

An Update on Domestic Violence

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Introduction

Domestic violence has emerged from behind closed doors and is now acknowledged as a serious societal problem. The League of Women Voters of Virginia completed its first study of domestic violence in June 1992. This local study is an informational update of the state effort. It looks at changes in policy at national and state levels and focuses on programs and practices in the field of domestic violence in Fairfax County.

The Nature of Domestic Violence

The overwhelming majority of victims of domestic/family violence are women: 85 percent now, down from 95 percent 10 years ago. Virginia law expanded the definition of *family* from “. . . spouse, former spouse or a person who has a child in common with the abuser . . .,” to include the abuser’s siblings, parents, grandparents, grandchildren, and step-relatives, regardless of where they live, and in-laws if they live in the household of the abuser. Also included are individuals who cohabit or cohabited with the person within the previous year and any children of either of them residing in the same home with the abuser. Cohabitation does not include same-sex relationships.

In the estimation of Fairfax Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court staff, about 85 percent of cases brought before the court are male-female relationships. This paper uses the vocabulary and describes abuse in terms that fit this reality, with the understanding that not all abusers are men and not all abuse involves intimate partners. Abuse may also occur in the relationships of parents and adult children, and between siblings.

Family Abuse

Domestic violence/family abuse is no respecter of age, race, education, income, social class, or religion. It is defined in the *Family Violence Reference Manual* of the Virginia Commission on Family Violence Prevention as a pattern of abusive behaviors by which one partner establishes control over the other through use of physical violence and/or psychological abuse. It may involve hitting, choking, using a weapon, name calling, and/or threats to do harm or take children away. It may be forced sexual contact, forbidding contact with family or friends or use of a car, economic control,

such as discouraging or forbidding employment, or controlling all family finances and assets.

Under Virginia law, as amended by the 2002 General Assembly and effective on July 1, 2002, family abuse will be defined as “. . . any act involving violence, force, or threat, including, but not limited to, any forceful detention, which results in bodily injury or places one in reasonable apprehension of bodily injury . . .” While physical violence is a crime, Virginia law does not recognize emotional abuse.

The Abuser

The *Family Violence Reference Manual* defines the abuser as someone who is controlling, has very low self-esteem, and may be excessively jealous and possessive. He believes in a rigid gender role definition and may fear that the woman is too good for him and might leave. The abuser may be unable to express his frustrations in non-violent ways, often has a history of alcohol or drug abuse, and tends to blame others for his actions

I don't want anyone going to jail. I just want the violence to stop.

Victim at a protective order hearing

The Victim

The victim of abuse also has low self-esteem and accepts traditional gender roles in the family. According to the *Family Violence Reference Manual*, the victim may stay because her culture, her religion, or she herself believes that marriage vows must be kept and that family violence is acceptable. Fear of what may happen to her and her children, and what the family might say, is a powerful force that keeps the woman from leaving, as is fear of reprisal by the abuser. The victim may also stay because of economic dependence, isolation, or because she loves the man and hopes he will change. Over time the abuse may so destroy the victim’s self concept that she descends into depression and learned helplessness. The victim believes that she cannot do anything by herself and is responsible for her abuse, and that if only she were a better wife or mother and did things “right” the abuse would stop. Unless the abuse is caught early, the situation will almost never improve.

The Cycle of Violence

Abusive relationships follow a predictable pattern. First there is a period of tension-building characterized by increasing stress, followed by the abuser's exploding in rage and committing violent acts. The victim may want to leave at this point. However, the batterer typically asks for forgiveness, promises the violence will never happen again and may be charming and give gifts—the honeymoon phase. Over time the cycle may repeat and the violence may escalate.

Incidence of Domestic Violence

Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey, completed in 1996 and reported in 2000, interviewed a nationally representative sample of 8,000 women and 8,000 men. It showed that nearly 25 percent of women and 7.6 percent of men were physically assaulted and/or raped by an intimate partner at some point in their lifetime. Almost 5 percent of surveyed women and 0.6 percent of men said that they had been stalked by such a partner during their life. The survey also shows that women victims reported approximately one-fifth of rapes, a quarter of physical assaults, and half of the stalkings to the police. Men reported fewer incidents—about 14 percent of assaults and 36 percent of stalkings. Virginians Against Domestic Violence data show 129 family violence fatalities in the state in 2000.

Changes During the Last Ten Years—VAWA

The public attitude toward domestic violence has changed significantly. It is now considered a serious social problem—a crime rather than a matter to be settled within the family. And the negative effect on children—the silent victims—of witnessing domestic violence has also been recognized.

In a national effort to stop domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking, Congress authorized the Violence Against Women Office in the Department of Justice to implement the 1994 Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). The office advises federal agencies and Congress on policy regarding justice for women, promotes awareness of the problems of violence against women, and helps devise solutions. It also administers over \$200 million a year in grants to states, tribes, and local communities to support victims through use of legal aid, advocacy, law enforcement protection, and emergency shelter. In FY01 Virginia programs received \$152,263,278. Over a two-year period, \$348,000 will go to Legal Services of Northern Virginia to represent victims of domestic violence. A grant to the Texas Council on Family Violence funds a 24-hour national hotline. In 2000, the policy arm of the office, the National Council on Violence published “An Agenda for

the Nation on Violence Against Women,” a comprehensive blueprint for individual, community, and government action.

State

Virginia Commission on Family Violence Prevention

Change in dealing with domestic violence has also come to Virginia. In 1990, the Attorney General appointed a task force of representatives to recommend legislation and education initiatives. In 1994, the General Assembly established the Virginia Commission on Family Violence Prevention, which included judges, legislators, other elected officials, and citizens as members. During its six-year term, the commission convened 27 different task groups to study a broad range of issues regarding family violence.

The commission and its predecessor task force were instrumental in bringing about changes in the *Code* that created a definitive and decisive law enforcement response, expanded family abuse protective orders, and established a stalking statute. The commission also developed informational packets for the general public, schools, and businesses, and training materials for professionals dealing with domestic violence. It provided technical assistance to local communities, and studied and made recommendations about child witnesses to family violence, among other issues. When the commission concluded its work in 2000, the Virginia State Crime Commission established the Family Violence Subcommittee to continue development and implementation of policies and legislation on family violence.

Virginians Against Domestic Violence

For more than 20 years, Virginians Against Domestic Violence (VADV), a coalition of individuals, agencies, and organizations, has been working to combat domestic violence and sexual assault with education and advocacy. They operate a toll-free statewide 24-hour hotline, produce public awareness materials on a variety of family violence related topics, provide technical assistance to local domestic violence and batterer programs, and monitor and develop policies affecting abused women and their children. The Training Institute, established in 1996, offers training around the state to the professional community and produces a biannual newsletter.

In 1996 VADV, Virginians Alligned Against Sexual Assault, the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS), and the Virginia Department of Health cooperatively developed an integrated statewide data collection system for domestic

violence programs and sexual assault centers—VAdata. It became operational in 1999 and published its first statewide report in October 2000.

Program Certification

To improve the quality of services to victims of family abuse, clinical standards and criteria for certification of programs serving the victims and for batterer intervention programs (BIPs) were established in 1998. VADV developed and administers certification for domestic violence programs which must be public or nonprofit agencies and provide free and confidential services without discrimination. In addition to assuring range and quality of services, the certification gives the VDSS a basis for selecting programs for funding.

Standards for BIPs were developed and certification is administered jointly by both VADV and the recently formed Coalition for the Treatment of Abusive Behaviors. Goals for these programs are safety and justice for the victim, offender accountability, and community collaboration. They follow the philosophy that family abuse is a crime, not an illness, and that the program is to educate batterers and change their behavior. Also, standards allow programs to charge fees.

Fairfax County

Fairfax County Population

The population of Fairfax County population increased by 18.5 percent, from 818,589 in the 1990 Census to 964,712 in 2000. More significant has been the increase in population diversity. The proportion of whites in the population decreased from 77.5 percent in 1990 to 64.4 percent in 2000. Immigrants now are about 25 percent of all residents, up from 15.6 percent a decade earlier; the largest group is Asian, followed by Hispanic. About 35 percent of county households speak a language other than English at home. For the Justice System and for domestic violence service providers this means dealing with cultures that view domestic violence differently and making interpreters and/or a bilingual staff a necessity.

Services

Education is needed to promote prevention of abuse and to stop the cycle of abuse. It takes intervention to stop the cycle of violence and prevent further abuse. The abuser needs help in learning non-violent ways of dealing with anger, resentment, and hurt, characteristics of a troubled relationship. The victim needs help whether she chooses to stay in the relationship or escape it. To serve these needs various programs have been developed in Fairfax County.

Prevention and Outreach

Schools. Studies show that violence is a learned behavior which can be avoided by teaching children to solve problems without violence. Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) teach students how to avoid violence through programs in conflict resolution and peer mediation as early as fourth or fifth grade, and through Family Life Education (FLE), which is taught at all levels. In high school, topics such as avoiding date rape and violence are introduced, and students learn how to avoid or get help in dangerous situations.

This spring the FCPS’s Center for Promoting Family Learning and Involvement, a special program which addresses family problems, will offer a six-hour course to adults to prevent or reduce family violence. It will emphasize the effect of violence on children’s emotional, physical, behavioral, and intellectual well being and is designed to break the cycle of violence.

Area II Pilot. In 1997, in response to concerns in the Hispanic community, the Board of Supervisors funded a two-year Domestic Violence Pilot Project, Region II, Department of Human Services (DHS), to provide linguistically competent and culturally appropriate services to deal with domestic violence in the Bailey’s Crossroads area. Representatives from public agencies and immigrant groups developed a model with a focus on prevention, education and training of service

24-hour Hotlines	
National Hotline	800.799.SAFE
Virginia’s Family Violence and Sexual Assault Hotline	800.838.8238
Fairfax County’s Victim Assistance Network (VAN) Hotline	703.360.7273

providers about cultural differences, and developing community partnerships with the three largest minority communities (Hispanic, Korean, and Vietnamese) to learn from them how best to reach the target population. The project has contracted three minority part-time outreach workers to work in their respective communities, explaining the American system to their people and serving as a resource on available services.

The Domestic Violence Community Council, composed of representatives from community organizations, faith-based groups, and public agencies, advise on planning and implementation of the project. With the help of TV, radio, fliers, and newspapers in the target groups’ languages, the project has spread the message that domestic violence is

illegal. Social services of the communities now get more calls and there is a support group for Hispanic women. Despite strong community support, the program was not funded for FY02, nor will it be for FY03. It is expected to continue with reallocated funds.

Counseling Services

Fairfax County Victim Assistance Network (VAN) operates a 24-hour hotline for victims of domestic violence and rape. This service offers information on the medical, legal, and psychological aspects of domestic violence, escort and advocacy for clients who need assistance in securing safe shelter, medical treatment, or help in following through with prosecution or other legal matters, and links to other programs, such as jobs and social services. Seventy percent of crises line workers are volunteers compared to 90 percent 10 years ago. They use phonetically written scripts in an array of languages, asking the caller to give a number for a return call or to call back when bilingual staff will be available. Requests for services have increased from 3,983 calls (790 of these were first-time domestic violence calls) in 1990 to 4,333 calls in FY01 (967 were first-time domestic violence calls; 26 were first-time stalking calls).

VAN also offers counseling through ongoing telephone contact and eight-week support groups at three locations around the county. A part-time staff person provides community education about both domestic violence and sexual assault for groups, schools, organizations, and the general public. VAN is a Fairfax County program with a staff of 10: two full time; the others half time and is certified.

The Center for Multicultural Human Services (CMHS), a nonprofit mental health organization, provides outreach to potential victims in ethnic communities where domestic violence is considered too private to discuss. CMHS has an ongoing Latina abused women's support group which served 81 women in FY01. About half had husbands in BIP; others were self-referred and came either alone or with partners. CMHS is funded by grants, government subsidies and donations, and offers parenting and health classes.

Religious Communities. Churches in the Bailey's Crossroads area offer services to abused immigrant women: St. Paul Catholic Church (Korean) and St. Anthony's Catholic Church (Hispanic). The Muslim community in Herndon/Reston/Leesburg offers counseling to Muslim women, often in their own language, and is seeking funds for a shelter for Muslim women leaving abusive situations.

Shelters

Three shelters in Fairfax County are designed specifically to meet the needs of abused women and their children: the Women's Shelter, Bethany House, and Safe Places. The Women's Shelter and Bethany House offer crisis beds at undisclosed locations. Safe Places and Bethany House have transitional shelter programs. The Women's Shelter is the only public facility and is certified. The other shelters are private nonprofit agencies funded by both public and private monies. Fairfax County has the lowest shelter bed-to-population ratio in the metropolitan Washington area.

The **Women's Shelter**, with 12 beds, served 230 women and children and turned away 239 in FY00. This year a grant from the state Department of Social Services added 5 beds, but because of state budget shortfalls, staff are unsure if the grant will be renewed. The shelter will double its capacity to 24 and extend the length of stay from three to four weeks when the expansion approved in the FY02 budget is implemented this spring. The shelter's program offers emotional support, counseling, court advocacy, and referrals to meet housing, medical, employment, and other needs.

Bethany House of Northern Virginia has 31 beds in four shelters in the Falls Church area where families may stay for four to six months until housing and job arrangements have been made. The program offers life skills training and education. Bethany House is the only shelter accepting out-of-state victims. In FY01 Bethany house helped 361 women and 461 children. It also has a two-year follow-up program to prevent recurrence of abusive behavior.

Safe Places is a two-year transitional shelter program. It has 10 locations around Fairfax County, ranging in size from two to five bedrooms, and serves families referred by emergency shelters that meet the HUD definition of homeless. Clients are provided with a full range of services to prepare them for independent life in the community.

When the domestic violence shelters have no room, victims may stay at shelters not specifically designed to meet their needs. These include family shelters—**Mondloch House** in Mount Vernon (45 beds), **Shelter House** in Falls Church (42 beds), and the **Emery Rucker Shelter** in Reston (houses 30 families a year), and shelters for single people—**Ethel Kennedy Shelter** in Mount Vernon (12 women and 38 men) and the **Bailey's Crossroads Community Shelter** (14 women and 36 men). All offer a variety of transitional services. When the shelters are full, victims are referred to shelters outside Fairfax, including Washington, DC. There is no follow-up.

A Fairfax survey of homeless people on January 24, 2002, found that 30 percent (111 families) were victims of domestic violence; 7 percent of single people had been abused.

Treatment Services for Abusers

Anger and Domestic Abuse Prevention and Treatment (ADAPT) is a fully certified, Fairfax County-run batterer intervention program (BIP). It teaches personal responsibility for one's actions and includes a six-hour substance abuse education unit. The program operates at three locations and consists of an 18-week group counseling program. ADAPT also offers an eight-week anger management program for non-abuse anger problems. Non-English speakers are referred to the Center for Multicultural Human Services. Participants may also be seen individually until a group is available. The program receives approximately 200 referrals a year; approximately half graduate. About 65 percent are court ordered and the rest are "wife ordered" (she threatens legal action). Participants pay a fee of \$480 for the 18-week program; the eight-week anger management program costs \$260.

Opportunities, Alternatives and Resources of Fairfax County, Inc. (OAR) works directly with the criminal justice system to provide transitional services to help offenders who have completed their sentences re-enter the community. It offers an 18-week batterer intervention program through group counseling sessions. The BIP program was provisionally certified in 2001 and has 30 clients in three groups. Participants pay \$300; indigent participants may perform community service at the rate of one hour for \$10 of the fee. About 80 percent of participants complete the program. Most referrals come from the criminal justice system.

OAR receives about half of its funding from Fairfax County. The remainder comes from state and private sources. Future plans include BIP programs for women and Spanish-speaking men in 2002 and, eventually, a youth program.

The **Center for Multicultural Human Services (CMHC)** also has a BIP. Funded by Fairfax County, it received provisional certification in 2001. It offers an 18-week group therapy course for Spanish speakers. There are four groups for Latino men; groups for Koreans and Vietnamese are in planning stages. Clients with no group in their language are offered individual therapy. Clients are court ordered and pay \$540. There were 105 Latino men who completed the program in 2000, with 140 in 2001; additional services for spouse and family are provided at no extra cost.

In addition, there are several uncertified men's programs which offer anger management. The **United Methodist Anger**

Management Group in Annandale is a privately funded, nonprofit serving court-ordered men in group therapy sessions for eight weeks, serving about 100 men each year. The **Anger and Stress Management Center** in Fairfax provides a full range of counseling services to about 250 men and women a year; most referrals are court ordered. About 100 batterers are seen in 50-minute group sessions for 25 weeks. The **Women's Center** in Vienna runs men's anger management groups three or four times a year for six to eight weeks. The groups have about 20 participants and include offenders convicted of domestic violence.

Legal Process in Virginia

Police

Initial Call. Society's initial response to domestic abuse is a police officer answering a domestic disturbance call. Fairfax County police receive specialized training in handling domestic situations. If the officer determines that the call is a domestic dispute—an argument where no one has been beaten or injured—he calms the situation and leaves. Domestic abuse situations used to be handled the same way. Now *Code* requires that if the ". . . officer finds probable cause . . . he must arrest the primary physical aggressor unless the officer can indicate special circumstances . . ." He must also petition, by phone, for an Emergency Protective Order (EPO) from a judge or a magistrate if an arrest is made or if no arrest is made but the officer believes there is probable danger of further acts of family abuse. Police are now required to advise the victim of community and legal resources. An officer may, upon request, transport or arrange for the transportation of the abused person to a hospital, safe shelter, or magistrate's office.

Whether or not an arrest is made, the officer must file a written report of the call. A copy of the report goes to the Victim/Witness Services Section in the Police Department, which assists victims and witnesses to enable them to testify. Staff and interpreters are available around the clock. While they handle other victim crimes, such as burglary and rape, over half of their cases involve domestic violence. In about half of these cases, only Spanish is spoken. Since 1996 Victim Services can provide the victim with shelter at a local hotel for up to 24 hours.

Charge. Unless the victim is seriously injured, the abuser is charged with *assault and battery of a family member*, a misdemeanor, punishable by a year in jail and/or up to a \$2,500 fine. A third conviction in a 10-year period elevates the crime to a Class 6 felony, punishable by up to five years in penitentiary. In some cases the charge may be just *assault and battery*. It may take six to eight weeks for the case to be

heard in the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District (J&DR) Court. If the injuries are serious the abuser is charged with felonious assault. The victim also may charge her abuser by going in person to a magistrate and swearing out a warrant for assault.

The Fairfax Police Department responded to 11,072 domestic disturbance calls in 2000: 7,826 were domestic disputes, while 3,246 were domestic violence; 2,925 arrests were made and 46 abusers were charged with felonies.

Emergency Protective Order. The EPO prohibits the abuser from contacting the victim or family and may grant temporary possession or use of home to the victim. It lasts for 72 hours or, if the court is not in session, until 5 p.m. the next business day. Upon issuance of the EPO (or any protective order) information is entered into the Virginia Crime Information Network system database and also into the National Crime Information Center maintained by the FBI. The victim can obtain an EPO on her own, but must do so before a magistrate. For a protective order to go into effect, it must be served to the abuser. If the abuser has disappeared, serving the order is problematic, and it may expire before the abuser is found.

Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court

Criminal Case. In FY99, the last year for which data are available, Fairfax J&DR Court received 1,469 Domestic Violence complaints, 1,153 simple assaults on family members, and 126 aggravated assaults. At the court hearing, interpreters are provided for non-English speakers. The accused has a right to an attorney and, if he cannot afford one, have one appointed. In Fairfax, Assistant Commonwealth's Attorneys prosecute the case if the defendant has an attorney. If he does not, the victim generally prosecutes her own case. If the accused fails to appear in court, a warrant is issued for his arrest.

Hearing. According to court staff, more than half of the victims do not want to testify. The batterer may have persuaded the victim not to testify or the victim may have changed her mind and claim that it really did not happen the way she said and that it was partially her fault. Prosecutors generally honor the wishes of the victim. In about a third of the cases the victims do not show up and the case is dismissed. Immigrant women have the additional worry of deportation of the breadwinner or themselves. Since the 1996 amendments to federal immigration law, legal immigrants can be deported for any felony and for misdemeanor domestic assault. If it is known that the accused is an illegal immigrant, such information must be forwarded to the INS.

Disposition. Upon conviction the offender may be ordered into anger management or substance abuse treatment, sentenced to jail, fined, or have imposition of his sentence deferred. Since 1997 judges may, and increasingly do, defer the imposition of a sentence by placing the abuser on probation without a finding of guilt. The charge is dismissed if the offender remains on good behavior for two years; if not, the sentences is imposed. The option is discussed with the victim beforehand. Alcohol and drug evaluations are usually ordered before disposition, because these are frequently a factor in the violence. According to court staff, programs lack sufficient capacity and it may take weeks before an abuser can get treatment.

Protective Orders. While criminal prosecution punishes the batterer and attempts to reform him, protective orders attempt to protect *the health and safety of family and household members*. To obtain a protective order, which can now last up to two years, the victim must first request a preliminary protective order (PPO), at the Intake Office of the J&DR Court during regular working hours. These are issued on the basis of the victim's affidavit which must ". . . *show immediate and present danger of family abuse or that family abuse has recently occurred.*" The judge may issue the PPO, without the respondent present, on the same day. It may include the following conditions: prohibit acts of abuse or contact with family/household members; grant residence and temporary possession of a jointly owned car or require the respondent to provide alternative housing to the victim. The PPO sets the date for a full hearing, which must be held within 15 days. Sometimes the intake counselors are booked two to three days ahead. In almost half of the cases, the emergency orders expire before the victim can see an intake counselor to get a PPO.

Service of PPO. The PPO goes into effect as soon as the alleged abuser is personally served by a deputy sheriff. Deputies go to the address(es) provided and make several attempts at serving the order. They may go at any time of day, weekends, or to the place of employment. Some abusers move around to avoid being served, leaving the victim no legal protection. If the order is not served by the time of the court date, Intake reissues it and another attempt is made. About 80 percent of orders do get served. In 2001 the Sheriff's Office received 1,066 requests to serve protective orders, both preliminary and permanent. According to court staff, more than a half of the respondents to PPOs are also charged with assault.

Hearing for Protective Order. At the full hearing for a permanent protective order, the abuser must be present and may have an attorney. The victim must prove her case by a *preponderance of the evidence*. Because this is a civil matter,

the victim is not entitled to free legal representation. Intake counselors may not give legal advice, but may advise the victim on what evidence might be helpful: photographs of injuries, certified copies of medical records, and subpoenaing the police officer to testify to what he observed. They may also take her to Legal Services for which more than half of the victims qualify because assets of the perpetrator are not counted as hers, according to court staff. If she chooses not to get an attorney, one of 11 volunteer court companions may help her through the court process. Most of the companions are bilingual. About half of the respondents have attorneys, and, in staffs' estimation, probably 25 percent of plaintiffs cannot prove their case. At the PO hearing the victim may also request child and spousal support. However, support is decided in separate hearings which may take as long as six months for the final decision. According to court staff, many women find themselves in dire situations and may go back to the abuser because they lack financial resources.

Some victims may qualify for public assistance. Immigrants must have been in this country for five years and have legal status. Victim-Witness Services of the Police Department will help injured victims apply for reimbursement for medical and counseling fees, lost wages, moving expenses, and crime scene cleanup from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund.

Since 1997, a PO may include provisions for temporary custody and visitation of minor children, "any other relief necessary for the protection of the petitioner" and order the respondent into treatment. The court can no longer order the victim into treatment. Since 1998, a person under a PO cannot purchase or transport a gun or obtain a permit to carry a concealed weapon. A 1996 Federal law also prohibits possession of a gun. Local police and Virginia courts enforce protective orders from other states. Violation of any protective order is a Class I misdemeanor and/or contempt of court and the respondent is subject to immediate arrest.

Stalking Statute. Since 1992 there has been a law against stalking and since 1997 POs may be obtained if the petitioner has been the subject of stalking on more than one occasion—put "*in reasonable apprehension of sexual assault, serious bodily harm, or death*" and a warrant has been issued for the arrest of the alleged stalker. According to court staff, a stalking PO is rarely used by victims of domestic violence because their problem is family abuse and they request protective orders against assault and battery. Fairfax County police made 37 stalking arrests in 2000.

Effectiveness of Order. By itself, a protective order does not protect the victim. According to court staff, it works in many cases because the private, in-home abuse is now known. In

other cases, the intake coordinator can get the victim a free cell phone which dials police and police victim services only.

Coordinating Councils

The Virginia Commission on Family Violence Prevention reports in its *Family Reference Manual* that jurisdictions with the most effective response to family violence have coordinating councils in which judicial, law enforcement, social service workers, and victim advocates work together.

The **Fairfax County Network Against Family Abuse (NAFA)** is an informal group of representatives from law enforcement, court, government, and community service providers. It has 26 members, but no staff, budget, or official standing. NAFA is the successor to the Fairfax County Domestic Violence Coalition, organized in 1982 to coordinate services and stress outreach and education. NAFA's current focus is on advocacy and gaining stature for the organization. It is updating the Coalition's handbook, *Domestic Violence: Services for Individuals, Couples and Families*.

The **City of Alexandria's Domestic Violence Program**, which became a national model 10 years ago, provides a coordinated response to domestic violence. Many program components for both Alexandria and Fairfax County are the same: 24-hour crisis hotline, shelter/outreach, counseling for both victims and batterers, and community education. However, Alexandria's program is part of the Office on Women, reports directly to the city manager, provides services such as a children's social worker, and includes survivors of domestic violence as members on its Commission for Women.

By contrast, Fairfax County has no single locus for domestic violence program coordination or policy development. Obtaining consistent data from agencies that deal with domestic violence was a general concern voiced by those interviewed. NAFA is advocating the development of a mechanism for county-wide data collection and sharing.

Conclusion

There has been a major change in our society's approach to domestic/family violence. The shift has moved away from blaming the victim to holding the abuser accountable and treating him as a criminal. Domestic violence is viewed as a major social problem with wide repercussions to society in the form of medical costs, devastating effects on victims and children, homelessness, and other ills. There now is an office at the national level and federal funding to address, prevent, treat, and stop domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. Virginia domestic violence law has been rewritten, broadening

Jurisdiction	Judges	Per Population
Arlington	2	90,000
Alexandria	2	65,000
Fairfax County	7	140,000

protections for victims, increasing police powers and penalties for abusers. Virginia has its own office to deal specifically with family violence issues. At both national and state levels there are major efforts to raise public awareness and train the professional community in improving services to both victims and perpetrators of domestic violence.

Changes in Fairfax County have been incremental. Even though the population has increased and become more diverse, and the number of incidents of domestic violence has gone up, there has not been a commensurate increase in resources dedicated to dealing with family abuse. There remains a critical need for additional emergency and transitional shelter beds. There are too few judges, long waits for court hearings, insufficient numbers of treatment slots for abusers, and limited services for victims—most have a waiting list or turn people away. Nor are there reliable, comparable statistics about domestic violence in the county or any one source of comparable data.

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Michell, Pamela, director, New Hope Housing, Feb. 19, 2002.

Nichols, Dr. Steven, Office of Middle School Instruction, Lacey Center, Nov. 12, 2001.

Rich, Jerry, assistant director, Intake Services, Domestic Relations Unit, Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court, Oct. 16, 2001.

Rowe, Loretta, counselor, Anger and Stress Management Center, Jan. 29, 2002.

Taylor, Carol, executive director, OAR of Fairfax County, Jan. 18, 2002.

Vargus, Omar, director, and Dian Sujono, policy analyst, National Advisory Council of the National Violence Against Women Office, Nov. 21-22, 2001.

Van Ryzin, Anne, director, Victim Assistance Network, Fairfax County Community Services Board, Sept. 4, 2001.

Valentine, Judge Michael J., Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court, Oct. 31, 2001, Feb. 12, 2002.

Ward, Doris, director, Bethany House, Jan. 24, 2002.

Williams, Katherine, director of research and evaluation, Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court, Jan. 2, 2002.