

NYSCADV Annual Meeting
9/30/09
DV System Issues/Recommendations

(Participants: representatives from NYSCADV, OPDV, OCFS and OTDA)

Service needs

- transportation (and related costs; who is responsible) includes transport for residents to things like day treatment, and across county lines
- assistance from LDSS to transition to permanent housing (see Onondaga pilot)
- translation; who is responsible if VDV needs translation to get through various systems (including LDSS)
- define best practices in industry in terms of core services in regulations (possible NYSCADV project)
- housing, retraining, jobs combined with support services
- clarification needed regarding core non residential services; for example, does advocacy require accompaniment?

LDSS relationships/payment responsibilities

- Challenges getting through local district processes and requirements, particularly when dealing with a crisis situation
- Additional challenges when working with special need clients
- DV providers interested in fair hearing process available for denials of benefits, such as shelter stay or extension
- DV providers given power of attorney for client may not have same authority with LDSS
- Significant payment delays require providers to spend significant resources tracking down payments
- Often times, by the time a shelter is informed of the DFR issue/amount of fee owed, the resident may be gone, resulting in partial or no per diem reimbursement
- In many cases, especially if client is from out of county, the per diem is a small percentage of the actual cost to house/serve the client
- Shelter may need to hold bed for child on visitation, or victim in the hospital, etc which can not be used and/or reimbursed
- Assistance needed with cross county payment negotiations; related bulletins will be redistributed; the OTDA helpline number is **518-474-9344**.
- There is a lack of consistency in the way local districts interpret/implement requirements and therefore it is very challenging when serving victims cross county; the benefits provided in one county may not be available in another, requiring a lot of work on part of the provider to learn and resolve issues. Residents in any given shelter may be getting different benefits depending on DFR. A universal approach to serving dv victims would be very helpful.
- Relationship w/ county is important, but many issues are cross county. Interest in having OCFS and/or OTDA leadership on assisting w/ cross-county issues.
- Providers need to deal with multiple counties due to the movement of victims for safety reasons; while a provider may have a very good relationship with their local dss, its difficult to maintain the same type of relationship with other counties
- Mutual accountability; consider exchange of accountability measures to jointly meet client needs

Special need clients

- an increasing number of clients are presenting with multiple, and very serious issues
- often times, referral sources have waiting lists so dv providers are faced with all the needs, and not all counties have available complementary services
- need more staff with more areas of expertise at all times in case of a crisis
- special need victims require longer lengths of stay
- it can be extremely challenging getting all the required documentation for/from special need victims
- safe dwelling without 24 hour coverage often refer special need residents to dv shelters; may need to re-assess safe dwelling staffing

Eligibility criteria

- undocumented mothers not eligible for services but children are; difficult to separate the two
- shelters are seeing an increase in single women referred to shelter, particularly from nyc, although all over state. Single women may share a room but still leaves unfilled beds that can not be reimbursed. Single cases take longer to open, and if they come fr/ NYC still have to go to the City for court and other appts.
- some trafficking victims, while not clearly meeting definition by law, have the same dynamics as dv victims; should be considered in future
- clarity needed regarding age requirements/responsibility to teenage female victims
- Often times there is confusion about homeless vs. dv eligibility criteria

Length of stay

- need more time due to decreased housing options and financial stressors and fact that more and more clients are individuals with multiple needs
- regulations allow 90 days, but some local districts have contracts requiring 30-day stay
- while admissions may be decreasing, length of stay is increasing due to challenges finding affordable alternate housing so data looks like utilization is “down” because there are fewer new clients
- in poor economic times, victims are more likely to remain in abusive situation rather than face financial and housing crisis, in part based on general fear about economy, and fear of change (ie. shelter)
- suggestion of system based on “aggregate” length of stay as opposed to same length for each resident met w/ some interest

Other

- CPS mandates regarding confidentiality often conflict with DV policies
- Concern about both “inappropriate” programs receiving certification as well as programs providing quality services that are not certified
- What is the reason that FVO waivers are not issued in some counties
- NYC practices differ from rest of state so clients in the same shelter may be treated differently; also, concerns about requiring victims to call back daily if a shelter bed is not available (which is done when victims seek housing through the homeless system, as screened by HRA/NOVA staff)

