligible cases to a program treatment group or to a control group, which did not receive the program intervention. Findings show that significantly fewer of the treatment group (compared to the control group victims) reported that they had experienced further violence during the 6 months following the arrest of the batterer. Arrest plus police-initiated follow-up compared to arrest alone led to reductions in subsequent self-reported domestic violence. Also, increased victim perception of empowerment led to reduction in self-reported domestic violence. Finally, arrest plus police-initiated follow-up compared to arrest alone led to increased prosecutions, convictions, and sanctions for batterers.

From these studies and through discussions with DVERT staff, we developed relevant research questions and methods.

Research Questions and Methods

The DVERT Process.

We examined cases from the point of origin to the close out or de-activation of the case. This meant coding information from cases that originate through referrals from a variety of agencies, including the Center for the Prevention of Domestic Violence, the Department of Human Services, battered women's shelters, the Humane Society, and

others involved in DVERT. We followed cases as they went through the DVERT process.

We asked the following research questions; How many cases have been referred to DVERT? By whom? How many cases have been accepted? Denied? How are these cases handled through problem-oriented policing techniques?

Other general questions included: what are the characteristics of domestic violence incidents? Demographic information about the victim and suspect (age, race, gender, marital status, education, economic level, etc.); the presence of alcohol or drug use; presence or use of a weapon; previous criminal history; mental health; presence of children; and other data were collected.

How many times did the victim call the police? Did the suspect have a criminal history? How many times did the victim seek assistance from non-police services? Was there a pattern or history of abuse?

Where possible, we explored what happens after arrest. For example, how many cases were prosecuted? What was the disposition by the court? What was the level of punishment?

Lastly, we examined DVERT's links to community policing: How does DVERT follow the principles of community policing in terms of community engagement, organizational adaptation, and problem-oriented policing?

The Collaboration Process. As part of the evaluation, we observed the collaborative process that occurs among DVERT team members. We also conducted interviews of DVERT staff to gain their understanding of the collaborations. We asked: How do members interact? What are the dynamics of the group? How are decisions

made? What factors are critical in the decision making process? Are there elements of the collaboration that can be learned and replicated elsewhere?

Victim Perspectives. With additional funding from NIJ we were able to conduct interviews with victims of domestic violence. We asked a number of questions concerning their experiences with their spouses/co-habitants, their perspectives of DVERT, and the impact the program has had on their lives.

Data Collection Instruments

We gained access to a number of records through the DVERT office:

- 1) police records of the perpetrator and victim, including calls for service data, arrest reports, and criminal histories;
- 2) DVERT case files; and
- 3) Center for the Prevention of Domestic Violence files on victims.

Coding sheets were developed for the information within these documents.

Copies are included in the appendix.

Interviews

Dr. Jennifer Mastrofski interviewed 19 persons having key affiliation with DVERT. Persons interviewed were identified using two different methods. First, Dr. Uchida, Detective Black, and a long-term DVERT staff member suggested names of persons with long-term histories on the project. This process resulted in a core list of about 10-12 key persons. Second, after each interview was concluded, interviewees were asked to name three persons who he/she felt would be important to interview as well. Using this broadly defined snowball sampling, then another 12 persons were scheduled for interviews. From this two-step process, 21 total interviews were scheduled, two

persons cancelled, resulting in 19 completed interviews. They represented law enforcement, victims' advocates, caseworkers, attorneys, medial professionals, and DVERT staff. Questions covered five major areas: history of DVERT, roles of partner agencies, impact of DVERT on domestic violence, nature of collaboration among partner agencies, and suggestions for improving DVERT.

Dr. Mastrofski and Ms. Deborah Dawson conducted 18 face-to-face interviews and one telephone interview with victims of domestic violence. Staff from DVERT selected previous and current clients for the interviews. A 30-item questionnaire (see appendix) covered five major areas: previous domestic violence incidents, attitudes toward DVERT, perceptions of the criminal justice process, perceptions of social service assistance, and overall changes they would recommend.

Findings

Overall we find that DVERT is a unique and active blend of social service and criminal justice components. More importantly, it is unlike any other domestic violence unit situated within a police agency. One of the major differences between DVERT and other police programs is its view that *the safety of the victim is the primary concern*. This philosophy drives the way in which advocates and law enforcement work with clients and how they work within the criminal justice system and social service system. This attitude is in contrast to other special units that are more concerned with an arrest and prosecution of the batterer. This also reflects the input of advocates at the Center for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and other partner agencies.

Second, the program does not follow the traditional police model for a special unit. In most police agencies, a domestic violence unit serves as the coordinator for

department activities. The traditional unit is usually comprised of police officers and a victim advocate, but the majority of people are from law enforcement. The traditional unit responds to serious domestic violence situations, serves as a referral unit for patrol (officers will transfer calls or incidents to the unit), and works with social service agencies in its jurisdiction (provide some training and information about police practices). The main focus of these special DV units is enforcing the law and bringing cases through the criminal justice system.

DVERT is different from this model. DVERT is a "systemic response" to domestic violence situations because it involves the coordination of criminal justice, social service, and community-based agencies. DVERT involves efforts to establish communication among criminal justice and social service agencies, to establish advocacy services to meet victims' needs, and to implement policies aimed toward more aggressive apprehension and sanctioning of offenders.

It is also important to point out that cases do not always (in fact, rarely) begin with an arrest or call for service. This subtle but important difference sets DVERT apart from other programs. In most situations, DVERT accepts a case because the client is in imminent danger, not necessarily because an arrest has occurred. This is in stark contrast to the way in which other departments operate and the way in which other researchers have documented and focused upon the *police* response to domestic violence. DVERT is a *multi-disciplinary* response to domestic violence. It takes a more balanced approach to the problem of domestic violence, as it spreads the responsibility for the problem to a number of agencies, not just the police.

This philosophy permeates the unit in a number of ways. The best example is the way in which decisions are made regarding acceptance of cases. Representatives of the CSPD, the Center, the Department of Human Services (DHS), and the Humane Society, as well as a local physician make decisions about accepting or not accepting cases. Another example is in the physical location of the unit. DVERT is located in a building apart from the police department and other partners. About 25 staff work in these offices, including DVERT coordinator Detective Howard Black. The overwhelming majority of DVERT staff are **not** formally affiliated with the Colorado Spring Police Department. Staff members are advocates from the Center, DHS caseworkers, probation officers, a deputy district attorney, and detectives from other local law enforcement agencies. By having these representatives under one roof, communication among agencies is enhanced, information is exchanged more readily, and learning among staff occurs more naturally.

Another example of shared responsibility among agencies is the in-kind contributions of those agencies to the program. While many of the positions are funded through grants, partner agencies provide staffing at no cost.

DVERT Operations

The DVERT program focuses on three levels of domestic violence situations -- Level I -- the most lethal situations where a victim may be in serious danger; Level II -- moderately lethal situations where the victim is not in immediate danger; and Level III -- lower lethality situations where patrol officers engage in problem solving.³

³ This categorization applies to DVERT cases from 1996 to 1999. In February 2000 DVERT made changes to its operation and no longer uses the Level I, II, or III designations. Instead, cases are now referred to as Assessment, Ongoing, or POP.

A domestic violence situation comes to the attention of DVERT through a variety of mechanisms. Most of the referrals come from the Center. Other referrals will emanate from DHS, the Humane Society, other law enforcement agencies, or city service agencies. Once a case has been referred, all relevant information concerning criminal and prosecution histories, advocate, restraining orders, and human services documentation is researched by appropriate DVERT member agencies.

Referral decisions are made on a weekly basis. From May 1996 to December 1999, a DVERT "staffing unit" met to discuss individual domestic violence situations. As mentioned above, a group of six to eight representatives from partner agencies would listen to a description of a domestic violence event or series of events relating to one couple. At the weekly staffing meeting an advocate, police officer, or caseworker for children would present the case. Documentation and evidence is presented, including criminal history, victim advocacy contacts, child protection contacts, humane society calls, calls for service, and other information. Discussion then occurs, followed by a vote of the panel to accept the case. To maintain adequate coverage of clients, Level I cases were limited to 125 at any given time.⁴ Those cases that did not meet the Level I standards were placed in Level II or III, or simply not recommended for acceptance for any level.

For the most serious cases or Level I cases, several things happen next. First, the staffing unit makes recommendations regarding immediate interventions by the various DVERT member agencies. Second, the addresses and names of victims and perpetrators are added to the Department's computer-aided dispatch system. Third, clients may be

⁴ This was not always a rigid rule. If cases merited inclusion into DVERT Level I, exceptions would be made to go beyond the 125 cases.

added to the 'Wants and Warrants' computer system with an indicator identifying them with DVERT. Once the client is in DVERT, ongoing intervention tactics may also occur, including counseling, advocacy, shelter, support, and legal services. At least once a week, a DVERT victim advocate will attempt to contact the victim to provide support, information, and resources. In some cases, cellular phones may be assigned to victims requiring immediate access to law enforcement and/or micro-cassette telephone recorders to document telephone harassment and violations of restraining orders.

From its inception in May 1996 to December 31, 1999, DVERT accepted 421 Level I cases and 541 Level II cases. Table 1 shows the case numbers by year for each level. In addition, a small number of cases moved from Level II to Level I because of an increase in seriousness of the case.

Table 1. DVERT Case Numbers by Year 1996-1999.

(Cases are analyzed by the year that they are accepted, not the year that they are deactivated.)

Year	Level I	Level II	Moved from Level II to Level I	Total
1996	82			82
1997	71	27		98
1998	115	192	8	307
1999	153	322	20	475

Table 2. Active and Deactivated DVERT Level I Cases, by year.

Year	Active	Deactivated
1996	6	76
1997	6	65
1998	12	103
1999	112	41

Table 2 shows the number of cases that were deactivated or closed for each year as well as the status of active cases as of December 31, 1999.

Tables 3 and 4 show the demographic characteristics of Level I offenders and victims for 1998 and 1999. Offenders were predominantly white males between the age of 21 and 50. Victims were predominantly white females between the age of 16 and 50.

Table 3. Level I Deactivated Cases Offender Demographics (N=285)

Sex of Offenders

1996	75	1	0
1997	65	0	0
1998	101	1	1
1999	40	1	0

Race of Offenders

1996	42	14	15	4	1
1997	37	10	10	1	7
1998	62	19	16	4	2
1999	23	12	4	1	2

Age of Offenders

1996	0	3	20	36	13	3	1
1997	0	3	12	34	12	2	2
1998	0	3	36	33	24	3	4
1999	1	0	11	17	10	0	2

Table 4. Level I Deactivated Cases Victim Demographics (N=303*)

Sex of Victims

Year	Male	Female	Total
1996	2	80	82
1997	0	69	69
1998	2	104	106
1999	1	45	46

Race of Victims

Year	White	Black	Hispanic	Other	Total
1996	55	5	12	1	73
1997	40	4	10	3	57
1998	62	12	11	6	91
1999	24	8	6	0	38

Age of Victims

Year	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Total
1996	0	5	31	30	12	3	81
1997	0	5	21	28	12	0	66
1998	1	12	36	37	17	3	104
1999	0	4	14	11	8	0	37

*Some offenders have more than one victim.

Level I cases were brought to the attention of DVERT primarily through the Center. Cases were referred for a number of reasons. Prior history of domestic violence by the perpetrator was indicated in 82 percent of the referrals (234 of 285). Physical abuse of the victim appeared in 78 percent of the referrals.

Prior arrests for domestic violence were also important as an indicator of potential harm. Most referral sheets had indications that the offender had been arrested before. In 74 percent (211 of 285) of the cases, a prior arrest had been recorded. Of the 197 cases that indicated type of arrest, 176 were for domestic violence, nine were arrests for both

domestic violence and child abuse and two were for child abuse only. In 10 cases, the prior arrest charges were for charges other than domestic violence and child abuse. Indications of when the incidents took place usually spanned one to three years, with 19 cases indicating periods of five years or greater. The largest reported period of abuse was 20 years.

Direct threats of violence by the offender to the victim were a fairly common notation on the referral sheet. Seventy-six percent (218 cases) of the victims had received a threat of violence. The most typical threat (70 percent or 153 of 218) was that the offender would kill the victim. The second most common threat was that the offender would harm the victim (in 24 cases) and that the offender would harm himself or herself. In 12 cases where the offender threatened to kill the victim, the offender also stated that he or she would commit suicide.

Original Reasons for Acceptance by DVERT

DVERT accepted cases for a variety of reasons – in all we tabulated 19 possible reasons for accepting a referral.⁵ These reasons are consistent with the notion that the primary concern was the safety of the victim. DVERT staff were concerned about the potential for lethality of the victim. The most frequent reason for acceptance was threats to the victim (76 percent), followed by evidence of multiple domestic violence incidents (66 percent of the cases). Reasons such as injuries, prior arrests of the offender, and physical abuse were indicated in over 70 percent of the cases. The least frequent reason

⁵ The options include: 1. multiple incidents of domestic violence; 2. injuries; 3. a prior offender arrest history; 4. children at risk; 5. general threats of violence; 6. specific threats to the victim; 7. threats to children; 8. threats to animals; 9. threats to others; 10. access to weapons; 11. evidence of stalking behaviors; 12. the lethality level was high; 13. a restraining order had been violated; 14. evidence of

for acceptance were elevation from Level II (2 percent of the cases) and recent losses in the victim's life (4 percent).

The total number of reasons for acceptance ranged from one to 13 reasons (of the 17 possible categories). The average number of reasons was 3.97, or nearly four reasons for accepting a case. For 1996, the average number of reasons for acceptance was 5.28; in 1997, the average number was 5.8; for 1998, the average was 2.87; and for 1999, the average number was 1.41 (it must be remembered that only 41 1999 cases have been deactivated at the time of the analysis). It is clear that in 1998 DVERT was selecting cases for more specific reasons than before. It appears that this change reflects the increased confidence of the staffing unit in selecting appropriate Level I cases. In other words, it appears that DVERT's early selections (in 1996 and 1997) were based on multiple reasons because they may have been reluctant to reject cases for fear of making an error. As they grew more proficient and confident about defining potentially lethal case, decisions were made based on fewer, but more serious criteria.

physical abuse; 15. evidence of sexual abuse; 16. offender had a prior criminal history; 17. recent losses to the victim; 18. case was being elevated from Level II; and 19. other reasons

Table 5. Reasons for Acceptance

	1996	1997	1998	1999
Multiple Domestic Violence Incidents	80%	71%	21%	5%
Prior Arrests	65.8	61.5	22.3	2.4
Injuries	61.8	60	11.7	0
Threats to Victim	60.5	72.3	29.1	7.3
Threats of Violence	55.3	69.2	24.3	7.3
Risk to Children	35.5	36.9	38.8	29.3
Weapons Present	36.8	40	12.6	29.3
Stalking Behavior	28.9	40	18.4	19.5
Threats to Children	27.6	24.6	24.3	4.9
Violation of Restraining Order	24.3	24.6	5.8	0
Sexual Abuse	18.6	12.3	7.8	4.9
Recent Loss	10	15	0	4.9
Other Types of Threats other than to Victim, Children, Animal or General Threats of Violence	11.8	24.6	1.9	0
Threats to Animal	9.2	15.4	12.6	2.4
Lethality High	6.6	20	31.1	7.3
Prior Criminal History	0	3	22.3	17.4
Elevation from Level II	0	4.6	2.9	0

Examining the specific reasons by year, the pattern of reasons for acceptance differs in 1998 from the 1996 and 1997 cases.⁶ In 1996, the reason for acceptance that occurred most frequently was reported multiple domestic violence incidents, followed by prior arrests and injuries. For 1997, the reason for acceptance that occurred most frequently was threats to victim, followed by multiple domestic violence incidents and threats of violence. In 1998, the most frequent reason for acceptance was risk to children, followed by lethality level high and threats to the victim. This appears to represent a policy shift towards a greater concern for children. As stated above, as DVERT expertise grew, this understanding of the significance of specific criteria to seriousness of the situation has become more refined.

⁶ Cases from 1999 were not included in the analysis because of low numbers compared to other years and a number of missing cases.

Deactivated cases. Cases were closed or “deactivated” when DVERT staff believe that the client is safe from harm. From July 1, 1996 to December 31, 1999, DVERT closed 285 cases. Of those cases closed, 19 cases did not include reasons for deactivation.

From Table 6 it appears that DVERT staff became more efficient in dealing with cases. For cases opened in 1996, the average time to closure was 558 days; for 1997, 410 days; for 1998, closure occurred within 240 days, a decrease of 57 percent since 1996. While not conclusive at this point, since only 27 of the 41 cases closed in 1999 had both acceptance and deactivation dates, the average number of days between acceptance and closure was 166 days. We believe that this decline is attributable to increased confidence in DVERT decision-making in handling cases. In the early days of DVERT staff were more cautious about accepting cases and deactivating cases. As time past and their comfort levels increased, their expertise and efficiency in knowing when to deactivate cases appropriately increased as well.

Table 6. Deactivated Cases

Year	Number of Cases	Average Time to Closure (Days)	Total Days
1996	76	558	139; 1,096
1997	62	410	30; 1,064
1998	101	240	35; 569
1999	27	166	60; 280

Analysis of Reasons for Deactivation

In each case file, DVERT provides the reason or reasons for case deactivation.

Only two files were missing reasons for deactivation (N=209). For purposes of analysis, the 30-plus reasons for deactivation were compressed into 10 categories:

1. Offender or victim physically separated (e.g., offender is incarcerated, victim and/or offender moved out of the area; victim in jail);
2. Positive victim behavior (e.g., restraining order in effect, victim in a new relationship and/or counseling, victim divorcing/divorced offender);
3. Victim behavior is not conducive to DVERT program (e.g., victim cannot be reached, does not want any contact with DVERT, is unwilling or cooperative);
4. Victim is no longer afraid of the offender;
5. Positive offender behavior (e.g., no contact with victim, in treatment, completed domestic violence classes, served sentence and has not re-offended);
6. Negative offender behavior (awaiting trial, rearrested, rearrested on non-domestic violence charges);
7. DVERT involvement unnecessary (e.g., offender can be monitored by probation, the lethality level is low or is not a Level I case, third parties report no incidents, not in DVERT's jurisdiction);
8. Victim and offender behavior hard to quantify;
9. Offender behavior has changed (e.g., remarrying, in new relationship); and
10. Victim or offender is deceased.

Up to three different categories could be captured in the analysis. Physical separation of the victim and perpetrator and death of one of the parties were the most straightforward reasons for deactivation.

Main Reason for Deactivation of Cases

Fifty-one percent of the cases (144 of 285) were deactivated mainly due to physical separation of the victim and offender. In five (2 percent) of the cases, either the victim or the offender was deceased. Of the physical separation cases, 33 percent were due to the victim and/or offender moving out of the area. Twenty percent (58 of 285) of the cases were deactivated because the offender was incarcerated (there was only one report of the victim being in jail).

In 60 cases (21 percent), the main reason for deactivation had to do with an offender *exhibiting positive behavior*. This is an important finding for it demonstrates a peaceful resolution to the domestic violence problem. No contact with the victim without any other positive behavior was indicated in 51 of the 60 cases. In seven cases, other positive behavior such as serving time and no reported re-offending was cited along with no contact. For the seven cases where the offender was still in contact with the offender, the offender was either in treatment, had completed a domestic violence program, or had served time and has had no reported incidents.

For 12 cases (6 percent), the main reason for deactivation was the victim did not want to partner with DVERT. The victim could not be reached, wanted no contact with DVERT, or indicated that s/he was unwilling or would not cooperate with DVERT.

Intervention. DVERT advocates and police maintain close contact with clients. In 1999, advocates made 1,549 successful contacts with 263 Level I clients. A team (an advocate and officer) made an additional 355 contacts. Other professionals affiliated with DVERT made 1,031 contacts. This is an average of 11.2 contacts per client over a one-year period. This equates to about 1 contact every five weeks for each client. Most

case files are filled with notes and descriptions of contacts attempted and made by DVERT advocates. In our interviews with 19 victims, they reported a range of contacts from 1 contact per month to nearly 300 contacts over 12 months. This disparity can be explained by the nature of the relationship between the victim and DVERT. A number of victims initiated contact with their advocates, while others remained passive and waited to hear from their advocates. Others did not return phone calls made by advocates or police officers and were difficult to find.

Some cases received more attention than others because of their complexities. As part of its routine, DVERT staff would conduct "Internal Case Management" meetings about twice a month, where complicated cases would be discussed, assignments delegated to staff, and action taken. For example in a case with a household of children, imminent threats by a perpetrator, and a victim who was reluctant to participate in DVERT, discussions would be held to determine what to do next. These case management meetings could lead to a caseworker from the Department of Human Services making a visit, a law enforcement officer acting on a Violation of a Restraining Order, and an advocate meeting with the victim.

Role of advocates. Advocates assisted victims in a number of ways. They referred clients and their children to group or individual counseling at the Center. They assisted them with day-to-day basic needs – finding housing, hooking up a telephone, calling the utility companies, getting welfare assistance, etc. They could provide cellular phones to victims who were being stalked so they could call 911 immediately. They were good "listeners" and counselors to victims who were facing the criminal justice

system for the first time. They joined the victim in court to provide moral support and perhaps to testify against the batterer.

Criminal justice system. Other interventions could occur through the enforcement of restraining orders or arrests for a variety of crimes, including assault, kidnapping, attempted murder, sexual assault, menacing, or stalking. In 1999, DVERT police officers made 47 felony arrests and 85 misdemeanor arrests. The District Attorney filed over 50 cases in 1999 resulting in five jury trials, 14 guilty verdicts (or plea bargains), and 7 not guilty counts. A number of cases are still pending.

Level II cases

When DVERT began in 1996, Level II cases were those situations where they did not warrant the same close scrutiny of Level I cases, but deemed serious enough to make contact by DVERT. Most of the cases were handled through phone calls to victims referred to DVERT. In 1997, DVERT developed the Level II referral form. This form compiled the information from calls to victims, along with any information gathered by participating DVERT agencies. Additionally, a short description of court information would be compiled. Once the victim had been called and all agencies had reported what they knew about the case, the DVERT staff would go through the referrals. Usually, the staff would review between five and eight cases a week. The cases that were not accepted were not documented.

While the actual process has not changed, the documentation and the level of detail on referral forms has increased over time, especially when the Level II staff detects that a Level II case may need to be moved up to Level I status. Since September 1999,

internal case reviews have been occurring for Level II cases. In early 2000, the number of cases became too much for Level II staff to deal with—the number of Level II referrals became 25 per week, so changes were made in the process.

From 1997 to 1999 there have been 541 Level II cases. In 1997, there were 26 cases; in 1998, 193 cases; and in 1999, 322 cases. Because data were more complete for 1998 and 1999 we analyze those cases only. Thus, the following analysis is based on a total of 515 cases.

Tables 7 and 8 show the demographic characteristics of offenders and victims, for Level II cases in 1998 and 1999. As with Level I, most of the offenders were white males between the age of 21 and 50. For the victims, most were white females between the age of 16 and 50.

Table 7. Level II Offender Characteristics (N=506)

Sex of Offenders

1998	179	7	7
1999	296	10	

Race of Offenders

1998	24	11	12	1	145
1999	90	45	20	5	152

Age of Offenders

1998	1	14	63	68	27	6	1	13
1999	0	14	108	93	44	10		

Table 8. Level II Victim Characteristics (N=506)

Sex of Victims

1998	12	178	3
1999	13	287	12

Race of Victims

1998	31	4	7	3	148
1999	10	23	23	5	151

Age of Victims

1998	0	20	61	61	22	3	2	24
1999	0	25	71	105	26			

Reasons for Referral to DVERT Level II

This part of the analysis is based on 290 of 515 cases. Forty-four percent or 225 cases were missing information about the referral. Because of missing information, the results presented below may not be representative of all Level II cases or significant compared to other DVERT cases. They provide the reader with a snapshot of what is occurring in Level II cases.

Of the cases with referral information, 67 percent (195) indicated a prior history of domestic violence incidents. However, unlike Level I cases, the documented Level II cases were more likely to involve *emotional* instead of *physical* abuse. Fifty-six percent (110) involved emotional abuse and 44 percent involved physical abuse, of which 18 percent involved sexual abuse and 12 percent involved child abuse.

For 78 cases (or 27 percent), at least one domestic violence incident was recorded on the referral sheet; however, the exact number of incidents was not noted in many cases. The number of incidents ranged from one to 23, with one incident being reported the most often (in 25 cases).

Most referral sheets had indications that the offender had been arrested before. In 63 percent (183) of the cases, a prior arrest had been recorded. Of the prior arrests, 149 of them were for domestic violence or for domestic violence combined with additional charges unrelated to domestic violence or child abuse. For eleven cases, the arrests were for both domestic and child abuse and three were for child abuse only.

Direct threats of violence by the offender to the victim were noted routinely on the referral sheets, although not as common as seen with Level I cases. Forty-four percent (124 cases) of the victims had received a threat of violence. However, the level

of threat for Level II cases where information was documented followed the Level I pattern. That is, the most typical threat was that the offender would kill the victim -- this appears in 55 cases. The second most common threat was that the offender would harm the victim (in 30 cases) and the third most common threat was that the offender would harm himself or herself (in 20 cases).

Original Reasons for Level II Acceptance by DVERT

Two hundred thirty-two of the 515 cases (or 45 percent) have documentation that give an explanation for acceptance of the case into Level II. In 1998, there are 65 cases and in 1999, 167 cases. For this reason, the results presented below cannot be viewed as representative of all Level II cases or significant compared to other DVERT cases.

Of the 183 cases with prior arrests, there were 121 cases that experienced injuries, with 102 cases with cuts, bruises or abrasions. Sixty-nine cases documented more serious injuries such as concussions, broken bones and sexual assault.

There were at least 92 incidents with substance abuse issues with the offender or the offender and victim.

With regard to seriousness of the issue, there were 24 cases that needed medical attention, of which at least nine were treated in hospitals or emergency rooms and two were treated in unspecified locations.

When examining the issue of access to weapons, in at least 67 of the 232 cases, perpetrators have access to weapons, with 35 cases having access specifically to guns.

Of other behaviors that would indicate a domestic violence behavior, 59 cases indicated harassment, 50 cases involved stalking, 49 indicated telephone threats, 41 said that the offender was following the victim, 35 documented threats against the victim, 8

indicated that the offender was peeping or driving by, there were 7 trespassing and 7 kidnapping/unlawful imprisonment incidents and 4 unexpected appearances by the offender.

Reasons for Closure of Level II Cases

For 81 percent of the cases, there are conclusion forms that explain the reason for closing out the Level II case. Unfortunately, only 65 percent of the 1998 cases had conclusion forms while 90 percent of 1999 cases had forms. This may mean that the results presented below are more representative of 1999 cases than 1998 cases.

For 68 percent of the 1998 and 1999 cases that had conclusion forms, an advocate and officer made contact with a victim. For nearly 20 percent of the victims contacted (52 cases), the conclusion forms indicated that cases were referred to Level I. However, for 25 percent of these cases that were referred to Level I, it was difficult to verify whether referral actually occurred.

In the remaining 32 percent of cases (124) with conclusion forms DVERT staff gave reasons for not making contact with victims. For 104 cases, the victim could not be located at all. In 20 cases DVERT could document that the victim had moved and could not be found. In six of these cases DVERT had received information that the victim was now living outside DVERT's jurisdiction.

For those cases with conclusion forms, there were only five cases in which contact was made but the victim refused to talk with anyone from DVERT.

Level III or the POP Process in DVERT

Problem oriented policing (POP) is a major strategy for the CSPD. This concept, first formulated in 1979 by Herman Goldstein, has been emphasized by Chief Kramer for the past decade. POP involves four basic steps: Scanning, Analysis, Response, and Assessment. Scanning means identifying a specific problem that has occurred numerous times. Analysis involves extensive examination of the problem – who was the offender, victim, and stakeholders affected by the problem? Where is the problem located? When is it occurring? These are among many questions asked at this stage. Response is the phase where police and others take action. The Assessment phase takes a close look at the effectiveness of the problem solving strategy.

For the problem of domestic violence, the scanning phase of the POP process begins at DVERT. A staff member checks all relevant police department contact sheets to see if there have been three calls for service at a location during the last 12-month period. The DVERT staff member will pull the location history and calls for service for the identified location. The DVERT staff member also checks to see if the offender or victim is in the DVERT database, the DVERT POP database, or has been in the District Attorney's Fasttrack program. DVERT will provide victim packets back to the police department as POP projects.

At the CSPD division stations, lieutenants are informed about DVERT Level III POP projects. They in turn, make sergeants responsible for assigning the projects to officers for follow-up analysis, response and assessment. Patrol officers are responsible for contacting the victim at the identified location and delivering the victim packet. If the

victim no longer lives at the identified address, it is the responsibility of the officer to make all reasonable attempts to locate the victim within a 30-day period.

After either contacting the victim, or attempting to contact the victim, the officer will complete an "Officer Contact Sheet" with all pertinent information, which will be returned to their sergeant. The sergeant will pass the information on to the lieutenant. After review, the lieutenant will return the information to DVERT. At the present time, it does not appear that officers systematically treat Level III cases as POP projects. Some officers do engage in analysis, response and assessment for some of the problem addresses, but the model is not consistently followed.

Data from DVERT indicate that in 1999, 291 problem addresses were identified in the Colorado Springs area. Of these, 181 fell within the jurisdiction of CSPD. The rest were in the cities of Fountain, Manitou Springs, and Palmer Lake and in El Paso County. In the first quarter of 2000, 110 problem addresses were identified with 68 in CSPD's jurisdiction.

DVERT and Community Policing

DVERT epitomizes community policing in Colorado Springs in a number of ways. First, DVERT has formed strong partnerships with over 25 community-based organizations, city and county service agencies, and other law enforcement departments. The partnerships are based on memoranda of understanding that lay out specific roles for each agency. Each organization participates in domestic violence reduction efforts. Advocates from the Center, guardians ad litem from the court, probation officers,

caseworkers for children, animal control officers from the Humane Society, deputy district attorneys, patrol officers, and local physicians work together to assist victims.

Second, DVERT has brought about organizational changes within the police department and its partners. Within CSPD, knowledge about domestic violence has increased through training and active participation by patrol officers. For the last four years, officers have rotated through DVERT for 100 days to learn about domestic violence and assist in responding to calls after hours. Further, officers work directly with the partner agencies and thus learn about the roles of advocates, children's caseworkers, and other members of DVERT. Similarly, non-police members of DVERT learn from each other and about law enforcement. Thus, the victim is aided and organizational bonds are forged.

All of this would not be possible without the support of Chief Kramer. The chief's open management style encourages officers to think, solve problems, and handle situations without fear of failure or recriminations for failing. By delegating authority to all commanders, supervisors, officers, and civilians, he is able to develop leaders and run an efficient, highly motivated, results-oriented agency. This attitude extends to DVERT. Detective Black is able to supervise a unit of non-CSPD staff and make decisions about important domestic violence cases with confidence and support from the chief. In addition, without the chief's influence, DVERT's partnerships would not be as formidable.

Third, DVERT specifically follows the POP model for Level III cases. As discussed above, problem-solving begins at DVERT for addresses with three or more

calls for service over a one year period. This component could be strengthened through more active participation by officers at the district stations.

Overall, DVERT and community policing principles are intertwined. Slowly, subtly, and without much fanfare DVERT is becoming institutionalized not only within the police department, but within the city of Colorado Springs.

Perceptions and Attitudes of DVERT Staff

To assist us in understanding the implementation and impact of DVERT, we interviewed a number of current and former DVERT staff. This section describes the results of those interviews.

Impact of DVERT

Interviewees described several major accomplishments of their affiliated agencies as a result of DVERT. Respondents from victim services focused on three major categories: services for victims, inter-agency relationships, and organizational accomplishments. Law-enforcement personnel emphasized increased awareness, education, and training; networking; and systems communication among major accomplishments. Interviewees from DHS indicated that the linkage between domestic violence and child welfare is a major accomplishment, as are organizational changes associated with DVERT. Those affiliated with the District Attorney's office identified tougher plea bargaining, education, effective prosecution, and resource availability.

Services to women. The vast majority of persons interviewed believe that services to women have improved as a result of DVERT. They cite improvement

through agency collaboration, training, the women themselves, and new programs and initiatives. Of these categories, interviewees focused on the women themselves more than any other area. They described cell phones, safe housing, and counseling as some of the ways in which services have improved. Challenges to serving victims include feelings of being overwhelmed by the task at hand or personnel issues, such as low pay for victims' advocates.

Barriers to improving services were identified by about one-third of interviewees. They include housing needs, limited resources, and potential for the process to re-victimize some women.

Changes in law enforcement. Most respondents felt that practices in law enforcement have changed as a result of DVERT. Categories of change encompass education and training, organizational changes, inter-agency relationships, direct services and resources. One major change is Fast Track, a new program designed by the district attorney that expedites domestic violence cases that come to the attention of the criminal justice system.

The value of law enforcement rotations at DVERT has a ripple effect on changing law enforcement. Not only do rotations dramatically change the perspective and knowledge of officers directly involved in a rotation, but the experiences of rotating officers filter back to home departments when rotations have ended. Other examples of changes in law enforcement include better understanding and enforcement of the law with mandatory arrest (along with relevant issues, such as stalking, dual arrests, and primary aggressors), needs in rural areas, and sensitivity to the subject of domestic violence.

A few interviewees described challenges to change within law enforcement with focused on the slowness of institutional change compared to individual change.

Violence Reduction. The most prominent message conveyed by DVERT staff is that violence is reduced for women when they become a part of the DVERT caseload and are being served and supported by DVERT staff. Further, when perpetrators are in the DVERT caseload, and are being monitored by DVERT staff, recidivism for those perpetrators – as one means of measuring reduction of violence – is lowered or non-existent.

Interviewees also said that violence has been reduced for children as a result of DVERT. In particular, children are safer when their mothers are actively involved within DVERT's caseload due to a number of variables, such as increased vigilance of those children, and programs and resources for those children.

Respondents are realistic in identifying challenges to reducing violence. Almost half of them suggest that some educational pieces are missing (school programming for adolescents, for example); DVERT's limitations on impact reduction; the nature of the community with its transient population and value system poses challenges; and that there are questions about identifying persons appropriate for intervention.

On Collaboration

Role differentiation. Interviewees described three levels of collaborations among partners: 1) those among core partner-agency staff housed at DVERT; 2) those among staff of partner agencies who are split in their physical location (at DVERT and partner agency offices); and 3) those among partner agencies at large. Across the board,

the majority of interviewees feel strongly that role differentiation is generally clear. At the same time, the majority also believe that there are conflicts associated with role differentiation. Conflicts stem from a variety of sources, which include intermittent misunderstanding about differentiating roles; sharing common goals with different agency policies to achieve those goals; lack of knowledge about partner agencies' policies/regulations and constraints; and conflicts over information sharing.

Conflict. The majority of interviewees believe that there are also conflicts outside of role differentiation. However, many respondents emphasize the positive aspects of conflict as well. One person interjected that conflict "speaks for the process" of inter-agency collaboration; another suggested that conflict translates into "healthy debates". Areas of conflict extend to turf and jurisdiction; definitional issues; decision-making; power/control within DVERT, establishment of in-house disciplinary policies; and some levels of distrust.

Suggestions for Improving DVERT

Four categories for improving DVERT emerged from the interviews: policies and decision making; services for victims; resources and manpower training; and physical environment. They proposed over 50 suggestions.

Policies and decision making. Almost 40% of all suggestions fell within this category. Interviewees proposed improvements in management and leadership, gave suggestions for current and future directions, voiced opinions about organizational, day-to-day issues, and addressed personnel matters. With regard to management, proposals

vary from less "micro-management" and fewer supervisors to more "free-flow interaction among staff at the lower street level, where people are most knowledgeable."

More far-reaching ideas range from extending policy making beyond core membership and ways to perpetuate the ideas of DVERT to limiting DVERT cases to Level I's only. Organizationally, interviewees express desire for meetings which function more as brainstorming or input sessions rather than as status-report forums.

Services for victims. About 25% of the suggestions are directly linked to victim services. These vary from improving response time, linking services to welfare benefits, developing ways for victims to become more empowered and self-sufficient, establishing more follow-up and long-term care after emergencies, and developing more programs for children.

Resources and manpower. Another 25% of recommendations call for more resources and staff generally, equalizing financial commitments among partners, and obtaining support from city and county governments.

Training. Ten percent of all suggestions focus on continuing on-going training, expanding training nationally, and developing more specialized and advanced training where appropriate.

Physical environment. A few other suggestions propose more physical space generally and more private space in particular--especially related to phone use.

Victim Interviews

In April 2000 we conducted interviews with 19 DVERT clients.⁷ We asked a number of questions about their experiences with DVERT, law enforcement, victim service agencies, and the criminal justice process as well as specific questions about their particular situations.

Eighteen women and one man were interviewed by staff of 21st Century Solutions. On average, these clients spent over one year in the DVERT program. Six clients were still part of DVERT; 13 had been "deactivated." During their time in DVERT, clients reported that they were in contact with an advocate or law enforcement officer on a regular basis. For five individuals this meant contact twice a week. For five other individuals it meant weekly contact. Only two clients said that contact was "not often." We also asked victims about the number of contacts they actually had with DVERT. One individual who was in the program for about a year said that he/she had almost 300 contacts with an advocate. This number was an exception as the average for the rest of the respondents was about 36 contacts per client with an advocate.

Most respondents had a very high regard for DVERT and its staff. Seventeen of 19 clients strongly agreed or agreed that a DVERT advocate was available to the victim whenever she was needed. The same number strongly agreed or agreed that DVERT staff provided support to the victim. Fourteen strongly agreed or agreed that DVERT

⁷ These individuals were selected by DVERT staff members based on availability. It is not representative sample of all clients, but the information provides us with insights about their views of DVERT and domestic violence.

police officers understood their problems and concerns. Sixteen respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the DVERT program "made me feel safe."

We asked open-ended questions at the conclusion of the interview. When asked to "tell us about your experiences in DVERT" more than half (10) had high praise for DVERT. One victim said that DVERT "saved my life." Another said that: "DVERT is a great program...without the advocate, I would not have gotten a restraining order ... having an advocate in court was very valuable ... otherwise wouldn't have followed through on charges ... I would probably be 6 feet under right now..." Finally, one respondent said, "I really thank God for DVERT, they pulled me through...I'm much more stable now... DVERT helped me get help for my alcoholism and I have not drunk for a year."

Victims also were asked a series of questions about domestic violence as it affected them. Fifteen victims did not stay with their partner when they were in the DVERT program. Thirteen said that there were times when they wanted to call the police because you were afraid of possible violence. Of these, nine victims said they called the police; the other four said they wanted to but did not. For the nine who called the police, three victims called the police on three separate occasions, three others called the police four times, two said they called five times, and one called the police about 20 times.

Concluding Remarks

DVERT constantly evolves. Over the 18-month period that we observed DVERT, changes occurred regularly in its processes, decisionmaking, and personnel. This is due in part, to the "newness" of the unit. More importantly, however, changes

occur because of the belief in fixing and improving systems if they could serve clients/victims better.

In February 2000, the way in which DVERT classifies cases changed dramatically. Levels I-III were replaced with new terminology and a new process. The "Intake Team" is now responsible for reviewing all cases referred to DVERT. Detectives, victim advocates and child protection workers are on the team and they must make contact with the victim and children on every referral. Extensive background information continues to be gathered including criminal history, victim advocacy contacts, child protection contacts, and other information. The Intake Team has two weeks from the date of the case assignment to make contact with the victim and to provide her/him with resource information and information about domestic violence and safety planning. The victim may also talk to a detective about previous domestic violence incidents. Also, a child protection worker assesses the welfare of children in the home, particularly for those children over the age of 5. After the Intake Team completes its initial visit to see the victim and children, the team members will either make a recommendation, in conjunction with DVERT management for further intervention or may choose to close the case with no further follow-up. If the Intake Team believes that the family could benefit from additional intervention, team members may refer the case to the DVERT Assessment Team or the DVERT Ongoing Team.

The DVERT Assessment Team consists of a detective, a victim advocate, and several officers who work overtime with DVERT. The Assessment Team provides short-term interventions in complex cases. The team works on 25-30 cases at any given time. Interventions are tailored to the needs of each family and may include advocacy support

for the victim, containment of the offender through arrest, or assistance for children. They may also develop stalking cases and could facilitate the relocation of victims who are in very dangerous situations. Most interventions by the Assessment Team should be completed within two to eight weeks. This team also makes recommendations for further involvement by DVERT or may choose to close the case.

The DVERT Ongoing Team handles the most dangerous cases, much like those in Level I. The multi-disciplinary DVERT staffing unit must vote to bring cases to the Ongoing Team. As with Level I, the number of cases is capped -- but this time at 75, rather than 125.

Once a case is assigned to the Ongoing Team, it is monitored closely. An advocate is assigned to contact the victim on a regular basis to provide support and information. Court support may also be provided. Just as in Level I, multi-disciplinary case management occurs here. Child protection workers, the humane society, police detectives, counselors, and others are involved in the case.

With these changes, DVERT hopes to handle more cases than before and still manage the most lethal situations. The emphasis remains on the safety of the victim.

Additional grant funds have led to other changes. In FY 2000, the COPS Office provided monies for innovative, multimedia training to all professionals interested in reducing domestic violence. A training curriculum is being developed that includes scenario-based exercises, adult learning techniques, and interactive CD-ROMS. Travel funds are available for DVERT team members to assist other cities and agencies in developing multi-disciplinary responses to domestic violence. Finally, DVERT has been named a National Demonstration Site by VAWA and a National Training Test Site by the

COPS Office. These changes will bring more attention to DVERT and assist other agencies as well.

Summary of Findings

Overall, our evaluation has identified at least 16 significant findings that should be beneficial to practitioners and others interested in domestic violence. In summary, these findings are:

1. DVERT focuses on the safety of victims as the primary concern.
2. DVERT does not follow the traditional model of domestic violence special units. It is a multi-disciplinary response to the problem of domestic violence.
3. DVERT takes a more balanced approach to the problems of domestic violence as it spreads responsibility for the problem to a number of agencies, not just the police.
4. DVERT has handled nearly 1000 of the most serious domestic violence cases (Level I and II) over the last four years.
5. Offenders/perpetrators in the DVERT caseload were predominantly white males between the ages of 21 and 50.
6. Victims in the DVERT caseload were predominantly white females between the ages of 16 and 50.
7. Level I cases were brought to the attention of DVERT primarily through the Center for the Prevention of Domestic Violence.
8. "Risk to children" was the most frequent reason for acceptance into the DVERT caseload in 1998, representing a philosophical shift towards greater concern for children.
9. As DVERT expertise has grown, staff have refined the criteria used for accepting cases.
10. For cases opened in 1996 the average time to closure was 530 days; for cases opened in 1998 closures occurred within 210 days, a decrease of 60%.
11. Services to victims have improved as a result of DVERT. Because of the collaboration among police and social service agencies, the most serious domestic

- violence cases are now being addressed. Advocates, police, caseworkers for children, the district attorney, and other agencies work together to ensure the safety of victims.
12. Victims have more resources through DVERT. Safe housing, counseling, and explanations of the criminal justice process are among the resources available to victims.
 13. Law enforcement practices have changed as a result of DVERT. Police officers are more aware of domestic violence issues in Colorado Springs; they receive more training in domestic violence (on stalking, dual arrests, and primary aggressor); and they have engaged in more problem solving than in the past.
 14. For women and children actively involved in the DVERT program, it appears that violence has been reduced.
 15. Of 19 victims who were interviewed, two said that DVERT had saved their lives. Others said that DVERT changed their lives for the better.
 16. Overall, through this program CSPD has expanded its domestic violence operation with one detective and officers paid through overtime to a fully functional multi-disciplinary organization. It has saved lives, reduced violence, improved communication among city and county agencies and service providers, and improved the quality of life in Colorado Springs.

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Appendix 1: DVERT Information and Forms



**PARTICIPATING AGENCIES FOR
DVERT
(DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ENHANCED RESPONSE TEAM)**

- ✓ Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)
- ✓ Center for Prevention of Domestic Violence (CPDV)
- ✓ Children's Advocacy Center
- ✓ City of Fountain Police Department
- ✓ City of Green Mountain Falls Marshal's Office
- ✓ City of Manitou Springs Police Department
- ✓ City of Palmer Lake Marshal's Office
- ✓ Colorado Springs Police Department (CSPD)
- ✓ Colorado University at Colorado Springs (CUCS)
- ✓ El Paso County Department of Human Services (EPCHS)
- ✓ El Paso County Humane Society (HSPPR)
- ✓ El Paso County Sheriff's Office (EPCSO)
- ✓ Fourth Judicial District Attorney's Office
- ✓ Fourth Judicial District Probation Department
- ✓ Law Enforcement Chaplains
- ✓ Pikes Peak Arkansas River Legal Aid
- ✓ Senior Victims Assistance Team (SVAT)
- ✓ Teller County Sheriff's Office
- ✓ Town of Calhan Marshal's Office
- ✓ Town of Monument Police Department
- ✓ United States Air Force (OSI)
 - ✓ Academy
 - ✓ Falcon Air Force Base
 - ✓ Peterson Air Force Base
 - ✓ Space Command
- ✓ United States Army (CID)
 - ✓ Fort Carson
- ✓ Woodland Park Police Department



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
Enhanced Response Team

DVERT Referral Form

Offender

Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: (h) _____ (w) _____

Race: _____

Relationship: _____

Names & ages of children: _____

DVERT Case Number: _____

Referring Person

Name: _____

Agency: _____

Phone: _____

Date: _____

Victim

Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: (h) _____ (w) _____

Race: _____

Relationship: _____

Check and describe all that apply:

<input type="checkbox"/> 1. History of D.V. incidents:	<input type="checkbox"/> 6. Type of injury:
<input type="checkbox"/> 2. Multiple law enforcement interventions:	<input type="checkbox"/> 7. Stalking behavior:
<input type="checkbox"/> 3. Direct threats of violence:	<input type="checkbox"/> 8. Refusal of victim to go to a safe place:
<input type="checkbox"/> 4. Separation attempted, in progress, or family not together:	<input type="checkbox"/> 9. Abuse of others (children, elders, pets):
<input type="checkbox"/> 5. Recent losses (job, family, death, etc.):	<input type="checkbox"/> 10. Access to weapons:

DVERT Staffing Recommendations

- Active
- Inactive

DVERT Case Number:
Date:

Law Enforcement

DA's Office

CPDV

EPCHS

Other

Appendix 2: Interview Protocols

Interview Protocol
DVERT Participants

Interviewer: _____

Date of Interview _____

Time: _____

Location of Interview _____

Name of Interview participant: _____

Title: _____

Agency: _____

Describe your current job responsibilities:

History of involvement in DVERT

I would like you to think about the origins of the DVERT program. (The following questions are aimed at the early history of the program.)

When did you first hear about DVERT?

From whom?

How did you/ your agency become involved in DVERT?

What is the role of your agency in DVERT?

From your perspective, what are the objectives of DVERT?

In your opinion what have been the major accomplishments of your agency as a result of DVERT?

Improving services for women victims

From your perspective, have services to women been improved as a result of DVERT?

If so, how? Give specific examples.

If not, what seems to have been the challenges?

Changes in Law Enforcement practices

From your perspective have practices in law enforcement (police) changed as a result of DVERT?

If so, how? Give specific examples.

If not, what seems to have been the challenges?

Has violence against women been reduced?

From your perspective, has violence against women been reduced as a result of DVERT?

If so, how? Give specific examples.

If not, what has worked against this reduction?

From your perspective, has DVERT made an impact on serving women victims in any way that hasn't been mentioned?

If so how, specifically?

Children

From your perspective, has violence against children been reduced as a result of DVERT?

If so, how? Give specific examples.

Collaborations

Let's talk about the different groups involved in DVERT. How many agencies are involved?

Are the roles of the agencies differentiated? Are there conflicts over roles?

Are there conflicts among the agencies?

Are decisions made easily? On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being easy and 1 being difficult what would be the score?

How often does your agency meet with the others? Weekly? Monthly?

Do the other agencies actively participate in the discussions?

Dr. Craig D. Uchida
President

Consent Form

I voluntarily agree to participate in the evaluation of the Colorado Springs DVERT program conducted by 21st Century Solutions. I understand that I have been selected for this study because I have utilized the services of the DVERT program. I understand that participating in this evaluation requires that I answer a series of questions about the DVERT program.

The information I share will be kept strictly confidential. My answers will be sealed in an envelope and evaluated by non-DVERT members in Washington, D.C. DVERT will not have access to my answers. My responses will be part of a compiled report and will not stand alone in any identifying way in the final report or subsequent publications of the results. Questionnaire data will be stored securely with the evaluation team in Washington, D.C.

I realize I will be receiving a financial compensation of twenty U.S. dollars (\$20.00) for my participation in this research. There are no other personal benefits to me for participating in this research.

I understand my participation is totally voluntary. My answers will NOT impact the services available to me at DVERT.

Name (print)

Date

Signature

P.O. Box 12279
Silver Spring, MD 20908
(301) 438-3132
Fax: (301) 438-3134
Email: cduchida@aol.com

DVERT Participants

Interviewer: _____

Date of Interview _____

Time start: _____

Location of Interview _____

Time end: _____

When did you first become a DVERT client? ___/___ (month/year) ___ not sure

Are you still a DVERT client? __ yes __ no

If no, when was your case "de-activated?" ___/___ (month/year)

During the time you were (are) a DVERT client, on average, how often were you (or are currently) in contact with a DVERT advocate?

- 1. Daily
- 2. Twice a week
- 3. Weekly
- 4. Two times a month
- 5. Monthly
- 6. Other _____

How many times have you had contact with a DVERT Advocate? _____

How many times have you had contact with a DVERT police officer? _____

This section asks about your perceptions of the DVERT program.

	1 Strongly Agree	2 Agree	3 Disagree	4 Strongly Disagree	0 Neutra
1. The DVERT advocate was available to me whenever I needed her.					
2. DVERT staff provided me with support.					
3. DVERT law enforcement officers understood my problems and concerns					
4. DVERT services were extremely helpful to me overall.					
5. The DVERT program made me feel safe.					

Each of the following questions should be prefaced with: "During the time that you were in the program..."

Did you stay with your partner? ___ yes ___ no

Were there times when you wanted to call the police because you were afraid of possible violence against yourself? ___ yes ___ no

→ If so, did you call the police or decide not to call the police?
___ called ___ decided not to call

→ → (If called): About how many times were you afraid and called the police? ___ times ___ not sure

→ → (If decided not to call): About how many times were you afraid but decided not to call the police? ___ times ___ not sure

→ Did you call your DVERT advocate? ___ yes ___ no

Were your children ever present during an incident of domestic violence in your household? ___ yes ___ no ___ I do not have children.

→ Did you report this incident to the police? ___ yes ___ no

→ Did you report this incident to your DVERT advocate? ___ yes ___ no

Criminal Justice System issues

During the time that you were in the program, was your partner ever arrested for a domestic violence violation (restraining order, harassment, stalking, assault, etc.)?
___ yes ___ no

→ How many times did this happen? ___ times ___ not sure

Think about the most recent experience. At the time you made a police report, how did the officer(s) treat you? Would you say they were:

___ very helpful ___ helpful ___ not helpful?

→ Was the police officer involved with the arrest a DVERT officer?

___ yes ___ no ___ not sure

Notes: _____

Was your case forwarded to the district attorney? yes no not sure

→If so, How were you treated? Were they:

very helpful helpful not helpful?

Did your case go to trial? yes no

What was the outcome of the case? (check all that apply),

jail probation prison sentence

some combination → describe: _____

other → describe: _____

Counseling/Other agency involvement

What other agencies provided services to you (as part of DVERT) (circle all that apply)

1. The Center for the Prevention of Domestic Violence
2. DHS/CPS
3. CASA
4. Humane Society
5. Other → describe: _____

How were you treated by the people in those agencies? Were they very helpful, helpful, not helpful?

_____ (write agency listed above): very helpful helpful not helpful
_____ (write agency listed above): very helpful helpful not helpful
_____ (write agency listed above): very helpful helpful not helpful
_____ (write agency listed above): very helpful helpful not helpful
_____ (write agency listed above): very helpful helpful not helpful

Have you received group/individual counseling? yes no

→If yes, where? _____

Has your partner received group/individual counseling? yes no

→If yes, where? _____

Have your children received group/individual counseling yes no

→If yes, where? _____

→ If you are still with your partner, has your relationship changed? ___ yes ___ no

→How has it changed? _____

If you could change the current system for dealing with domestic violence, what is the one thing you would most like to see change?

What would help you the most?

If you were giving this survey, what questions would you like to see included that we have not asked you?

What would be your answer to this question?

Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about your experiences with DVERT or anything else?

Victim Responses

21st Century Solutions' staff interviewed 19 DVERT clients in April 2000. A 30-item questionnaire was used to determine victim perceptions of DVERT and domestic violence. Victims were asked to sign a consent form indicating their voluntary participation and the confidential nature of the interviews. Eighteen of the 19 interviewees were compensated \$20 for their time. Interviews took place at the DVERT offices over a two-day period.

These are the results of those interviews.

Victims:

19 clients interviewed; 18 women, 1 man

Time in DVERT: as low as 1 month to 28 months; average of 12 months

Average contact with DVERT -- 2 "not often"; 5 twice a week; 5 weekly; 5 twice a month; 2 monthly

Number of contacts by advocate: range of 1 to 300; one person said 300 contacts; if these are averaged 50 contacts per client; if this one is removed, then about 36 contacts per client.

Number of contacts by police: 131 total contacts or about 7 per client.

Perceptions of DVERT program:

The DVERT advocate was available to me whenever I needed her -- 8 strongly agree; 9 agree; 1 disagree; 1 no opinion

DVERT staff provided me with support -- 8 strongly agree; 9 agree; 1 disagree; 1 strongly disagree

DVERT law enforcement officers understood my problems and concerns -- 12 strongly agree; 2 agree; 3 strongly disagree; 2 no opinion

The DVERT Program made me feel safe -- 10 strongly agree; 6 agree; 1 disagree; 1 strongly disagree; 1 no opinion

On domestic violence:

During the time that you were in the program...

Did you stay with your partner? 4 Yes 15 No

Were there times when you wanted to call the police because you were afraid of possible violence against yourself? 13 Yes 6 No

If so, did you call the police or decide not to call the police?

9 called the police; 4 wanted to, but didn't

How many times did you call? From 3 calls to 20 calls [3 said 3 times; 3 said 4 times; 2 said 5 times; 1 said 20]

Did you call the DVERT Advocate? 11 called; 2 did not call

Were your children ever present during an incident of dv in your household? 10 yes

6 No 3 no children

Did you report this incident to the police? 6 yes 4 no

Did you report this incident to your DVERT advocate? 8 yes 2 no

Criminal Justice System Issues

During the time that you were in the program, was your partner ever arrested for a domestic violence violation?

13 Yes 6 No, of these 2 reported to the police, but an arrest was not made.

So 15 called the police -- 13 arrests; 2 no arrests, but a report was filed

How many times did this happen? Range from 1 to 10 times

Treatment by police 13 very helpful/helpful; 2 not helpful

6 were DVERT cops; 7 were not; 2 did not know

Was the case forwarded to the DA? 13 Yes 2 No

Treatment by DA: 10 helpful/very helpful 3 not helpful

Case go to trial? 5 yes 7 no (5 plea bargains)

What other agencies provided services to you:

CPDV 16

DHS 8

CASA 9

HS 0

Other 10

Victim in counseling during the time in DVERT? 15 yes 4 no

Perp in counseling during the time in DVERT? 10 yes 7 no 2 DK

Children in counseling during the time in DVERT? 11 yes 7 no 2 no children

Comments:

What would you change?

1. They have been good to me, but I would change this ...if my advocate is not in the office, another advocate should be able to help me. Sharing of cases, so if they are not in I can still be helped and understood.
2. Legal assistance for victim's throughout the whole process; no one is looking for the rights of victims
3. Would like to see another level in DVERT -- a maintenance level after we are released from Level 1. (felt abandoned)
4. Have more advocates to give more attention to each victim.
5. Stiffer laws and penalties (4 people)
6. Financial assistance (3 people)
7. More thorough investigations
8. DVERT needed to show up when the incident occurred, not 4 months later
9. DVERT interviewed my son and took him away -- parental rights lost
10. DHS should change -- threatened me about my child's safety
11. Put the offender in jail and keep him there; offender has too much freedom to harass her because of the judge's decision.
12. DVERT is good, but they really can't do anything to stop the offender until he violates the law. Their hands are tied. What more can be done physically to protect the victim? (3 people said a version of this)
13. Discouraged when I went to court -- the judge didn't understand; treated her as if she did something wrong.
14. Need speedy trial and judges who are more aware of DV issues; judges don't seem to understand the harm that could be caused by such a simple thing as a violation
15. Expedite the process; dragged on for so long; have people informed
16. DHS and GAL worked against me; made false accusations about me, took my child and place her with the offender who sexually abused her (and now facing charges)
17. Stronger ability to separate abuser from victim
18. Women need more one-on-one support; more personnel needed to work with the legal system; need to be able to get help, but then left alone
19. Not enough protection for women in DV; never really felt safe until friends told the offender to stay away; not enough laws to scare him off
20. Officers need to take things more seriously, need to be educated and understand the situation;

Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your experiences in DVERT?

1. DA never tells me anything...everything is through my advocate.. jail doesn't tell me when the offender is bailed out
2. The program makes me feel safe...
3. Would like to see the victim more empowered related to making changes

4. "really thank God for DVERT, they pulled me through. I'm much more stable now. DVERT helped me get help for my alcoholism and I got treatment and I have not drank in a year." Advocates provided support in all aspects of the case.
5. "Police officers taking reports need education and sensitivity training... they made me feel like I deserved to be beaten."
6. DVERT did not treat me fairly and was not beneficial to me; caused financial problems, stress, and harmed my son.
7. An officer told the perp that if the child "mouthed-off" he could hit her with his fist as long as he did not bruise her. So he pulled her hair and pushed her down and scratched her neck later.
8. DVERT really made a bright point in my process -- hear my views; understand cycles; how to know if he's changing; list of resources I didn't even know about (clothes, food)... Am overly thankful... never have this for whole year of divorce filing ... DVERT officer was compassionate and helpful and understanding
9. Until DVERT came along, I never knew anyone who understood DV ... they were like the cavalry who showed up and knew what war was about ..
10. Have DVERT step in and take more action against the offender
11. DVERT is a great program...without the advocate, I would not have gotten a restraining order ... having an advocate in court was very valuable ... otherwise wouldn't have followed through on charges ... I would probably be 6 feet under right now
12. DA needs to communicate with the community -- only bad experience with DVERT was with the DA's office
13. Need more advocates to help victims
14. Overall DVERT has been really good... I have a 911 cel phone and it's worked great... they have been there when I needed them... they are too short-handed though..
15. Peace Group has been wonderful .. and DVERT, too...has been the backbone -- pull the rope on my end -- Peace group has been able to educate me to accept boundaries and helped me in all aspects of my life...great education...
16. DVERT needs to follow up more
17. Because of DVERT and how everyone has pulled together, it has possibly saved my life... once the offender realized about DVERT and the support I received he backed down to some degree...the outcome would have been different if it was not for DVERT...stalking would have continued
18. Everything has gone well ..DA was very good...judge was very good
19. Advocates were sweet, helpful, great in getting counseling for me...they stick with you... really care about you...
20. DVERT is good -- it's the best thing that could have happened in the situation...

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Box 6000
Rockville, MD 20849-6000