

COMMUNITY PROBLEM ORIENTED POLICING CHILD ABUSE PROJECT

**Coordination of
Resources**

**Crime Victims
Project**



**Community Problem Solving
S.A.R.A.**

**SUBMITTED BY:
La Crosse Police Department**



Department of Police



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ABSTRACT

LA CROSSE POLICE DEPARTMENT'S COMMUNITY PROBLEM ORIENTED POLICING CHILD ABUSE PROJECT

Prompted by community concerns about child abuse and observations of police investigators that child abuse cases involving young children were increasing in frequency and severity, the La Crosse Police Department and the Wisconsin Coulee Region Community Action Program formed a partnership to engage in a community problem solving effort. The project was initiated in late 1997 and continued throughout 1998. A planner was hired through the CAP office to staff the project and an independent evaluator was hired to assure objectivity and to oversee the entire project.

SCANNING

The scanning phase began with a community meeting designed to bring together a vast variety of individuals and organizations concerned about child abuse. The project planner began collecting baseline information about victims, offenders, and the crime environment. The independent evaluator devised a survey to gauge community perceptions about child abuse that was included with the invitation to the original community meeting. Forty-three persons representing twenty-two organizations participated in the project. The committee and the COPS planner gathered additional information to ensure that as many voices from the community as possible were represented. Information was gathered from police investigators, child protective services staff and clients, staff at local hospitals, family day care providers, family resources programs, persons on probation or parole for child abuse offenses, and attorneys who frequently represent parents accused of child abuse. The scanning committee subsequently grouped and prioritized the concerns and information collected.

ANALYSIS

Data for the analysis phase of this project was collected from a variety of sources utilizing a variety of methods. Police department records including victim profiles and geographic distribution of calls were reviewed. Information from state and national child abuse and neglect studies was reviewed. Recent community surveys provided a risk assessment of the community. A recent community task force study conducted by United Way of the La Crosse area provided documentation of surveys of 510 people in the seven counties representing the La Crosse area. The data was coded, tabulated, and cross tabulated. Regardless of how the data was analyzed, substance abuse, youth at risk, and domestic violence were priority issues. The analysis committee determined that children in families where there is domestic violence are fifteen times more likely to experience child abuse and that 75% of children whose mothers are battered will witness the brutality and are placed at risk. The analysis committee gathered extensive data on victims, offenders, and the child abuse environment.

RESPONSE PHASE

The scanning/analysis committees presented their work and findings at a second community meeting held in April of 1998. This meeting was attended by 23 individuals representing 15 community organizations. Five areas were identified for consideration and were ranked by participants. The committee decided that reducing the frequency and severity of child abuse while improving the processing and clarifying the responsibility for providing resources were areas where an improved response could be developed. The committee chose among a variety of responses and selected four major goals:

- 1) To introduce the community to the Herman Goldstein problem solving process.
- 2) Improving the delivery of services to the victims of crime and domestic abuse in an efficient and timely manner. The team recognized that police officers are best positioned in the community to provide the earliest possible intervention. Armed with a V.O.C. A grant, two part-time Crime Victim Specialists, along with police department volunteers, began the new Crime Victims Project and responded to crime scenes, making an astonishing 1,636 total victim referrals in 1998.
- 3) The team established a goal of intervening in domestic violence cases to prevent future child abuse where children were present. New Domestic Abuse Reduction Teams (D.A.R.T.) consisting of specially trained officers and Crime Victim Specialists began responding to and following up at domestic violence calls where children were present but not necessarily the direct victims.
- 4) The POP team recognized a need for the coordination of services and established a goal of increasing public awareness of the numerous resources available in the community. The group developed comprehensive listings of resources for both professionals and for families.

ASSESSMENT

Evaluating the effectiveness of the response was recognized as an essential part of the problem solving process. The assessment committee included nine volunteers from seven organizations. Assessment strategies had already been put in place by an independent evaluator throughout the SARA process. A final community meeting held in December of 1998 was held to assess the success of this project. The independent evaluator concluded that the "Tarent Pages," also known as resource listings, were widely used by both professionals and families. Both the D.A.R.T. team concept and the La Crosse Crime Victims Project are resulting in police and civilian Victims Specialists responding immediately to the scenes of domestic violence providing for a wide variety of community intervention efforts. On April 20, 1999, Mr. James Doyle, Wisconsin's Attorney General, announced that the Child Abuse Project was selected as the Law Enforcement Program of the Year. On Friday, April 9, 1999, all five La Crosse County Circuit Court Judges signed a letter stating "The goals of the Domestic Abuse Reduction Teams are ones which the courts share and you have our wholehearted support."

The La Crosse Child Abuse Project has successfully institutionalized a multi-agency response to address the needs of children who are present at domestic violence situations and offers a model which can be replicated in any community where domestic violence arrest laws are mandated.

TAB #2

**LA CROSSE POLICE DEPARTMENT'S
COMMUNITY PROBLEM ORIENTED POLICING CHILD ABUSE PROJECT**

Prompted by community concerns about child abuse and observations of police investigators that child abuse cases involving young children were increasing in frequency and severity, the La Crosse Police Department and the Wisconsin Coulee Region Community Action Program formed a partnership to engage in a community problem solving effort. The COPS Child Abuse Project engaged the La Crosse Community in a problem solving process using the SARA (Scanning, Analysis, Response, Assessment) model developed by Professor Herman Goldstein of the University of Wisconsin.

The project was initiated in late 1997 and continued throughout 1998. A planner was hired through the Community Action Program to staff the project and an independent evaluator was hired to oversee the entire project. A preliminary time line was developed for the project based on the phases of the SARA process. The scanning and analysis phases were scheduled to begin in January and to be completed by the end of April. The response phase was scheduled to begin in early May and continue through October. The assessment phase was to take place in November and December and would continue throughout the term of the project.

SCANNING AND ANALYSIS - January-May 1999

SCANNING

The scanning phase began with planning for a community meeting to be held in January 1998 to bring together a variety of people and organizations concerned about young children. The project planner began developing a mailing list to invite potential project participants to the community meeting, and began collecting baseline information about victims, offenders, and the crime environment. The independent evaluator devised a survey to gauge community perceptions about child abuse that was included with the invitation to the original community meeting.

- The initial community meeting was held in January to introduce the project to the community, recruit participants for committees to work on each phase of the project, and begin a discussion of community concerns about abuse of young children in La Crosse. Forty three persons representing 22 organizations attended.
- The Scanning Committee met biweekly from early February through early May. Committee participants included 15 individuals representing 10 organizations.

- The Committee and the COPS Planner gathered additional information to try to ensure that as many voices from the community as possible were represented in the project, information was gathered from police investigators, Child Protective Services staff and clients, social services staff at local hospitals, family day care providers, parents involved in WIC, Healthy Families and Family Resources programs, WWTC students who are parents, persons on probation or parole for child abuse offenses, and attorneys who frequently represent parents accused of child abuse.
- The Committee grouped and prioritized the concerns and information collected.
- The Committee presented its work at a second community meeting in April, attended by 23 persons representing 15 organizations.

ANALYSIS

The Analysis Committee began meeting in early February and met bi-weekly through the beginning of May 1998. Fifteen individuals representing ten organizations made up the committee. This group began by refining the definition of the target population. The committee's goals included an effort to determine the root causes of the problems through an analysis of the various actors, actions, and reactions associated with child abuse in the La Crosse area. This group began by refining the definition of the target population. The Analysis Committee defined their target population as very young children to include children from birth to entry to kindergarten. The group then turned its attention to the baseline data and the list of concerns and trends identified at the community meetings. The committee grouped the concerns and prioritized the clusters they had identified. The committee also analyzed the efforts already in place in the community and attempted to identify gaps in service and/or under-served populations.

Data for the analysis phase of this project was collected from a variety of sources and using a variety of methods. Police department records were reviewed for information about the number of incidents reported to police, the geographic distribution of calls and their distribution. The Child Protective Services Unit of the La Crosse County Human Services Department provided basic information about the number of children abused, victim profile, type of abuse, sources of reporting, and interventions to protect children. Information from the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect and the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families provided national and state data for comparison with local information. Recent community surveys related to health and human services needs also yielded supporting information. Information obtained by a task force including the La Crosse Chief of Police substantiated that domestic violence and youth at risk were a priority concern of the La Crosse community. The needs assessment task force previously appointed by the Board of Directors of the United Way of the La Crosse Area utilized a standard assessment tool developed by United Way of America and the Gannett Foundation, in cooperation with the Urban Institute, with

the assistance of faculty and students from the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, they surveyed two groups:

- 510 people in the seven counties were randomly surveyed by telephone using the Household Survey questionnaire.
- ~ 541 health and human service professionals, community leaders and advocates were sent a similar questionnaire called the Key Informant Survey; 217 respondents (40%) completed and returned the form.

The data was coded, tabulated and cross tabulated. All responses were analyzed by five independent variables: age, gender, income, education and county of residence. Regardless of how the data was analyzed, several problems surfaced repeatedly in all seven counties and also within each county. They included:

- **Substance Abuse**
- **Youth at Risk**
- **Domestic Violence**

The City of La Crosse Police Chief chaired a sub-committee that facilitated more than 90 participants in attendance at eight focus groups which validated the task force findings and added information based on their personal and professional experiences.

Simultaneously, Ms. Ann Quinlisk, Director of the Domestic Violence Intervention Project received a state grant to do a needs assessment of the three major law enforcement agencies in the La Crosse area. The needs assessment indicated a need for training in both skill sharpening and sensitivity awareness for members of the major law enforcement agencies responsible for addressing domestic violence in the La Crosse area.

- The Analysis Committee specifically defined young children as children from birth to kindergarten entry.
- The Analysis Committee focused on analyzing the efforts already in place in the community and attempts to identify gaps in service and/or under-served populations.
- The Analysis Committee determined that children in families where there is domestic violence are fifteen times more likely to experience child abuse than children in non-violent homes.
- The Analysis Committee identified research indicating that 75% of children whose mothers are battered will witness the brutality, and researchers report that witnessing violence at home is more harmful to a child than witnessing a violent act such as a shooting outside the home.

Statistical records did not provide answers to all of the questions addressed by the Analysis Committee. The project planner met with police investigators and child protective service workers to gather additional information about their concerns and their observations of victim and offender characteristics, relationship of abusers to abused children, extent of repeated abuse by offenders, economic status of offenders, vocations where abuse occurs, and the history of abuse to offenders as children. The planner also arranged meetings with key service providers and social service staff at local hospitals. Family day care providers were unable to attend the community meeting or community meetings which were held during business hours. The planner held an evening focus group for these family day care providers to ensure that their concerns and perceptions were included in the analysis. The planner also held focus groups for parents, and conducted individual interviews with parents involved in the Wisconsin program for high risk parents identified through the Health Families Program. The Opportunity Center at Western Wisconsin Technical College, which serves returning adult students, included a parent survey developed by the Scanning/Analysis Committees in their newsletter. With the help of the Probation and Parole Department and Child Protective Services, offenders were interviewed to help fill out the picture. Attorneys who frequently represent clients accused of child abuse also shared their perceptions of their concerns and the needs and concerns expressed by their clients.

Following the SARA model, special emphasis was placed on the collection and examination of data describing victims, the crime environment and offenders. In general, local data and interviews with professionals working with abused children and their families revealed that child abuse in our community happens in much the same ways and involves victims and offenders very similarly to those in other communities in our state and across the nation. A summary of what was learned follows:

Victims:

We found that approximately 300 cases of child abuse were substantiated in La Crosse County in 1997, representing a rate of 11.1 children per 1000. As in other communities, young children seemed to be disproportionately represented, particularly in cases of neglect. Approximately 10-15% of child abuse cases involve families receiving public assistance. The majority of victims that came to police attention were female. All racial and ethnic groups in our community were represented. The community has concerns about cultural differences in child-raising, particularly in the Hmong community in La Crosse. Several offenders who had been charged with child abuse or child endangerment had abused children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and described the difficulty they had experienced in parenting these children. Approximately 21% of reported cases involve sexual abuse with neglect representing the largest portion (42%) followed by physical abuse (34%) and emotional damage (3%). Mandated reporters most often discover an report abuse. Local hospitals have incorporated questions

about abuse on their parent/family forms to ensure that health care professionals are considering the possibility of abuse in the lives of their young patients. Children are protected in a variety of ways, depending on the circumstances in each case. Child Protective Services (CPS) works closely with the police department and the court system to protect children that come to their attention. Interventions range from ordering parents to counseling or parenting education while children remain in the home to removal to foster care or kinship placement. In extreme cases, termination of parental rights may be sought.

Crime Environment:

Most child abuse occurs in the home. There is no particular geographic concentration of occurrences. We are fortunate to live in a very resource rich community. There are many programs already in place to support families and prevent child abuse, including parent education, counseling, home visitors, and support groups. There is little problem with child abuse in licensed day care settings. However, day care professionals and others express concern about the adequacy and safety of care in unregistered family care homes. It became obvious to the Analysis Committee that while many resources were available to families, the extent of such resources and a common source of referral was missing.

Offenders:

Approximately 55-60% of Child Protective Services (CPS) referrals involve allegations of abuse by primary caretakers. Police and CPS report multiple contacts with abusers. The Police Department estimates that approximately 15% of incidents involve repeat offenders. Most offenders involved with the police are male. There is particular concern about young men (late teens or early twenties) with limited educational background and very limited knowledge of parenting who are not married but are living with women and young children. This community has experienced several severe cases of Shaken Baby Syndrome perpetuated by young men caring for infants. Approximately 10-15% of CPS cases involve families receiving public assistance. All of the offenders interviewed described having been disciplined in punitive and sometimes abusive ways while growing up.

In collecting information, we tried to be as comprehensive as possible, and to include input from as many community stakeholders as possible. We attempted to tailor our information gathering methods to the populations we were trying to reach. Interviews and personal contacts with parents and offenders seemed to work well in eliciting their perceptions and concerns. Community and committee meetings provided opportunities for professionals to share their observations and expertise.

Response Phase — May-November 1998

The Scanning/Analysis Committees presented their work and findings at a second community meeting in April of 1998. This meeting was attended by 23 persons representing 15 organizations. Five areas were identified to be considered for a Response, and were ranked by participants in the community meeting as follows:

- Improve coordination of services to promote early identification of and intervention with high-risk families.
- Address overlaps between domestic violence and child maltreatment handling.
- Address overlaps between alcohol and other substance use/misuse/abuse and child maltreatment handling.
- Address overlaps between criminal justice system involvement and child maltreatment including the domestic violence mandatory arrest law and deferral procedures.
- Address providing help for parents in locating child care resources.

The Committee decided that eliminating the problem was not a realistic goal. However, reducing the frequency and severity of child abuse while improving the processing and clarifying the responsibility for providing resources were areas where an improved response could be developed. Using these areas of concern and priorities, along with information about existing community resources, the Response Committee set about its task. Several members of the Scanning and Analysis Committees also served on the Response Committee which greatly enhanced the project continuity as we move from one phase to the next. The independent project evaluator also attended most Response Committee meetings in order to include planning for assessment in the tailoring of responses. The group began by selecting two priority areas on which to focus; improved coordination of services to promote early identification of and intervention with high risk families, and overlaps between domestic violence and child maltreatment. Participants brain stormed a wide variety of potential responses. Brainstorming included not only ideas about possible actions, but also consideration of community risk factors and needs to be addressed and ways to design and deliver effective responses.

Possible responses discussed included:

- Support groups such as Parents Anonymous.
- More comprehensive lists of parenting education, including information about age of children, approach, location, and availability of child care. These kinds of information were not systematically included in existing listings.
- Improved coordination of services.
- Systematic follow-up and outreach to parents in order to provide multiple opportunities to accept voluntary services.
- Promoting more use of First Call for Help, the local information and referral service, including public awareness efforts to counter public perception that it is a suicide hot line.
- Increasing public awareness through employers, physicians, schools, mental health professionals, TV, friends and neighbors.
- Working for mandatory parenting education in high school and middle school, possibly based on a model used in another community in a nearby county.
- Exploring with the District Attorney's Office the possibility of including parenting education in the Domestic Violence Diversion program.

Having narrowed the field of possible responses, the Committee looked at the overlaps between some of the remaining ideas. In designing the response, the Committee considered that the strategy chosen must go beyond the incident and address the underlying problem. Further, the strategy should be aimed at providing a long-lasting solution to the problem. The Response Committee felt strongly that overlaps between domestic violence and child maltreatment responses could more effectively be handled within the Criminal Justice System. Wisconsin was one of the first states in the country to implement a mandatory domestic violence arrest law. The Committee recognized that the police are often best situated to make the earliest referral in domestic violence cases which often result in maltreatment when children are present.

The current Wisconsin Domestic Violence Arrest Law requires that police officers make arrests in most domestic violence situations. The police routinely make arrests in domestic situations where violence or disorderly conduct and other illegal activities are perpetrated in the domestic environment. Those individuals arrested pursuant to the domestic violence law are often placed on diversionary programs with specific limitations and obligations imposed by both the courts and/or the District Attorney's Office. The Response Team recognized that the police frequently are in a position to observe young children within the target population from birth to entry to kindergarten. Seventy five percent of such children whose mother's are battered who witness the brutality, researchers report, will themselves be placed at risk. Not only were such children overlooked in the police investigative process, but an opportunity to reduce the frequency of incidents of child abuse arising from domestic violence was being missed. Team members felt that the police were perfectly situated to identify high risk offenders and victims. Assisted by a Victims of Crime Act Grant, the La Crosse Police Department initiated a Crime Victims Project in which civilian crime victim specialists housed within the Police Department would respond to cases occurring between the hours of 7:00PM and 3:00AM. The objectives of the La Crosse Crime Victims Project were as follows:

- Provide support and information to victims, as well as referrals for other services available to them in the community.
- Contact service providers on a victim's behalf, to pass on relevant information concerning a crime.
- Keep victims informed of their case status.
- Work with investigators and officers to expedite the needs of victims.

The team response that evolved included police officers and/or detectives responding along with crime victim advocates to the scenes of domestic violence and other crimes.

Resource Listings Created:

In addition to the La Crosse Crime Victims Project, the Response Team selected resource listings as a means

to provide more comprehensive information, improve coordination of services, and increase public awareness. The group proposed that listings be compiled including information about parenting education opportunities, parents support groups and counseling resources for parents and families. Further, two versions of the listings would be developed; a more extensive version for professionals to use in referring parents to services, and a simpler easy to read version for parents.

Parenting Classes as a Diversion Agreement:

The Committee also decided to further pursue discussions with the District Attorney's Office regarding the possibility of including parenting education within the domestic violence diversion program. This proposed response clearly addressed the linkages between domestic violence and child maltreatment. In addition, it provided another means for early identification of and intervention with high risk families as offenders eligible for diversion could have no previous criminal record and could not use a weapon or cause serious injury to their victims. Perhaps most importantly, inclusion of parenting education in the court order for the diversion program would help to ensure the participation of offenders in preventative services. Family Resources, a local provider of parenting education focusing on parents of young children, was represented on the Response Committee and indicated that existing classes would have space to accommodate these referrals.

Domestic Abuse Response Teams (DART) Created:

The Police Department modified the original La Crosse Crime Victim's Project to include the development of Domestic Abuse Response Teams (DART). The new DART teams were arranged around a mission statement which specifically addresses domestic violence: "To reduce domestic violence through a united effort between the La Crosse Police Department and victim service agencies, with the goal of making La Crosse a safer place for families and officers." The DART team goals include:

- Reduce return domestic violence calls to the same location.
- Provide early intervention at the scene of domestic violence.
- Lessen the number of repeat offenders.
- Improve relationships with the families.
- Initiate follow-up visits.
- Identify and focus on specific problem areas including the linkage between domestic violence and child abuse.

New Police Information to Include Children Present:

In order to better facilitate the DART team response, the La Crosse Police Department developed a new police report format which noted the presence of children at domestic violence situations, even though the children were not directly involved in the incident. DART teams currently respond to and follow up at domestic violence locations where officers note that children were present and/or where the police department has

been dispatched to the same location three or more times. Officers and victims specialists assure that the presence of children is included in police reports and that this information is forwarded to the District Attorney's Office so that it might be considered when making diversion agreements. DART teams make follow-up visits to families to assure that children within the family are not being maltreated and further, to arrange for parenting classes and appropriate social service interventions. Recognizing that children in families where there is domestic violence are fifteen times more likely to experience child abuse, the DART teams are filling an important gap by providing follow-up by both the police and victims specialists.

The Response Committee worked on specifying the types of information and list of providers to be included in the resource listings, as well as on the formats for the parent and professional versions. Service providers included on the Committee also provided information about their services. The planner sent letters to providers to request information, and followed up with telephone calls to gather needed information or clarify written responses. The group also discussed distribution of completed listings. The process of compiling information was more time consuming than originally anticipated, but by late August of 1998, the information for the "Parent Pages" was complete. The formats were finalized in September and final editing completed. One thousand copies of the parent version and two hundred and fifty copies of the professional version were subsequently printed. Copies of the parent pages were distributed to the La Crosse Police Department, La Crosse Human Services, La Crosse County Health Department, District Attorney's Office, local elementary school social workers and guidance counselors, area clergy, and social service providers serving families and children.

The goals of the La Crosse comprehensive strategy to address child abuse and domestic violence project are as follows:

1. To introduce the La Crosse community to the Herman Goldstein problem solving process involving scanning, analysis, response, and assessment, commonly referred to as the SARA process. The initial community meeting was held in January and was attended by 43 participants representing 22 organizations. This group spent the entire year analyzing the underlying causes contributing to child abuse utilizing the SARA model.

Following the completion of this process, a private independent evaluator was hired through the Community Action Program (CAP Office) to evaluate every aspect of the child abuse/domestic violence project. The evaluator concluded "Community members that participated in this project showed a significant increase in their understanding of SARA, a problem solving process. The SARA model was not only useful for this project, but will be beneficial for future community endeavors."

2. The project team also established a goal of delivering services to the victims of crime and domestic abuse in an efficient and timely manner. The police department recognized that police officers are positioned in the community to provide the earliest possible intervention in such cases. These efforts resulted in the birth of the La Crosse Crime Victims Project, assisted by a grant secured from V.O.C.A. to provide for two part-time Crime Victim Specialists to work evening hours at the La Crosse Police Department. The model project utilizes these specialists in a partnership with La Crosse police officers to do follow-up crime victim contacts. This new Crime Victim's Project provides support and information to victims, as well as referrals for other services available to them in the community. The response teams contact service providers on a victim's behalf to pass on relevant information concerning a crime and keep victims informed of their case status. By the end of the year 1998, the response teams had made an astonishing 1,636 total referrals.

3. Encouraged by the initial success of the La Crosse Crime Victim's Project, members of the Domestic Violence Intervention Project and the La Crosse Police Department set about the task of developing a more "vertical"¹¹ response to domestic violence and child abuse. This entailed recruiting four officers per shift and four detectives for a specialized response unit. They received specialized training and became part of a follow-up program known as the **DOMESTIC ABUSE RESPONSE TEAMS (D.A.R.T.)** DART teams consisting of police officers and/or detectives, along with civilian DVIP members, currently are responding to and/or conducting follow-up investigations at addresses where domestic violence has occurred and officers have noted the presence of children. The La Crosse County Human Services Department and the La Crosse County District Attorney's Office are now utilizing the information relative to children being present at domestic violence situations when making diversion agreements and providing parenting classes and further follow-ups in these situations. The police department has revised its reporting systems to assure that the presence of children at domestic violence situations is noted even when the children are not the direct victims of abuse. The DART teams and enhanced reporting techniques are assuring that youth in crisis as a result of domestic violence in the family are not being overlooked. Utilizing the current domestic arrest law, the La Crosse Police Department is now assuring that the future victims of child abuse are receiving crime victim services before they, in fact, become the victims of child abuse. Efforts are currently underway to make such interventions a mandatory part of the domestic diversion program.

4. The Community Problem Solving Team also recognized that comprehensive information and improved coordination of services were necessary to increase public awareness of the numerous resources available in the community. The group proposed that listings be compiled including information about parenting education opportunities, parent support groups, and counseling resources for parents and families. Further, two versions of the listings would be developed, a more comprehensive version for

professionals to use and a simpler and easier to read version for parents. The formats were finished in September of 1998 and final editing completed. Grant funds were used to print 1,000 copies of the parent version and 250 copies of the comprehensive professional version.

The independent evaluator of this project concluded "PARENT PAGES, a resource guide for parents of young children and professionals who work with families, have been distributed in the La Crosse area. Initial evaluation indicated that professionals will use this guide 1-10 times per month, and parents will use it frequently. Both parents and professionals said PARENT PAGES provided useful information in a format that was easy to read and understand."

Assessment (NOTE: Also see Addendum A - Comprehensive Independent Evaluator's Report.)

Evaluating the effectiveness of the response was recognized as an essential part of the problem solving process. Without evaluation, the team could never be sure if the strategies that were implemented were having the desired effect or indeed any effect on the problem at all. Plans for the assessment of the aforementioned responses were subsequently put into place. The project evaluator developed very brief sets of questions for parents and for professionals, which were put onto a postage paid postcard and inserted into the Parent Pages. Questions asked respondents to indicate what they liked or would change about the Parent Pages, to rate their helpfulness and usefulness, and to indicate their expectations about how often they might use the listings. In addition, professionals were asked to indicate the type of agency or organization they represent. Cover letters sent out with response listings asked professionals to complete the surveys and to encourage their clients to do likewise. Evaluation postcards were provided to organizations that duplicated their own copies. Professionals were asked to indicate their initial impressions and to mail the follow-up postcards.

The Assessment Committee included nine volunteers from seven organizations. Although several major assessment strategies had already been put in place, this group had a very important role in planning a final community meeting. Held in December of 1998 and attended by 17 individuals representing 9 organizations, this meeting provided opportunities to discuss the project and its evolution, and to gather feedback from participants regarding their perceptions of the SARA model and the project as a whole. The value of the collaborations engendered by this project was widely acknowledged. Feedback about the Parents Pages was genuinely positive. Concerns about domestic violence and child abuse have been widely discussed in the community, both within and outside of this project. Independent of this project, domestic violence and child abuse were the focus of a conference in April, and representatives of Child Protective Services, Victim Witnesses, and domestic violence service providers have begun meeting regularly to improve their collaboration and the coordination of efforts to serve families. An independent evaluator was retained to access the effectiveness of this project. The independent evaluator concluded:

- **Parent Pages.** a resource guide for parents of young children and professionals who work with families, have been distributed in the La Crosse area. Initial evaluation indicated that professionals will use the guide 1-10 times per month, and parents will use it frequently. Both parents and professionals said the comprehensive 40-page Parent Pages provided useful information in a format that was easy to read and understand.
- **SARA Model:** Community members that participated in this project showed a significant increase in their understanding of SARA, a problem solving process. The SARA model was not only useful for this project, but will be beneficial for future community endeavors.
- **Child Abuse Problem:** Project participants showed an increased understanding of the child abuse problem in the La Crosse area. They also expressed their continuing concern and commitment to finding solutions to child abuse and other related problems. Participants expressed their intentions to continue this project as they worked to improve the quality of life for children and families.
- **Parenting for Domestic Violence Diversion Program:** Discussion and planning of a parenting program for domestic violence diversion offenders was initiated as a result of this project. Details need to be finalized. However, this program will fill and identify gaps in services related to violence in homes where young children are present.
- **Additional Benefits:** In addition to the specific goals identified by this project, there were additional benefits that surfaced.
 - Increased awareness of resources available in other agencies. This can lead to enhanced services for families, also a decrease in duplication of services.
 - Increased communication between agencies.
 - Stronger collaborative network between agencies. The working relationship developed in this project will continue far past the time line of this project.
 - Clearer understanding of law enforcement and judicial systems¹ responsibility and commitment to the child abuse issue.
- **Additionally:**
 - **TWO CIVILIAN CRIME VICTIM SPECIALISTS HOUSED WITHIN THE LA CROSSE POLICE DEPARTMENT RESPOND TO THE SCENES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND OTHER CRIMES BOTH WITH OFFICERS AND AS FOLLOW-UP SERVICES.** Total crime victim referrals accomplished by the La Crosse Crime Victim's Project for the year 1998 totaled 1,636 (see attached report).
 - **NEW DOMESTIC ABUSE RESPONSE TEAMS (DART) HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED WITHIN THE LA CROSSE POLICE DEPARTMENT AS AN ADJUNCT TO THE LA CROSSE CRIME VICTIM'S PROJECT.** Police officers and/or detectives, along with crime victim specialists, now respond to domestic violence cases where officers have noted that young children were present even though not directly involved. DART teams also respond to domestic violence locations where three or more incidents have occurred.

- **LA CROSSE POLICE OFFICERS NOW DOCUMENT THE PRESENCE OF YOUNG CHILDREN AT THE SCENE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SITUATIONS.** The presence of children are noted on a new La Crosse Police Department report form which is subsequently reviewed by the District Attorney's Office and La Crosse County Human Services. Both Human Services and the DART teams are able to make referrals of parents to parenting classes during both follow-up residential visits and/or as part of a domestic violence diversion agreement. DART teams are additionally making random follow-up residential visits to locations where domestic violence has been noted and where young children have been present.

CONCLUSION

The La Crosse Child Abuse Problem Oriented Policing Project has clearly been a success. While not having eliminated child abuse, the responses developed have improved the public's perception of the police handling of the problem and have helped coordinate responses to child abuse. Police officers routinely identify high risk offenders and victims. Follow-up visits and diversion agreements in domestic violence cases where children are present are directly addressing the social conditions that lead to child abuse by providing for follow-up visits and parenting classes. The distribution of "Parent Pages" to both professionals and families is providing more accurate information to the public to help them comply with the law and to resolve problems themselves.

DART teams responding to domestic violence locations where three or more incidents have been reported are reducing the frequency of incidents arising from those locations. Both the DART team concept and the La Crosse Crime Victim's Project are resulting in police and civilian victim specialists responding immediately to the scenes of domestic violence providing for immediate referral and intervention.

DART teams responding to domestic violence locations where three or more incidents have been reported are reducing the frequency of incidents arising from those locations. Both the DART team concept and the La Crosse Crime Victim's Project are resulting in police and civilian victim specialists responding immediately to the scenes of domestic violence, providing for immediate referral and intervention.

On April 20, 1999, Mr. James Doyle, Wisconsin's Attorney General, announced that the Child Abuse Project was selected as the Law Enforcement Program of the Year:

"Please accept my congratulations. The La Crosse Police Department's Problem-Oriented Policing Child Abuse Project has been selected as the 1998 Wisconsin Law Enforcement Program of the Year. I will have the pleasure of formally presenting this award to your department at the Law Enforcement Conference luncheon in Appleton on Wednesday, May 26.

La Crosse's Child Abuse Project exemplifies the type of law enforcement and community collaboration that is needed to reduce crime in our communities. This award is a small way of recognizing the positive impact this program has and will continue to have on the children of La Crosse."

On Friday, April 9, 1999, all five La Crosse County Circuit Court Judges signed a letter stating:

"The goals of the Domestic Abuse Reduction Teams are ones which the Courts share and you have our wholehearted support."

The judges further agreed to require domestic violence offenders to attend mandatory parenting classes as conditions of probation or of diversion agreements based on recommendations by DART, team members. The judges further agreed that in the appropriate circumstances, offenders would be ordered to cooperate with D.A.R.T. team members who will visit their homes to speak with their spouse and assure the welfare of children present. This can be a condition of probation, a condition of a diversion agreement, as well as a condition of bond.

The La Crosse Child Abuse Project has successfully institutionalized a multi-agency response to domestic violence situations where children are present but who are not the direct victims of violence. This institutionalized response is addressing the needs of children before they become the victims of child abuse. D.A.R.T. teams are ideally positioned to provide police officers with the opportunity to trigger the very earliest intervention in the child abuse cycle. The D.A.R.T. team response utilizes current domestic violence arrest laws to provide mandatory intervention and is a model which can be replicated throughout the country.

TAB #3

1998 COPS Problem Solving Partnership Grant

Final Report

Prepared By

**Carol J. Roth
Project Evaluator**

The COPS Problem Solving Partnership Grant provided the resources for the LaCrosse Police Department and the Wisconsin Coulee Region Community Action Program to collaborate efforts to address child abuse in the LaCrosse area. As LaCrosse Police Chief Kondracki stated, "Eliminating child abuse is NOT the goal (of this grant), but to look at a response that will decrease the incidence, reduce the impact, improve the handling of the problem, and clarify responsibilities." SARA, a problem solving process, provided the method to examine these issues.

SARA Mode!

The SARA model is a process that involves four separate phases — scanning, analysis, response, assessment. In summary, through this process information is gathered relative to a specific identified problem; a response(s) is designed and implemented to address the problem; response(s) is evaluated.

Scanning and Analysis.

Since "child abuse" is such a broad topic, the scanning and analysis phase required considerable discussion to focus on a specific area to address. Some of the primary questions that the committee labored over and discusses at length included:

- * Who will this grant effect? (Define target population)
- * What are the priorities that have been identified? (Review information) (For initial observations, concerns, trends, see Appendix I)
- * Are there services in place to address these priorities? (Avoid duplication of services)

- * Have all the stakeholders been heard?
Note: The committee realized that community parents were under represented and solicited their input. (See Focus Group Summary, see Appendix II)
- *• Do we have adequate information to address the problem? After preliminary discussions, the committee identified the Following areas for further study: early identification/intervention and parenting; help in locating/arranging for child care; alcohol and other drug use/abuse, domestic violence, and criminal justice system involvement related to child maltreatment.
Note: The committee realized the importance of researching the problem and gathering adequate information. And,..." it can be a never ending task." However, given the time constraints of the grant, the committee efficiently compiled the information for the response committee. (Scanning/Analysis Committee Compilation, see Appendix III)

Response

Based upon the report provided by the Scanning/Analysis Committee, the Response Committee was faced with the challenge of converting the information provided into a community response(s) to meet the needs/priorities indicated. Decisions regarding the information was not made without considerable negotiation. All committee members had the opportunity to provide input into these discussions, and everyone's comments were respected. This demonstrated the true collaborative nature of this process. Following lengthy discussions, the Response Committee via a nominal group process delineated three appropriate responses that addressed:

- Ⓜ Parenting Resource Guide for Professionals
- Ⓜ Parenting Resource Guide for Parents
- <D Parenting for Domestic Violence Diversion Offenders

In addition to attending to the task at hand, members of the Response Committee reported some additional professional benefits from participation in this project. Committee members created a collaborative environment that will continue well past the cycle of this grant. They not only reported developing collaborative relationships that will assist them in their professional work, but also learned more about what was going on in other agencies. This new collaborative network will serve to benefit the agency/organizations of the LaCrosse area.

Assessment

Process and summative evaluation was conducted for all aspects of this grant. However a longer funding cycle would have provided the opportunity to more adequately develop the responses to the child abuse problem and assess the effect of those responses more extensively.

There were two primary assessments throughout this project:

- *Parent Pages*
- Understanding of the Child Abuse Problem and the SARA Model
- Development of Parenting Programs for Domestic Violence Diversion Offenders

Overall this grant attempted to reduce child abuse in the LaCrosse area. Baseline data was collected from the LaCrosse County Human Services Department at the beginning of the grant cycle (January, 1998). (For Baseline Child Abuse Statistics, See Appendix V) However, a one-year funding cycle and initiation of the response phase late in the cycle prohibited correlation between the grant activities and year-end statistics. A longer funding cycle would allow more in-depth evaluation of this project.

Parent Pages. The Parent Resource Guides (*Parent Pages*) were well received by area professionals. One School Counselor commented that she liked *Parent Pages* because they were "current, and well organized," and that she "liked it and will use it frequently." Several other responses commented on the format and the information the Guides provided: "The layout is easy to read." "I like the breakdown into categories." "It's easy to find what you are looking for." "Lots of specific information to direct parents." Positive impressions about the Guides were also reflected in the survey data that was collected at two points in time. Responses were returned via self-addressed stamped postcards following the initial distribution of the Resource Guides (PI) and again one month later (P2). (See Appendix IV for Sample Data Collection Postcard) Users were asked to estimate how often they "expected to use" the Guide(s) and rate their "overall usefulness". Table 1 provides a summary of all the responses. Mean scores were calculated for both independent variables at two points in time (PI and P2). Group scores were also calculated for each type of Agency/Organization (dependent variable) that responded.

TABLE 1: Expected Use and Usefulness of Resource Guides				
Agency/Organization	Expected Use (P1)*	Expected Use (P2)*	Overall Usefulness (P1)**	Overall Usefulness (P2)**
Child Care	2.1	2.0	2.5 ¹	2.3
Clergy	1.8	1.7	2.2	2.0
Education	2.2	2.0	2.6	2.4
Health/Medical	2.0	1.5	3.0	2.0
Human/Social Services	2.3	2.0	2.3	2.7
Other***	2.4	2.0	2.6	2.0
Total	2.2	1.9	2.5	2.3

* Expected Use Scale ranged from 1 to 4. One = Never; Two = 1-10 times/month, Three = 11-20 times/month; and Four = More than 20 times/month.

** Overall Usefulness Scale ranged From 1 to 3. One = Not useful at all; Two = Somewhat useful; Three = Extremely useful

*** Other was comprised of elected officials or government employees not identified in other categories.

As Table 1 indicates, most respondents initially expect to use *Parent Pages* 1 to 10 times every month. In the agencies/organizations that responded, Human/Social Services had the highest expected use with Health/Medical the lowest. Follow-up one month later demonstrated that use expectations did not change significantly. While the evaluation did not specifically examine the direct relationship, the first two sets of data indicate that while the Guides are useful to multiple types of agencies, they were used more often by agencies/organizations responsible for parent referrals. The rated overall usefulness of the Guides followed the same pattern. For

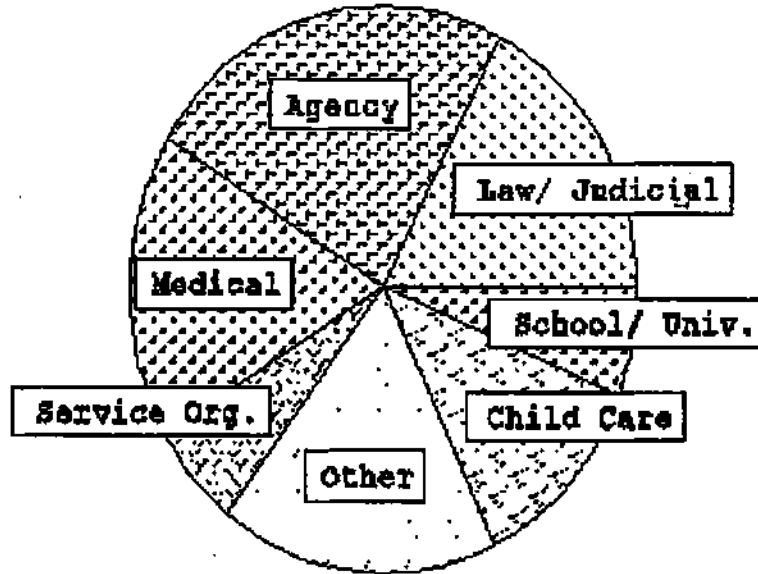
example, It is interesting to note that after one month, the ratings for Guide Usefulness from Human/Social Services increased while Health/Medical services decreased slightly.

Response rates indicate other factors. Table 2 reports is the response rate for both data collections (PI = Initial Distribution of Parent Pages; P2 = One month follow-up)

Table 2: Response Rate for Parent Pages Data Collection		
Agency	Initial Distribution of Parent Pages (P1)	Follow-Up (P2)
Child Care	18.9 %	17.0%
Education	20.8 %	18.9 %
Clergy	9.4 %	13.2 %
Health/Medical	1.9 %	7.5 %
Human/Social Services	11.3 %	35.8 %
Other	9.4 %	5.7 %

As evidenced in Table 2, there were no responses from Law Enforcement or Business/Industry. However, respondents in these categories may have checked "Other". Also, no responses from Law Enforcement does not indicate non-participation in this event. As the following participation graph indicates Law Enforcement as well as other community factions were well-represented throughout this process.

Participation In COPS Grant



There is also some indication that the rate of response is related to use expectations and perception of usefulness. For example, as previously indicated, Human/Social Services respondents, who are involved with parents on a daily basis, expected use and perception increased. This coincides with a three-fold response rate increase. It appears that increased responses reified initial perceptions.

Regardless of use frequency, all agencies/organizations that responded indicated that the Guides were useful and a valuable resource for their profession. The primary changes that respondents suggested were to add more resources and update information regularly to ensure accuracy. There were also formatting suggestions that would simplify these changes. For

example, information changes should be simplified if data were "computerized and (saved) on a disk."

Only a minimum number of parents responded to the survey request for information. Minimal parent involvement has been a major challenge for this project. Several barriers may be responsible for this phenomenon — meeting times coincide with work hours, no or undependable transportation, lack of child care. However, those that did respond to the survey indicated that:

- Information was somewhat to very helpful
(Mean = 2.5 on a Likert Scale with a range of 1 to 3)
- *Parent Pages* was easy to read and find information.
- Information provided was needed by families.
- They would use the Guide sometimes to often.
(Mean = 2.5 on a Likert Scale with a range of 1 to 4.)

Understanding of Child Abuse Problem and SARA Model. To assess project participants understanding of the child abuse issue in the LaCrosse area and the SARA Model, a pre-post test survey was utilized to gather the data. (For a copy of the survey, see Appendix VI) Respondents were asked to rate statements related to child abuse and the SARA Model on a five-point Likert Scale. Ratings were: strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), unsure (3), agree (4), and strongly agree (5). Means were calculated for all variables. Case summaries were compiled using all data calculations. Variable means were posited against the agency/organization (dependent variable) the respondent represented. Table 3 compiles pre and post data collected.

**Table 3 — Understanding of Child Abuse Problem and SARA Model
Pre-Post Test Data***

Agency/ Organization**	Prob	Know	Fam Help	Dscpl	Nglet	Prev	Com Awar	Fear Con	Satis	Sara
School/University	4.0	2.0	5.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	4.0	0.0	2.0	4.0
	<i>4.0</i>	<i>3.0</i>	<i>5.0</i>	<i>1.0</i>	<i>3.0</i>	<i>1.7</i>	<i>2.7</i>	<i>3.0</i>	<i>2.7</i>	<i>1.7</i>
Agency	4.0	4.0	4.5	1.5	4.5	3.3	3.3	3.8	3.0	3.5
	<i>4.1</i>	<i>4.2</i>	<i>4.6</i>	<i>1.9</i>	<i>4.2</i>	<i>2.9</i>	<i>2.7</i>	<i>3.5</i>	<i>3.2</i>	<i>2.5</i>
Service Org.	4.0	2.0	4.0	2.0	4.0	4.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	4.0
	<i>4.0</i>	<i>2.0</i>	<i>4.5</i>	<i>1.0</i>	<i>3.5</i>	<i>3.5</i>	<i>2.5</i>	<i>3.0</i>	<i>2.5</i>	<i>1.0</i>
Medical	4.7	4.3	4.7	2.7	4.7	4.0	3.3	3.3	3.0	3.7
	<i>3.7</i>	<i>4.4</i>	<i>4.3</i>	<i>1.4</i>	<i>4.1</i>	<i>3.6</i>	<i>2.7</i>	<i>3.1</i>	<i>2.4</i>	<i>2.7</i>
Judicial/Law	5.0	3.7	4.0	1.3	3.7	3.7	2.0	3.7	2.3	4.3
	<i>4.0</i>	<i>4.0</i>	<i>4.0</i>	<i>2.0</i>	<i>3.0</i>	<i>2.0</i>	<i>2.0</i>	<i>3.0</i>	<i>3.0</i>	<i>2.0</i>
Child Care	4.0	4.0	5.0	1.5	3.5	3.5	1.5	4.5	2.0	3.5
	<i>4.0</i>	<i>3.9</i>	<i>4.9</i>	<i>1.5</i>	<i>3.9</i>	<i>3.3</i>	<i>2.5</i>	<i>3.3</i>	<i>2.7</i>	<i>1.5</i>
Other	4.7	4.0	5.0	1.7	4.0	3.7	4.0	4.3	3.0	4.7
	<i>4.2</i>	<i>3.5</i>	<i>3.8</i>	<i>1.5</i>	<i>3.7</i>	<i>2.8</i>	<i>3.0</i>	<i>3.5</i>	<i>2.7</i>	<i>1.5</i>
Total	4.4	3.8	4.6	1.8	4.1	3.6	2.9	3.8	2.7	3.9
	<i>4.0</i>	<i>3.9</i>	<i>4.5</i>	<i>1.6</i>	<i>3.9</i>	<i>3.0</i>	<i>2.7</i>	<i>3.3</i>	<i>2.8</i>	<i>2.1</i>

* Pre-Test Data indicated in *italics*. Post-Test Data indicated in regular font.

** Variables listed represent responses to the following statements:

- Agency/ Organization = Type of agency or organization participant represented.
- Prob = Child abuse is a major problem in this community
- Know = Child abuse is a subject that I know a lot about.
- Help Fam = Families need help with discipline issues.
- Dscpl = Discipline of children is the same across all cultures.
- Neg = The most common form of child abuse is neglect.

- Prev = Child abuse is most prevalent in young children (ages 0 to 4).
- Com Awar = This community is aware of the child abuse problem.
- Fear Con = This community is fearful/concerned about child abuse.
- Satis = This community is satisfied with the way child abuse is handled.
- Sara = I am familiar with the SARA model of problem solving.

As Table 3 indicates, there were significant changes in four variables. They were child abuse as a major problem, the prevalence of child abuse among very young children ages 0 to 4, concern about child abuse, and familiarity with the SARA model.

One of the primary goals of this grant was to acquaint the community with the SARA model of problem solving. Participants indicated a noticeable change in their familiarity with this model. Mean scores almost doubled from the pre to post test (2.1 to 3.9). While there is still capacity for more understanding, this was a significant shift.

As indicated by cumulative participant responses, there was an increased understanding of child abuse. Respondents reported an expanded awareness about child abuse in relationship to the LaCrosse community and the children that are most likely to be affected (young children ages 0 to 4). They also indicated that the community-at-large is not aware of the child abuse problem. However, following participation in this project, respondents expressed an increased concern for the problem. Participants in this project believe strongly that families need help with this discipline and other child abuse related issues.

Parenting for Domestic Violence Diversion Offenders. Upon recommendation from the Response committee, the COPS Planner initiated the discussion of this issue with the district attorney. There are several issues/questions that both the committee and the District Attorney's office believe needed to be considered before the parenting program is implemented. Issues/questions considered:

- Who is the target group? (Similar to project — young children)
- How many people will be offered the diversion?
- Who will do the assessment?
- Are offenders currently involved in drug and alcohol treatment eligible for this program? (Not while in treatment)
- Criterion for compliance and non-compliance?
- Who will be responsible for case management? (Not the responsibility of parent educator.)
- What parenting services are available? Who should be responsible for the cost?
- Length of diversion orders?
- How successful are diversion programs?

Through multiple meetings to coordinate and clarify program logistics, the COPS planner facilitated the process so that this diversion program will be implemented within the county. Due to the one-year funding cycle, this grant is only responsible for the that planning process. Program implementation will occur outside the grant-cycle.

Conclusion

The SARA Model provided a framework to address the issue of child abuse in the LaCrosse area. There were many benefits from this project. Responses that were initiated were:

- *Parent Pages* - Resource Guides for parents of young children and professionals working with families.
- / Parenting for Domestic Violence Diversion Offenders

Nevertheless, there were multiple other benefits from this project that will magnify its far-reaching affects throughout the LaCrosse community. These include:

- / Enhanced network for professionals working with children and families
- f Increased familiarity with services available in the area.
- V" Willingness and commitment to make the LaCrosse area a better place to life.
- / Knowledge of the SARA Model that will be useful in other community endeavors.
- / Movement toward a Unified Family Court System (One judge/family)
- V Community commitment to the child abuse issues as evidenced by support for response initiatives. A LaCrosse Law Enforcement Officer summarized his feelings about this issue, "These little guys can't stand up for themselves, we have to..." Child abuse is "the most heinous of crimes committed upon the most innocent of victims."

While there were multiple benefits from this project, some barriers and concerns did surface. Other matters that participants mentioned were:

- / The SARA Model works, but certain parts, such as the scanning and analysis, take more time.
- if The time-limited commitment required for this project encouraged participation, and "this group did a lot in the time allotted." However, there was "not enough time to do what needs to be done."
- f Many participants expressed the need for implementation money to follow-up this initial grant.
- " The challenge for this project is to find adequate resources to support the response.

Where do we go from here?

Those who participated in this project expressed their desire to keep this initiative going. They said: "Systems are in place, we need to keep this from fizzling." "What about a Task Force to keep this process going?" Others suggested future meeting "so we don't lose this one."

As a result of these concerns, there was a need expressed to plan for the future. Because, as one participant said "If we don't plan for it, it won't happen." Consequently, future plans scheduled were:

1. Additional meetings with the district attorney's office to finalize already introduced initiatives.
2. Attempts to create a Child Abuse Task Force or incorporate issues into another department. For example — Coulee Region to Prevent Child Abuse.
3. Follow-up meeting with COPS Grant participants to planned by Community Action Program.
4. Investigate creation of parent support group — Parents Anonymous

Returning to the initial purpose of this grant as outlined by Chief Kondracki, project participants addressed all three purposes. Within the short time-frame of this project, they used the SARA Model to design a response to decrease the incidence of child abuse, to improve the handling of child abuse problems and to clarify agency and community responsibilities.

COPS Child Abuse Project

Community Meeting, 1/22/98

Summary of observations, concerns, trends:

Trends in reporting:

- Reports stabilized or down in the last several years
- Can we get data on longer term trends? (i.e. 25 years)
- If trends change, do we really know why? What drives them up and down? How do prevention programs influence trends in reporting?

Prevention programs:

- Prevention programs operating in community, like Healthy Families
- Hands on, in home teaching of parenting skills, as in Healthy Families, is ideal
- Healthy Families is a good program, data driven
- Home visiting is key-has worked and been more common in past generations, with pastors, nurses, others visiting in homes

Concerns about legal system:

- Prosecution of abusers is difficult
- Court processes difficult
- Legal consequences for perpetrators?
- Laws vague on neglect. Very difficult to prosecute unless abhorrent.
- Neglect must be life threatening to prosecute.

Child care concerns:

- Licensed centers are not seeing the anticipated influx of children from W-2 families
- W-2 moms overwhelmed with demands of work and parenting, problems with budgeting, with the result that once the first parent payment is due for child care, children are often withdrawn from centers
- Neglect and supervision issues when parents resort to older siblings (sometimes elementary school agers) caring for young children, or live-in partners caring for children while parent works, elementary children at home alone
- Child care slots available in La Crosse, but media makes child care look scarce
- Affordability of child care also a big issue for low income working parents

Concerns about consequences of abuse/neglect:

- Delinquency when older children unsupervised
- Younger children who have received inadequate or minimal supervision may also be at-risk for later delinquency
- Cycle of abuse, tendency to be repeated from generation to generation-what will be the effects of this issue?
- No concept of "fair fighting"

Cultural differences:

- We are blessed and challenged by large minority groups.
- What was acceptable in country of origin may not be acceptable here
- Minority populations can get unfair media coverage.
- People of color may be, and may feel that they are, reported more often
- Abuse needs to be looked at case by case
- Abuse is abuse-it may not be a cultural difference
- Be careful of how you accuse or excuse abuse based on cultural differences
- Risk factors can be enhanced by the refugee experience/minority experience

Neglect concerns:

- What's neglect, and what's a result of poverty? "It's not neglect if it's a result of poverty." Difficult for reporters when children's unmet needs judged to be the result of poverty.
- See comments above related to vagueness of law and difficulty in criminal prosecution of neglect.
- See comments above related to child care and supervision.

Emotional abuse:

- Very common, but not reported, not well defined

Identification of early risks:

- At birth, professionals can often spot kids who are headed into bad situations, where parents have little or no investment in parenting
- Bonding critical-terrifying to watch when it does not happen
- We miss opportunities for early intervention
- Licensing for parents?

Prevention concerns:

- Asking for help is not considered a strength
- Need better ways to identify parents in trouble
- Prevention services are voluntary. Even if high risk families can be identified, they can refuse services.
- Limits to the number of families that can be served by existing programs.

Family risk factors:

- More young parents
- More single parents
- Single parent situations where there is a succession of short-term, live-in partners-difficult for children to form stable relationships
- Lack of interest on part of families

- Infants/toddlers can't report abuse
- Increasing trend of developmental^ delayed men and women having children-concern about their ability to care for and keep their children safe when they can't care for or keep themselves safe.
- Parents may need to be "parented"
- Need to replace "good grandparents"-support systems for parents, to teach about parenting

Legislative trends:

- CHIPS (Children in need of protection) law-emphasis has shifted from family preservation to the best interest of the child
- Statewide funding for prevention and Healthy Families
- , However, CHIPS and Healthy Families under attack, especially from Christian right, concerned about interference in the family and with home schooling

Police observations:

- In 1996 and 1997, two shaken baby cases. One abuser received a 20 year sentence, one received a 30 year sentence. One of the babies disabled for life, one lots of fractures. In a recent case, the child died. Both cases involved young parents where moms worked, leaving babies with 18-19 year old fathers who had no knowledge of child rearing.
- Need for services for these families
- Earlier education about parenting
- Proactive vs. reactive

Concern about children in domestic violence situations

Others who should be part of project:

Legal/judicial system

- Consumers of services
- People who have experienced abuse

What Do La Crosse Parents Have to Say?



Results of Scanning/Analysis
Committee Parent Interviews
and Focus Group
April 1998

Who have we asked?

Parents from:

- WIC
- Family Resources
- Healthy Families
- WWTC Opportunity Center
- New Horizons

We will also be talking with parents who are involved with Child Protective Services.



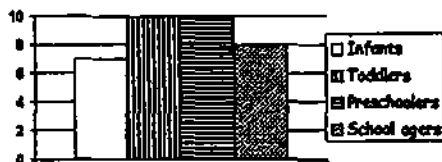
Who have we asked?

To date, we have obtained information from 21 parents. About half have been single parents. About two-thirds have family living in the La Crosse area.



Who have we asked?

Age of children



Who have we asked?

Age of Parent



Who have we asked?

Number of adults in household



Who have we asked?

Racial/Ethnic Background



What did they say?

Parents expressed a variety of concerns, including:

- Education (7)
- Money (6)
- Health (6)
- Discipline (4)
- Nutrition (3)
- Isolation from other parents (3)
- Crime (3)
- Finding safe, affordable child care (2)
- Child development (2)
- Housing (2)



What did they say?

Parents reported being familiar with and using a wide variety of services. The following services were mentioned frequently:

- WIC
- Medicaid
- Food Stamps
- Food Pantries
- Family Resources
 - Parenting education
 - Parenting information
 - Child Care Resource and Referral
- Healthy Families
- Head Start
- Family & Children's Center
- Human Services
- Health Dept.
- New Horizons
- Salvation Army



What did they say?

Frequently mentioned services (continued):

- Public Library
- Teen Health
- Healthy Start
- First Call for Help
- Nurse Advisor Line
- Newsletters from hospital
- La Leche League
- YMCA
 - Play groups
 - Child care for members
- La Crosse Co. Housing Authority
- Parks & Rec. Dept.
- Various play groups and other social or community service groups



What did they say?

In general, parents were satisfied with the services they had used.

Some frustrations were expressed, as follows:

- Transportation problems
- Schedule and location of service not convenient.
- Information received too general.
- Limits on ages of children served by some programs.



What did they say?

Parents' suggestions for services they would like to see provided:

- More help finding child care
- More services available in the evening, like parenting education, play groups, parent discussion groups
- Parents Anonymous or other parent support groups
- Open forum for parents with child care provided
- Drop-in respite care
- More services for single parents
- Support groups/ways for stay at home parents to meet other stay at home parents



What did they say?

More parent suggestions:

- Play groups for specific age groups at a location like the YMCA
- Indoor play area for winter (other than McDonald's)
- Play structures like the Kids' Caucus "in which you can see your child at all times"
- More programs for 3 and 4 year olds, like swimming, play groups, something like Big Brothers/Big Sisters for younger children
- Information for families/parents in Welcome Wagon or other materials for new area residents



What did they say?

Parents identified the following situations as very stressful for them:

- Late afternoon/dinnertime, everyone tired and hungry
- Mornings, trying to get ready for work, school, day care
- Bedtime
- When financially stressed
- When conflicts between adult partners



What did they say?

Stressful situations continued:

- Adjusting to new baby, both for parents and for older siblings
- Baby with colic
- Crying baby
- When baby/child ill
- Wintertime--when more difficult to send kids outdoors



What did they say?

Parents' coping strategies:

- Routines for mornings, mealtimes, bedtime
- Putting the child in another room for a few minutes
- Walking away for a moment
- Relaxation techniques, reading a book, taking a walk
- Exercise
- Getting support from partner, groups at church, school
- Using more "convenience" foods to simplify meal preparation
- Sending kids outdoors in warmer weather



What did they say?

Who cares for children when parent is away?

- Several parents had chosen to stay at home
- Husbands, partners, ex-husband
- Parents
- Other relatives
- Older child
- Child care center or family day care provider
- Friends
- Teenage neighbor



What did they say?

Concerns about child care:

- Cost
- Difficulty in locating/arranging
- Concerns about leaving children with someone else
- Disagreements about discipline, TV, smoking
- Concern about nutrition
- Concern about how thoroughly child care workers' backgrounds are checked



Clustering of concerns/comments, Scanning/Analysis Committee meeting~2/4/98

Risk Factors

- Short-term live-in partners make it hard for children to develop stable relationships
- Are data available on longer term trends? (i.e. 25 years)
- Alcohol use/abuse by parents seen in many CPS cases
- Parents involved in criminal system in many CPS cases, usually unrelated to child maltreatment charges
- Licensed day care centers not seeing anticipated influx of W-2 children
- Child care slots available in La Crosse, but media makes slots look scarce
- W-2 moms overwhelmed. Children withdrawn from day care wften first parent co-payment due.
- Less involvement by extended families
- Affordability of child care for low income working parents
- Neglect/supervision issues: children caring for children, children at home alone, live-in partners caring for children
- Prevention services are voluntary. Even if high risk families are identified, they can refuse services.
- More developmental^ delayed adults having children-can they care for children when they cannot care for themselves?
- Limited number of families can be served by existing resources.
- More single parents
- Cycle of abuse—tendency to be repeated from one generation to the next.
- More young parents
- Children at risk in domestic violence situations
- Shaken baby cases locally—moms working, babies left with young fathers who had no knowledge of child-rearing
- Push for low income women to go into child care, whether they have interest in children and parenting skills or not
- Bonding is critical, can be observed, terrifying when does not happen
- Legislation on CHIPS and Healthy Families under attack, especially by Christian right due to concerns about government interference in the family and with home schooling
- Asking for help not considered a strength
- At birth, doctors and other health care professionals can often tell which families are headed for trouble
- Infants/toddlers cannot report abuse
- Parents may need to be "parented"
- No good modeling of parenting
- Lack of interest on the part of families

Neglect

- Delinquency when older children not supervised
- Younger children who have received little or minimal supervision at risk for delinquency
- Laws on neglect vague. Very difficult to prosecute.
- Lack of interest on the part of families

Parenting

- Any program must have incentives for parent participation
- Parents put their own needs first
- No modeling of impulse control
- No good modeling of parenting
- Kids left in day care long hours, six and seven days per week
- Lack of interest on the part of families
- Parents may need to be "parented"
- Emotional abuse common, not reported, not well defined
- Need "good grandparents" to serve as support systems for parents, teach about parenting
- No concept of "fair fighting"
- Some parents have little or not investment in parenting
- Bonding is critical, can be observed, terrifying when does not happen
- Earlier education about parenting needed
- Asking for help not considered a strength
- Home visiting is key-in past generations, visits by nurses, pastors, etc.
- Hands-on, in-home teaching about parenting is ideal, as in Healthy Families
- Prevention services voluntary. Even if high risk families are identified, they can refuse services.
- Shaken baby cases locally—moms working, babies left with young fathers with no knowledge of child-rearing.

Prevention

- Hands-on, in-home teaching about parenting is ideal-e.g. Healthy Families
- How do prevention programs influence reporting?
- No modeling of impulse control
- Community has prevention programs in place, such as Healthy Families
- Home visiting is key. In past generations, home visits by nurses, pastors, etc.
- We miss opportunities for early intervention
- Asking for help not considered at strength
- Earlier education about parenting needed
- Need to be more proactive
- Need better ways to identify parents in trouble
- Statewide funding proposed for prevention and Healthy Families
- Legislation on CHIPS and Healthy Families under attack, especially by Christian right due to concerns about government interference in the family and with home schooling
- Prevention services voluntary. Even if high risk families are identified, they can refuse services.
- At birth, doctors and other health care professionals can often tell which families are headed for trouble.
- Need "good grandparents" to provide support systems for parents and teach about parenting
- No good modeling of parenting

Infants

- Infants/toddlers cannot report abuse
- At birth, doctors and health care professionals can often tell which families are headed for trouble
- Bonding is critical, can be observed, terrifying when does not happen
- i • Shaken baby cases locally-moms working, babies left with young fathers with no knowledge of child-rearing

Cultural Issues

- La Crosse blessed and challenges by large minority groups
- Acceptable child rearing practices in country of origin may not be acceptable here
- Different beliefs in Hmong community re: young children (elementary age) caring for younger children
- People of color may be, and may feel that they are, reported more often.
- Minority populations can get unfair media coverage
- Abuse needs to be looked at case by case
- Abuse is abuse-may not be cultural difference
- Risk factors may be enhanced by refugee/minority experience
- Be careful of how accuse or excuse abuse based on cultural differences

Legal Issues/Stats

- Mandated reporters need better understanding of system.
- Prosecution of abusers difficult
- Why do trends go up and down?
- Legal consequences for perpetrators?
- Court processes difficult
- Laws on neglect vague. Very difficult to prosecute unless extreme
- Neglect must be life-threatening to prosecute
- Not neglect if children's needs not met due to poverty. Hard for reporters to know how to respond.
- Proposed changes in CHIPS law would shift emphasis from family preservation to best interest of the child
- Legislation regarding CHIPS and Healthy Families under attack, especially by Christian right due to concerns about government interference in the family and with home schooling
- What is neglect and what's a result of poverty?

Good News

- Healthy Families-good program, data driven
- Reports of child abuse stable or decreasing the last several years
- Community has prevention programs in place, such as Healthy Families

Baseline Child Abuse Data — January 1998
Collected from the LaCrosse County Human Services Department

Number of referrals received:	
Neglect	469
Physical Abuse	377
Sexual Abuse	238
Emotional Damage/Other	35
Total referrals received	1119
Number of child abuse referrals assigned	
	968
Number of substantiated cases	
	272
Number of unsubstantiated cases	
	409
Number of children removed from their homes:	
Placed in foster care	94
Placed with relatives	39

Executive Summary

1998 COPS Problem Solving Partnership Grant

Project Highlights:

/ *Parent Pages*

Parent Pages, a resource guide for parents of young children and professionals who work with families, have been distributed in the LaCrosse area. Initial evaluation indicated that professionals will use this guide 1-10 times per month, and parents will use it frequently. Both parents and professionals said *Parent Pages* provided useful information in a format that was easy to read and understand.

/ SARA Model

Community members that participated in this project showed a significant increase in their understanding of SARA, a problem solving process. The SARA Model was not only useful for this project but will be beneficial for future community endeavors.

V" Child Abuse Problem

Project participants showed an increased understanding of the child abuse problem in the LaCrosse area. They also expressed their continuing concern and commitment to finding solutions to Child Abuse and other related problems. Participants expressed their intentions to continue this project as they work to improve the quality of life for children and families.

V" Parenting for Domestic Violence Diversion Program

Discussion and planning of a parenting program for Domestic Violence Diversion offenders was initiated as a result of this project. Details need to be finalized. However, this parenting program will fill an identified gap in services related to violence in homes where young children are present.

V" Additional Benefits

In addition to the specific goals identified by this project, there were additional benefits that surfaced:

- Increased awareness of resources available in other agencies. This can lead to enhanced services for families. Also a decrease in duplication of services.
- Increased communication between agencies.
- Stronger collaborative network between agencies. The working relationship developed in this project will continue far past the timeline of this project.
- Clearer understanding of law enforcement and judicial systems responsibility and commitment to the Child Abuse issue.



Executive Summary

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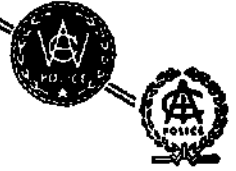
OJJDP Safe Start Grant Agenda
April 28, 1999

1. Review of names, organizations invited to participate as part of grant requirement
2. Review of last meeting and review of today's agenda - additions/deletions
3. Beth Twiton - CAP's history with past grant and one submitted to O&A last year
4. Agency perceptions of needs related to this grant and how each agency sees itself as a collaborative partner.
5. Grant writing funding questions.
6. Agenda and time of next meeting.
7. Break up groups.

TAB #4



Department of Police



EDWARD N. KONDRACKI, CHIEF
LA CROSSE WI 54601-3396

AGENCY AND OFFICER INFORMATION

The following is in response to the Selection Committee's request for agency and officer information.

- 1) The La Crosse Police organization implemented this problem solving initiative throughout the department by changing its domestic violence reporting format to include the presence of children at domestic violence situations. Additionally, volunteer officers were specially trained in order to participate on Domestic Abuse Reduction Teams. The Detective Bureau played a significant role in coordinating and integrating the project throughout the department.
- 2) The La Crosse Police Department has been organized around problem solving teams for the past several years. All police department members have received problem solving training before this project began.
- 3) Officers who participated in this project were recognized by both the Police Chief and the Wisconsin Attorney General; however, no additional incentives were given.
- 4) The La Crosse Police Department received the 1994 Herman Goldstein Team Honorable Mention. The PERF POP Quarterly and other such publications were used by officers to help them manage this problem solving initiative.
- 5) Issues/problems which were identified included the need to train community members in the use of the SARA model. Currently the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse and the Domestic Violence Intervention Project have adopted the SARA model.
- 6) This POP project brought new resources to address child abuse in the form of the community, other agencies both public and private, and the creative energies of police personnel. The Community Action Program was successful in landing a federal grant to assist them, and the Domestic Violence Intervention Project Director was able to land a VOCA grant to assist their agency. The police department has engaged line personnel in this effort and has authorized overtime expenditures for both training and follow up visits to domestic violence scenes.
- 7) The project contact person is:
 - a) Gerard Kabat
 - b) Lieutenant
 - c) 400 La Crosse Street
 - d) La Crosse, WI 54601
 - e) 608/789-7210
 - f) 608/789-7250
 - g) None