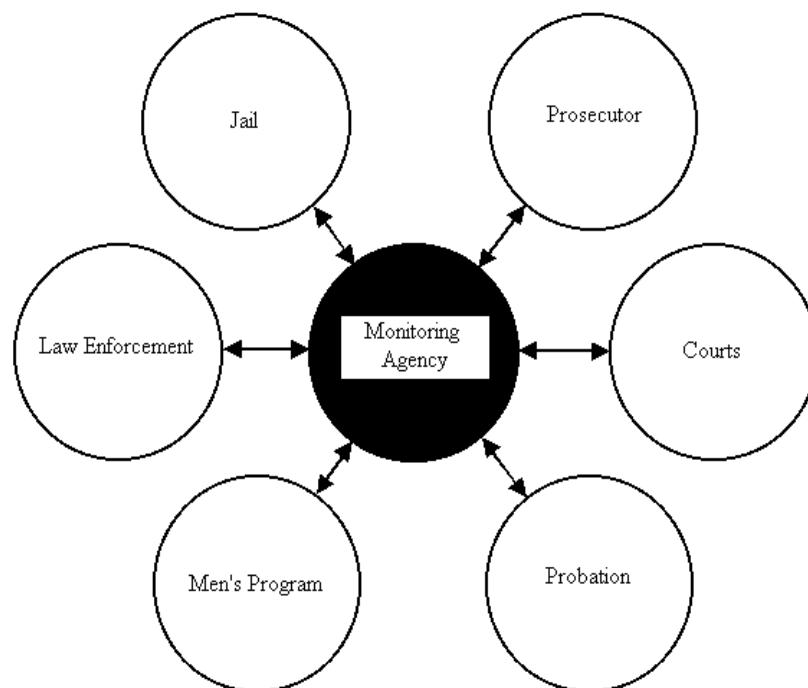# ORGANIZING A COORDINATED COMMUNITY RESPONSE

Introduction

A Coordinated Community Response (CCR) is a criminal justice intervention model that was developed to monitor compliance with legal changes as well as facilitate additional changes to address developing trends. This concept involves a multi-disciplinary approach to ensure accountability for batterers and safety for battered women. Each disciplinary agency develops a role within this collaboration, providing a consistent response from law enforcement, prosecutors, judges, and probation officers. Most CCRs use a community-based group outside of the legal system to do the actual monitoring. This monitoring agency is often the buffer between service providers and systems people and acts to gather and analyze information from all sources while working to ensure a cohesive response from all players. Understanding that there are many complex jurisdictional and legal dynamics that affect Native communities, it is difficult to pose a single solution or intervention model that is relevant to all. Therefore, the CCR needs to be tailored to fit the particular circumstances of each community.

Training and education

Education on domestic violence is a large part of creating a CCR. Training on the dynamics of DV needs to be provided regularly with the involvement of professional and community people to keep the awareness of domestic violence fresh in peoples' minds and to address more complicated issues like child custody, full faith and credit of protection orders, and marital rape. Advocacy and shelter programs typically provide

most of the ongoing community education about domestic violence, but there may be occasions where specialized trainers will need to be brought in to cover specific areas.

Trends
Being prepared to handle changes and address new trends in regards to domestic violence cases and fluctuating resources is also a component of CCR work. The CCR team must maintain a certain amount of flexibility in order to accommodate changes in personnel and other institutional changes. To sustain and maintain an effective program, there needs to be a continual process of reflection and examination; these will be the key elements to measuring the success of the program, and also provide a way to identify current trends concerning involved issues.

Community specific responses
When establishing an intervention program such as a CCR, the unique characteristics of the community must be considered. Not every community has the same level of resources or access to information. A CCR based on a criminal justice approach may not be possible or even the appropriate response for a community. Communities can develop approaches that utilize the resources currently in place and work to devise methods that build upon the baseline of services. The most important aspect of multi-disciplinary organizing is that the community creates responses where men are held responsible for their actions, women get the protection and assistance they need, and social attitudes are challenged.

Building strong community relationships
Connecting with different agencies or institutions is critical in doing intervention work. The majority of CCR success is based on building and maintaining relationships so the team can come together and handle hard issues. Typically, the group contains various professions that have a history of animosity between them. Knowing and trusting that such resentments can and will be worked out, strengthens your response to domestic violence. Common respect must be part of the process. If people feel insulted or blamed, the focus shifts from the issue of domestic violence to personality issues within or between organizations. The group needs cooperate to reach the end goal of ensuring a consistent and cohesive response where each player fulfills their role. As long as the group operates with the same understanding, they should be able to keep professional relationships with each other while working to address violence in the lives of women.

Shared Philosophy
Organizing and developing a common philosophy is, perhaps, the most time-consuming stage of intervention work. If the purpose of organizing in our communities was solely to hold meetings and talk about domestic violence issues, we would short sight ourselves and not create lasting, effective change. Because the dynamics of battering encompass many social, political, and historical issues for Native people beyond the scope of most individual agencies, the direction of the intervention team must be clear and concise. It is easy to get caught up in examining the circumstances that occurred prior to a violent episode; however, mending a couple's relationship should not be the emphasis of intervention work. When this becomes the focus, the intervention runs the risk of drifting

into mediation efforts that compromise the safety of the woman and reduce the level of batterer responsibility. Having a common philosophical approach is crucial when it comes to the actual work of a CCR intervention team. Relationships strain, conflicts arise, priorities change, and opinions vary; any of these undermine the groundwork if there is a lack of thorough and effective planning, organizing, and commitment on the part of all players involved.

Desired Outcomes

When organizing a CCR the overall goal is to ensure that law enforcement, prosecutors, and judges are consistent in following policies and procedures intended provide safety for women and accountability for offenders. Service providers working with women and men play a crucial role by communicating to the institutional agencies involved about the areas in which there is a breakdown in the system in achieving these goals. Both must work together to ensure consistency. This intervention model requires an ongoing effort of reflection and evaluation to make sure that your CCR is doing what it is supposed to do. Once properly implemented, specific methods can be created that hold perpetrators responsible for violent acts and provide enhanced safety for women in the community.