

Collaborative Response to Crime Victims in Urban Areas:

Final Evaluation Report

Submitted to Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center
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August 2006



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This presentation is supported by grant #2002-VF-GX-K017 awarded from the United States Department of Justice, through the Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center, Inc. Points of view in this presentation and document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center, Inc. or the U.S. Department of Justice.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We thank Project Director Scott Beard and the Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center, Inc., for their openness, responsiveness, and ongoing support over the project's duration. Special thanks to staff at each of the five project sites for their hospitality during site visits, frank discussion of project successes and barriers, and valuable recommendations to enhance future projects. Finally, we thank the many faith leaders, victim service providers, community advocates, victims, and others who shared their insights to ensure that continued efforts are informed by persons living and working within high-crime, urban communities.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report describes the final evaluation for a multi-year effort to link faith-based resources and crime victim services in five locales. The United States Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime selected the Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center, Inc., as a pass-through agency to oversee the project. The Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center, Inc., in turn, selected lead agencies at five sites across the nation. These include: STAND! Against Domestic Violence in Richmond, CA; the Sidran Institute, Inc. in Baltimore, MD; the St. Paul Area Council of Churches in St. Paul, MN; the Anti-Violence Partnership in Philadelphia, PA; and the Interdenominational Ministers Fellowship in Nashville, TN.

Project activities took a variety of forms across the five sites, including meetings of advisory committees, informal meetings such as luncheons or roundtable discussions, individual outreach visits to community organizations, representation or presentations regarding the project at existing community events, and dissemination of written project information via brochures, flyers, or bulletin inserts.

For faith leaders, project activities provided insight into dynamics of violence and underscored its reality in their congregations and communities. The networking aspect of the project helped raise faith leaders' awareness of victim services and their own role as providers of a complementary, spiritual component of service. For victim service and other secular providers, the project helped them to reflect upon their own provision of services, infuse their work with meaning, and respond to spiritual issues without "shutting down." Trainings gave these providers the tools and language to use in addressing faith issues and helped them to appreciate the legitimacy of spirituality as part of crime victims' healing.

One of the most prominent effects of the project was its impact on relationships between faith leaders and secular service providers, in that project activities helped to highlight commonalities and establish a shared language for discussing victimization and spirituality. This enhanced trust both within and between groups and helped persons to feel more connected to one another. Many felt they could now call upon one another personally for consultation or referral.

Sites varied in their methods and success in creating collaborative networks of faith-based and secular providers. There were substantial efforts at all sites to engage multiple faiths in the project, resulting in some rewarding interaction and real insight into differing perspectives. However, some aspects of the initiative appeared largely Christian in tone and representation.

STAND! Against Domestic Violence (Richmond, CA) used a grassroots participatory model with strategies of ongoing education and cross training, group decision making and planning, and implementing community-wide celebrations. A highlight of STAND!'s approach was development of "Days of Healing" to create visibility and interest, and offer the Richmond community emotional, spiritual, and physical ways of healing from trauma. STAND! also designed and printed resource posters listing partner service agencies, faith organizations, and other community resources in English and Spanish for distribution around the Richmond community.

The Sidran Institute, Inc. (Baltimore, MD) utilized a community-driven approach to bring faith-based and secular service providers and the community-at-large together for the well-being of crime victims. Principles derived from Sidran's Risking Connection® curriculum were a cornerstone of the initiative, teaching faith-based and secular service providers to work in collaboration with survivors and with each other to provide trauma-sensitive services. The initiative culminated in a 42-person Leadership Council, which is to take responsibility for functioning of the initiative beyond the federal funding period.

The St. Paul Area Council of Churches (St. Paul, MN) used face-to-face interviews and meetings to build relationships and promote dialogue among spiritual leaders and victim service providers. Trainings included multi-faith panels with diverse spiritual leaders, and the project culminated with an outstanding resource directory and an informational DVD featuring network leaders and providers.

The Anti-Violence Partnership (Philadelphia, PA) provided trainings, partnered with existing faith initiatives to co-sponsor events, and served as liaison between faith leaders and victim service providers to promote referral of crime victims. A major accomplishment involved securing long-term training engagements at selected churches, with training provided for two hours each week for multiple consecutive weeks.

The Interdenominational Ministers Fellowship (Nashville, TN) identified prospective stakeholders, used surveys and interviews to profile community needs, and held forums for cross-organizational networking and discussion. A major component of the project involved training all partners on cultural competency, with an emphasis on working with marginalized populations including those who are impoverished or struggling with addiction. A significant outcome of the initiative was a strengthened relationship between African American clergy and Nashville police.

Because the *Collaborative Response* project was among the first of its kind, it often took the form of a "work in progress," challenging site staff with evolving task demands. Future work may be informed by the strengths and struggles of this project, hopefully establishing a rudimentary foundation of successful practices upon which continued efforts may be based.

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INTRODUCTION

Although a significant number of crime victims seek post-crime support from members of the faith community, faith leaders and congregants may feel unsure of their abilities or uneducated regarding resources to assist crime victims. Funded through the United States Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime (OVC), the *Collaborative Response to Crime Victims in Urban Areas* project was intended to enhance support for victims of crime by linking faith-based organizations and victim assistance programs in five high-crime, urban neighborhoods.

The Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center, Inc. (MCVRC) is a private, nonprofit organization whose mission is to ensure that victims of violent crime receive justice and are treated with dignity and compassion through comprehensive victims' rights and services. Founded a quarter century ago, MCVRC was selected as a pass-through agency to direct the project based on expertise in grassroots organizing, knowledge of crime victimization, and credibility with both victim-service and faith-based organizations. In this role, MCVRC would oversee administrative and programmatic functions of project sites via a cooperative agreement with OVC. MCVRC selected five existing agencies from a field of 55 applicants to serve as lead agencies for the project:

- STAND! Against Domestic Violence (STAND!) in Richmond, CA, is a community-based nonprofit agency dedicated to serving victims of domestic violence in Contra Costa County, a large county north of San Francisco.
- Based in Baltimore, MD, the Sidran Institute, Inc. (Sidran) is a nationally focused nonprofit organization devoted to helping people who have experienced traumatic life events.
- The St. Paul Area Council of Churches (SPACC) is an ecumenical and interfaith organization in St. Paul, MN, representing 168 congregations from 23 different denominations, dedicated to justice and anti-racism for betterment of St. Paul communities.
- The Anti-Violence Partnership (AVP) of Philadelphia, PA, began in 1980 as a victim assistance program serving family members of homicide victims and evolved to address the entire cycle of violence and violence prevention.
- The Interdenominational Ministers Fellowship (IMF) includes more than 40 predominantly African American Christian congregations and 10 community-based organizations joined to fight social injustices in Nashville, TN.

Thus, lead agencies included two victim-service organizations, two faith-based organizations, and one organization specializing in mental health issues. With guidance from MCVRC, these lead agencies were charged with linking victim assistance programs and faith communities in five neighborhoods. This report summarizes evaluation methods as well as national and site-specific findings.

METHODS

The *Collaborative Response* project involved five sites, each with some commonalities as well as unique community demographics, politics, resources, and service needs. The evaluation blended site-specific and cross-site measurement to allow both broad general inferences and more specific conclusions about each of the five communities.

Basic components of evaluation included review of project timelines and progress reports, examination of evaluations from project trainings and advisory committee meetings, documentation of number and nature of collaborative partnerships, and on-site interviews with over 50 staff members and participants from across the five sites.¹ Staff interviews covered a range of basic issues including strategic plans, implementation processes, technical assistance issues, perceived outcomes, and sustainability at each site. The remainder of prospective interviewees were selected by site staff with input from the evaluator in order to achieve a range of demographic and disciplinary perspectives at each site. These interviews (prompts in Appendix A) addressed issues such as perceived impact of the project, nature and strength of interagency relationships, lessons and barriers, and ongoing potential of project activities. Interview transcripts were coded and analyzed using qualitative software and a grounded-theory approach for identification of major themes within and across the five project sites.

FINDINGS

The National Perspective

For the *Collaborative Response* project, MCVRC offered guidance, support, and resources to assist with logistical challenges as staff at the five sites identified stakeholders, built relationships, and

¹ Although performance measures on federally funded victim-service projects typically include number of victims served, establishing baseline measures for such parameters would not have been possible because partner agencies were not yet identified for participation in each community-derived collaborative. Further, as will be explained (“General Impact of Project Activities”), project goals involving impact on victims were eliminated from the overall plan.

implemented plans to engage communities in better serving crime victims. In overseeing the project, MCVRC opted for an exploratory approach, establishing several basic tasks for sites to accomplish (e.g., establish advisory committees, develop a strategic plan, implement the plan, establish sustainability beyond the award period), but allowing broad latitude within which to achieve goals. The intent was that such freedom would optimize creativity and promote projects that derived from community needs and priorities.

Accordingly, project activities took a variety of forms across the five sites. These generally included meetings of advisory committees, informal meetings such as luncheons or roundtable discussions, individual outreach visits to community organizations, representation or presentation regarding the project at existing community events, and dissemination of written project information via brochures, flyers, or bulletin inserts. Some sites hosted tours of project catchment areas, encouraged visits across participating agencies, or facilitated resource sharing such as co-located counselors or donated meeting space. All sites developed applied tools to facilitate collaboration (e.g., resource directories) and sponsored trainings or events to promote understanding of spiritual issues in victimization.

General Impact of Project Activities

Although initial goals for the three-year effort included achieving actual changes in services for victims (e.g., added or improved services and referrals), realization of the logistical challenges in doing so led to a shift in goals as the project evolved. After over a year of outreach and relationship building with faith leaders and victim service providers, the Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center, in cooperation with OVC and the five lead agencies, collectively decided to focus primarily on the network-building aspect of the project, with the understanding that strong networks would have potential to yield service changes at a later time. Sites varied in their success in engaging communities to establish such networks. Evaluation interviews revealed a number of perceived effects of project activities, including effects on faith leaders, on victim service providers, and on the relationships between these persons, as well as some effects for victims themselves. Although magnitude of impact varied from site to site, the types of effects described by project participants were similar across all five sites.

First, most sites had difficulty maintaining involvement of faith leaders in the project.

The faith community is a hard nut to crack. I can guess at why that might be, being a member of the clergy and the faith community. I think that part of the problem is that clergy tend to get overwhelmed with way too much to do, and they can become very parochial, just focusing either on their own congregation or their own denomination. Even in the interfaith community, it is hard to move Buddhists outside the Buddhist community or Hindus outside the Hindu community and so forth. The

Islamic folks, it is very hard to move them outside the Islamic, and part of it is and within the Christian tradition, as well—you have got denominations that do not want to move outside their specific perspective or lens on spirituality. Part of it is that a lot of them come from a place of proselytization. They really believe that they are required to convince others that their way is the right way. It makes it very difficult to work in an interfaith environment for them (Faith leader).

Despite these challenges (some of which will be addressed throughout this report), faith leaders who stayed involved identified a number of specific ways in which the project was of benefit. For many, project trainings helped to “put a name on things” that faith leaders had observed, providing insight into the dynamics of violence and underscoring its reality in their congregations and communities. Having this new language and awareness of violence, they were more willing to speak about violence-related issues, to allow bulletin inserts or on-site training, and they felt more able to process victimization issues within their congregations. The networking aspect of the project helped raise faith leaders’ awareness of victim services and their own role as providers of a complementary, spiritual component of service. They began to understand that they did not have to handle victimization on their own, and they felt better able to provide appropriate referrals.

I tend to only deal with stuff that I know something about. So let’s say three years ago somebody comes and says, “Look, my mother was victimized, and she needs some help.” I would have probably said, “Well, I’m sorry. I can’t help you. Talk to the police or someone. I don’t know.” That would have been my response. But through the [collaborative], I now have been in circumstances and have gotten to meet people. I can say, “Okay, that is the person to talk to” (Faith leader).

A handful of faith leaders were inspired to initiate their own violence-prevention or risk-reduction activities such as special sermons or seminars, and some began taking an interest in other (non-project) community activities on victimization and violence (e.g., making a point to attend local workshops).

One of the things that I did was I just asked if I could do an adult class. It was either a four or five week thing, and I used some of the resources that we did [on the collaborative]. We ended up with making some recommendations that went to the leadership of the church, asking them to do some teaching for our youth, particularly where violence is often perpetrated on young adults...date rape, all that sort of stuff... We put some information through the church that would be accessible to both men and women if they are not in a safe situation (Faith leader).

Although there were some challenges gaining involvement of victim service providers (most notably skepticism about working with the faith community²), there were no identifiable patterns regarding the types or disciplines of providers who were or were not engaged in project activities. For those victim service and other secular providers (e.g., health care, financial assistance or TANF) that did become involved in the project, some discussed how the project helped them to reflect upon their own provision of services, infuse their work with meaning, and respond to spiritual issues without “shutting down” (which had been a common response due to fear of crossing the church-state boundary). Trainings gave these providers the tools and language to use in addressing faith issues and helped them to appreciate the legitimacy of spirituality as part of crime victims’ healing. At some sites, providers began to integrate non-invasive questions about spirituality into their intake forms; they also became more aware of and more vigilant in documenting referrals or service requests from faith-based sources. Some groups of advocates evolved from the community, including clergy volunteering for police chaplaincy and laypersons working within a victim advocacy network. Both secular providers and faith leaders described gaining insight into and visibility to new populations (particularly underserved minorities) and developing increased cultural sensitivity as a result of project activities.

One of the most prominent effects of the project was its impact on relationships between faith leaders and secular service providers. Project meetings, trainings, and events brought together people who had previously been together only rarely. Now faith leaders from varied denominations and secular providers were interacting with one another on a regular basis, helping to highlight their commonalities and establishing a shared language for discussing issues of victimization and spirituality.

We have to be able to reach one another without saying, “Well, that is not my problem, that is your problem.” It is everybody’s problem when our children are in trouble...especially if you are trying to heal a broken community. If you have some resources that you can help supply, and if we have resources that we can supply, and we come together in a neutral zone, then we take our titles off and say, “We are here as humanitarians. We are not here as [agency name] or as [another agency name]. We are here as helpers” (Faith leader).

This enhanced trust both within and between groups, helped persons feel more connected to one another, and promoted listening and dialogue.

I remember that one of the very first meetings, the faith providers all walked in with their versions of the sacred text—whether that be the Koran or the Bible or the Torah or whatever—and there was a lot of going back and forth in terms of the interpretation of

² This skepticism, as well as other barriers faced at the outset of the project, are discussed more fully in: DeHart, D. (2004). *Collaborative response to crime victims in urban areas: Needs assessment report*. Columbia, SC: The Center for Child & Family Studies, University of South Carolina.

scripture around domestic violence. Through the process of really talking about the issues associated with victimization and the role of the church and clergy in responding to that, I think we came to common ground that allowed us to put scripture aside for the moment and really speak to those issues as something that we shared in terms of focus. Then once that trust had really been established, we were really able to go back and look at text again in a very different kind of perspective with less controversy and conflict arising (Secular provider).

Partners in the initiative felt they had gained greater understanding of one another and were less reliant upon stereotypes, and many felt as if they could call upon one another personally for consultation or referral. A small proportion of these individuals formed partnerships beyond project activities, such as working together on violence-prevention campaigns, collaborating on new funding proposals, inviting one another to speak at events, and accompanying each other to additional community meetings. They believed they could lend credibility to one another and cover service areas with more breadth and/or depth in conjunction with partners, and they felt that the project's holistic multidisciplinary approach had potential to increase involvement with their community base.

Every time we meet, it is something about dealing with the victims and getting the victims closer to the resources that they need. Me being a community affairs officer, I think that falls right in line with what the police department is trying to do. That is why I like being a part of it (Secular provider).

Although the project was not expected to yield immediate effects for victims, some avenues by which effects might take place were evident. Some project participants (e.g., law enforcement officers) described "seeing victims in a different way." Some faith leaders engaged their congregants in discussions around victimization issues, noting that victimization would touch each and every congregant in some way. A few faith leaders indicated that congregants had come forward to discuss their own victimization or perpetration following such discussions.

I had men in my congregation come and say to me, "Reverend, just so you will know, confidentially, I am about to go into anger management." I had some women say, "You know, my husband and I were able to talk through some things since this sermon, and our home life is different, our relationship is different. Thank you so much" (Faith leader).

Several faith leaders acted as liaisons between victims and the service community, facilitating interaction for victims who were apprehensive about service contact. Faith leaders and secular providers felt as if the nature of victim contact with services had potential to change for quicker, more appropriate referrals and better linkage between referring entities. Finally, at most sites, some victims spoke out and told their stories through the project, either via impact panels or spontaneously at project events.

Some guy found the sign [for the event], and he came in off the street. He started talking about how the meeting may have changed his life—being able to talk about these feelings that he had been afraid to ever tell anyone. That was amazing. That's pretty incredible (Secular provider).

Dynamics of a Multi-Faith Initiative

There were substantial efforts at all sites to engage multiple faiths in the project, resulting in some rewarding interaction and real insight into differing perspectives. It was the first time many of the faith leaders had an opportunity for extensive interaction beyond denominational lines.

It was good to see the different perspectives at the table—it is amazing how different the views can be for this one simple problem. You saw a diverse group of opinions and the way they approached things (Secular provider).

Despite efforts by MCVRC and staff at the five sites, some aspects of the initiative appeared largely Christian in tone and representation.

It is stuff like terms that you use. Don't always say minister. Don't always say church all the time. I would remind them of that and the Muslim would remind them of that (Faith leader).

Each meeting that I have attended begins with a prayer. The prayers have been very ecumenical. They didn't start out that way, but it was pointed out by some people that they should be and that has been pretty much adhered to (Community organizer).

Staff at the five sites struggled with issues such as these, employing a variety of strategies to achieve an ecumenical or multi-faith approach. Some sites rotated the location of project meetings from church to church. When it became evident that some immigrant groups were uncomfortable attending even “interfaith” meetings held in churches, one site began hosting smaller meetings in ethnic restaurants and locales frequented by these immigrants. There was also an attempt to use a quota system to achieve multi-faith and ethnic diversity on a project advisory board.

We had put the structure together of what would the board look like, and we were going to have two people from each one of these groups, which meant two from the Native American, two from Muslim, and all that (Community organizer).

Still, there was difficulty maintaining involvement of particular faiths or ethnic groups from site to site.

I felt like everybody had the heart for it...I never saw the same communities of color who were at the meeting back at the next one (Secular provider).

If you have made people feel unwelcome and you don't recognize that you have done it because you have been culturally inappropriate or something, how do you learn that you have made that mistake and quit making it? All of the examples in my own life have been people who have cared enough about me or themselves and their community that they were willing to educate me even when they were angry, upset, or offended. . . . The blinders you don't know you have on are the ones that get you in trouble (Secular provider).

In fact, there is evidence that the individuals who did remain involved in project activities made such attempts to educate and learn from one another.

A lot of times people say, "How do you handle that in your community? What would that look like in your community?" We were learning from each other even to ask the question (Secular provider).

However, quite a few interviewees characterized the "multi-faith" atmosphere that was actually accomplished as more surface tolerance than true grasp of multi-faith issues or bidirectional understanding or acceptance of alternative views.

An issue came up about participating with other faiths, and one of the pastors was like, "I participate. They can come to my church anytime"—completely unaware that he would never consider going to a Buddhist temple to participate. . . . I think people may feel like, "Well if you want me here, then you have to understand that my way of being tolerant is you have to hear what I have to say, and I will tolerate what you have to say, but I choose not to participate [in activities] when it is your turn [to host them]." I think the thought from [the project's view is] that an ecumenical approach is the answer, but it isn't—not for non-ecumenicals (Secular provider).

At several sites, interviewees mentioned racial and gender issues as contributing to conflict or resistance.

I don't know that we could have anticipated how complex it was—all the racial and ethnic and class stuff going on, distrust between different faith communities. . . . this stuff takes years or decades to work through (Community organizer).

One of the elephants in the middle of the room was the whole issue of Black and White. . . . We have a large African American clergy group that seems to be totally disinterested in working with the White clergy folks who are pretty much part of the mainline churches. And a lot of them are female pastors, and in the Black community, there are mostly male pastors, so there are these issues of male-female (Faith leader).

There were occasional instances of overt and vehement anti-faith comments.

I think there was some petty, petty intramural Christian stuff at the beginning that didn't serve us well, but it was probably the low point... There was kind of an edge and mistrust of certain kinds of Christians—just in listening to some of the little barbs that I heard. There were some people who had some axes to grind about church or Christianity or something (Faith leader).

At several sites, interviewees mentioned that predominant Christian representation may be appropriate given that this was a reflection of the community or targeted catchment area.

We are looking at this region of [city], and the majority community that we are trying to reach out to is Christian. So, the fact that we are welcoming, but having [meetings in a church] that some may not come to is—on some level—not exactly what we wanted, but—on another level—reality. If we were targeting Southeast Asians, we would have had to have all kinds of language and cultural outreach that we weren't prepared for (Secular provider).

There was recognition, however, that difficult-to-engage communities (often ethnic minority immigrants or faiths with more dogmatic views) may be the very populations for whom isolation from mainstream services or victim-blaming ideologies may impede support for crime victims. Some interviewees noted that engaging non-Christian or marginalized populations might be more easily accomplished as a “next step” or sub-project once successful engagement of mainstream populations had been accomplished. In this way, project coordinators could translate their experiences on the “core” project into strategies to build rapport with minority communities.

I think the potential for sort of sub-projects for language reasons might be a good idea... I think if there was a sort of working group working with organizations focused on Spanish speakers, that might work better over a period of a couple of years than trying to bring all of the sub-groups to a broader group immediately (Secular provider).

There's an opportunity now in later stages of the project—we are seeing pockets of diversity. This is where we'd like to go next. There wasn't time in the first two years, but now we have a group of Hispanic pastors coming to the next training. As time goes on, we will have the opportunity to build relationships (Community organizer).

Site-Specific Activities

STAND! Against Domestic Violence—Richmond, CA

STAND! Against Domestic Violence, a community-based nonprofit agency, used a grassroots participatory model to create a cohesive partnership between faith communities and victim service providers for improving range, quality, and accessibility of services to crime victims in Richmond.

Within this model, advisory committee members introduced project staff to people who were already working day-to-day in the Richmond community. Staff met with these persons, began to develop relationships and learn about issues of concern, and found out about events or meetings in the Richmond area through which new contacts could be made. Staff members were tenacious about attending every possible event or meeting to show support for work being done in the community, and about following up each contact with a phone call or email, often inviting persons to attend the advisory committee meetings to speak about their own work. Finally, staff involved these persons in planning events, also asking them to assist in promoting the events and to invite others from their social circles to attend. Much of the success of this approach derived from the nature of the Richmond community. Richmond is a city of 100,000 with a crime rate double that of other California cities of comparable size. Many providers who live in Richmond know one another, and community members share a concern about violent crime.

Highlights

STAND! utilized three major strategies with active participation by advisory members: 1) ongoing education and cross training, 2) group decision making and planning, and 3) implementing community-wide celebrations.

Four trainings were geared specifically toward faith leaders, including “Faith in Violence Free Families: Addressing Domestic Violence,” “Dynamics of Child Abuse,” “Elder Abuse: Protecting the Vulnerable In Our Society,” and “Hope, Help, and Healing for Victims of Violence.” Each training included topics presented from a faith perspective, with a panel of speakers that included a faith leader, a service provider, and local resource people such as law enforcement. Trainings were held mid-week in the morning to accommodate schedules of spiritual leaders, and breakfast was provided along with time for informal networking. A total of 80 people from faith and victim service organizations participated in the trainings.

Another series of trainings was directed toward victim service staff and was piloted with staff from STAND!’s multiple service offices. The series, “Delivering Spiritually Sensitive Services to Crime Victims,” was designed to enable staff to recognize their own spirituality and how it can be a resource or roadblock in serving victims, as well as to increase staff sensitivity to indicators of spiritual distress and diverse spiritual needs of victims. Staff reported that they are now more aware of spiritual issues in routine case management.

Typically clients initiate discussions on spirituality out of distress. Therapists need the tools to respond without shutting down. We found out that these conversations are going on a lot but they are not talked about within the agencies. Now we are discussing it and have the tools and the language (Secular provider).

A final series of trainings was geared toward development of “informal leaders” from Richmond communities. A seven-module training program designed for lay members of the community addressed issues such as understanding trauma, compassionate listening, sexual assault, domestic violence, the role of faith in trauma, and community resources. Twenty-seven participants came to one or more of the modules, and a handful completed the series and committed to stay involved for continued skill-building and discussion. Informal reports from staff, advisory committee members, and community who participated in trainings indicate that at least 14 crime victims were referred to the appropriate sources as a result of project activities.

In addition to education and training, advisory committee members were involved in planning processes including planning for trainings, events, and sustainability. Staff worked within the time restrictions of advisory members to keep them engaged in planning and implementing activities; “mini” face-to-face meetings, email, phone conversations, and synthesis of input was used to keep advisory committee members informed and ready to make key decisions as they came together for larger monthly meetings.

One of the most successful aspects of STAND!’s approach was development of community-wide activities that created project visibility, community interest, and broader participation. The idea for these “Days of Healing” was to offer the Richmond community emotional, spiritual, and physical ways of healing from trauma. The advisory committee was active in designing the three “Days of Healing,” including planning, task assignments, and development of slogans and crafts. This not only created ownership but enhanced the group’s ability to make critical decisions, have disagreements while maintaining respect and collegiality, maintain accountability, and renew commitment to a safe environment.

Richmond is pretty clear on what its problems are, but they don’t talk a lot about healing or hope. So this was a day in which healing modalities were presented. Victims talked about their experiences of healing. There was a catered lunch with organic food from a Richmond farm. There was drumming, poetry, lamentations, nutrition workshops, art. Local artists helped folks make memory boxes. There were local clergy and service providers. There was a ceremony with candle lighting and hearts and music. It was very powerful, and about 60-65 people attended—professionals, victims, folks walking off the street, kids (Secular provider).

Products of STAND!’s efforts include a provider curriculum on spiritually sensitive services and a lay community curriculum on spirituality and trauma, among other products such as brochures and staff assessment tools. Finally, STAND! designed and printed resource posters listing partner service agencies, faith organizations, and other community resources. Thousands of English- and Spanish-language versions of posters, as well as index-card versions, were printed for distribution around the community, including in Richmond schools.

Sustainability

STAND! hired a sustainability coordinator to identify appropriate funding agencies, cultivate relationships with funders, and develop a “boilerplate” proposal for submission to potential funders. Project staff also attended an “Immersion Training on Sustainability” sponsored by the Institute for Community Peace, which enabled staff to view sustainability through multiple approaches including shaping the project’s legacy, policy changes, institutionalization of programs, community norm changing, funding, and staffing.

One result of participating in the immersion training was the decision of STAND!’s Senior Management Team to change its universal intake form to include faith-related questions. This policy was supported by “strongly encouraged” trainings for each program division on delivering spiritually sensitive services and the addition of faith resources to STAND!’s office libraries. STAND! also integrated faith-based considerations into the organization’s long-term strategic plan. By institutionalizing a spiritually sensitive approach, STAND! pilots a model for how victim service organizations can address spiritual needs of crime victims.

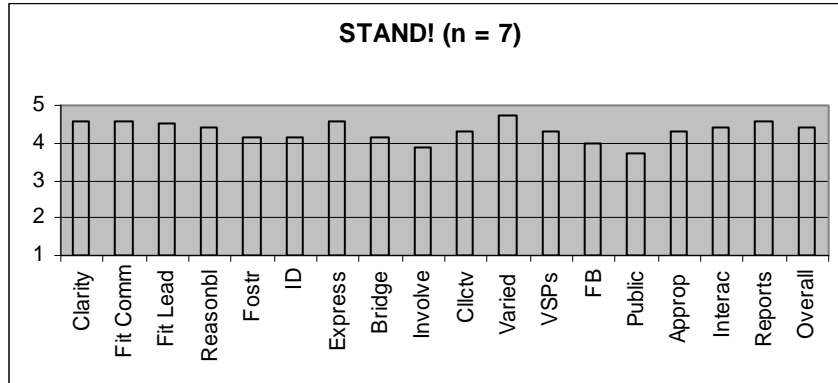
In the summer of 2006, staff and advisory committee members plan to meet to assess the impact of the first three years of the project and complete plans for year four. They also plan to hold a press conference to introduce the resource poster and bring the funding period to a close. They plan a final project report for stakeholders and prospective funders and will post project tools on STAND!’s website. They also have ongoing faith-related events planned.

Strengths & Struggles

STAND!’s training evaluations were overwhelmingly positive for multiple trainings. However, the evaluation forms primarily assessed only whether trainings met expectations. Thus, it is difficult to gauge participant perceptions of overall training quality.

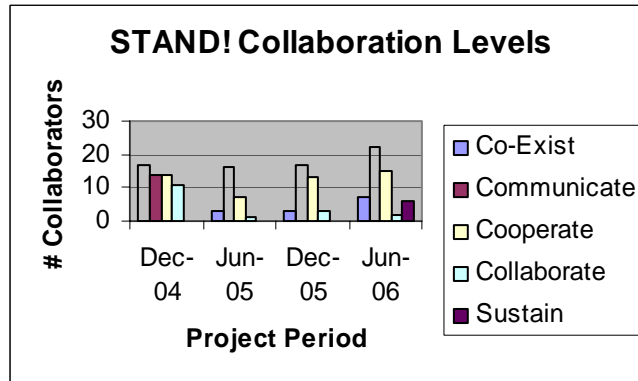
As can be seen in Table 1, advisory committee members gave STAND! high marks on most dimensions assessed (see Appendix B for rating forms), particularly commitment to working with providers from varied philosophies and backgrounds and a climate that allowed individuals to express their ideas. Areas for improvement might include greater involvement of front-line service staff, congregants, and the general public in continued activities (although ratings on even these dimensions are fairly high).

TABLE 1: ADVISORY MEMBER EVALUATIONS



Examination of staff ratings of collaborative partners over time (Table 2) indicates that STAND! succeeded in shifting some “co-existing” relationships to more active communication (see Appendix C for collaborative levels), as well as moving some relationships beyond collaboration to build a small core of sustainable partners.

TABLE 2: COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS OVER TIME



These ratings are supported by qualitative evaluation findings, which indicate that STAND! substantially increased trust and contact within the small advisory group, promoting a shared awareness of and commitment to victimization and violence issues in Richmond. Further, advisory members generally felt that their investments of time and resources into the project were met with a balanced return, and that the project had real potential to increase referrals across agencies, albeit the number of involved agencies was relatively small within the broader service context. These findings, as well as project fit with the Richmond community and STAND!’s institutionalization of spiritually sensitive services, reflect positively on STAND!’s ability to maintain at least a modest level of sustainable activity toward spiritually sensitive service collaboration.

Sidran Institute, Inc.—Baltimore, MD

The Sidran Institute, Inc., a nationally focused nonprofit agency specializing in trauma issues, utilized a community-driven approach to bring faith-based and secular service providers and the community at-large together for the well-being of crime victims. The initiative emphasized that because physical, emotional, social, and spiritual effects of trauma are complex, healing must occur in a connected community. Individual meetings were held with a diverse group of stakeholders in order to nurture one-on-one relationships, build trust, and cultivate interest in the initiative's vision. Each meeting opened doors to new contacts via a "snowball" approach to networking. Sidran then convened small homogenous groups of stakeholders to participate in focus groups or discussions on issues of common interest. Sidran intentionally kept groups for faith-based versus secular providers separate to provide for open discussion of concerns and allow opportunity to establish common goals. Principles derived from Sidran's Risking Connection® curriculum were a cornerstone of the initiative, teaching faith-based and secular service providers to work in collaboration with survivors and with each other to provide trauma-sensitive services. By utilizing representatives from the participating organizations as presenters in these and related cross-trainings on topics of common interest, the statement was made that much expertise lies within both faith and secular communities. Finally, a diverse group of clergy, faith-based service providers, government agencies, nonprofits of all sizes, and grassroots organizations reached a consensus on shared values and evolved into a 42-person Leadership Council. The Leadership Council is responsible for the functioning of the initiative beyond the federal funding period.

Highlights

Sidran's Risking Connection® trainings, along with other project trainings, were used to help faith-based and secular providers gain understanding of the effects of crime on victims, the role that spirituality can play in their healing, and how providers can make more successful cross-referrals to address victims' needs holistically. An important component of the training is the philosophy that all persons working in the community are providers, and that faith leaders provide a spiritual service that complements the more traditional human services of secular providers. The trainings helped providers from diverse backgrounds establish a common language, shared vision, and mutual trust to further future work together.

It was evident in the trainings that people started with separate languages and then began to rely on their overlapping languages. People made an effort to be inclusive in listening and speaking. They were engaging each other in their differences (Community organizer).

This series of trainings included those specifically for faith-based providers, for secular providers, combined faith-secular trainings, and even trainings co-sponsored by the Baltimore Departments of Health and Social Services for selected social-service staff.

In addition to Risking Connection®, the initiative made use of activities such as community tours of the target area, focus groups, site visits, presentations at staff meetings, dialogue sessions on common issues, and panel discussions. Several networking sessions were held for both faith-based and secular collaborators; these sessions included an educational component as well as opportunity for attendees to “profile” themselves and distribute business cards or organizational literature.

After the neighborhood tours, people would sit down and talk amongst themselves. It seemed like each meeting that we had, people would network with one another after the meeting. You know that you have a good meeting when the meeting is over and people don't leave. There was a lot of that (Community organizer).

The networking forums became a key in developing an effective referral network that would be more personalized for the victim, in that the referring agent would have greater trust that the person being referred would be treated well. Further, faith-based and secular roundtables met regularly to examine how providers could address the needs of victims, to reach consensus on core values, and to develop a strategic framework on how to function with other service providers as “equally valid partners in the process of healing.” Sidran also secured additional funding and conducted groundwork to encourage houses of worship, hospitals, clinics, and counseling centers to hire parish nurses and pastoral counselors, as these professionals were viewed as a critical link between the faith-based and secular providers in better serving victims.

Finally, through the initiative, Sidran provided technical assistance to collaborating organizations on resource and partnership development, program planning, organizational development, sustainability, and collaborative service delivery. This resulted in substantial partnerships that addressed service gaps in East Baltimore, including encouragement for the development of a new faith-based service and shelter for abused women and children.

Beyond key project activities, Sidran also engaged in presentations and representation at community meetings and events. Presentations were made at the state victim assistance academy, at a local community college, and to the domestic violence coordinating council. Project products included a memorandum of understanding with the state attorney's office and a hard-copy and CD-ROM resource directory for providers, as well as project-related brochures and information packets.

Sustainability

Sidran's plans for sustainability involve a project that is community-owned and community-driven, working largely through existing community institutions. An important part of their plan evolved as the project progressed. It involved bringing a self-selected group of collaborators into leadership positions by cultivating an inner core via the Leadership Council. Sidran hired a consultant to serve

as a liaison and help the council build an ongoing infrastructure as the federal funding period comes to an end. The consultant will help ensure that the collaborative has a well-defined mission and standards, help develop a new strategy for recruiting and preparing partners, and help develop and sustain skills and processes to achieve goals.

One primary objective was to plan that the project would be ceded to the community. The role of Sidran was to provide support, training, and technical assistance to the people in the community so that those people could then be driving the bus. It has been clear throughout the project that the community would take over. It's like a parent teaching a child to be independent. The collaborative will be a legacy left by Sidran for the community (Community organizer).

Sustainability of the collaborative also may derive from existing funding ties of those in the Leadership Council. A group of the collaborating partners, both clergy and secular leaders, have come together to identify, cultivate, and approach potential funding sources to sustain and build on the accomplishments of the initiative. Partners have also submitted a concept paper for additional federal funding, and five of the collaborating organizations banded together and secured a federal grant. There is also possibility of staffing the collaborative with an internship through one of the partner organizations in conjunction with local institutions of higher education.

The collaborative has also developed a core of strong champions for the project throughout Baltimore, and they are working to develop a documentable model for broader dissemination. Sustainability plans also include a website and listserv to facilitate referrals, as well as periodic events to bring partners together each year. There are hopes for peer victim support groups to be housed in faith and community institutions, and possibly a “one-stop” community-based support center for triage, assessment, and coordinated network service and referral. Currently, three partners involved in the collaborative (one government agency and two churches) are working together to identify funds and locations to bring the support-center idea to fruition.

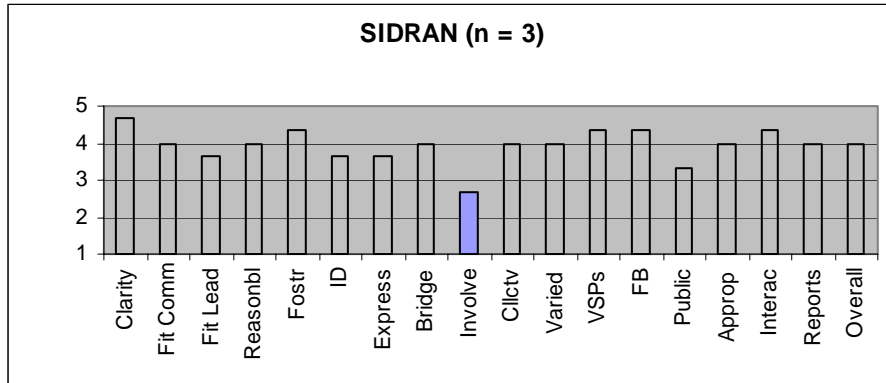
Strengths & Struggles

In-depth evaluations for the Risking Connection® trainings were overwhelmingly positive for multiple sessions, and evaluations for other trainings were mostly positive.

As can be seen in Table 3, advisory committee members gave Sidran very high marks for clarity of communication, ability to foster partnerships, building support among secular and faith-based providers, and quality of interaction at advisory meetings (see Appendix B for rating forms). Areas for improvement include involving front-line staff, congregants, and the lay public in project activities. Most remaining rating dimensions received moderate to high scores, with a high overall satisfaction in the project. The fact that only three persons returned these rating forms, however, is

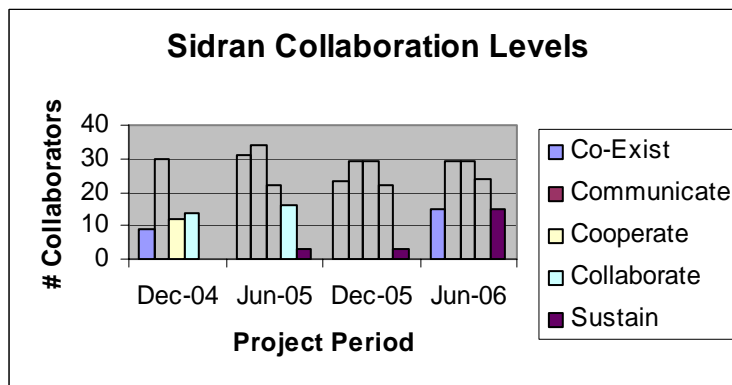
cause for some concern. Many project comments addressed the tenacity of project coordinators in keeping participants involved, and one wonders whether involvement will wane without the dogged efforts of paid Sidran staff members.

TABLE 3: ADVISORY MEMBER EVALUATIONS



Examination of staff ratings of collaborative partners over time (Table 4) indicates that Sidran steadily recruited new partners into the initiative while slowly building a substantial core of sustainable partners (see Appendix C for collaborative levels).

TABLE 4: COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS OVER TIME



These findings are supported by reports from interviewees, who indicate that the project made significant progress toward relationship building, establishing mutual recognition of one another’s contributions to community services, and a strong commitment to continue the initiative beyond the federal funding period. Interviewees felt confident that their investment in the project would be met with a rewarding return over time, and that the collaborative has true potential to improve visibility and access to services for victims of crime and increase consultation and coordination among providers.

Right now, because it's still in its formation stages, there is more going into than is coming out... The final product that you were initially working to put together—you can't see that yet. It's sort of like with children—you start when they are young, and it's a high investment, but then as they get older, it's more of a give and take relationship, and you get a lot of your investment back (Faith leader).

Another component of perceived success was the broadened conceptualization of “victim service provider,” through which all partners were given equal footing as providers of important services for victims—including not only traditional victim service agencies but also spiritual leaders and allied professionals.

We redefined “secular” to include not only victim service providers, but also mental health, substance abuse, food stamps, social services, healthcare, and so on. Our motto was “wherever the victims surface” (Community organizer).

An undeniable aspect of project success involved relentless grassroots organizing by two project coordinators with solid ties to the community. Although functioning in the absence of these coordinators will present a true challenge to the initiative, there exist a number of factors that bode well for sustainability of the initiative. First, with encouragement from Sidran staff, partners have already begun meeting in the absence of coordinators. Further, there is the consultant liaison, several partners have already secured additional funding for related activity, and partners demonstrate an exceptional confidence in the collaborative’s potential.

I think this is really one of the stronger projects that I have been involved with. I have done a ton of collaborations that feel like they got totally bogged down. This group did seem to set a direction and kind of stay on it. That's pretty critical (Secular provider).

St. Paul Area Council of Churches—St. Paul, MN

The St. Paul Area Council of Churches, an ecumenical and interfaith organization, used face-to-face interviews to determine gaps in knowledge, services, and infrastructure between spiritual communities and victim service providers. Meetings of various types were used to build relationships and promote dialogue among spiritual leaders and victim service providers from a variety of backgrounds in order to build a collaborative network. Training and education were offered to groups within the network, and the project culminated with an outstanding resource directory and an informational DVD featuring network leaders and providers.

Highlights

Face-to-face interviews were the key component of the initiative and a catalyst to reaching out to spiritual communities and victim service providers. Project coordinators also represented the

project at community events including the Clergy-Police Summit on Domestic Violence, the Delegate's Assembly clergy trainings, and the Police Clergy Academy. SPACC also offered educational trainings including "Nurturing Our Healing Environments" and a refined version "Healing the Hurt: A Multi-Faith Response to Justice and Victimization." The trainings included a panel of spiritual leaders and victim service providers, including representation from diverse communities including African, Ojibwa, and Somali, among others. Panelists were given scenarios that generated discussions regarding faith, cultural practices, and issues of victimization, as well as coverage of topics including services for crime victims, making appropriate referrals, trauma issues, and helping communities heal from crime.

The resource directory, entitled "Who to Call for Help," was exceptional in quality. This was distributed and posted on the SPACC website, and products including brochures, newsletters, bookmarks, and advisory member business cards were also developed. Finally, SPACC hired the production company Honest to GOD Media for development of an educational DVD, "A Hope for True Healing," which included some of the same panelists that had participated in trainings. Preliminary feedback regarding the DVD indicates that the product is excellent, and 1000 copies are being distributed to members of the faith community in the target area.

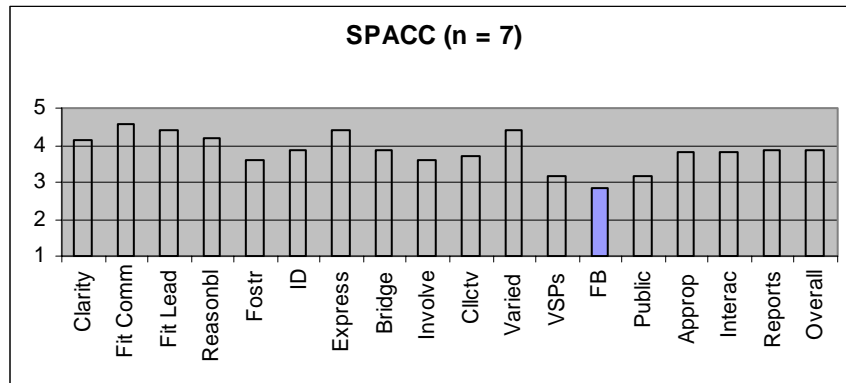
Sustainability

A fundraising consultant and grant writer were hired to assist in developing means for sustainability, but it was decided that timing did not present favorable circumstances. The decision was made to cease pursuit of new funding until 2007, at which time SPACC plans to review the program plan and decide whether to proceed. At the current time, SPACC's sustainability derives from the resource directory and DVD, and some project funds were identified to retain on-call staff and volunteers to assist persons in use of these media resources.

Strengths & Struggles

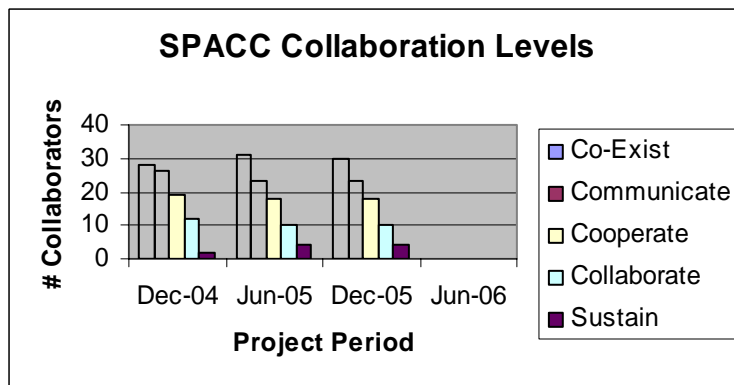
Evaluations for project trainings were mostly positive. As can be seen in Table 5, advisory members gave SPACC high marks for fit of the project with the lead agency and with the community, as well as allowing opportunity for members to express themselves and commitment to working with providers from diverse backgrounds (see Appendix B for rating forms). Areas for improvement include SPACC's ability to involve victim assistance providers, faith leaders, and the general public in project activities. Overall satisfaction with SPACC's performance was fairly high.

TABLE 5: ADVISORY MEMBER EVALUATIONS



Examination of staff ratings of collaborative partners over time (Table 6) indicates small changes over time, with a few sustainable partners (see Appendix C for collaborative levels).

TABLE 6: COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS OVER TIME



(No data available for Jun-06 period)

The initiative in St. Paul underwent significant structural changes well into the project’s three-year time frame, primarily stemming from the differing goals, perspectives, and commitment levels of the three partner agencies that collectively applied for initial funding. Two of the agencies split from the project, and SPACC struggled with staffing changes and related difficulties that diverted energies that otherwise could be focused on project goals. In part because of these changes, goals were re-focused several times during the course of the project, possibly creating problems in developing momentum.

Interviewees indicated a relatively low investment in the project, with the exception of a small core of highly involved individuals. The latter included faith leaders who, with great success, took their learning back to their own congregations via sermons and seminars.

I do a sermon series for six weeks in the winter. It is kind of blah around here and cold and so we really hype it up. But I just used things that would maximize what we had been talking about in [the collaborative]...really unpacked some very touchy subjects about anger and stress and how that can lead to unresolved issues and can turn into resentment and have us lash out...it really affects our family, ourselves individually, and it affects our community (Faith leader).

Even these persons sometimes had to choose sporadic involvement in the project due to time demands, and all sincerely felt that SPACC was making best efforts to enhance project potential. Without a doubt, the face-to-face efforts of project coordinators were one of the project's major strengths.

I think that there has been considerable progress directly proportional to [SPACC staff member] having gone community to community to community...leadership to leadership to leadership. Wherever she has gone, she has been water between rocks, connecting them to each other and to resources (Faith leader).

The trainings and DVD also received praise for quality, but the former lacked high levels of attendance. Finally, SPACC demonstrated extraordinary efforts to involve immigrants and other ethnic minority groups in the project, thereby contributing to interest and impact of the trainings and DVD and ability of these to introduce participants to a range of spiritual perspectives.

Anti-Violence Partnership—Philadelphia, PA

The Anti-Violence Partnership, a community-based victim-service and violence-prevention agency, secured long-term training engagements with a small number of faith institutions, partnered with existing faith initiatives to co-sponsor events, and served as liaison between faith leaders and victim service providers to promote referral of crime victims. The approach began by connecting with faith-based stakeholders at existing community meetings and events, following which, one of the project staff would arrange a one-on-one meeting to share information about the collaborative. The meetings would include brainstorming with the stakeholder about how the collaborative could assist to further the stakeholder's work or goals. Training was of common interest and was something tangible that could be offered with some immediacy, and AVP staff followed up to plan and schedule such training. AVP staff would continue to contact and network with these stakeholders in the interim and beyond, attending rallies or other activities to help build trust and a relationship with the faith community.

Highlights

A major aspect of AVP's initiative involved series trainings at selected churches. These trainings were provided to several different churches for two hours each week for up to seven consecutive weeks. Interviewees emphasized that securing such a long-term engagement was quite an accomplishment, given that other organizations often had difficulty just getting a "foot in the door." For use beyond the trainings, staff prepared a complete written curriculum, including activities.

AVP also provided training on domestic violence to a women's ministry at a Pentecostal church, and a training on holistic services for crime victims which included a panel of faith leaders. Project coordinators presented several workshops on "Spirituality and Victim Services," including two sessions at a statewide victim service conference, where the workshops were well received. AVP presented on victim issues to a group of mediators and a class at the Center for Urban Theological Studies, provided community workshops at local police districts, and represented the project at community fairs and events.

Through coordination with organizations such as the Philadelphia Coalition for Victim Advocacy and the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, staff contributed to a candlelight ceremony, a rally at the capitol, and an awards luncheon. AVP also held focus groups of faith leaders and networked with both faith-based and secular organizations to promote the awareness of victim issues.

AVP administered a self-evaluation to their in-house therapists about incorporating spirituality into services, resulting in some insightful ideas for exploration. AVP also developed and implemented a spiritual intake form for use in their offices and affiliated agencies. Beyond this and the training curriculum, other project products included a directory of victim services and bulletin inserts provided to members of the faith community.

Sustainability

Based on staff assessment that training is the primary strength of the AVP project, AVP's plan for sustainability is to carry on similar trainings for the faith community as well as for a broader range of service providers beyond victim services (e.g., allied professionals). AVP has already secured some funding to this end and has champions in several city offices, creating a positive outlook for additional funding.

The Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency awarded funds to AVP to continue training in a different area of Philadelphia. AVP has also submitted proposals to several city offices, including discussion with the Mayors Office of Faith Based Initiatives regarding a possible Community Chaplaincy Program. AVP is exploring additional funding options, including foundation funds and federal funds. One partner institution has already applied for the latter.

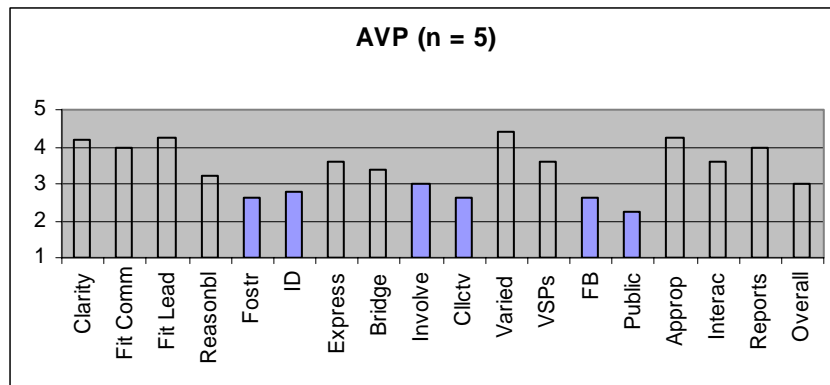
Finally, AVP’s involvement in the project contributed to their successful application for funds to support an unrelated victim-service initiative.

Strengths & Struggles

Many of AVP’s trainings received ratings that were mostly positive, but there was considerable variation across trainings. Thus, AVP may wish to bolster curricula or otherwise provide additional guidance to trainers for those trainings that received less positive feedback.

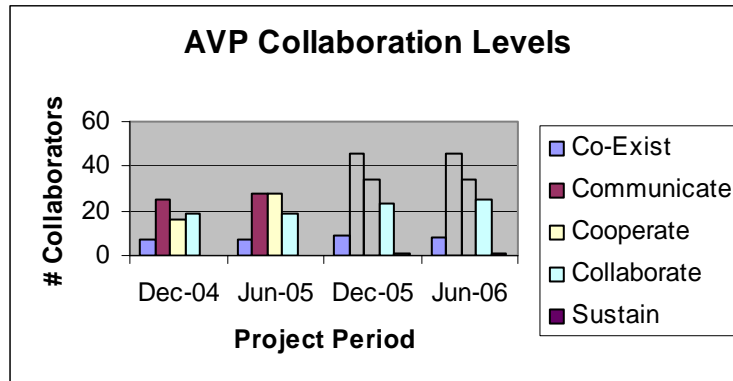
As can be seen in Table 7, advisory members gave AVP high marks for clarity of communication, commitment to work with providers from varied backgrounds, and appropriateness of tasks and topics to project goals (see Appendix B for rating dimensions). Areas needing the most improvement included fostering partnership among participants, identifying resources, leading partners toward collective goals, and involving front-line staff, faith leaders, and the general public in project activities. Overall satisfaction with AVP's performance was moderate.

TABLE 7: ADVISORY MEMBER EVALUATIONS



Examination of staff ratings of collaborative partners over time (Table 8) indicates steady increases in number of communicating and cooperating partners over time, as well as some ongoing collaboration, but very few sustainable partners (see Appendix C for collaborative levels).

TABLE 8: COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS OVER TIME



These findings are consistent with both interviewee and staff accounts, in that AVP consciously chose to focus on limited training for partners and to serve as a liaison between participating faith leaders and victim service providers rather than fostering relationships among these persons. Accordingly, interviewees indicated that they had invested very little in the project. The possible exceptions are the few churches that received long-term training. There are indications that these persons enjoyed a rewarding return on their investment of time.

The teaching aspect and the energy from the individuals—it has been second to none. I have learned a lot, and it has enabled me to put a lot more things into practice (Faith leader).

Such long-term trainings were the clear strength of AVP’s efforts, as well as their ability to connect the organization with numerous faith contacts and political contacts, as well as related faith initiatives for continued work.

I definitely feel like I have heard from other people in the community that they do a really great job of getting and doing long-term trainings, which is actually something that I am pretty jealous of because a lot of the work that we do, maybe we go in for two hours and that might be the most that we get. I think related to their success in making those relationships is that they are able to get more space, and they are able to do maybe a longer-term training with a particular group. I have definitely heard that that has been successful (Secular provider).

Interdenominational Ministers Fellowship—Nashville, TN

The Interdenominational Ministers Fellowship, a collective of Christian congregations and activist leaders, identified prospective stakeholders and engaged these persons through representation of the project at community meetings, targeted calls and visits, and follow-up mailings of printed project literature. They also conducted surveys and interviews to create an overview of services and

congregations in Nashville's four highest crime neighborhoods in order to assist in strategic planning. They then used existing forums as well as creating new opportunities to convene potential partners and foster cross-agency interaction, as well as serving as a liaison between partners to facilitate referrals. A major component of the project involved training all partners on cultural competency, with an emphasis on working with marginalized populations including those who are impoverished or struggling with addiction.

Highlights

A key project activity was training on cultural competence and spiritual sensitivity. These trainings addressed complex trauma and long-term victimization, especially in relation to economically depressed, predominantly African American communities in Nashville. IMF presented several additional trainings, including a training on domestic violence in relationships presented to American Baptist College students, the national alumni of a sorority, and a sex offender treatment board.

IMF sponsored several luncheons for partners and represented the project at a community health fair, at a crime victims' vigil, to the NAACP health committee, at police chaplaincy trainings, and at various other community events. They also conducted a radio broadcast about the project and produced materials including bulletin inserts, promotional pencils and yardsticks, and a resource directory. IMF served as a liaison between project partners by offering the staff phone number for questions and assistance with referrals.

The project was quite successful in bringing together police and IMF clergy, and this led to a number of ministers volunteering as police chaplains. Beyond direct chaplain duties, these members of the clergy are in phone communication with police, allowing exchange of information and potential for additional aid to law enforcement officers and crime victims.

Sustainability

IMF's plans for project sustainability focus on incorporation of the project identity (IMF Peniel Initiative) as a nonprofit that will work closely with its parent organization, IMF. The parent organization is led by faith leaders from the community and has a history of projects serving the disenfranchised. The incorporated Peniel Initiative will draw upon this history, which lends expertise and credibility with funders, yet the 501(c)(3) status will allow more freedom for pursuits beyond those of interest to IMF. In this role, the Peniel Initiative would continue to serve as somewhat of a referral service for existing organizations as well as convening partners on a regular basis and pursuing funding for a broader range of projects beyond those associated with criminal victimization.

To some extent, staff chose to delay fundraising activities, as their emphasis was on charitable donations or “pledges,” which are restricted under the federal award (i.e., paid project staff cannot solicit donations while engaged in project activities). There was some misunderstanding about this at the outset of the project, and plans for pursuing alternative funding were developed later. These include application for federal awards. Products to demonstrate fundability are in preparation, including written project reports and letters of support from community champions such as the police department. The Peniel Initiative also plans to solicit funds from IMF member churches, and staff are working to build relationships with possible collaborators such as other nonprofits and academic institutions. Thus, the incorporation aspect of sustainability largely depends on ability and commitment of staff to persuade potential funders of project worth and viability.

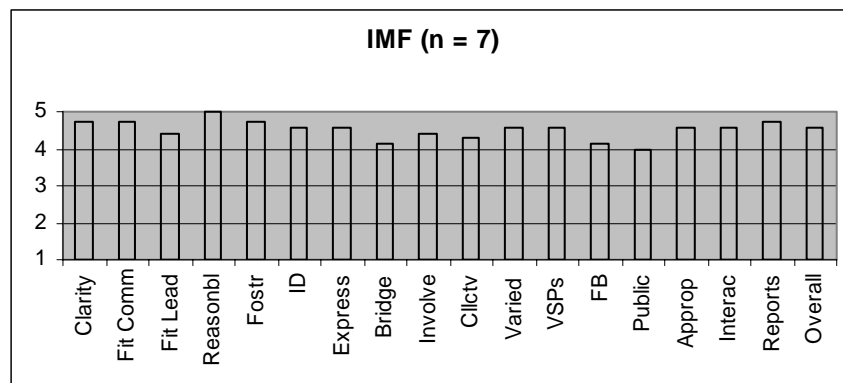
Another aspect of the project’s sustainability involves project contributions to the police chaplaincy program. This avenue holds much promise in both its formal aspects (clergy trained as chaplains) and its informal relationships (clergy in ongoing communication with police), with significant potential to contribute to Nashville communities.

Strengths & Struggles

Training evaluations for multiple trainings received largely positive ratings.

As can be seen in Table 9, advisory members gave IMF very high marks on nearly every dimension (see Appendix B for rating dimensions), with the weakest area being ability to engage the lay public in project activities (albeit still a high rating). This was supported by interviews, in that some interviewees felt that more contact and visibility of the project was needed within the communities served.

TABLE 9: ADVISORY MEMBER EVALUATIONS

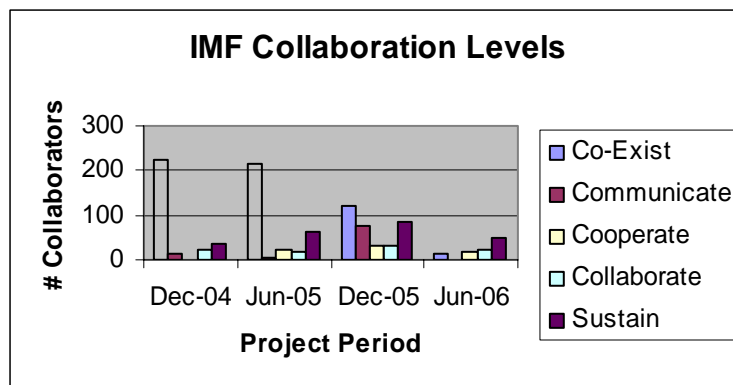


Examination of staff ratings of collaborative partners over time (Table 10) indicates high numbers of partners relative to other sites (see Appendix C for collaborative levels). One contributor to these ratings may be IMF’s inclusion of member agencies in ratings—IMF is an organization made

up of churches and others who have joined together with a shared mission of sustainability. Their task was then to engage other providers in the community to address issues of victimization. Over the course of the project, however, ratings show high numbers of sustainable partners (including loss of some of these “sustainable” partners) as well as a dearth of partners at intermediate levels of involvement. This may indicate differential interpretation of collaborative levels by IMF versus other sites, including possibility of a lower threshold for deeming partnerships sustainable. This could make sense, given the project’s emphasis on limited training and serving as a liaison between organizations, which would require lesser investment from partners. This is consistent with interviewee reports that they had invested little in the project, yet felt there was some rewarding return.

I think that we get more out of it than we put in because our staff is small, and the agency is growing. We cannot invest as much in IMF as they have been able to invest in us. So it has definitely been advantageous for us (Secular provider).

TABLE 10: COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS OVER TIME



In general, one of the most visible strengths of the initiative was the ability to bring together large numbers of police and clergy, as well as significant numbers of victim service providers.

The last event that we had I would say we had at least ten police officers there from all around the metro area. We had colleges, universities, and all types of victim service agencies...Each time I go there is more and more—and it is not that they come and they go and they don’t come back again. They keep coming and bringing more with them (Secular provider).

Technical Support for the Five Sites

Technical support on the project was provided by the pass-through agency, the Maryland Crime Victims Resource Center, a nonprofit organization dedicated to justice, dignity, and compassion for crime victims through comprehensive rights and services. This technical support took a variety of

forms, including site visits, phone calls, resource materials, cross-site conference calls, an online message board, and two cross-site meetings. Perceptions of technical support varied across sites, which, in part, may be attributable to skill levels of site staff and differential use of support. Overall themes, derived with input of MCVRC and staff at the five sites³, follow.

Roles & Dynamics of Support

In general, delivery of technical support was perceived as encouraging, supportive, accessible, and flexible to changes in project plans.

[MCVRC] did a really good job of being the soft hand on the shoulder—"I'm pushing you along, but I'm with you." [MCVRC] encouraged us and provided options for us, supported us.

Site staff felt that there were efforts by MCVRC to balance firmness with flexibility, which was sometimes a challenge. Although it was clear from the outset of the project that MCVRC would provide technical support, several sites were unsure regarding dynamics of this role, particularly in the early stages of the project.

We didn't know what to expect of [MCVRC], like to view [MCVRC] as a resource to go to with problems, or a project director that you want to impress. We tended to use [MCVRC] only as the latter. We wanted [MCVRC] to know about our successes, but not so much our challenges.

Another site noted: *We didn't know what to say on the [online cross-site message board]—to say what's really going on or what [MCVRC] wanted to hear. We felt like some sites put on their best faces. Maybe that's what we were supposed to do.*

There were effortful attempts by MCVRC to clarify this role at the multi-site meetings, with staff reporting that here MCVRC "did [their] best to make us see [MCVRC] as a helper and not a supervisor." A related issue pertained to several sites' being "confused regarding the level of detail in supervision."

Sometimes it's very detail oriented, other times there seems to be a complete lack of interest... We can't figure out how or whether it corresponds to our own activities. There may be a rationale, or maybe it has to do with what other fires [MCVRC] is putting out at the time.

Another site noted: *We didn't know what we were allowed to do on our own.*

³ Disciplinary affiliations of interviewees are not included with quotes in this section in the interest of confidentiality for staff members at the five sites.

Another third site noted: *There were a few times that we asked for assistance, and the assistance we got wasn't so good, and a few times we felt like if we didn't call, we'd get chastised for not calling or reporting in. We didn't know what was expected of us.*

At least one site described consistent, reliable support from MCVRC, and others described variation ranging from a laissez-faire to a micro-management style. A hypothesis put forth by one site staffer was that MCVRC “was probably trying to gauge the specificity or detail [MCVRC] needed to use.” The five sites varied widely in experience, skill levels, communication styles, and ability or commitment to follow oral or written guidelines. Indeed, it is likely that provision of technical support required substantial tailoring for suitability to situations and sites, and that ongoing adjustments were made in response to experiences and outcomes as the project progressed. Similar struggles occurred in communications between site staff and the evaluator as each attempted to communicate data-collection problems and/or expectations to the other (e.g., with site staff requesting greater clarity or flexibility and the evaluator pushing for more consistency within or across sites). Such difficulties in communicating expectations may be instructive to future project organizers, in that organizers may wish to carefully consider methods for increasing clarity and consistency of expectations as well as for promoting compliance with these given varying backgrounds of project participants.

Mediation of Conflicts

An area for which sites sought repeated support involved staffing conflicts. Nearly every site solicited support from MCVRC for such conflicts, which included turf issues between funded partner agencies (several lead agencies had subcontracts or partners at the time of the award), difficult relationships between organizational administrators and front-line project staff, and personality conflicts among staff. A large proportion of the technical support provided by MCVRC involved mediating between staff and collaborative agencies at the sites, and this support was both helpful and appreciated by site staff.

At one point, there were phone calls daily...[MCVRC] visited when we were having staff conflicts—scheduled conference calls, helped resolve the problems...[MCVRC] was never more than a phone call away.

Such management and staffing problems underscore the importance of preparedness for agencies, their partners or subcontractors, and their staff in taking on projects of this type. For future projects, good working relationships and existing protocols for conflict resolution would be wise considerations for both grantees and grantors *prior* to the application and/or award.

Evolving Task Demands

The very nature of funded projects necessitates adjustment as the grant-writer's proposed plan evolves to accommodate varied interests of funders, program coordinators, staff, community partners, and other stakeholders. Because the *Collaborative Response* project was among the first of its kind, there were a number of emerging task demands that had not been anticipated at the outset of the project. There was also a need for substantial adjustment at key points in the project's development. For instance, a needs assessment to inform the work of each site had been slated to occur early in the first funded year. A delay in selection of sites required re-scheduling, leading to scheduling conflicts for the assessor that contributed to even further delays in assessment. Site staff were thereby forced to adjust plans well into their first year as assessment findings became available. Similarly, sites had to adjust again as their community-based advisory boards provided input, steering plans in yet another direction. Finally, as is typical in projects of this sort, adjustments to site plans were needed as the federal funder communicated evolving expectations to the pass-through organization.

Collectively, these unexpected shifts resulted in the feeling that the project lacked an overall vision or structure, challenging site staff and sometimes requiring "learning curves" to acclimate to tasks. Even this learning sometimes warranted subsequent adjustment.

We learned all these things through the project, then we had to come back to the table to revise our plans to be inclusive of these lessons.

Changes in plans often required "re-grouping," yet site staff felt that the project time frame did not sufficiently allow for this.

I think we spent two years trying to figure out just the very, very first step, so that by the time that we got to a place where we were like, "Oh yeah, this is how we could do this," it was almost too late for the length of the project.

To address such adjustment, site staff suggested more base training on task-specific skills (e.g., strategic planning) as well as explicit forewarning of the need for ongoing adjustment.

[MCVRC] said that this is a work in progress...I don't know that they could have anticipated things, but maybe [MCVRC] could have told us this up front.

Theoretical Framework of Support

One challenge for MCVRC and the five sites concerned the theoretical framework from which MCVRC and/or its consultants approached technical support. Some of this pertained to conceptualization of key ideas including "multi-faith" and "collaboration."

With this project being about communication, collaboration, and respect for belief systems, we felt that MCVRC and the consultants didn't have as good of a handle on these things as we did. This was manifest in some of the written materials and at the all-site meeting. We were being presented with stuff that really exemplified more of a tolerance education, but not real collaboration coming from the leadership over the project.

Another site said: The whole group had sort of a narrow lens of view in terms of religion and tolerating... The consultants didn't seem to have checked with [MCVRC] about what they were going to say, and some of what they said indicated a lack of screening and particular insensitivity given the nature of the project.

There had been several instances when consultants presented material predominantly from a Christian perspective, and some site staff approached these consultants or MCVRC to make them aware of the bias. There were efforts by MCVRC to rectify these issues, including an intensified approach to achieving a multi-faith atmosphere, such as provision of multi-faith resources and a presentation using a multi-faith panel as an example of a training that could be replicated at sites. Throughout the project, staff and participants at all five sites were given multiple opportunities for input on types of training needed.

Another area in which theoretical framework presented a challenge involved project sustainability.

[MCVRC] had lots of expectations about finding ways to sustain the project, but not a lot of theoretical framework regarding what sustainability was... [MCVRC] didn't really know what sustainability was about other than fundraising... That undermined the community ownership and self-sustaining aspect. When you limit your sustainability to just funding, you limit what it's all about.

Some of this conceptualization may have derived from differential skill levels of staff at different sites. MCVRC felt that some required substantial education about the basics of fundraising and thereby concentrated on this in trainings or discussions of sustainability. For future projects, building a more thorough conceptual framework regarding sustainability may be desirable.

Cross-Site Interaction

A final instructive issue regarding technical support concerns interaction of staff across the five project sites. MCVRC recognized at the outset of the project that the five sites differed with respect to skill in strategic planning and community organizing. Because of this, MCVRC chose to allow each site to develop an initial plan prior to creating a forum for extensive cross-site interaction. The rationale for this was that weaker sites may simply adopt strategies developed at other sites if such interaction occurred, thereby failing to develop plans that were truly based on unique needs and resources of their own communities. MCVRC attempted to assure that each site

had adequate information, and MCVRC in some ways acted as a filter, sharing information selectively across sites. Following the first multi-site meeting (late in the first year of funding), MCVRC attempted to promote greater cross-site sharing in a number of ways, including an online message board and an online training bank in which all sites' training products were accessible. MCVRC also facilitated several specific mentoring relationships between staff across sites, and supported one site staff member's efforts to arrange conversations across the five sites.

However, there are indications that the initial approach of filtering information created a hesitancy among site staff to share information, possibly contributing to less-than-optimal usage of avenues available later in the project for cross-site communication.

Across sites, we don't know what other sites are doing. We haven't developed a relationship with other sites beyond the national meetings. . . . We don't want to say something wrong that we aren't supposed to share. There was a precedent set early—at the first meeting, the groups tried to have an informal meeting without [MCVRC] in the room, and it became obvious that that couldn't happen. It was maybe perceived as a threat.

Another site noted: The cross site networking was one thing we wanted to be better. . . . We begged for structured conference calls with an agenda, but were told this was difficult and expensive. The message board was established, but no one utilized it. The group meeting was helpful, and we got a lot out of the dialogue there, but we wanted meetings or at least conference calls more frequently—like quarterly communication. . . . It would have been nice to share pieces of implementation and tools with one another. We sensed there was a concern initially that the sites would “pollute” one another, which is paradoxical since this is a project on collaboration. It just wasn't cultivated that the sites should be communicating. Also, [MCVRC] wanted to be there if there was any discussion. . . . so there wasn't really opportunity for the sites to share freely.

It is possible that time limitations at both multi-site meetings and/or misinterpretation of MCVRC actions contributed to the feeling that sites could not share freely. It was noted that MCVRC staff were housed in an entirely different building for one meeting, with staff from the five sites sharing a lounge area for networking after hours. Meals were also intended as an opportunity for informal discussion and networking. Some site staff placed the onus of responsibility for lack of cross-site interaction on themselves.

[MCVRC] did [its] best to set up the message board, but we didn't utilize it. That's more our fault than [MCVRC]'s. It was rare that they had opportunity to talk to people from other sites. Again, that's not [MCVRC]'s fault. . . . The multi-site meetings helped establish the necessary personal connections, so we didn't always have to use [MCVRC] as a go-between.

These dynamics illustrate some very real challenges as MCVRC attempted to balance its own provision of site support with site-to-site support. MCVRC's concern that some sites may inappropriately adopt methods of other sites has validity, in that site staff shared at least one instance in which this may have occurred (uncredited use of materials, which was addressed with assistance from MCVRC). An area for exploration and model development on future projects might include structured protocols for cross-site communication, sharing of resource materials, and site-to-site mentoring.

Overall Impressions

Caveats aside, site staff repeatedly emphasized the good job done by MCVRC in managing a project of this size and scope, particularly given complexity of issues addressed, varying backgrounds and skill levels of those involved, and lack of existing models for carrying out such a project. There was general agreement that the quality of support became stronger as the project progressed, as relationships were built, and as lessons were learned.

The technical support has been helpful, especially now that it's smoother at the end.

LESSONS LEARNED

Lessons were learned on the project through some formal means such as course evaluations, but more so through trial and error, learning from responses of community partners, and reflection in hindsight. Interviews with project staff and community partners were especially informative in identifying lessons that may inform future efforts. A few major themes dealt with gaining “buy-in” for the project, staffing issues, and time needed to achieve goals.

Buy-In

Despite concerns about church-state separation, many faith leaders and providers saw the utility of faith-secular collaborations.

Funders and systems have a tendency to compartmentalize what isn't compartmentalizable. Doing so doesn't serve the victim holistically. Within the victim, there is no compartmentalization—substance needs, housing needs, victimization—all intersect. By bringing people together, we begin to see that we are all working with the same people, and that spiritual needs are part of the mix (Community organizer).

Many were relieved at the idea that there were sensitive ways to integrate faith into their secular roles and had previously been compartmentalizing *themselves* into dual lives (e.g., clergy who

suppressed discussion of faith in their 'other' jobs at hospices, firms, etc.; providers who suppressed in their victim service work but who were strongly involved in the faith community).

For others, however, participating in a collaborative such as this was another of many competing priorities in lives that were already quite full in terms of career demands. Some faith leaders, for instance, were already becoming inundated with requests for participation in federal or other faith-based initiatives. Further, victim assistance providers often choose their work because of a passion about victimization issues, which is difficult to instill in others. Thus, rendering these projects a priority for faith leaders sometimes required framing victimization within a broader context that matched their passions (e.g., serving persons who are poor or disenfranchised, preventing community or youth violence) or focusing on involvement of faith community members who already had some interest in victimization issues (e.g., health ministries, women's ministries). Listening to community members to identify issues of concern and creating forums for multi-directional learning from one another (versus presenting project staff as the experts who will teach others) are important components of developing an appropriate focus for project activities.

I like the idea that [staff at one site] were always available, always open to ideas. It wasn't like they were in charge. They would often say, "Well what do you think. Make some suggestions. We welcome the opportunity to work on that manual" (Secular provider).

Similarly, some sites in this initiative were engaged in an ongoing struggle to achieve buy-in from particular groups (e.g., certain faith leaders or providers, ethnic minorities, persons of non-Christian faiths). It was noted by several interviewees that they felt it was appropriate "to throw the net broad and wide" in efforts to include a range of potential partners, but that at some point in the project, it is necessary to move beyond "spinning your wheels" trying to bring in persons who are resistant or less committed to the work. It was not perceived as helpful to constantly worry about who was *not* at the table, as this de-energized those who were.

You know, we struggled a lot with that...stumbled over and over it but never got anywhere. It came up at every meeting, and at every meeting nobody had an answer, and nobody came up with a solution, or nobody wanted to try something...We just grappled with it—processed the issue for so long. We never got anything done with it. Having that conversation two and a half years into the project is worthwhile as long as you are doing something with it and not continuing to grapple with the problem (Secular provider).

It is important to keep all prospective partners informed and provide them with resources, but some sites chose to focus their most rigorous engagement efforts on persons that were already moderately committed. That commitment could be strengthened to form strong partnerships, and then those persons could assist in involving their peers.

You can be buffeted by external events and seem to be kind of blown off course, but as long as you have a nucleus and a solid core, I think the other stuff can build from that. If the core people get discouraged because it doesn't seem like it is moving fast enough or involving more people—"How are we going to get the Jews involved? How are we going to get the Muslims involved? What about the Sikhs?"—or whatever, because of all of the diversity—it is just kind of a lesson about not being discouraged and just keeping going (Secular provider).

Finally, even after three years working together, some interviewees indicated there were still glimpses of distrust, territoriality, and adversarial relationships between and among victim service providers and faith communities at their sites. Both faith leaders and victim service providers are protective of those whom they serve; they do not want to “lose” their clients or their flock to someone who may “un-do” what they have worked so hard to accomplish. Relationships between and among faith-based and secular providers must be approached with mutual respect for one another’s expertise and contributions. Effective referrals should allow these providers to continue serving the victim while having their own unique role supplemented by those who can add something different toward victim well-being.

Staffing

There were staffing and management conflicts at multiple sites and multiple levels of the project. It became evident to many involved that an integral aspect of project success may be having strong working relationships from the project’s outset, consistency in staffing for the project’s duration, and project staff who are sufficiently committed to the lead agency and to the project.

Many persons suggested that such projects require staff dedicated entirely to the project, and that gaining buy-in requires that these be persons who are viewed as consistent, reliable, trustworthy, and credible to the community. They must get out of the office and into the community, frequently working irregular hours to accommodate the differing schedules of faith-based and secular providers (including evenings and weekends). They must be flexible to meet emerging task demands and changes in plans, as well as persistent in following up with prospective partners. The overall team of staff requires skills including project administration and management, ability to multitask yet maintain focus, ability to lead meetings and process multiple perspectives, and conflict management skills, among others. Finally, gender, race, connections to the field and the community, and personalities *did* matter in opening doors and establishing rapport with potential partners.

Having the male partnership when [male staff member] joined the team was very helpful in forming the bond with male clergy. It totally turned around the interview process—the dynamics changed and the clergy opened up (Community organizer).

Time

Staff at every site felt that the allotted time of three years was insufficient to accomplish necessary tasks: learning about the community, individually networking with providers and faith leaders, identifying needs, building relationships among providers and faith leaders, planning, creating tools and testing these, embedding tools and implementing plans, and seeing outcomes.

I think some of it is just really bigger than the project. I think it probably will take years to develop....I mean, there are wars over religion. To think that you are going to get all of these people together in three years just doesn't seem realistic to me (Secular provider).

Instead, many staff described feeling that they had just “hit their stride” in performing tasks and establishing trusting relationships at the time when the funding was coming to an end.

One of my frustrations is that it feels like we are just now at the place where we could jump off from. It feels like we are ending three years too soon (Faith leader).

There was the concern that the project had not been adequately seeded and would wither away, leaving stakeholders disappointed and damaging the community trust that had taken so long to build.

If [the collaborative] doesn't exist past this initiative, it's going to be harder for others in the future because of damaged trust. People are tired of being promised things and then the funding goes away (Community organizer).

This was a prominent concern from the outset of the project, and there were numerous efforts by MCVRC and many site staff to develop a sustainable approach. Nevertheless, a number of persons suggested that a five-year time frame may be more feasible, noting that such time frames are typical of prevention work or other projects that require longer-term investments to achieve outcomes. Alternatively, the three-year time frame could be viable if lessons from this project are translated to future projects for a streamlined approach.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The *Collaborative Response* project was among the first projects of its kind, and perhaps the only project of this depth and scale focused on collaboration between victim service and faith communities. Although success varied across sites, there were some definite benefits to project activities as well as a number of remarkable accomplishments. The exploratory nature of the project combined with differing backgrounds and settings of the five lead agencies provides insight

into diverse approaches. Future work may be informed by the strengths and struggles of this project, hopefully establishing a rudimentary foundation of successful practices upon which continued efforts may be based.

APPENDIX A—INTERVIEW PROMPTS

Staff Interviews

1. First, I'd like to open it up for you to tell me your ideas about the basic goals, plans, and activities at your site (e.g., your strategic plan, impressions of success, lessons learned).

Now I have some specific prompts to address:

Technical assistance

2. Tell me about the nature and regularity of visits, phone consultations, or other one-on-one support with your site.
3. Tell me about MCVRC's ability to promote cross-site networking, conferencing, or mentoring for resolving mutual problems or sharing resources.
4. Tell me about MCVRC's flexibility in providing support appropriate to your organization's own style and needs.

Sustainability

5. I'm going to list a few potential "vehicles" for sustainability, and I'd like you to tell me a bit about each:

- your sustainability committee
- your sustainability plan
- persons or entities that "champion"/support the project in the community
- prospective funders
- mechanisms for documenting progress & communicating w/ stakeholders
- training of persons beyond the immediate advisory committee/partners
- strength of your agency to contribute to sustainability
- integration of this project's collaborative activities with existing programs
- fit of this project with the host community

6. How do your sustainability efforts translate one-on-one personal relationships of collaborative partners into more enduring practices or policies?
7. What aspects of the existing collaborative response project need to be sustained the

most if the goal is to improve services for crime victims?

8. Do you feel that the project's overall timeline allowed for something sustainable?
9. What were important ways that you learned lessons along the way and put these into practice to improve the project?

<h3>One-on-One Interviews</h3>

1. To start off, tell me little a bit about your agency/organization and your involvement with the project.
2. Think back over changes that you've seen since the project began. Are there specific changes you think are related to the project—changes for victim service providers? Faith communities? Victims?
3. Tell me a bit about the nature and strength of interagency relationships you've had since the project began. How has contact and trust among partners changed?
4. Tell me about the returns on your investment in the project—what you put into the project (staff, time, etc.), what you get back in return, and how returns might be maximized?
5. What are problems and obstacles y'all had establishing links between faith and victim service communities?
6. Think back over the things that worked best about the project. What were successful approaches to increase collaboration and cross-referral among faith and victim service communities?
7. Do you think the project has potential to increase the number of victims being served or to bring services to new populations?
8. How would you describe the cultural sensitivity with which faith issues were handled on the project or by different project partners? Do you feel religious freedoms were adequately protected (e.g., inclusion & alternatives for diverse faiths)?
9. Tell me what you learned from the project about how or whether faith and victim service communities can work together.
10. What progress has been made toward establishing an effective network of faith-based and secular victim services? If you had three more years, how would that time be best used?

APPENDIX B—ADVISORY EVALUATION FORMS

Rating scale:

Not at all

1

2

3

4

Very much

5

Instructions:

The following items address your impressions of the [project name] coordinated by [Agency]. Based on your experiences *throughout* the project, please rate:

Items:

[Agency]'s ability to clearly communicate the purpose of what was to be achieved

The appropriateness or 'fit' of the project's focus given community needs

The appropriateness or 'fit' of [Agency] (e.g., mission, culture) to lead a project like this

The reasonableness of expectations put forth by [Agency]

[Agency]'s ability to foster strategic partnerships among partners

[Agency]'s ability to lead partners in identifying and drawing upon community resources

[Agency]'s ability to promote a climate where partners feel free to express ideas and have sufficient time for group process

[Agency]'s ability to bridge differences between groups, highlight value of different perspectives, and combine inputs of different partners

[Agency]'s ability to involve front-line staff and congregants in project activities

[Agency]'s effectiveness in leading partners to achieve collective goals

[Agency]'s commitment to work with organizations and professionals of varied philosophies and backgrounds

[Agency]'s ability to build support for the project among victim service providers

[Agency]'s ability to build support for the project among faith leaders

[Agency]'s ability to build support for the project among the lay public

The appropriateness of tasks and topics addressed at advisory meetings given project goals

The quality of interaction at advisory meetings

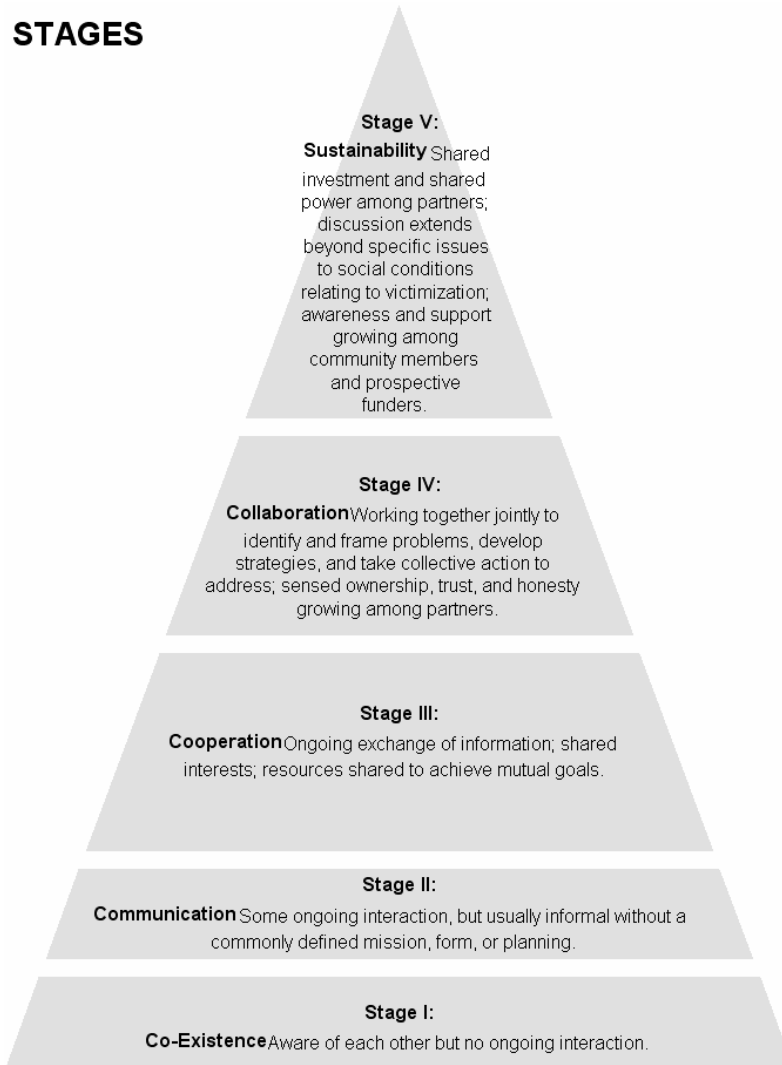
The quality of written and oral reports on project progress

Your overall satisfaction with the project's goals and processes

Please tell us anything else that you feel will help improve this or other projects in the future:

APPENDIX C—COLLABORATIVE LEVELS

STAGES



EXAMPLES

Shared essential resources across agencies (e.g., agency dedicates staff or valued resources to the project).

Integration of principles into agency infrastructure or philosophy e.g., partners' independent activities (e.g., sermons, curricula) reflect values or concepts derived from the collaboration; partnerships built into agency services or routines (e.g., changes to intake forms, MOUs, multidisciplinary staffings or teams).

Joint services provided through volunteerism or existing non-project funds (e.g., peer support groups, co-located offices).

Joint activities for agency staff or in the community (e.g., events, joint trainings, awareness activities, shared projects).

Initiative among partners in generating ideas and fostering collaborative activities without prompting of the lead agency.

Introduction of the collaborative by existing partners to new prospective partners.

Shared expendable resources across agencies (e.g., clothing donations, shared space for meetings).

Referral of victims across agencies (e.g., inclusion in victim materials, in verbal discussion of options, or direct introduction to agency staff).

Repeated participation in activities sponsored by the collaborative or by partners.

Informational support provided across agencies to enhance ability to serve victims (e.g., phone consultation, provision of resource materials).

Dialogue to enhance understanding of people, services, resources, & cultures (e.g., luncheons, joint meetings, developing shared vision upon which to base methods).

Mere introduction without ongoing discussion.