

SONOMA COUNTY
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
DEATH REVIEW TEAM
2002 FINAL REPORT

Domestic Violence Death Review Team

2002 Report

Kathy DeLoe, Chair 2002

Larry Scoufos, Chair 2003

Membership:

Det. Sgt. Steve Bair, Santa Rosa Police Department
Catherine Boyle, Sonoma County Probation Department
Barbara Branagan, RN/NP, Department of Health Services
Det. Sgt. Greg Contos, Sonoma County Sheriff's Department
Arthur Ewart, Mental Health Division, Department of Health Services
Dr. Deane Defontes, Petaluma Health Center
Chief Deputy Kathleen D. DeLoe, Chair, District Attorney's Office
Linda Hodson, Human Services-Family, Youth & Children's Services
Sarah Jennings, LCSW, Kaiser Medical Center
Susan McCauley, YWCA
Dr. Ikechi Ogan and Dr. Bolduc, Forensic Medical Group
Det. Sgt. Willie Wallman, Sonoma County Sheriff's Department

Purpose:

The purpose of the Domestic Violence (DV) Death Review Team is:

- To reduce or eliminate incidences of domestic violence by determining the number of domestic violence related deaths in Sonoma County;
- To review resources;
- To analyze patterns of abuse; and
- To explore ways to improve the response to domestic violence in our community.

Executive Summary:

- Two suicides and one homicide were related to domestic violence in Sonoma County in 2002.
- Domestic Violence crime reports, restraining orders, and filings by the District Attorney

(DA) decreased in 2002.

- Temporary Restraining Order Petitions filed through YWCA and other legal services for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault rose from 5,452 in 01-02 to 9,699 in 02-03, showing a rise of 56%.
- The YWCA 24-Hour Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Hotline Calls received 3,177 calls in 2001-02 and 5,427 in 2002-03 for an increase of 59%.
- Nationwide, victims report domestic violence less than 20% of the time.
- For the first time, the District Attorney filed charges against a health provider who failed to report injury from domestic violence.
- Children who witness or are present during domestic violence are now being considered “victims” of domestic violence.
- A Child Protective Services and Mental Health Representative joined the DV Death Review Team.
- Data collection for deaths related to domestic violence needs to be updated.

Summary:

In 2002, the Sonoma County DV Death Review Team continued the work that commenced with its formation in December 1996. The DV Death Review Team held meetings every other month throughout the year with representatives from the above membership list.

Sonoma County Sheriff's Department 2002 statistics indicate that domestic violence crime reports decreased by 7% over the previous year and restraining order violations decreased by 6%. The total of all domestic related reports criminal and non-criminal remained at the same level as in 2001. The DA's Office 2002 statistics indicate that domestic violence and restraining order cases submitted for review declined by approximately 24% over the previous year. The DA's filing rate changed slightly from 54% to 47% of cases submitted in 2002.

The YWCA's data and anecdotal trend analysis reveals increasing numbers of victims of domestic violence report strangulation, and more women report sexual assault as a common experience in their marriage and that their child(ren) were conceived while they were raped. More young women report battering in dating relationships and, when the perpetrator is involved in a gang, these young women find that both the perpetrator and other gang members target them and

their families.

The conflicting trends of decreasing domestic violence activity reported by the Sheriff and DA's Office and increasing services provided to victims of domestic violence through the YWCA may reflect that women are more likely to seek services for domestic violence but still chose not to report it to law enforcement.

Research shows that children who witness, or are present when domestic violence occurs, are adversely affected. Nationwide, few services are available for them. The Human Services Emergency Response Unit received training on the effects of domestic violence on children. This year a Child Protective Services (CPS) representative joined the DV Death Review Team.

There were two suicides and one homicide related to domestic violence reviewed in 2002. In 2001, a female was the perpetrator of homicide for the first time since the Domestic Violence Death Review began in 1996. That trend did not continue. In the three cases reviewed in 2002, the perpetrators were all male. (See 2002 Case Summaries, page 6.)

For the first time, it was known that a domestic violence victim sought services from a medical provider who did not report the domestic violence. The medical provider saw the woman twice, the last time two days before her suicide. The DA filed charges against the medical provider who is a mandated reporter. Prosecution was not pursued and the incident was used to train the medical provider.

In networking with other DV Death Review Teams around the country, it was determined that data collection has changed since this team began reviewing deaths in 1997. Data collection tools were reviewed from other counties and states, and results of the reviews will be used to update the data collection tools for 2003 cases.

The DV Death Review Team collaborated with the Sonoma County Domestic Violence Action Subcommittee, Courts and Law Enforcement, to address common domestic violence issues.

Accomplishments:

- Child Protective Services and Mental Health joined the DV Death Review Team.
- The team continued to collaborate with other service providers in Sonoma County.
- Data collection tools for deaths related to domestic violence were compiled and tested.

1003 Work Plan

- The DV Death Review Team will:
- Examine homicides, suicides, and accidental deaths related to domestic violence and determine if there were gaps in services that may have prevented the deaths.
- Update Protocols and the Data Collection Form.
- Make recommendations to the Law Enforcement Subcommittee.
- Communicate with the Sonoma County Domestic Violence Action Committee.
- Continue to focus on the effects of domestic violence on children.
- Work with the Sexual Assault Team Planning Committee to explore the connection of domestic violence and sexual assault.
- Work with the community to provide training for mandated domestic violence reporters to help understand domestic violence and reporting requirements.
- Ensure Law Enforcement continues training on domestic violence.
- Include the Sonoma County mental health community in domestic violence prevention efforts.

2002 Cas summaries

Case 1: Reviewed 3/7/02. Suicide. A 51-year-old Caucasian male was being sought by police for a reported assault on his former girlfriend and her new boyfriend on 1/31/02. As two police officers approached his pickup, he lit it on fire and burned to death in a public parking lot. The assailant and girlfriend had lived together 3 years and broken up on 8/17/01. She had a history of forgery (felony), stolen property, bad checks, and marijuana use. He had a history of weapons use (felony), false imprisonment, and DUI. Investigated by Santa Rosa PD.

Case 2: Reviewed 3/7/02. Suicide. 33-year-old Caucasian female was violently assaulted by her boyfriend (21 yr. old Caucasian) on 1/2/02. They had a dating relationship for 1 year and lived together for 2 months. Punch marks, bite marks and other bruising was evident. Visited her chiropractor for injuries on 1/2/02 and chiropractor did not report nor document the injuries. The domestic violence victim committed suicide by asphyxiation at her residence on 1/6/02. Investigated by the Sheriff's Office.

Case 3: Reviewed 11/7/02. Homicide. 39-year-old Caucasian male kicked wife, threw her down the stairs and strangled her on 9/3/02. 46-year-old Caucasian wife died in their home. Couple was married for 13 years. She had adult children by a previous marriage who were adopted by perpetrator. Perpetrator had a history of alcohol and methamphetamine use. Investigated by Petaluma Police Department.

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Age: Average age DV victim Average age perp Average age suicide Age of children killed	31 years 43 years 14 years	25 years 23 years 3 weeks	57 years 65 years None	53 years 50 years 36 years None	38 years	43 years 36 years 42 years None
Gender: Victim of DV Perpetrator of DV Suicide	4 F, 1 M 4 M	3 F, 1 M 3 M	2 F 2 M	1 F, 1 M 1 F, 1 M 1 F, 2 M	M	3 F 3 M 1 M, 1 F
Sexual Orientation (S=straight; G=Gay): Victim Perpetrator Suicide	4 S, 1 G 3 S, 1 G	3 S (+ 1 infant) 3 S	2 S 2 S	2 S 2 S 3 S	S	3 S 3 S 2 S
Race* Victim Perpetrator	4 C, 1 H 3 C, 1 H	1 B, 3 C 1 AA, 2 C	1 H, 1 J 1 C, 1 H	3 C, 2 H 2 C	C	3 C 3 C
Location of deaths:	5, family home 1, neighbor's home 1, boyfriend's home (in another county)	3, family home 1, ex-husband's home 1, on freeway	3, family home	3, family home 1, in field 1 in homeless shelter	Workplace	1 Parking Lot 2 Home
Weapons:	4 guns, 1 kitchen knife	Hands, kitchen knife, vase	1 hammer, 1 gun	1 hands, 2 guns, 1 overdose, 1 CO ₂	Carbon dioxide	1 Fire 1 Carbon dioxide 1 Hands