

Fostering a Collaborative Approach Between Partners in Elder Abuse

ALAN BERKOWITZ, PH.D.

21ST ANNUAL ELDER ABUSE
CONFERENCE

SYRACUSE, NY
JUNE 14, 2018

Who is working on this issue?

To what extent do you:

- know about each other's efforts?
- talk to each other regularly?
- collaborate on programs?
- use a common framework?
- strive to be proactive?
- design synergistic programs?

Do You?

Collect data about the problem?

Include a broad range of community members on your team?

Have a community-wide task-force focusing on elder abuse prevention and response (EAPR) issues that meets regularly to debrief cases and design programs together (ex: an Elder Justice Committee or EMDT)

Three Domains of a Comprehensive Program

- Policies, procedures and enforcement
- Services for victims
- and*
- Prevention and Risk-reduction programs

Elements of Successful Prevention Programs

- Comprehensiveness
- Intensiveness
- Relevance
- Data Driven
- Emphasizing the Positive

Conclusions

- Violence prevention and response is a gradual process that takes place over time with no quick-fixes or easy solutions
- EAPR is the responsibility of all community members working collaboratively
- *How* we go about EAPR and supporting victims is as important as *what* we do
- Collegial relationships and understanding are the building blocks of effective prevention and response

Stages of Social Change

- Social change efforts go through stages
- Later stages build on and strengthen earlier ones
- Each stage presents special challenges and requires specific expertise and skills
- At each stage, new players join the process

Question: Where are we now and what skills do we need to move the process forward?

7

Prevention Stages

- Denial of the problem
 - challenges by activists and advocates
- Recognition of the problem
 - focus on providing services to victims
 - enhancing legal/investigative response
- Expanding the scope to prevention
 - Moving from being reactive to proactive
 - Impacting causes of violence
 - Addressing the role of environment
- Fostering inclusiveness in prevention and response

To some extent, all of these occur at the same time

8

Skills Required for Stages 3 & 4

- Collaboration
- Relationship building
- Conflict management
- Facilitation
- Accurate perceptions
- Learning to be allies to each other
- Humility and non-defensiveness
- Recognition of personal issues
- Compassion

9

More Conclusions

- Consider every colleague as a potential partner, ally, and teacher who can help you learn about another “piece of the puzzle”
- Relationships are just as important to successful EAPR as programs and tools
- Every negative outcome or failure provides information about the nature of the problem and potential solutions and it is our responsibility to learn from them and adjust our efforts accordingly

End Violence Against Women International

**WILLIAM DONNER
FOUNDATION SEXUAL
ASSAULT PREVENTION
COLLABORATION STUDY**

What Helps You Feel Supported?

WHEN OTHER PROFESSIONALS

Recognize that roles are different but complimentary	86%
Understand my role in sexual assault response	81%
Are responsive to my requests/needs	73%
Value my role	72%
Respect my relationship with the victim	66%
Believe the victim and her/his story	52%
Other	11%

How do you define success?

What are successful outcomes? Are they the same for all?

- Successful forensic investigation?
- Successful prosecution and conviction?
- Reduction in the long-term negative consequences of the assault for the victim?
- Appropriate penalties for the perpetrator?
- Validation of the victim?
- *All of the above?*

Donner Study Conclusions

Professional feelings of support and collaboration are most strongly associated with whether or not the professional feels that the victim's needs are being met rather than their own perceptions of the effectiveness of the criminal justice system response, their understanding of professional roles, or professional role conflicts.

Still More Conclusions

- Victims are almost always telling the truth and therefore our efforts must be victim sensitive and we must "start by believing" while also ensuring a fair process for both victim and accused
- Victim satisfaction with the system furthers the goals of all
- Are we clear about what we are trying to do, why we think it will help, and how we will measure it?
- Our efforts must be accountable to elders and include their input

Victim Validation – A goal for all

- Responding professionally and compassionately
- Frequent and timely communication
- Honesty
- Providing periodic updates and assessments
- Effective communication of case outcomes
- Design systems to measure these outcomes across professions

www.evawint.org

Collaboration in Prevention

- Know what each other are doing
- Identify critical ingredients and mechanisms of change and diffuse across programs
- Ensure consistent messages and outcomes
- Design multiple programs that are interactive and synergistic across agencies
- Ensure that program efforts span the ecological model

Concluding Questions

- What would a comprehensive EAPR program look like in your community?
- What would need to change in order for this to happen?
- How could you go about making this a reality *over time* and what are your next steps?
- What are your personal goals in terms of:
relationship building?
self-awareness and improvement

Relevant articles

- Fostering Healthy Norms to Prevent Violence and Abuse: The Social Norms Approach
- Guidelines for Sanctioning Perpetrators of Sexual Assault
- Overcoming the Obstacles to Campus Safety: Developing a Comprehensive Approach to Prevention
- RESPONSE ABILITY: A Complete Guide to Bystander Behavior
- Working with Men to Prevent Violence Against Women
- Critical Elements of Sexual Assault Prevention and Risk Reduction Programs

www.alanberkowitz.com

Thank you for your
willingness to be a
peacemaker and bridge-
builder

Contact Information

**ALAN BERKOWITZ
INDEPENDENT CONSULTANT
PO BOX 318
MOUNT SHASTA, CA 96067-0318**

ALAN@FLTG.NET

WWW.ALANBERKOWITZ.COM