



CEDV Meeting Notes

Meeting: Council to End Domestic Violence (CEDV) Meeting
Date and time: April 25, 2024, 7:30a.m.
Location: Fairfax County Courthouse

**Council Members/
Designees Present:** Supervisor Dalia Palchik, Vice Chair Meredith McKeen, Community Coordinator Phylcia Woods, Adarsh Trehan, Ambreen Ahmed, Andrew Goldberg, Brenda McBorrow, Christopher Leonard, Christopher Revere (Gloria Addo-Ayensu), Corie O'Rourke (Paula Fitzgerald), Dawn Butorac, Judge Dipti Pidikiti-Smith (Michael Holleran), Elizabeth Teare, Geneviève Fine, James Walkinshaw, James Ferguson, Joe Meyer, John Cook, Kader Gumus, Kimberly Jaramillo, Leigh Taylor, Matt Thompson, Judge Maha-Rebekah Abejuela, Judge Divani Nadaraja, (Thomas Sotelo), Michael Becketts, Nora Mahoney, Paul Koshetar (Elizabeth Edwards-Talbot), Rachna Krishnan, Ramona Carroll, Judge Stephen Shannon (Penny Azcarate), Thomas Arnold, Toni Zollicoffer.

**Council Members Absent
(With no designee present):** Amanda Katz, Cecilia Ortega-Shew, Daryl Washington, Derwin Overton, Dominic Bonaiuto, Erin Schaible, Col. James Morris, Jhumka Gupta, John S. Butler, Kevin Davis, Lisa Sales, Col. Maggie A. DeBoard, Mattie Palmore, Nicole Lawrie, Paula Fitzgerald, Stacey Kincaid, Stephen Descano, Thomas Barnett.

Guests and Staff: Abigail Picard, Andréa Nunes-Gardner, Brittany Vera, Chris Davies, Derrick Ledford, Janice Clagett, Kacey Kirkland, Katrina Smith, Kendra Lee, Kimberly Parr, Marlon Murphy, Stacy Ziebell, Sultan Ludd, Thomazine Spurlock.

Note Taker: Rae Nguyen

AGENDA

- I. Introductions & Sexual Assault Awareness Month Photo
- II. Approval of January Meeting Minutes
- III. Equity Spotlight – Abigail Picard, DSVS Prevention and Education Coordinator
- IV. Updates from the Coordinated Community Response
- V. Accountability Workgroup Report Findings – John Cook
- VI. Open Forum

VII. Adjourn

I. Introductions & Sexual Assault Awareness Photo

Before delving into the agenda for the meeting, Community Coordinator Phylcia Woods conducted a vote for virtual participants to be able to join in and participate in the meeting. Council member Ramona Carroll joined the Zoom call from Springfield, VA and the council voted to allow participation virtually – moved by Joe Meyer and seconded by Geneviève Fine.

Woods thanked council members Kader Gumus and Meredith McKeen for their “excellent testimonies on behalf of the CEDV” at the Board of Supervisors budget hearings that took place.

Those who were present at the courthouse were invited to join a group photo in support of April being Sexual Assault Awareness Month. Participants were encouraged to have an item of teal (e.g. teal ribbon pins) or to hold signs with phrases in support of sexual assault survivors (e.g. “Believe Survivors”) when the photo was taken.

II. Approval of January Meeting Minutes

The motion to approve the November meeting minutes was first moved by Chris Leonard and seconded by Brenda McBorrough. The council then took a vote with no opposition or abstentions.

III. Equity Spotlight – Abigail Picard, DSVS Prevention and Education Coordinator

DSVS Prevention and Education Coordinator Abigail Picard presented on reproductive coercion to mark Sexual Assault Awareness Month and as part of the Equity spotlight. The participants were given a brief introduction to the concept through a video created by Futures Without Violence. Picard pointed out that while the video focused mostly on women with the capacity for pregnancy, anyone (regardless of gender) can be affected by reproductive coercion. The presentation then reviewed barriers to reporting interpersonal sexual violence, including:

- Cultural beliefs and stigma about sex and sexuality
- Individual beliefs about sex, sexuality, and relationships
- Having to “come out” about one’s sexuality to disclose the sexual violence
- Limited knowledge about consent and sexuality
- Legal gaps regarding sexual violence in relationships

To give participants a better idea, some examples of reproductive coercion were shared such as:

- Birth control sabotage (via birth control medications or other contraceptives like condoms)
- Pregnancy pressure (whether that is pressure to keep or terminate the pregnancy)
- Pregnancy coercion (e.g. guilt-tripping or threats directed at the pregnant person to pressure them into keeping or terminating the pregnancy)

The presentation then shifted to statistics about interpersonal violence and reproductive health from the Fairfax County Public Health Department. The statistics showed associations between interpersonal violence, reproductive health, and the health impacts of infants and children:

- There is an increased risk of maternal mortality.
- Homicide is the leading cause of maternal mortality.
 - This is two times higher than any other cause of death related to pregnancy.
- Black and African American women, youth, and young women (ages 10-24) have the highest risk of homicide – pregnant or not.
 - This group is also at a higher risk of pregnancy.
- Reproductive health inequities play a part in the reasons why the statistics above exist today.
- Women of color experience reproductive coercion at higher frequencies and severity than white women.
- The maternal mortality rate of black women is over three times that of white women.
- Those that are in the LGBTQ+ community are also at higher risk.

The presentation then shared statistics from the “Gains, Gaps & Goals: The Status of Women and Girls in Fairfax County” study that was presented on March 22, 2024. The presentation concluded with the sharing of additional resources from various partner organizations (e.g. Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance).

Toni Zollicoffer asked Abby to give context regarding the systemic issues and marginalization that affect black women. The discussion delved into how marginalized groups have a significantly harder time getting services like medical care. These situations occur more commonly in reproductive health settings and there are often barriers to getting services (e.g. lack of transportation). Thus, healthcare settings become a space where two systems that people are experiencing marginalization converge into one space. The conversation then branched off into discussing healthcare providers as a key point of entry to support those affected by reproductive coercion. Another way that healthcare providers may be able to educate and support those affected by reproductive coercion is through universal education.

IV. Updates from the Coordinated Community Response

Stacy Ziebell presented updates from the Coordinated Community Response (CCR):

- April is Sexual Assault Awareness month.
- Step Up 4 Kids held the 7th training for GALs (guardian ad litem).
- Protective order content for the website is in its final stages.
 - This is part of the court process walkthrough – the information on obtaining a PO is often difficult and/or confusing for clients to navigate. The idea was to take information, make it more accessible, and put it in a centralized location.
- DSVS completed another round of Tier One Domestic and Sexual Violence trainings.
 - This past February 2024 was the inaugural session of Tier One Sexual Violence.
- Accountability workgroup has a final report.
- Teen advocates from Neighborhood and Community Services and Second Story partnered

with Make A Scene Media and DSVS to create short videos to spread awareness and education around teen dating violence. Video was shown.

- The DV Network had a robust meeting around trends to discuss findings from the quarterly report.

Challenges and emerging issues seen in the CCR were discussed at the DV Network meeting and summarized for the council. Nora Mahoney was given kudos for her instrumental work in getting input, data, and discussions from people.

- The rapid advancement in technology and stalking is a major area of concern.
 - During the meeting, it was shared that the National Network Against Domestic Violence made an app called “Tech Safety” to help advocates talk about stalking, the many ways that it occurs, and prevention with clients.
- Financial and affordable housing issues are continuing to be seen.
- There have been issues with criminal prosecutions, primarily stemming from the lack of education around the criminal process.
- There is a need for more mental health professionals for adults, teens, and children – especially providers who are trauma informed.

V. Accountability Workgroup Report Findings – John Cook

Supervisor Palchik introduced the report, citing over two years of research and outreach that has gone into this final report. John Cook, the Chair of the accountability workgroup, started by thanking the council for the time to speak on this and the members of the committee for their hard work.

The purpose of this workgroup was to enhance processes to promote accountability for those who cause harm through domestic violence. The guiding focus was hearing the voices of survivors in all of the work that was done. The workgroup engaged in a community input process, although they acknowledged challenges related to that. There were no statistically valid findings from the research and input that was gathered. Some of the lessons that were learned included a lack of faith by some individuals in the existing resources and the need for a system outside of “the system”. The workgroup then proposed three recommendations.

Recommendation 1: the creation of a voluntary accountability system outside of the government or criminal justice system.

- This relies on community involvement in providing accountability (e.g. extended family, church, neighborhood, business groups, cultural organizations).
 - This is not dissimilar to programs like Narcotics Anonymous (NA) or Alcoholics Anonymous (AA).
- This voluntary system would be coordinated by “the Core” nonprofit coordinator.
 - The Core is a nonprofit organization that develops the framework, provides community outreach in design, provides training and support to community accountability efforts, protects confidentiality, uses evidence based practices, provides evaluation of methods, and develops measures of success.
 - The initial funding would come from a county grant and future funding would come

- from county grants, private funding, and other grant dollars.
- This is an unstructured system to deal with the specifics of the situation. Much of this is based on RISE, a program in New York that Brittany Davis introduced the workgroup to.

Recommendation 2: improve accountability within the judicial system.

- Current processes are not fully addressing the needs and risks.
- Current processes lack follow up to measure performance and success.
- Current plea deals are not tracked through court services.
- Recommendations are consistent with current court initiatives.
- Establishing a domestic violence accountability docket
- Sanctioning and sentencing guidelines
- Court-ordered restitution
- Waitlists (for various groups) and classes
- Information packets for options available in the court system.

Recommendation 3: improving post incarceration systems.

- Current systems does not capture all data and information.
- Pre-release services are needed for the person incarcerated and services are needed to support the survivor.
- Housing, mental health, and substance use services are needed.
- Coordination and communication
- Increased flexibility
- Court orders for Batterer Intervention Programs (BIPs)

John Cook wraps up the presentation of the report by stating that there needs to be a discussion about what ‘success’ means. He proposes that success does not have to mean the same thing for everyone, but “How else will we know if we’re succeeding if we are not measuring?”

The floor was then opened up for discussion. The first comment was about recommendation 1. Concerns were voiced around putting accountability into the hands of communities who may not view domestic violence as a matter that needs to be addressed. The discussion continued with acknowledgement that the existing system does not and cannot work for everyone (e.g. undocumented individuals, those who want a different system than the criminal system, and the situations where the criminal system does not always work). Other council members asked questions regarding the training groups that will be going to the community and their thoughts on getting more diverse community partners that have an existing rapport with the community. With time in the meeting running out, Supervisor Palchik offered engaging in another discussion at the July CEDV meeting to talk about next steps and other thoughts that council members might have. There was agreement to do that.

VI. Open Forum

No additions or comments during this time.

VII.Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 8:59 AM.

Next Meeting: July 11, 2024