

**Maricopa Association of Governments
Domestic Violence Protocol Evaluation Project
Professional Affinity Group Summary**

The Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) Domestic Violence Protocol Evaluation Project has engaged professionals in affinity group meetings. Peer meetings with law enforcement, victim advocates, and prosecutors provide rich conversations for helping to assess domestic violence protocols. Between February and July 2012, seven affinity groups were held with professionals. Each group discussed what is working well, what is not, and possible solutions. Topics of conversation were recorded. This summary is offered to relay the discussion topics of professionals during affinity group meetings about their work with victims of domestic violence.

Successes

Law Enforcement:

- Being creative in acquiring digital equipment for recording interviews.
- Asking open-ended questions to learn more about any history of abuse and types of controlling behaviors.
- Including details about controlling behaviors, prior convictions, and patterns of violence are included in the Departmental Reports.
- Conducting in-house trainings on MAG Misdemeanor Domestic Violence Protocol Model to ensure implementation.
- Found money to fund a victim advocate.

Victim Advocates:

- Noted great work of detectives gathering evidence of controlling behaviors.
- Connecting with victims within 24 hours of domestic violence calls.
- Increasing awareness of community-based victim resources.
- Building positive working relationships with law enforcement.

Prosecutors:

- Transferring domestic violence cases from city to county or vice versa to minimize the release of offenders.
- Successfully prosecuting cases by charging Forfeiture by Wrongdoing.
- Establishing electronic feeds with law enforcement to access evidence immediately.
- City prosecutors assigning advocates to victims as soon as possible.

Insights

For Law Enforcement:

- Training on Strangulation and Suffocation
 - Recognize the signs.
 - Gather forensic evidence for prosecution.
 - Use appropriate terminology.
- Improve cross jurisdictional communication and coordination.
 - Streamline access to information for verifying protective orders, release conditions, and prior convictions in the field.

- Victim Notification about Orders of Protection
 - Notify victims when protective orders are served and provide Affidavits of Service.
 - Who is responsible for serving protective orders?
 - Who is responsible for notifying the victim once orders are served?
 - Why are there significant delays between date of service and notifying the victim?
 - How are victims notified when reports are filed as citation cases in justice courts?
- Victim Involvement
 - Engage victims from the beginning.
 - Share level of risk with victim as soon as possible.
- Others
 - Include assessment for controlling behaviors in police reports and probable cause statements.
 - Identify and address high lethality cases immediately.
 - Improve availability and use of digital recorders and cameras.

For Victim Advocates:

- Training on Strangulation and Suffocation
 - Recognize the signs.
 - Gather forensic evidence for prosecution.
 - Use appropriate terminology.

For Prosecutors:

- Communication and coordination
 - Improve cross jurisdictional communication and coordination.
 - Prevent releasing offenders when cases are re-filed in a different court.
 - Streamline access to information for verifying protective orders, release conditions, and prior convictions in the field.
 - Encourage prosecutors to contact one another with questions related to particular cases.
 - Improve coordination between municipalities and Maricopa County.
 - Determine criteria for elevating multiple misdemeanors to felony status consistently.
 - Increase communication between county prosecutors and city prosecutors about elevating cases.
- Victim Involvement
 - Take cases to trial more quickly.
 - Tell victims the decision to prosecute is up to the prosecutor; not the victim.
 - Re-assess No Drop policies and enforcement of subpoenas.
- Others

- Assign cases to prosecutors who specialize in domestic violence cases.

For Courts:

- Initial Appearance Docket
 - Changing start time for initial appearance hearings to occur later in the morning.
 - More time for researching criminal records and histories of violence.
 - More likely to make contact with victim about rights.
 - Increases ability to resolve cases more quickly.
- Fingerprinting offenders
 - Take complete fingerprints of offenders to initiate criminal records.

For All:

- Resources for Victims
 - Provide community-specific information and resources.
 - Connect to advocacy services.
 - Provide more information about free forensic exams for sexual assaults.
 - Provide better access to translators throughout the criminal justice process.
- Victim Notification
 - Provide information about victim's rights to appear and give input on release of abuser at initial appearance hearing.
- Communication
 - Continue affinity groups and revitalize multi-disciplinary group meetings.
 - Improve information sharing between law enforcement and prosecutors.
 - What are the expectations of each other?
 - What does each other do and why?
 - Provide law enforcement with feedback about evidence collection resulting in successful prosecution.