
INTIMATE PARTNER/
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

SENTINEL EVENT REVIEW

REPORT AND
RECOMMENDATIONS

MILWAUKEE HOMICIDE REVIEW COMMISSION

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Table of Contents

Overview	2
Priority Recommendations	4
Resources	4
Response Coordination	5
Modifying Approach to DV Response	6
Research and Evaluation	7
Emergency and Law Enforcement Response	8
District Attorney Response	9
Corrections Response	9
Community Outreach, Education, and Awareness	10
Statutory/Legislative	11
Postvention	12
Tier 2 Recommendations	13
Resources	13
Response Coordination	13
Modifying Approach to DV Response	14
DA Response	15
Corrections Response	15
Community Outreach, Education, and Awareness	15
Criminal Justice System Outreach, Education, and Training	15
Tier 3 Recommendations	17
Resources	17
Response Coordination	17
Modifying Approach to DV Response	17
Research and Evaluation	18
Emergency and Law Enforcement Response	18
Corrections Response	19
Community Outreach, Education, and Awareness	20
Criminal Justice System Outreach, Education, and Training	21

Overview

This report is intended to provide an overview of the Sentinel Event Review conducted on the death of Bobbie Lou Schoeffling, in Milwaukee, WI. As of the time of this report her ex-partner, Nicholas Howell, has been convicted of stalking, first-degree intentional homicide, possession of a firearm by a felon, felony intimidation of a victim, misdemeanor battery, and disorderly conduct in her July 2022 death. This situation has received significant attention in the media as an example of potential gaps in systems intended to protect those experiencing victimization due to domestic or intimate partner violence.

At the request of the Milwaukee Police Department (MPD), a group was convened by the Milwaukee Homicide Review Commission to conduct a Sentinel Event Review of this incident. The purpose is to conduct a thorough review of unexpected deaths to better understand the circumstances and risk factors and to take actionable steps toward prevention of similar future events. In this case, the review specifically addresses questions and concerns about the response to domestic violence (DV) or intimate partner violence (IPV) incidents¹ in Milwaukee as identified through this incident. The intent of the review is to bring a multi-disciplinary team together to consider the circumstances of the incident, events leading up to the incident, and system responses that occurred along the way. The review does not focus or weigh in on any criminal proceedings related to the case. It is also not intended to place blame, but rather to identify where there are opportunities for change and improvement. Through this process, potential gaps can be identified and explored, leading to recommendations on possible process, policy, practice, or system changes that, if implemented, have the potential to prevent the same outcome for similar situations in the future.

The review process involved conducting background research, as well as convening a multisector team (as listed in the *Acknowledgements* section) four times between June and August 2023. Review team members provided input prior to, during, and following the meetings and participants were asked to weigh in on the final report and rating of the recommendations. This report represents the combined results of the process and input of the review team members. Although the recommendations were based on the review of this incident, the recommendations also draw from the combined expertise of the participating agencies in identifying the needs and gaps in current responses to DV/IPV.

The report is structured to provide the recommendations that were developed by the review team. Given the large volume of recommendations, they were prioritized based on the potential reach and

¹ In the report the terms domestic violence (DV), intimate partner violence (IPV), and domestic abuse (DA) are used to represent incidents of interpersonal violence occurring in the context of defined relationships. In this context, DV and DA are used to represent incidents that meet the statutory definition of domestic abuse under Wis. Stat. §968.075 (1)(a) which defines DA as various forms abuse "...engaged in by an adult person against his or her spouse or former spouse, against an adult with whom the person resides or formerly resided or against an adult with whom the person has a child in common." (<https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/document/statutes/968.075>). DV is used more frequently in this report as it is the more common term utilized within the literature. IPV is used in this report to represent incidents that involves a romantic relationship between the partners, but does not meet the statutory definition, such as dating relationships. This distinction is important because there are many responses and resources within the criminal justice system in Wisconsin and in Milwaukee County that are not activated unless the situation meets the statutory definition of DV/DA.

impact of the recommendations if implemented. Those assessed with the highest potential impact are listed as the priority recommendations and the remaining recommendations are grouped into second and third tiers so that the full range of recommendations generated is documented. Recommendations are then grouped into categories within each tier. Review team members were also asked to identify the complexity of each recommendation in terms of what it would take to implement, and the overall assessment (high/medium/low) is listed with each recommendation. Given the high volume of recommendations, they are grouped into categories to make interpretation easier and to facilitate connections across recommendations. Where appropriate, there are also updates listed on some recommendations where implementation has started or where progress has been made since the time of the initial event. The report does not go into details on the incident, but rather focuses on the recommendations from the review process.

The next steps in this process will involve identifying agencies or organizations to help lead the implementation of specific recommendations, or the agencies currently leading if a recommendation is already in process, with a focus on those recommendations listed as priority/high potential impact. The priority recommendations will be the focus of the initial action planning, with input from the group sought to identify a subset (5-10) of the priority recommendations for most immediate action. This will include identifying implementation steps, cost, and timeline. Follow-up will be conducted at six-month intervals and reported to track progress of the recommendations to support accountability for system and process change.

Acknowledgements

The following agencies and organizations participated in the review process by sending a representative and/or providing information to support the review process.

Alma Center	Milwaukee County District Attorney’s Office
Benedict Center	Milwaukee County Medical Examiner’s Office
City of Milwaukee Fire and Police Commission	Milwaukee Homicide Review Commission
City of Milwaukee Mayor’s Office	Milwaukee Police Department
City of Milwaukee Common Council	Safe and Sound
Medical College of Wisconsin	Sojourner Family Peace Center
Milwaukee Community Justice Council	The Asha Project
Milwaukee County Department of Health and Human Services, Behavioral Health Services	Wisconsin Department of Corrections

We would like to acknowledge the role of the Milwaukee Police Department in both requesting this review, as well as supporting the process by providing information and sending representatives to participate on the team. Additional law enforcement agencies also assisted in providing information for incidents that occurred outside of the City of Milwaukee. Many thanks also to Charles Vear, MPH and Amy Parry, MPH of the Medical College of Wisconsin for their critical work on this process.

Priority Recommendations

Resources

Priority Recommendation 1: Expand the resources for the Domestic Violence High-Risk Team (DVHRT) to increase capacity for the number of cases staffed by the team longer-term and to support resource needs of the DVHRT agencies.

Status: In process

Funding needed: Yes

Difficulty/Complexity: Medium

Context: Increased funding (\$1 million) was provided since this incident (starting in July 2023), which has allowed for the expansion of the DVHRT, which staffs DV cases that are at high risk for lethality, to increase capacity by 50% from 20 to 30 cases per week. However, this funding is relatively short-term and additional financial support is needed for this to be sustained beyond December 2024. MPD Sensitive crimes has also increased the number of investigators to support the increased number of cases reviewed, but additional resources would be beneficial for conducting follow-up on cases and referrals.

Priority Recommendation 2: Consider a rapid response model to create a team with specific expertise, including either advocates or individuals with lived experience with DV/IPV, that could be part of the direct co-response to incidents at the same time as the law enforcement response. This should also consider response teams including agencies with culturally specific expertise.

Status: In process

Funding needed: Yes

Difficulty/Complexity: High

Context: The intent is to consider more of a co-responder model for DV/IPV situations, depending on circumstances, to work directly with victims. This could also involve developing a pool of people from the breadth of agencies working to support individuals who experience DV or IPV that can respond 24 hours per day to police stations to support individuals reporting DV/IPV incidents. This would provide a set of resources to assist victims in navigating the process of reporting incidents to law enforcement, particularly given the dynamics of DV/IPV relationships and stigma around DV/IPV. This would require advanced training and coordination across multiple agencies and organizations. A pilot project is currently underway with this approach as a collaboration between Sojourner Family Peace Center, MPD, and the Milwaukee County District Attorney's Office (MCDAO). Data from the initial pilot should be reviewed to help guide the direction of this recommendation. The impact of Marsy's Law should also be considered in this context.

Priority Recommendation 3: Consider an expansion or reallocation of resources for all law enforcement agencies in Milwaukee County to focus on locating and apprehending individuals with a DV/IPV history who have absconded from community supervision or have active felony warrants. This may include identifying ways to escalate attempts to find an abuser if additional incidents are reported.

Status: Not started

Funding needed: Yes

Difficulty/Complexity: Medium

Context: This recommendation is focused on enhancing the follow-up or attempts to locate individuals who have been convicted of DV/IPV incidents or have been involved in DV/IPV incidents but have absconded while on community supervision or have outstanding felony

warrants because the risk to victims may be higher or victims may also be concerned about the ramifications of reporting. The focus is on increasing capacity either through additional funding or reallocation of resources and to include all law enforcement agencies in Milwaukee County, including the Milwaukee Collaborative Offender Re-entry Program (MCORP) and other specialty units that focus on location/arrest efforts. This recommendation has multiple layers. Some initial considerations include:

- Need to identify criteria for when the enhanced follow-up would occur.
- MCORP is an existing partnership between law enforcement and the Department of Corrections (DOC) community supervision (probation parole agents). It is a resource that can be brought in depending on circumstances. If the case is flagged for DVHRT an MCORP officer should be following up that week. There may be more opportunities for actively seeking those individuals with active warrants or that have absconded.
- If MCORP cannot find the individual, efforts can be escalated to find the abuser by referring the case to the US Marshals Fugitive Taskforce, provided the alleged abuser has an active felony warrant.
- To conduct a phone track on the alleged abuser to help in locating the individual, the law enforcement agency needs probable cause that they committed a felony. There have been some recent changes to LE practice since this incident that tie into this recommendation. With the expanded capacity for DVHRT, this case would have likely been flagged and there would have been attempts to contact both the victim and the alleged abuser.
- It is also important to note that only the City of Milwaukee has access to MCORP currently.

Priority Recommendation 4: Explore additional funding opportunities specifically focused on housing options (short- and long-term) for emergent situations to provide safe and secure shelter for those experiencing DV or IPV victimization.

Status: Not started

Funding needed: Yes

Difficulty/Complexity: High

Context: This recommendation centers on the concerns about maintaining safety particularly when there is an effort toward partners separating from a DV/IPV relationship and providing alternatives to shelters, as this experience can also be challenging and traumatizing depending on the situation.

Response Coordination

Priority Recommendation 5: Improve information sharing and communication across jurisdictions (both within Milwaukee County and across counties) specifically related to DV cases or individuals with DV history.

Status: Not started

Funding needed: Not known yet

Difficulty/Complexity: Medium

Context: The intent is to improve communication about DV situations that may be occurring in more than one jurisdiction, with an emphasis on law enforcement agencies. Discussion indicated that a short-term approach could be to enter specific cases into ACISS, which is an existing system used by law enforcement in Wisconsin, but this would require manual entry. This could also explore automating entry of data into ACISS. This could also include exploring technology solutions to enhance statewide sharing of information.

Priority Recommendation 6: Explore a system for distributing DV hotline calls coming in to include agencies with a specific culturally specific approach or population of focus.

Status: Not started

Funding needed: Not yet known

Difficulty/Complexity: Medium

Context: The intent was to build on the current hotline model but develop a way to distribute the calls more directly to agencies that have a specific culturally specific approach or population of focus as part of the overall system capacity. It was suggested that this could build on the current model in place through the Sojourner Family Peace Center. This is likely a complex recommendation to implement. A first step would be to seek information from other large, urban jurisdictions that may have existing processes to manage this type of coordination across different organizations and agencies. A process would also need to be developed for identifying culturally specific agencies with capacity to respond to DV incidents in near real-time. Consideration also needs to be given to the impact of Marsy's Law, specifically for law enforcement's ability to manage partnerships across multiple DV agencies.

Priority Recommendation 7: Explore opportunities for all law enforcement agencies in Milwaukee County to enhance response to high-risk DV cases.

Status: In process

Funding needed: Not yet known

Difficulty/Complexity: Medium

Context: This is a relatively broad recommendation to look for ways to review and potentially enhance the response to high-risk cases across all law enforcement agencies within Milwaukee County. The suburban agencies in the county do typically utilize the Lethality Assessment Protocol (LAP), have victim advocates available, and participate in DVHRT depending on circumstances, such as when they have cases being staffed. At the same time, some programs, such as MCORP, only exist in Milwaukee. This recommendation is to review current resources and practices across agencies to see if there are opportunities to enhance the response to high-risk DV cases.

Modifying Approach to DV Response

Priority Recommendation 8: Identify ways to enhance or expand current efforts to address safety concerns that may impact victim response or willingness to participate in the criminal justice process.

Status: Not started

Funding needed: Not yet known

Difficulty/Complexity: Medium

Context: This recommendation focused on the fact that victim participation is often critical for moving forward with the criminal justice response to DV situations, but safety concerns may impact the likelihood that individuals will report in the first place or continue to engage in the criminal justice process. There are many efforts currently in place such as utilizing victim advocates to work with victims, providing hotels for short-term housing, the potential for use of the Witness Protection or Witness Security (WITSEC) program, and related areas. These resources may not be known to victims or may not be known early in the reporting process. Therefore, this recommendation is focused on both documenting the resources currently available to address safety concerns, as well as consider opportunities to expand or enhance those efforts, including ways the resources are communicated to victims.

Priority Recommendation 9: Explore ways to improve system responses to victims who recant or do not want to pursue charges, particularly when the person perpetrating the abuse is not in custody.

Status: Not started

Funding needed: Not yet known

Difficulty/Complexity: Medium

Context: There was a general concern that victim participation in the criminal justice process is critical, but out of safety or other concerns individuals may not want to participate and this may be particularly true when the individual accused of perpetrating DV/IPV is not in custody. This recommendation is intended to identify ways to improve system responses to victims who may not want to participate in the criminal justice process. This also ties to the recommendations about safety concerns, expanding efforts to apprehending individuals who have absconded from community supervision or have an active warrant, and evidence-based prosecution (priority recommendations 8, 3, and 17 respectively).

Research and Evaluation

Priority Recommendation 10: Examine the impact of MPD conducting a second outreach to victims who decline referrals to DV resources to identify how often this is leading to consent to share information with advocacy organizations. This recommendation is connected to Marsy's Law.

Status: In process

Funding needed: No

Difficulty/Complexity: Low

Context: This recommendation would help to understand whether there has been an increase in victims consenting to share information with advocacy organizations. Data is currently being tracked for the efforts currently underway at MPD that can directly support this recommendation to examine the impact this additional contact can have on the likelihood of victims consenting to a referral.

Priority Recommendation 11: Examine the impact of the newly created position through expanded DVHRT funding from the Governor's Office to attempt connection of suspects of DV to services and support and seek additional longer-term funding.

Status: In process

Funding needed: Yes

Difficulty/Complexity: Medium

Context: The work is currently underway between the Alma Center, Sojourner Family Peace Center, and other partners. This funding is short-term so understanding the impact of the position is important overall and to be able to seek funding to extend or expand the position longer term.

Recommendation 12: Further research the interface of those perpetrating DV/IPV who have histories of firearm possession or use and the propensity to go on to commit DV/IPV offenses while armed.

Status: Not started

Funding needed: No

Difficulty/Complexity: Medium

Context: The intent of this recommendation is to further understand the existing literature and potentially conduct additional research locally to understand the relationship between

individuals with DV/IPV history who also have prior firearm-related offenses and the likelihood of future involvement in DV/IPV incidents with a firearm.

Emergency and Law Enforcement Response

Priority Recommendation 13: Review current training for law enforcement and telecommunication operators on how questions are asked regarding relationship status and follow-up questions during early interactions with individuals who may be experiencing DV/IPV.

Status: Not started

Funding needed: Not yet known

Difficulty/Complexity: Low

Context: The intent is to enhance training to improve identification of potential DV/IPV situations where the relationship or living situation may not be readily apparent or shared (e.g., does the abuser have a key, do they have a child in common). It was noted that this will not address cases where the victim would not be able to say yes due to other factors (e.g., current requirements that would prohibit living together, concern about financial dependence). This recommendation relates to the definition of DV/DA not including the dating relationships that do not meet the other criteria by statute.

Priority Recommendation 14: Create a protocol with a focus on ensuring persons reporting DV or IPV to law enforcement do so in an environment and manner that is trauma informed and most conducive to eliciting ongoing cooperation from victims.

Status: Not started

Funding needed: No

Difficulty/Complexity: Low

Context: This recommendation is connected to the need to ensure that individuals reporting DV/IPV incidents are able to do so in a private space and that their own perception of the likelihood of escalation or lethality be acknowledged and documented. This is connected to the recommendation related to perceived risk from those experiencing DV/IPV (tier 2 recommendation 13).

Priority Recommendation 15: Review and potentially enhance current protocols around information recorded in reports taken on DV/IPV incidents to ensure that critical information is included to document some of the unique factors related to these incidents (e.g., relationship status, whether individuals are living together, safety concerns), as well as to assist in prosecution.

Status: Not started

Funding needed: No

Difficulty/Complexity: Low

Context: The intent of this recommendation is to have a protocol around the specific information that can be important to capture particularly related to DV/IPV incidents. In part this is important to determine whether the relationship meets the statutory definition of DA, but also to document dating relationships that may have the same dynamics as a statutory DV/DA situation.

District Attorney Response

Priority Recommendation 16: Consider ways to identify cases that may be DV, particularly those going to General Crimes, to potentially redirect them to the DV Unit in the DA's office and refer to DVHRT for staffing.

Status: In process

Funding needed: No

Difficulty/Complexity: Low

Context: This recommendation is focused on enhancing the process of getting potential DV cases to the DV Unit at the DA's Office. DV advocates in the DA's Office work with victims, and even if victim does not realize they are in danger, advocates may recommend them for DVHRT staffing. The DA's office can make a referral directly to DVHRT. General Crimes does also refer cases to DVHRT, but this recommendation is to support further efforts to redirect cases to the DV unit where possible. This also connects to ensuring that the relationship and other factors of DV/IPV incidents are documented in reports (priority recommendation 15).

Priority Recommendation 17: Explore what procedural changes need to be in place to help improve reporting and documentation of evidence to improve the likelihood of charging and prosecuting DV cases.

Status: Not started

Funding needed: No

Difficulty/Complexity: Low

Context: The discussion for this recommendation centered around the evidence-based focus of prosecution and how this can be impactful particularly for DV cases. For example, victims may be afraid to testify, particularly in person, in DV cases but if the victim does not testify there are concerns with hearsay that come into play (e.g., the victim talks to the DA's office, but then does not want to testify). Questions were raised as to whether prosecution without victim testimony is possible, and under what circumstances, the role of the investigators in gathering evidence to support prosecution, and whether there are practices in place in other jurisdictions or states focused on evidence-based prosecution for DV cases. This also ties to priority recommendation 8 on addressing victim safety concerns.

Corrections Response

Priority Recommendation 18: Improve current processes to ensure DOC is aware of new incidents or law enforcement contacts (calls, reports, arrests, etc.) involving those on supervision, particularly those with a DV/IPV history.

Status: In process

Funding needed: No

Difficulty/Complexity: Low

Context: Since this incident, there have been efforts by DOC to work more closely with MPD to ensure the timely identification of calls, reports, or arrests involving individuals on community supervision for a DV-related incident by having a team member proactively review reports to identify potential law enforcement contacts to facilitate proactive follow-up. Currently this is happening with MPD, but not other jurisdictions within the county.

Priority Recommendation 19: Consider developing a process wherein high-risk DV perpetrators placed on community supervision are assigned directly to agents with specialization in working with this population through outreach from MCDAO to DOC immediately after sentencing.

Status: In process

Funding needed: Not yet known

Difficulty/Complexity: Medium

Context: There are existing mechanisms within DOC to track perpetrators identified through DVHRT reviews as their cases are processed and they are placed on community supervision for DV-related incidents. This recommendation is focused on expanding this process to potentially high-risk offenders identified based on criteria from DVHRT and sharing resources in terms of following up on the cases and eliminating gaps in services. An example would be an individual convicted of a serious DV incident that was never staffed by DVHRT.

Priority Recommendation 20: Improve the current DOC response to individuals on supervision who are also victims of DV/IPV.

Status: In process

Funding needed: Not yet known

Difficulty/Complexity: Medium

Context: The intent of this recommendation is to address the inherent dangers a victim faces in a relationship that has been assessed as high risk. DOC could potentially improve the response to individuals who are on community supervision and have a history of DV/IPV victimization. Considerations could include further educating agents on connecting victims with services in a timely manner to ensure victim safety and recovery efforts or developing a more direct referral system between DOC and DV service agencies to allow DOC agents to facilitate direct outreach to clients who are on community supervision and have or are experiencing DV victimization.

Community Outreach, Education, and Awareness

Priority Recommendation 21: Consider developing education that can be shared by law enforcement or other system partners with victims or their family members around reporting options when a victim does not want to proceed with reporting a DV/IPV incident immediately.

Status: Not started

Funding needed: Not yet known

Difficulty/Complexity: Low

Context: There are many reasons someone experiencing DV/IPV victimization may not want to report incidents to law enforcement, including safety concerns, stigma, fear of retaliation, financial concerns, and many others. This recommendation is related to ensuring that options are offered to those experiencing DV/IPV victimization to encourage reporting of incidents, the importance of calling 911, and how to follow-up if they determine they later want to report a previous incident. This could also include broader education about DVHRT.

Statutory/Legislative

Priority Recommendation 22: Further explore the implications of IPV situations (such as a dating situation where the individuals are not living together and do not have a child in common) that do not meet the statutory definition of DV/DA and thus are not included many of the aspects of DV response. Then consider whether to recommend changes to the current DA statute.

Status: Not started

Funding needed: Not yet known, but likely

Difficulty/Complexity: Medium

Context: This recommendation has many layers and potential implications, which is why the first approach is to further explore the implications. This is also known as the “dating loophole.” This will likely require a workgroup. Some of the areas of consideration include:

- Options that are not currently required for IPV that are activated for DA situations: mandatory reporting; requirement to call into the hotline; DA modifier on charges; referral to DVHRT if meeting other criteria. Need to identify other areas.
- It is possible to call into the hotline for IPV situations even if not DV, but not required.
- For IPV situations, if LAP is completed, 25/26 and/or firearm pointing, stabbing, or DOC expressing concern it can lead to DVHRT, but many of these do not make it to DVHRT.
- Needs to also address the DV modifier statute (e.g., would allow more automatic follow-up for the Battering Intervention Program (BIP), DOC etc.).
- Research statutes in other states for definition; explore whether other states have closed the loophole and include IPV relationships.
- Need to identify how often there are incidents that are IPV and that are *not* DV/DA (homicides, shootings, strangulations, etc.) to determine potential volume increase.
- Would likely require additional resources for multiple agencies (law enforcement, district attorneys, advocates, BIP, etc.) – potentially significant.
- Need to consider additional consequences of changing statute. For example, penalty factor implications (e.g., impact on future employment, housing) if expanding the DA relationship definition.
- May want to consider level of offense (misdemeanor/felony), other criteria (firearm, offense type, etc.) but not setting up differences between DV/IPV.
- May also open the opportunity to increase potential for involvement in diversion programs.
- Also need to address considerations for expungement eligibility if not successful initially.

Priority Recommendation 23: Further document the challenges associated with Marsy’s law and based on those challenges, consider potential advocacy for changes.

Status: In process

Funding needed: Not yet known

Difficulty/Complexity: Medium

Context: The group discussed understanding the benefits of Marsy’s law, which focuses on the rights of individuals experiencing victimization and the importance of protecting both rights and privacy. At the same time, there were challenges identified specifically related to the ability of agencies to communicate with other agencies and organizations, and the unintended impact this may be having on individuals who have been victimized, such as the difficulty connecting them with resources and services or better assessing risk. Some initial discussions have taken place with input from the MCDAO. This needs further exploration and discussion with input from multiple groups.

Postvention

Priority Recommendation 24: Conduct a next of kin interview with particular family members, to share the recommendations and identify additional gaps and opportunities and include their recommendations in updates to this report.

Status: Not started

Funding needed: No

Difficulty/Complexity: Medium

Context: The group discussed the importance of conducting direct outreach to the family to both share information about the review process and steps being taken in response to the incident and to this review. This would be conducted by a social worker through the Medical College of Wisconsin and would also include offering additional support and resources. This may also lead to a recommendation about providing on-going postvention support to families of those lost to DV/IPV incidents.

Tier 2 Recommendations

Resources

Tier 2 Recommendation 1: Explore additional funding opportunities specifically focused on housing options (short- and long-term) for emergent situations for those perpetrating DV or IPV.

Status: Not started

Funding needed: Yes

Difficulty/Complexity: High

Context: This recommendation centers on the concerns about maintaining safety particularly when there is an effort toward partners separating from a DV/IPV relationship and providing alternatives to shelters to support safety and well-being of victims. This recommendation focuses on individuals perpetrating abuse. This can draw from related efforts carried out by the Alma Center, particularly during COVID.

Response Coordination

Tier 2 Recommendation 2: Consider developing a protocol for automatic referral to the DVHRT that includes factors in addition to the Lethality Assessment Program (LAP) score.

Status: In process

Funding needed: No

Difficulty/Complexity: Medium

Context: The intent is to look at additional factors that could support automatic referral to the DVHRT that are outside of the LAP score. A portion of this is already in place. the recommendation is to review additional factors that should potentially be considered for automatic referral. This needs to consider the impact of Marsy's Law.

Tier 2 Recommendation 3: Provide technical assistance to MPD and other law enforcement agencies to explore additional ways to obtain consent for referrals to an advocate or other resources.

Status: Not started

Funding needed: No

Difficulty/Complexity: Medium

Context: In addition to steps currently underway at MPD to conduct multiple follow-ups with victims of DV, law enforcement should consider other approaches to connect with victims and potentially obtain consent for a referral. This recommendation is connected to Marsy's law. The data collected on the current efforts by MPD to conduct follow-up with victims should be explored first to help inform the direction of this recommendation.

Tier 2 Recommendation 4: Enhance system communication across agencies when process gaps or concerns are identified.

Status: Not started

Funding needed: No

Difficulty/Complexity: Medium

Context: This review identified multiple gaps or concerns across and between agencies. This recommendation is to establish more of an on-going culture and process of communication across agencies so that when these types of issues are identified during daily work they can be addressed. This will require a commitment by agencies to be open and receptive to suggestions for change.

Tier 2 Recommendation 5: Consider ways to identify the high-risk nature of DV situations as soon as possible so that the opportunity for awareness by DVHRT partners occurs sooner.

Status: In process

Funding needed: No

Difficulty/Complexity: Medium

Context: This recommendation is intended to reduce the time to make partners aware of the concerns about the level of risk with particular DV situations. This is often currently happening same day, but the recommendation is to explore whether there may be cases missed that are potentially high-risk that could be identified and connected to DVHRT.

Modifying Approach to DV Response

Tier 2 Recommendation 6: Explore options for reducing barriers to reporting and system participation by victims (e.g., reducing fear or increasing willingness to engage with resources).

Status: Not started

Funding needed: Not yet known

Difficulty/Complexity: Medium

Context: The intent is to explore ways to increase victim participation and reporting. Initial ideas included considering a peer support model, implementing, or enhancing a trauma-informed approach across agencies, and considering alternative methods of testifying. This recommendation may be partially addressed by some of the priority recommendations (e.g., 2, 8), but is intended to explore other options that may reduce barriers to participation and reporting for those experiencing DV/IPV victimization.

Recommendation 7: Identify ways to improve current system responses to family (or others) reporting concerns about DV or IPV situations for a family member.

Status: Not started

Funding needed: No

Difficulty/Complexity: Medium

Context: Concerns were raised that there are potential gaps in the current follow-up practices when another person reports concerns about DV/IPV. This recommendation is intended to determine if there are multiple points where this response may be improved (law enforcement, DA, corrections, etc.) and develop strategies to improve practices for follow-up response.

Tier 2 Recommendation 8: Further understand the training 911 operators receive regarding incidents involving DV/IPV, including the information relayed to first responders.

Status: Not started

Funding needed: No

Difficulty/Complexity: Low

Context: The intent is to better understand the training currently received by 911 operators, to potentially consider whether there could be enhancements or improvements to specifically address DV/IPV calls and how information is recorded and relayed to responding officers.

DA Response

Tier 2 Recommendation 9: Identify potential options for advocates to be available during the charging conference in DV/IPV situations.

Status: Not started

Funding needed: Not yet known

Difficulty/Complexity: Low

Context: This recommendation is intended to enhance the support provided to victims by the MCDAO by having the ability to have victim advocates present during the charging conferences portion of the criminal justice process.

Corrections Response

Tier 2 Recommendation 10: In cases where mental health needs have been identified as a contributing factor to a DV incident, ensure continuity of care through case processing, pretrial monitoring, and placement on community supervision, with a focus on limiting disruptions to existing medication and therapy services.

Status: Not started

Funding needed: Not yet known

Difficulty/Complexity: Medium

Context: This recommendation focuses on exploring ways to increase the likelihood of continuing to have individuals, particularly with DV/IPV history, connected to mental health services after release from incarceration (such as while on community supervision).

Community Outreach, Education, and Awareness

Tier 2 Recommendation 11: Increase education around reporting options for DV/IPV victims and families.

Status: Not started

Funding needed: Yes

Difficulty/Complexity: Low

Context: The specific direction of this recommendation needs to be determined, but the intent is to increase community outreach and education around reporting options for DV/IPV situations both within and outside of the criminal justice system to increase the likelihood that both victims and family members will report or seek services and support.

Criminal Justice System Outreach, Education, and Training

Tier 2 Recommendation 12: Explore current trainings and opportunities to enhance response specifically around DV for law enforcement to help officers understand the of the situations and factors that may affect risk and victim response to reporting and involvement in the criminal justice process.

Status: In process

Funding needed: Not yet known

Difficulty/Complexity: Low

Context: The intent of this recommendation is to help address law enforcement training on DV, specifically to emphasize why there tend to be repeated DV/IPV situations without reporting, which can cause frustration and be a challenge for law enforcement. MPD has been planning some additional training, including a focus on the DV liaison officers. This ties to the recommendation surrounding stigma (tier 3 recommendation 20).

Tier 2 Recommendation 13: Disseminate information within law enforcement and other criminal justice agencies about responding to an increased reaction or level of concern from victims that may be due to the level of threat they are experiencing or their perceived risk.

Status: Not started

Funding needed: Not yet known

Difficulty/Complexity: Low

Context: This recommendation was based on discussion that the increasing concerns about safety or perceived risk coming from individuals who have experienced DV/IPV may not receive a sufficient level of system response, particularly if the individual has previously not wanted to engage with the criminal justice system. The recommendation is to disseminate information or training that statements from the victim about their safety or threat to their lives should be taken seriously and receive an appropriate response as it may be an indication of increased potential risk of lethality or harm.

Tier 3 Recommendations

Resources

Tier 3 Recommendation 1: Explore additional expansion of DVHRT capacity (potentially another team) with a focus on having culturally specific agencies involved in the staffing process.

Status: Not started

Funding needed: Yes

Difficulty/Complexity: Medium

Context: In addition to the expansion of the DVHRT overall capacity, this recommendation focused on potentially building and expanded or additional team with specific emphasis on involving agencies that have a specific culturally specific approach or population of focus. This recommendation is related to Marsy's Law.

Tier 3 Recommendation 2: Document current capacity for DV response and the expansions that have occurred recently to identify longer-term funding needs.

Status: In process

Funding needed: No

Difficulty/Complexity: Low

Context: Recent funding expansion for some DV services such as the expansion of DVHRT is short-term. This recommendation is to document that expansion and the resources needed for longer-term sustainability. This recommendation is tied to priority recommendations 1 and 11, but also to determine if there are other aspects of the expansion that need additional sustainability funding.

Response Coordination

Tier 3 Recommendation 3: Explore ways to address challenges with individuals receiving appropriate, culturally specific mental health services, resources, and therapy.

Status: Not started

Funding needed: Not yet known

Difficulty/Complexity: Medium

Context: Concerns were raised regarding the availability and access to culturally specific mental health services, particularly for those experiencing DV/IPV. This recommendation is intended to better understand the resources currently available, gaps in resources, and ways to better connect those experiencing DV/IPV to those resources.

Modifying Approach to DV Response

Tier 3 Recommendation 4: Consider having a multi-disciplinary, multi-sector team be part of the assessment of any additional potential expansion of various DV response approaches (including some recommended through this process) to help address concerns with the current system response.

Status: Not started

Funding needed: No

Difficulty/Complexity: Medium

Context: The focus is on ensuring that there is a broadly representative team (such as the group that was involved in the review process) to weigh in on potential expansion of various DV response approaches to help identify and address concerns with proposed changes.

Research and Evaluation

Tier 3 Recommendation 5: Based on existing research, best practices, and expertise from partner advocacy agencies, identify the recommended steps for individuals attempting to separate from a relationship in a DV or IPV situation. This may then lead to an opportunity for education with partner agencies and organizations that are part of the DV response.

Status: Not started

Funding needed: No

Difficulty/Complexity: Low

Context: This is intended to provide more background on the risks associated with separation and recommended steps to for how an individual can be safer when separating from a partner where this is DV/IPV history.

Tier 3 Recommendation 6: Review existing research on the connection between previous DV/IPV relationships and future risk for DV/IPV (risk transference) for both those experiencing victimization and those perpetrating abuse. Share the results of this literature review with those agencies or organizations involved in DV response to potentially enhance training in this area.

Status: Not started

Funding needed: No

Difficulty/Complexity: Medium

Context: The intent of this recommendation is to assess what is currently known about risk transference, specifically transferring risk of DV/IPV across different relationships (such as a new partner for someone with a history of DV/IPV with previous a previous partner(s)) and how this can inform agencies or organizations responding to DV/IPV situations.

Tier 3 Recommendation 7: Review existing literature on the connection between other types of abuse (child abuse, sexual assault) and risk for DV/IPV. Share findings to encourage additional focus on addressing earlier types of abuse that may related to future risk DV/IPV for both those perpetrating abuse and those experiencing victimization.

Status: Not started

Funding needed: No

Difficulty/Complexity: Low

Context: The intent of this recommendation is to assess what is currently known about heightened risk of DV/IPV for those with history of other types of abuse and how this can inform agencies or organizations responding to DV/IPV situations.

Emergency and Law Enforcement Response

Tier 3 Recommendation 8: Develop a policy to flag individuals as high-risk DV offenders by MPD and then conduct outreach through DV officers in Sensitive Crimes.

Status: In process

Funding needed: Yes

Difficulty/Complexity: Medium

Context: This recommendation is focused on identification of high-risk DV offenders for proactive follow-up. Specific criteria are under development, with consideration being given to risk transfer for victims and abusers. Resource needs will likely include an analyst and resources to track the flags and remove the flags.

Tier 3 Recommendation 9: Particularly for DV/IPV situations, explore changing the focus of the law enforcement investigation from incident-focused to family- or relationship-focused to examine upstream factors and the history of those involved.

Status: Not started

Funding needed: Not yet known

Difficulty/Complexity: High

Context: Given the complexity of DV relationships, this recommendation is to consider a more holistic approach to the investigation of DV/IPV incidents, to help identify potential prevention opportunities. This also connects to other recommendations with risk transference and other history of abuse (tier 3 recommendations 6 and 7).

Corrections Response

Tier 3 Recommendation 10: Investigate an option for automated notification to DOC of incidents involving a law enforcement response for someone who is on community supervision and has DV history.

Status: Not started

Funding needed: Yes

Difficulty/Complexity: Medium

Context: In addition to the efforts by DOC to work more closely with MPD to ensure the timely identification of calls, reports, or arrests involving individuals on community supervision for a DV-related incident (priority recommendation 18), this recommendation is to explore potential ways to automate that process to notify the DOC agent when an individual is involved in a law enforcement incident with MPD or potentially other law enforcement agencies.

Tier 3 Recommendation 11: Explore opportunities for DOC agents to communicate with an individual's family who has a DV history, is flagged as high-risk, and is absconding from community supervision as an approach to seeking assistance in locating the individual.

Status: Not started

Funding needed: Not yet known

Difficulty/Complexity: Medium

Context: Given the potential for on-going incidents in DV/IPV relationships, this recommendation is focused on enhancing the response to locate individuals who are absconding, specifically through communication with the individual's family. This connects to priority recommendation 3).

Tier 3 Recommendation 12: Consider a process change within DOC to amend warrants to indicate if an individual has been identified as high-risk for DV as the warrants are distributed nationwide.

Status: Not started

Funding needed: No

Difficulty/Complexity: Medium

Context: This recommendation is intended as another mechanism to ensure that there is the ability to share information across agencies related to individuals indicated to be high-risk for DV. It was noted that this would need an education component for law enforcement about the DV high-risk on warrants and what it means. It may also require expanding lethality training to suburban jurisdictions and other counties.

Tier 3 Recommendation 13: Review and potentially enhance the current DV treatment options offered by DOC to individuals who are incarcerated and have a DV/IPV history.

Status: Not started

Funding needed: Not yet known

Difficulty/Complexity: High

Context: The focus of this recommendation was to better understand the current DV programming offered by DOC and whether there are potential areas to enhance or expand that programming for individuals who are incarcerated and have a DV/IPV history.

Community Outreach, Education, and Awareness

Tier 3 Recommendation 14: Examine the curriculum currently used in high school on dating and DV/IPV/healthy relationships and identify potential opportunities for improvements.

Status: Not started

Funding needed: No

Difficulty/Complexity: Medium

Context: This recommendation focuses on the curriculum currently offered in high school to address IPV in dating relationships. This would consider both what is currently offered in the curriculum, whether students can opt out of this content, and whether there are opportunities for improvement.

Tier 3 Recommendation 15: Consider expanding ad hoc programming for youth/young adults on DV/IPV/healthy relationships in spaces outside of school (e.g., youth centers).

Status: Not started

Funding needed: Yes

Difficulty/Complexity: Medium

Context: Expanding ad hoc programming in other spaces was discussed as a complement to reviewing what is already underway in schools (tier 3 recommendation 14).

Tier 3 Recommendation 16: Identify existing local trainings or curriculum on healthy relationships and opportunities to expand or enhance this programming.

Status: Not started

Funding needed: Yes

Difficulty/Complexity: Medium

Context: This was discussed in the context of curriculum that had been offered by the Alma Center and the Parenting Network and understanding whether this is still being offered, and if so where and who can access the resources, as well as whether it could be enhanced or expanded.

Tier 3 Recommendation 17: Identify ways to further educate agency partners and community members about lethality risk with DV/IPV.

Status: In process

Funding needed: Not yet known

Difficulty/Complexity: Low

Context: This recommendation is focused on expanding the understanding of the lethality risk in DV/IPV situations. This is partially underway as specific agencies have outreach efforts such as

Sojourner's focus on "Know Your Risk." There is also consideration to providing a way for people to assess their own lethality risk.

Tier 3 Recommendation 18: Develop a process or campaign to increase community awareness of DV upstream prevention opportunities.

Status: Not started

Funding needed: Yes

Difficulty/Complexity: Medium

Context: The intent is to further community understanding of ways that DV/IPV can be prevented.

Criminal Justice System Outreach, Education, and Training

Tier 3 Recommendation 19: Ensure agents and outreach positions across criminal justice agencies and other DV/IPV organizations are aware of the resources available to support DV/IPV victims.

Status: Not started

Funding needed: No

Difficulty/Complexity: Low

Context: This recommendation is intended to ensure there is widespread understanding resources available to DV/IPV victims. An example specifically discussed was the Saving Our Sisters and Saving Our Selves (SOS) campaign (ashafamilyservices.org and [SOS Campaign Final Report](#)).

Tier 3 Recommendation 20: Explore opportunities for training on DV/IPV with a focus on reducing stigma specifically within law enforcement and other criminal justice agencies.

Status: Not started

Funding needed: Not yet known

Difficulty/Complexity: Low

Context: Some of the overarching concerns centered on the stigma that continues to surround DV/IPV situations. The intent is to identify and implement training with a focus on reducing stigma around DV/IPV particularly within law enforcement and other criminal justice agencies.