

Commentary on *Evaluating the Implementation of Hospital-based Domestic Violence Programs*

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“We are planning an evaluation of your program.” Yes, those are words that can strike fear in the hearts of domestic violence programs as well as health care practitioners. We needed to spend time explaining and reassuring the participants that this evaluation was not about critiquing or accreditation. It was important to do that reassuring in writing, on the phone, and by site visit if requested. As our programs and their health care partners understood that our intent was to assist them in determining where they were in the developmental process of institutionalizing a health care response to domestic violence, a sigh of relief could be heard. As the programs recognized that this process would also assist them in evaluating their success and setting goals and objectives for improvement, they participated openly and actively and found the evaluation to be a positive experience.

Another important component in conducting the evaluation was helping our domestic violence programs as well as their health care partners understand that the evaluation would provide guidance to similar programs in other settings across the country and help them set achievable goals and objectives. Many of the health care practitioners in particular, were not cognizant of their leadership role in changing the health care response to domestic violence and it was important for us to affirm that for them.

Interestingly, after initial funding, our programs are required to submit a proposal and work plan to us every third year. In recently reviewing those proposals, it was very clear the Delphi instrument had been used by the programs in setting the next three year's goals and objectives.

So, put aside your fears and take the evaluation plunge - it's worth it.