

Sub-Category A-i: Advocacy

COMPENDIUM OF RESEARCH ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

1993-2020

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Category A: JUSTICE & RELATED SYSTEMS

i. Advocacy

1997-WT-VX-0006:	An Evaluation of Family Advocacy With a Team Approach
Amount:	\$150,934
PI:	Arlene Weisz
Status:	Completed

This project, a partnership between researchers, DV advocates, and criminal justice professionals, plans to evaluate the services provided by advocates in police precincts and at the prosecutor's office. The goal is to examine the effectiveness of advocacy using: (1) the rate of completed prosecution and the rate of guilty findings or pleas of guilty; (2) the rate of repeat victimization measured by victim reports, police call reports, arrests, warrant requests, and perceived safety of victims; and (3) satisfaction with services offered. The project will include an ongoing process and outcome evaluation of the efficacy of advocacy services, consisting of formative reports to provide feedback for practitioners and a reference point for interpreting outcomes. The outcome evaluation will employ a quasi-experimental design to include victim surveys and archival research. Research questions will address the relationship between advocacy and victim safety, and between advocacy and victims' responses to the criminal justice system. The survey research will compare 250 female victims in two precincts served by the precinct level intervention team to 250 female victims in two precincts with no precinct intervention team but with access to advocacy at the prosecutor's office and at court. Archival research on these cases will compare the rates of successful prosecution of the abusers, rates of subsequent calls to the police by the victims, and rates of subsequent arrests and warrants against the abusers.

Product: NCJ# 187107/187110

Evaluation of Victim Advocacy Within a Team Approach (2001) – A. Weisz, D. Canales-Portalatin, N. Nahan

Using 1057 police reports with 242 telephone interviews, 24% of interviewees had received some type of advocacy. The effectiveness of advocacy was examined through the rate of completed prosecution, the rate of repeat victimization measured by victim reports, police call reports, arrests, warrant requests, and perceived safety of victims; and victim satisfaction with services. Results indicated that the DV teams and advocacy offered by the community were just beginning steps in helping battered women, who are often grappling with multiple problems. The researchers found that although the women appreciated a serious and sympathetic response to incidents of violence by criminal justice personnel, these services were neither intensive enough to increase victims' participation in the prosecution of batterers nor able to increase their safety. There were no associations between a guilty verdict/plea and cases coming from precincts with DV teams or victims who received advocacy. Similarly, there was no association between receiving advocacy and the reasons for case dismissal. And finally, there was no relationship between the victims' living in precincts with or without DV teams or those victims receiving advocacy and the filing of subsequent police reports.

Additional NCJ Citations: 194769, 199718, 210058

1997-WT-VX-0009:	An Evaluation of Victim Advocacy in Ohio
Amount:	\$114,463
PI:	Diana Ramos
Status:	Completed

This project will develop a better understanding of how victim advocacy services in Ohio are defined and delivered and assess the effectiveness of those services in helping women to pursue adjudication of the perpetrator and achieve goals in personal functioning. Data will be collected from urban agencies in Ohio that receive funding from the Office of Criminal Justice Services. The first phase of the research is qualitative and will gather in-depth information from program directors, staff, and clients on victim advocacy models. In the second phase, two or more agencies will be selected to receive training in single-case evaluation methods to assess the effectiveness of victim advocacy services. A multiple baseline research design will be used to evaluate the impact of systematic practice evaluation on service outcomes for 100 cases in two sites. The outcome evaluation of the advocacy services will provide a comprehensive assessment of individual change in eight domains: home, family, psychological/emotional, medical, educational/vocational, legal, social/recreational, and safety/crisis planning.

Product: NCJ# 182368

Victim Advocacy Services in Urban Programs: A Description by Staff and Clients of Service Provision and Gaps (2000) – C. Bohmer, D. Bronson, H. Hartnett, J. Brandt, K. Kania

This project focused on the evaluating victim advocacy services available in Ohio through the VAWA S.T.O.P. Formula Grants. Phase one mailed a survey to 13 Ohio victim service agencies (shelters, legal services, prosecution and crisis intervention services) to gather comprehensive descriptive services of funding, staffing, victims served and other demographics, which was followed by focus groups with clients and staff. Resources and services that were helpful to victims included transportation, cellular phones, child care, counseling, and support. Gaps in services included safety issues, system problems (e.g. lack of punishment of offenders, problems with divorce and custody), and financial resources to secure housing and other services, and lack of public understanding. Phase 2 developed ways to evaluate service outcomes and focused on evaluating the impact of training law enforcement officers. A number of themes emerged from the client and staff focus groups as most clients and service providers spoke of advocacy in operational terms. The concerns expressed focused on tangible goods and services, emotional support, case management, education, services to children, legal services, and visitation supervision.

Additional NCJ Citations: 199018, 202564

1998-WE-VX-0031:	Evaluation of Special Session Domestic Violence: Enhanced Advocacy and Interventions
Amount:	\$73,594
PI:	Catherine M. Havens
Status:	Completed

This project seeks to understand more about the effectiveness of specialized DV court sessions, and the enhanced advocacy, supervision, and offender interventions they provide for ensuring victim safety and reducing offender recidivism. The project aims to: 1) identify which types of pretrial supervision are most effective, and for which defendants; 2) learn how the role of the specialized victim advocate is affected by increased resources and court emphasis on sanctions; 3) learn which types of probation supervision are most effective and for which defendants; and 4) learn more about the similarities and differences in the experiences of African American, Latina, and Caucasian victims of DV in the context of a special court which provides enhanced advocacy and extra resources focused on offender accountability. The researcher/practitioner measures will be developed to describe the services and collaborative contracts provided by: the specialized family violence victim advocates; the intensive pretrial supervision program staff; the treatment program staff; and by adult probation officers. Measures will be tested with 225 DV defendants and in-depth interviews will be conducted with 60 DV victims, drawing equally from African American, Latina, and Caucasian women.

Product: NCJ# 197858/197860

Special Session Domestic Violence Courts: Enhanced Advocacy and Interventions (2002) – E. Lyon

The study sought to understand more about the effectiveness of specialized DV court sessions, and the enhanced advocacy, supervision, and offender interventions they provide for ensuring victim safety and reducing recidivism. Interviews were conducted with DV victim advocates working at three specialized courts, and 60 DV victims whose current or former partner had appeared in one of those courts. Data were also analyzed through an automated family violence victim service record developed specifically for this study. The study found that: 1) being heard is imperative to women who have experienced domestic abuse, which strongly influences their reaction to legal system interventions; 2) police and advocates are key to women’s experience of legal system interventions; 3) women’s experience and decisions are strongly influenced by their children’s needs; 4) many women do not consider their experience of violence to be their most pressing life issue; 5) their assessment of risk, circumstance, and priorities often change during court case processing; 6) language and culture may contribute to differences within Latina DV victims compared to African-American and Caucasian victims; and 7) although nearly half of the women were no longer in the abusive relationship, many women did not want the relationship to end; rather, they wanted an end to the violence.

2000-WE-VX-0014:	Impact Evaluation of Special Session Domestic Violence: Enhanced Advocacy and Interventions
Amount:	\$347,009
PI:	Eleanor Lyon

Status: Completed

This project will evaluate how EVOLVE, Connecticut's new 26-week curriculum for male DV offenders, affects the participants and their female partners. Project objectives include: (1) learning if men who complete EVOLVE have lower rates of repeat physical and psychological abuse and whether their partners feel safer; (2) comparing characteristics of men who do and do not complete EVOLVE; (3) learning how partners of men with multiple arrests or serious charges assess the risks they face and options available to them, how they react to the legal system intervention, and how better advocacy and community resources affect their safety; and (4) developing measures to improve initial screening of defendants and assessments of victim safety.

Product: NCJ# 210362/210363

Impact Evaluation of Special Session Domestic Violence: Enhanced Advocacy and Interventions – E. Lyon

Program EVOLVE, implemented in three urban courts in 2000, addresses issues of fathering and the impact of violence on children. In addition, the program integrates substance abuse education and includes a multi-session component on sexuality and sexual violence. The evaluation focused on: (1) the program's impact on subsequent rates of physical and emotional abuse, partners' safety, and safety planning; (2) rates of program completion compared to the more general 26-week programs in place in other courts; and (3) how the victim advocate's role was affected. The evaluation used a sample of 420 men who attended at least one session of EVOLVE and a sample of 124 men who attended at least 1 session at the comparison site. Data were collected through interviews at program intake and at 3, 6, and 12 months after intake. The two groups completed their programs at similar rates: 63.5% for EVOLVE and 65.2% for the comparison group. Regarding recidivism, 6 months after leaving the program, 83.4% of those who successfully completed EVOLVE had no subsequent arrests leading to conviction, compared to 58.3% of those negatively discharged from the program. Recidivism patterns were similar across racial/ethnic groups for program completers. Victim advocates' primary concerns were inconsistent court responses, limited resources, and clarification of their role in relation to group facilitators.

For an index of all grants, go to ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh241/files/archives/ncjrs/223572-grants-index.pdf.