

The 14<sup>th</sup> Annual BISC-MI Fall 2009 Conference

**Coordinated Community Responses  
To Domestic Violence, Are They Effective?**

*The Reality, Research and Results Behind  
The Judicial Oversight Demonstration Initiative*

A partnership of Batterer Intervention Services Coalition of Michigan  
and the U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women

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**DELBERT NELSON &  
TREATY WOMACK**

**Conference Theme Song: Lean On Me**




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**LARRY BENNETT**








**Professor**  
Jane Addams College of Social Work, University of Illinois at Chicago



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## What Does Research Say About the Effectiveness of Coordinated Community Responses to Partner Abuse?

Battle Creek, MI  
11/4/09

Larry Bennett, PhD, LCSW  
University of Illinois at Chicago  
[lwbenn@uic.edu](mailto:lwbenn@uic.edu)

## Should We Let the Data Speak?

Q: "What does research say about the effectiveness of coordinated community responses to partner abuse?"

A: Research says nothing, unless somebody moves its mouth



## Today's Take Home Points

- Did JOD work?
  - *Yes, it did, in many ways*
- Did JOD work in all impact areas across all sites?
  - *No, it did not, and for many reasons*
- Does JOD suggest we should continue CCR?
  - *Yes, almost all JOD participants and critics support continued CCR development*

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## More To The Point

- Re-offense is less likely with court sanctions for non-compliance
- Most criminal justice and community practitioners are enthusiastic about the JOD enhancements
- JOD resulted in lasting system changes
- DV re-offense was less in 2 of 3 JOD settings

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## More To The Point

- Accountability increased substantially
- In JOD, victims are more likely to get needed services
- JOD had greatest impact with the highest risk offenders (!)

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## Select CCR Studies

1. MN: CCR ↑ arrest, prosecution, sentence to BIP (Gamache et al, 1988)
2. Lincoln NE: ↓ recidivism post CCR (Steinman, 1991)
3. Minneapolis MN: arrest + BIP ↓ re-offense (Syers & Edleson, 1992)
4. DuPage Co IL: arrest but not prosecution ↓ re-offense (Tolman & Weisz, 1995)
5. Seattle WA: BIP completion in CCR ↓ re-offense (Babcock & Steiner, 1999)
6. Baltimore MD: arrest + prosecution + sentence + BIP ↓ re-offense (Murphy et al, 1998)
7. Alexandria VA: CCR ↑ arrest but no change in ↓ re-offense (Orchowsky, 1999)
8. Duluth MN: ↑ assessment & information sharing among CJ and advocates, court-ordered BIP, BIP completion ↓ re-offense (Shepard, et al., 2002)

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## CCR Controlled Studies

1. CDC-funded (1996, 1999) CCR at 10 sites, each with a comparison community (Post, et al, In Press)
  - Sites had different characteristics driven by local concerns, which makes combining them problematic
  - Post-only measurement
2. Judicial Oversight Demonstration (JOD) CCR at 3 sites, 2 of which had a comparison community (Visher et al, 2008)
  - Sites were different and had different results
  - Pre-post measurement

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## The CDC Study: Summary Findings

- Sampled general population, not batterers or victims
- Goals:
  - Change community attitudes about IPV (probable ceiling effect)
  - Increase victim assistance and services
  - Decrease prevalence (16%) of IPV
- No significant differences between CCR and COMPs
- Some evidence longer (>6yr) collaborations had less IPV

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## The JOD Question

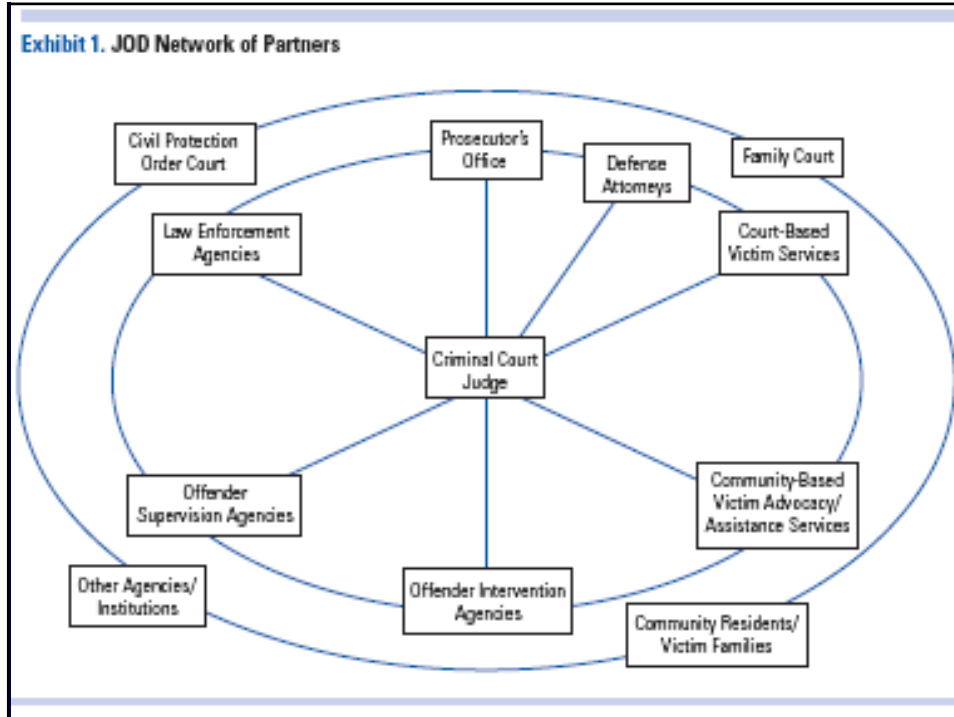
Can a coordinated, focused, and systematic response by the judicial system, law enforcement and probation agencies, and community service organizations improve victim safety and hold offenders more accountable while encouraging them to change their abusive behavior?

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## The JOD Model

- Uniform & consistent response to offenders
  - e.g. pro-arrest policies, evidence-based vertical prosecution
- Coordinated victim advocacy
  - e.g. contact by victim advocates, safety plans, community services
- Offender accountability and oversight
  - e.g. court-based supervision, BIP referral, sanction non-compliance

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## JOD Plan

- SITES
  - Dorchester MA (JOD) & Lowell MA (comp)
  - Washtenaw Co MI (JOD) & Ingham Co MI (comp)
  - Milwaukee Co WI (JOD) & Milwaukee Co WI (comp)
- JOD evaluation objectives were to estimate the overall impact of CCR on
  - Victim services, well-being, & safety
  - Offender accountability
  - Re-victimization



## Select Outcome Measures

- Victim well-being
  - Victim perception of safety (MI, MA: 1-4 scale)
  - Victim well-being (MI, MA: 1-4 scale)
- Offender accountability
  - Convicted (%)
  - Contacted BIP (%)
  - Probation revoked (%)
- Re-offense
  - Victim report of physical assault (MI, MA: %)
  - Re-arrest for DV (WI: %)

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## Official Implementation Issues

- BIPs gap in knowledge about operations of other partners
- Unanticipated changes in BIP workloads
- State and county hiring limitations that restricted recruiting for new positions

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## Official Implementation Issues

- Obstacles (e.g. confidentiality) to collaboration between justice agencies and community service providers
- Lack of adequate systems for sharing data across justice agencies and with community service providers

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## Other Implementation Issues

- Researchers may have gotten insufficient feedback from collaborating agencies
  - Alternately: they got the feedback but didn't incorporate it
- Diversion of funds for other program needs

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## Other Implementation Issues

- JOD-control site differences
- Between-JOD site differences
- One size fit all: No high-risk management
- Overall impact measured, not individual components

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## Offender Characteristics

	WI		MA		MI	
	Comp	JOD	Comp	JOD	Comp	JOD
Age	35	34	36	34	35	33
Prior Arrests	5.1	5.2	8.3	3.7	2.9	1.9
Unemployed (%)	–	–	46	60	38	30
White (%)	32	32	57	8	52	49
Black (%)	56	49	1	65	36	45
Other (%)	13	19	41	27	12	6
Male (%)	96	93	84	79	90	84

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## Select Outcomes JOD v. Comparison

Impact	JOD	Com
Victim Safety (MA, MI)	3.4	3.6
Batterer convicted & sentenced (%)	82	69
Referred to BIP (%)	80	42
Victim re-assaulted (MA, MI: %)	28	35
Batterer re-arrested for DV (WI: %)	4	8

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## Select Outcomes Cross-Site Comparisons

Impact	WI		MA		MI	
	COM	JOD	COM	JOD	COM	JOD
Victim Safety (1-4)	-	-	3.3	3.4	3.3	3.2
Probation Revoked (%)	2	27	-	12	-	1
Victim-reported IPV (%)	-	-	31	21	35	37
Re-arrest DV (%)	8	4	-	-	-	-

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## Dings Against JOD

- JOD didn't enhance victim safety over comparison sites
- JOD didn't deter batterers from re-offending
- Even where there was reduced re-offense, probation revocation is the reason

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## JOD other findings

- JOD victims received more & wider-range of services
- In Milwaukee, JOD reduced the odds of re-arrest for DV by 51% controlling both for number of prior arrests and age
- JOD more effective with offenders having less social capital (younger, more arrests, less attached, lower "stake in conformity")
  - This is an striking finding because it contradicts most other studies

## The JOD Echo Chamber

### What JOD Researchers and Others Say

" Although JOD did increase both offender accountability and victim contacts with service providers and criminal justice agencies, it did not increase offenders' perceptions of the risk of sanctions for future violence or improve victims' perceptions of their safety or well-being."

(Spohn, 2008)

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## The JOD Echo Chamber

"Accumulating evidence shows that only a few criminal justice interventions have even a weak deterrent effect, and many have no effect...Little evidence suggests that current criminal justice interventions effectively deter recidivism by IPV offenders....A stronger conclusion...is that the criminal justice system is ineffective at deterring recidivism by IPV offenders." (Peterson, 2008)

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## The JOD Echo Chamber

"We strongly recommend caution in using (the JOD negative) findings as a basis to reduce the level of support for efforts to improve coordination in the delivery of services to victims of intimate partner or family violence."  
(Garner & Maxwell, 2008)

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## The JOD Echo Chamber

"Interventions intended to improve victims' safety and overall well-being need to go beyond services centered on cases in the court system to include services that address issues in the victims lives outside the realm of the court case." (Harrell, Visher, Newmark & Yahner, 2009)

". . . commitment of judges to the issue of domestic violence . . . has dramatically and permanently changed the culture of the court system in all three sites." (Visher, Newmark & Harrell, 2008)

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## Unpacking the data Victim Safety

- Finding: no difference between JOD and Comp
  - They had community intervention and DV advocates at the comparison sites too
  - 3.5 out 4 ain't bad: The Ceiling Effect
  - "No change" or even "negative change" in victim perceived safety may not be a negative outcome
    - The Illinois DV/Substance Abuse Demonstration WEB scores

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## Unpacking the data Accountability

- Finding: JOD increased systemic and offender accountability
  - No real issue here: both system and offender accountability increased by any measure
  - One success in this goal (revocation) is used to explain away perceived failure in another goal (recidivism)

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## Unpacking the data Recidivism

- Finding: JOD reduced recidivism in Milwaukee (arrest) and Dorchester (victim report) but not Washtenaw (victim report)
  - 2 out of 3 ain't bad
  - Explaining away positive results in one goal (recidivism) by pointing to a conveniently negative interpretation of positive results in another goal (accountability) suggests an alternative agenda



## Possible Alternative Agenda #1 Batterer Programs Don't Work

- The JOD design made it impossible to separate the effects of arrest, prosecution, probation, advocacy, accountability, other elements of the intervention, but surprisingly the researchers conclude:  
*“ . . . Referral to batterer intervention programs does not have a powerful effect in reducing intimate partner violence.”* (Visher et al, 2008, p. 520)

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## Possible Alternative Agenda #1 Batterer Programs Don't Work

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## Possible Alternative Agenda #2 Accountability is Not A Real Goal

- Three goals for batterer intervention (Healy, Smith, & O'Sullivan, 1998):
  - Rehabilitation/attitude & behavioral change
  - Safety/non-violence
  - Justice/accountability
- Is accountability (rather than deterrence) *by itself* a legitimate outcome?
  - Judicial monitoring/sanctioning
  - BIP

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V.

I do not know which to prefer,  
The beauty of inflections  
Or the beauty of innuendoes,  
The blackbird whistling  
Or just after.

Wallace Stevens

*13 Ways of Looking at a Blackbird*

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## Court Responses to BIP Non-compliance

(Labriola, Rempel, O'Sullivan & Frank, 2007)

- Study of *accountability* from court, BIP and advocate perspectives in 260 U.S. communities
- Implementation of accountability is the issue
  - 94% of BIP submit compliance reports to the court
  - 74% of courts says the act on non-compliance
  - <50% of BIP and VSA agree courts act
- JOD changes this

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## The JOD Question Revisited

Can a coordinated, focused, and systematic response by the judicial system, law enforcement and probation agencies, and community service organizations . . .

- Improve victim safety?
  - We may already do this to a great extent
- Hold offenders more accountable?
  - Yes
- Encourage offenders to change their abusive behavior?
  - Yes, and amazingly, CCR may impact the riskiest offenders where other approaches have not

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## Afterthoughts

- Batterers in *the system* bear little resemblance to batterers in America
- Its as much about the characteristics of the offender as the intervention
  - Age
  - Social attachment (partner, children)
  - Social class (education, job)
  - Arrest history
  - AOD/MI

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## Afterthoughts

- We have shown little interest in addressing either the social class of violence or the "*unintended consequences*" of our dependency on the criminal justice system to prevent violence
- Intervention programs already in place work better for middle class men

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## Afterthoughts

- Men with prior DV convictions, men who seriously injure a victim, men with co-occurring conditions, and men who are non compliant with sentences need to be managed differently than 1<sup>st</sup>-timers, low-lethality, stable, and compliant men  
(And no, I do not know how to do this in a practical and unfunded way, but I believe that only judges can do this effectively)

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## Afterthoughts

- CCR is not a panacea or an end in itself, but rather a bridge to and a model of
  - Communities *just saying no* to intimate partner violence and backing it up with action (e.g. VCS/NY)
  - Men accepting their role of bystanders to violence against women (e.g. MSV/GA)
  - More comprehensive models than JOD may lead to better results: (e.g. MSV's Ecological Community-based Accountability Model)

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## Afterthoughts

- Grandma's Rule (*When you finishing cleaning your room then you get some pie*) communicates:
  - What is at stake
  - What is expected
  - What will happen if you comply
  - What will happen if you don't comply
  - Who is going to do what and when
- CCR, properly implemented, is one path to Grandma's Rule

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THANK YOU!

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