Military Civilian Partnership Demonstration Project

Lessons Learned

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Executive Summary

The current paper documents lessons learned from the Assessment Phase of the Military Civilian Partnership Demonstration Project (herein referred to as the Project).

Department of Defense organized a Task Force on Domestic Violence in 2000. Part of this effort included the identification and development of two military/civilian partnership demonstration sites: Fort Campbell, Kentucky and Jacksonville, Florida.

Projects commenced in 2003 and began with a comprehensive assessment of the military and civilian response to domestic violence in each community with particular attention to the intersection of the military and civilian response.

To begin each partnership, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed by military and civilian leaders whose respective agencies would be involved in the Project (see page 5).

Following the signing of the MOU, a coordinated community response training was provided including key stakeholders from military and civilian systems. This comprehensive training covered a wide range of topics related to an effective coordinated response, presented exemplary coordinated community response models from around the country and began the process of examining local protocols and policies.

Following the training, mapping teams (i.e., the teams that would investigate the current military/civilian response to domestic violence) were convened and included representatives from military and civilian agencies. Each mapping team addressed a specific topic (e.g., protective order application, protective order violation, misdemeanor criminal cases, case disposition and monitoring, initial response) and engaged in an inquiry process to uncover the strengths and weaknesses of the current response in that domain. This inquiry involved examining existing forms and protocols and conducting interviews with agency representatives. Each team was then charged with making recommendations based on the findings from their inquiry (see page 6).

The culmination of the Assessment Phase in each community involved the signing of a second Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in Jacksonville and the development of a Summary Report and Implementation Plan in Fort Campbell. Each document details the practices, protocols and policies in the response to domestic violence that would be
addressed during the Implementation Phase of the partnership in each community (see page 7).

To document lessons learned during the Assessment Phase of the Project, 16 interviews were conducted with 14 participants directly involved in the partnership process. In addition, approximately 1000 pages of documents were reviewed including training materials, meeting minutes, interim reports, mapping team reports and electronic communications (see page 7).

Importantly, participants indicated that the Assessment Phase of the partnership had positive implications for their knowledge and understanding of the civilian and military systems response, relationships among military and civilian stakeholders and the policies, procedures and practices in participating organizations (see page 8).

Participants identified a variety of “lessons learned” during the process including both facilitators and challenges to military/civilian partnership (see page 11).

Lessons learned emerged in seven domains, including: a) time (see page 12), b) participation and engagement (see page 13), c) goals, structure and process (see page 16), d) consultants and local ownership (see page 21), e) cross-cultural realities (see page 23), f) external environment (see page 24), and g) flexibility (see page 25).
History and Background

Beginning in 2000, the Defense Task Force on Domestic Violence (DTFDV), which included military and civilian stakeholders and worked over three years to develop 194 recommendations to improve the military and civilian response to domestic violence. These recommendations covered a variety of domains including victim safety, offender accountability, community collaboration and education and training. This effort also resulted in funding for the development of two military/civilian demonstration projects (herein referred to as Projects).

Two communities were chosen as demonstration project sites: the Naval Station Mayport and Naval Station Jacksonville installations in Jacksonville, Florida and the Fort Campbell installation in Fort Campbell, Kentucky. This paper provides a brief overview of the process employed to complete the Assessment Phase of the Project and documents lessons learned throughout this phase.

Demonstration Projects

The Projects began by engaging key stakeholders involved in both the civilian and military response to domestic violence. Initially, this involved identifying local contacts, and meeting with and inviting military and civilian leaders to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) indicating they would participate in the Assessment Phase of the Project.

Importantly, the MOU provided a comprehensive overview of what the Project would entail. It described the purpose of the project, the goals of the mapping process and roles and responsibilities of Project coordinators and participants.

In each community, the partnership process began with a coordinated community response (CCR) training provided by the Battered Women’s Justice Project and/or the National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence (NCDSV). The training provided an introduction regarding the key goals and principles of enhancing victim safety, best practices in a CCR (e.g., law enforcement, courts, batterers’ intervention), and the current systems’ response in the local community. This training also introduced stakeholders to the “mapping process” that would
characterize the heart of stakeholders’ work through the Assessment Phase of the Project. In response to the local requests, the training at Fort Campbell for the Installation, Christian County, KY and Montgomery County, TN also provided significant best practices training, given the inability of most participants to access state and national training in the last several years.

**Mapping Teams**

To assess the current military/civilian response to domestic violence, at each demonstration site, mapping teams were formed. These teams were domain specific – that is, they were formed to examine a specific component of the systems response and to fully investigate how that response functioned (e.g., protective order application; protective order violation; misdemeanor criminal cases; case disposition and monitoring; initial response; access to advocacy and victim response). While each group focused on domain-specific questions (sample below) they all operated with two overarching questions in mind: 1) How do our combined efforts account for victim safety? and 2) How do our combined efforts allow the system intervention to hold the offender accountable? Information was gathered by analyzing existing forms and protocols and also by conducting interviews with stakeholders with key stakeholders in each domain.

Inquiry was guided by a set of questions that addressed a specific aspect of the systems response. For example, the Initial Response Team addressed the following questions: What is the law enforcement response for domestic violence calls in each of the jurisdictions? How does each jurisdiction determine that the victim or offender is a service member? What is the domestic violence arrest policy for each jurisdiction? When does each jurisdiction use the warrantless arrest? How does each jurisdiction help the victim access an emergency protective order? How does each jurisdiction recognize and accommodate foreign protective orders? What are law enforcement officers’ responsibilities to the victim of the crime? What legal options are available to victims of domestic violence who may not be eligible for a protective order? Based on the answers to questions in each domain, “maps” were created of the systems response and recommendations were made regarding the specific protocols and policies that could be targeted for change.
Implementation Plans

Based on the discoveries of the mapping teams, recommendations were made. The culmination of the Assessment Phase in each community involved the signing of a second Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in Jacksonville and the development of a Summary Report and Implementation Plan in Fort Campbell. Each document details the practices, protocols and policies in the response to domestic violence that would be addressed during the Implementation Phase of the partnership in each community. In Jacksonville, organizational leaders convened to sign the Implementation MOU. In Fort Campbell, the Summary Report and Implementation Plan includes recommendations for multiple MOUs to be created with a variety of partners. In the case of Fort Campbell, multiple MOUs are necessary given the installation spans multiple counties and states.

Method

To assess and document lessons learned 16 interviews were conducted with 14 participants directly involved in the partnership process. In addition, approximately 1,000 pages of documents were reviewed including training materials, meeting minutes, interim reports, mapping team reports and electronic communications. Participants’ experiences and reflections provided great insight regarding the implications of the Projects to date and lessons learned for future efforts. For the most part, the Projects will be discussed together even though they occurred in two communities. This is appropriate given the majority of lessons learned emerged in both communities.

To identify the implications of the partnership and lessons learned, a content analysis was conducted of the 16 interviews completed with participants. Common themes were identified regarding what changes had emerged as a result of the partnership and what lessons were learned along the way.
Implications of Partnership

Notably, by all accounts, the Project was remarkably successful. The vast majority of participants interviewed felt that the Project met its goals and were able to point to a variety of successes, including, a) increased knowledge among stakeholders regarding the military and civilian response to domestic violence, b) improved relationships and communication, and c) improved practices and policies.¹

Knowledge and Understanding

First, participants pointed to dramatic increases in their knowledge of the civilian and military response to domestic violence. These include knowledge of each other’s systems, the intersection of the military and civilian response, and how the systems response can be improved. For example, participants indicated increased knowledge of specific resources.

Increasing the communication between the civilian and the military groups has been improved...I did not understand all of what family advocacy did and what their processes were and part of their decision making as to whether an incident is substantiated or unsubstantiated. So it gave all of us in the civilian community a much better understanding about what goes on when the post becomes involved in the investigation stage. It also gave us a much clearer understanding of some of the resources that family advocacy has for military victims of domestic violence. And I think that it’s helped the family advocacy people understand what’s going on in the civilian side.

One of the things I’ve really seen that has changed is we have more information about what everybody does. And particularly when it comes to the victim advocates [on the installation] and how they interface with the communities...I think all...entities involved

¹Notably, these findings echoed those from questionnaires distributed in both communities at two points in time (i.e., during the first training and at the end of the Assessment Phase of the partnership. See the Questionnaire Feedback Reports for each community for further information.
have gotten a better understanding of what, what things are expected by each jurisdiction. How the laws may be different, how [the installation] works because I think that’s a real mystery for most people in civilian communities...[now] those mysteries [are] a little less mysterious.

Participants also indicated having a deeper appreciation for each other’s roles and having more realistic expectations of each other.

Just the conversation that has occurred as a result of the project, the networking, particularly, listening to each other, understanding better how the pieces fit in the course of discussion has helped us understand how to work together better...Understanding each other’s role better helps us to have more realistic expectations of things and helps us to evaluate better what’s working and what’s not and why.

I think one of the successes was actually getting...the military and the civilian people all in the same room. And talking about domestic violence together... this was a chance actually where we could have a dialog about...this is our position and they can say well... I see that but... this is how we work and we really can’t do that or can do that. And really getting together and... understanding each other, this was really a first for that, for I think most of us on a civilian side. Really understanding... the system on the military side.

Finally, participants indicated they gained a better understanding of what needed to change in the systems response.

[The partnership] has brought about an acute awareness of huge voids in processes. And what I am observing are people who were initially resistant...There was the ‘feeling out’ process. We worked through that. The defenses came down. People became more confident with one another. And I can say with little or no hesitation that for the vast majority of the participants, they were able to [have] open and honest dialogues and say “jeez, we’ve got some real gaps here.”
Stakeholder Relationships

Second, participants discussed marked improvements in the relationships among military and civilian stakeholders. This took the form of a greater sense of personal connection to key stakeholders (e.g., “putting faces with names”), but also in terms of communication patterns between responding stakeholders.

We know the people to call. We [can] put a face with a name. And what they do and that kind of thing. I think that that’s the major thing.

I think one of the things is for those of us who are civilian…it’s made [the installation] more accessible. It’s made them less kind of the, the unknown entity, you know? I feel…I have a sense of who to call and what they’re like and how this may or may not go. I think before, at least for those of us that have worked the project, there probably wasn’t that level of comfortableness.

Just getting the people together and discussing the various processes is a huge step because it helps establish those relationships and lay the ground work for what hopefully will come in the future.

I think there is a much stronger link between the military victim advocates and the civilian advocates and our having a liaison position that can go right on base and work side by side with them, I think that we’re going to have a much, much stronger working relationship.

It also appeared that there was greater collaboration occurring on specific cases. For one participant, this appeared to be the result of old assumptions about project partners dissipating. It seemed that as a result new opportunities to assist victims became possible as relationships among partners were improved.

Policy and Protocol

Finally, participants identified the development and signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in Jacksonville as a “huge success.” The MOU detailed proposed changes
in the community response to domestic violence. These will be enacted during the implementation phase of the Project. Interestingly, though, in both Jacksonville and Fort Campbell, participants pointed to a number of changes in policy and practice that occurred throughout the Assessment Phase as stakeholders learned about the systems response. For example, in Fort Campbell, MOUs between the installation and various police agencies were updated. Further, changes were made to protocol that made it easier to identify military-affiliated law enforcement cases.

One of the things that came out of this is that when we have a military-related order of protection or a violation of an order of protection, we try to identify it by stamping it with an “M” so that anybody who touches that paperwork is going to understand this is a military-related issue and to start looking for military-related solutions. So I think that was real helpful to know when these other resources are available just because the paperwork identifies it as a military [case]...

In Jacksonville, changes included hiring a military liaison advocate who will be employed by Hubbard House, a civilian domestic violence program, but work on a military base and providing batterers’ intervention groups on the installation in addition to usual community-based locations.

Lessons Learned

Collaborative efforts are often challenging. They involve multiple stakeholders with diverse perspectives and standpoints. Further, collaborating to strengthen the response to domestic violence is a remarkably complicated task.

There were a variety of “lessons learned” that emerged during the course of the project. These included reflections on both facilitators of the process that should be maintained and challenges that should be addressed in future efforts. These “lessons” emerged in seven domains: a) time, b) participation and engagement, c) goals, structure and process, d) consultants and local ownership, e) cross-cultural realities, f) external environment, and g) flexibility. Each domain is discussed in turn.
Time

Completing comprehensive assessments of the military/civilian response to domestic violence requires significant time.

While the Demonstration Project process briefly described in the introduction may appear straightforward the effort required to engage all relevant stakeholders and get the initial training off of the ground took approximately two years in both Jacksonville and Fort Campbell.

While completing a comprehensive assessment might not always require a two year period, it is important to recognize that a project of this magnitude is not completed “overnight.” Thus, while clear time lines should be created, it is also important to impress upon participants that tenacity and follow-through are fundamental to success.

Sufficient time must be granted by organizational leaders for key stakeholders to participate in the partnership process.

Collaborative efforts require an investment of time on the part of participants; however, releases from other duties do not always accompany such additional time demands. As one participant noted:

[Regarding what I would do differently with my own participation], I think I would have asked for the organizations to allow me to spend more time on the project. Again, it’s one of those ‘plate is full’ [issues]. [It leads to the question.] “What is the organizational commitment to the project?” [Organizations must relieve]... participants from some of their other obligations, so that they can fully participate...I think that it probably needed to be recognized that this is a big commitment that you’re undertaking here, and the organization has to be behind it.

To the extent possible, when agency leadership decides to engage in a collaborative partnership, they should make corresponding adjustments to their employees’ duties so they can be full participants in the collaborative effort. This may require additional funding, but in the absence of such resources other adjustments (e.g., redefining a job description, redistributing tasks) should
be considered. One participant indicated it may be important to clearly detail such expectations in the initial MOU. Specific requests regarding the amount of time each organization and its appointed representative would need to contribute could be detailed and discussed prior to the Project getting underway.

**Participation and Engagement**

At both sites, participants frequently discussed the challenges of maintaining active participation among stakeholders. While many participants noted that the key stakeholders they thought should be involved were present at the start of the project, they also noted maintaining such participation was challenging. At times, key members of the mapping teams were not present (in some instances this was due to regular deployments from Fort Campbell). There was also frustration expressed about how difficult it was to maintain the active involvement of both military and civilian leadership. Participants reflected on a variety of tactics that helped to maintain participation and that might encourage continued engagement in future partnership efforts.

*Actively maintain momentum so that key stakeholders remain enthusiastic about the project.*

Given the significant time it takes to complete a thorough assessment of the military/civilian response, it is critical to maintain momentum and enthusiasm among participants. An interruptions in the initial execution of the demonstration Projects had consequences for maintaining participation and required “restarting engines” among key stakeholders. While delays may be inevitable, to the extent possible gaps in action should be avoided. One participant described it this way:

> We had people kind of primed and ready to go and then, slam, the money...had not been allocated, not been appropriated...so there was about a 3 or 4 month lag in there and we lost a lot of that enthusiasm...and... [the project] is a really good idea. And then you come back three or four months later, well people...are not sitting around for some project to happen. They’re off on something else and we had to spend a fair amount of time getting people back on track. And I’m not sure that we ever got them as enthused and committed as they were at the original training.
Maintain support from the highest levels of leadership throughout the process.

One of the most challenging aspects of collaborative work is the ongoing engagement of decision-makers. Some participants noted that organizational leaders were not directly involved in the assessment process beyond the initial signing of the MOU.

I think the players that needed to be involved were involved in the very beginning and those are key political figures and key military figures who, from my personal perception, were never reengaged, never. And they did... what people do, regardless of their status and position. And that is they fall off the radar if they’re not engaged in future instances. And because of that lack of engaging with them or lack of going back and holding them to, you know, certain things that they made promises for, I think...they become disenfranchised.

The involvement of organizational leaders was particularly concerning regarding the ability to make decisions once recommendations were made for implementation. One participant described this as follows:

There were...a lot of us [front line people] that were there consistently I think going...to a lot of the meetings. But I think you know, for higher level system change...[we need] the people that are in charge of policy...And they’re not at these meetings, and they don’t know the discussions. And I think...in this project that...may have been an issue at times.

One participant indicated that future efforts might include information regarding the specific ways that leaders will remain abreast of progress in the initial MOU. For example, the MOU could detail when and how front line providers and local Project coordinators would communicate progress to leaders.

Provide regular updates regarding progress to foster ongoing engagement.

Participants discussed the importance of frequent updates regarding Project progress. Some participants felt that at points in time they were not sure what was happening. This was
particularly concerning when there were gaps in action. They would have liked more regular contact during those gaps to say, “hey, you know, there’s been an issue...probably not going to be meeting for a couple months but hang on.”

Some participants noted that it was particularly important that military and civilian leaders were briefed about progress in an ongoing way. Some felt that after the signing of the initial MOU (to begin the assessment phase), some leaders lost touch with the Project. In fact, one participant indicated that his/her leader was surprised to hear the Project was still ongoing. Creating regular mechanisms for feedback to participants and leaders, in particular, about progress to date and next steps may help to maintain leader connection to the Project.

A few participants indicated that electronic communication (e.g., listservs, email, websites) played an important role in facilitating communication. Others indicated that they were overwhelmed by the volume of email traffic and stopped reading messages because they could not keep up. While it seems that using electronic communication may be a vital tool for keeping participants abreast of project activities it is also important to structure electronic communications in a way that they remain useful. This might include reducing the overall volume of messages, reviewing etiquette about posting messages to a listserv (e.g., responding only to the sender of a message rather than to the list as a whole) and using web-based platforms to post messages and documents rather than send them via email.

*Celebration and recognition are critical components of engaging key stakeholders and maintaining their active participation.*

Importantly, the kick-off events for the signing of the initial Assessment MOU was a ceremonial event at both sites. The signing was attended by military and civilian leaders and was covered by local media (TV, newspaper, associated press). At both sites, prominent leaders (e.g., a Judge in Jacksonville and the Installation Commander in Fort Campbell hosted the events). Many participants discussed how exciting it was to be part of these “kick-off” events. These events seemed to signal how important the Project was and generated enthusiasm.
Some participants were concerned, however, that a ceremomial “booster shot” was needed to keep those involved going. For example, one participant suggested that a luncheon held midway through the process that celebrated successes to date may have kept representatives energized as they proceeded. Other participants added that they thought it was critical to involve not only military and civilian leadership in these events, but also to invite and recognize the front-line workers directly engaged in the mapping process. Two participants described the need this way:

> There needs to be something in the budget, and something set in the program I would say that says we are going to recognize the members of the mapping teams, at a function and that you know, we’ve got little awards to give them or whatever...Because people have... done a lot of work on this. And thank you is okay but I would feel better if we had thought about it and said you know what we need to do is just have a mapping team appreciation dinner or something like that.

> I ...think had there just been that opportunity to reconvene and to have the leadership say “we still value this, it’s still important, and we appreciate what you’re doing, and we’re going to do everything that we can do to affect the recommendations that you make. Please work hard. Please continue. Please keep at it,” I just think it would’ve been very, very beneficial.

Given the importance of maintaining participation, funding provided to support future efforts might include resources for such ceremonial and recognition events. However, as one participant noted, it may be important to create such events locally – even in the absence of specific resources.

**Goals, Structure and Process**

*Shared baseline knowledge of domestic violence and coordinated community response provides an important foundation for collaboration.*

A number of participants discussed the value of having the coordinated community response training at the beginning of the Project in each community. This training served to ensure shared
knowledge of domestic violence and coordinated responses, but also served to familiarize participants with the policies and protocols of their own community.

*I think that the upfront training is very important...and that it’s the training for everyone who’s going to be involved at the information gathering level. I think that was a very critical aspect of setting a baseline of not only expectations but of information. It’s the opportunity to educate people on the other systems, how they work now, as well as an opportunity to educate people on the issue of domestic violence because I think...you have to understand that there’s going to be people who are not going to have the same level of experience.*

Importantly, the initial training was not just about imparting knowledge, but about laying the foundation for the work ahead. The training began the partnership process because it was at this event that stakeholders began to exchange information about the current response in their community.

*I think that the initial training...where everybody...met and sat at tables with people who were not from their organization, and went through a series of trainings and discussions about how it was done in their jurisdiction, really set the tone well, really opened people up.*

**Articulate clear goals of the partnership and ensure those goals are broadly shared and understood.**

Remarkably, every individual interviewed and documents reviewed articulated the same goal for the Assessment Phase of the Project. This suggested that the purpose for the project was widely disseminated and understood by participants. However, some participants suggested they were confused about what the big picture was at the beginning and wanted to have more of a specific understanding of what would follow as the project progressed.

*I think at the very beginning there was not a clear sense of what [it is] that we’re doing, what is the outcome that we’re looking for. It was a little too general and the participants were saying “What is it you want me to do? How am I going to help? What
is the outcome you want to see?” I don’t think at the very beginning that had a lot of structure. We were getting a lot of training generally. But we didn’t know at the front end…the ultimate goal of this project, and how are we going to participate in [reaching] that ultimate goal?

Another participant described a similar experience and added that he/she would have benefited from more concrete examples of the tasks that would follow:

And the perception I had was even after the four days, and I don’t know how to correct this, but my perception was people still didn’t really quite understand what we were doing. Everybody…there was a lot of time spent on who does what and what do we do? …I just needed something a lot more concrete than what we were (given).

One participant suggested that holding a second training once mapping was underway might have served to solidify the content of the first training and further clarify how the inquiry process works. Further, she thought a second training might create an opportunity to reengage organizational leaders and provide updates regarding progress to date and next steps.

The structure and process of the partnership must be well-matched to its purpose and goals.

The structure and process of a partnership should be tailored to the particular goals of that partnership. Participants frequently discussed the value of the mapping teams to execute the goals of the Demonstration Projects. As one participant said,

This would’ve been an evolutionary process that might have taken a decade…I think had the mapping teams not been in existence, I think we would have evolved to where we are right now over a period of years versus months…Doling [the tasks] out into groups, subgroups, assigning tasks, not compelling but again tasking very specific individuals to go into specific organizations and… regrouping and comparing notes. And the organizations knowing, maybe not liking, but knowing and accepting the fact that they did sign a memorandum of agreement to allow this to happen. Again, that all formalized the process that had it not been formalized it would’ve been a process through just trial and error in political realities of certain subgroups or individuals within the
community...So it certainly expedited what otherwise would’ve been a slow, evolving process that I think would’ve eventually gotten there but would’ve been way long.

Also noted in this verbatim was the value of having an MOU signed that committed organizational leaders to the process. However, there was also a sense that in one of the communities, the initial MOU may have create an overly legalistic process that delayed the start of the project. Others felt that the some leaders ultimately ignored the MOU and that the MOU did not provide the necessary leverage to garner their participation. The use of an MOU may provide a valuable tool for engaging the written commitment of leaders; this must be balanced with the costs of such an approach.

**Mapping team leadership and the task the teams are undertaking should be clear.**

By and large, participants discussed the value of the mapping teams. However, some expressed frustration with the mapping team process. In particular, participants indicated they were not sure what they were doing and also not clear about who was leading their efforts.

> I went to a meeting and the designated team leader wasn’t even really available by phone... and it was more like the local people from the various sides kind of sitting around and discussing their process while the local coordinator took notes without there being any direction or guidance as to what was the point of our discussion, you know. Nobody asking the hard, critical questions like what would you need? I guess, from my perception... there seemed to be a gap in how we went about doing things compared to how it was presented at the training. That it would be done in terms of... going out and examining the process and...to think about everything that we could do to improve the process and really coordinate and...identify what policies and procedures would have to be changed...And it just didn’t seem like it got that detailed.

In some ways, this lack of clarity may be endemic to the process; that is, assessing the systems response is a daunting task and is likely to lead to some frustration and confusion. At the same time, the following steps were suggested that may alleviate such confusion: a) identify local group leaders who have the requisite skills, knowledge and influence to lead, b) recognize that within the military, leadership provided by military personnel may be particularly valuable, c)
provide more advanced training to local leaders so that they have a more detailed understanding of how to lead the mapping process, d) create concrete examples of what mapping looks like (e.g., examples from other communities), e) create hands-on sample exercises to analyze text or policies and identify their strengths and weakness (e.g., sample text analysis of police reports; joint observations of order of protection hearings) and f) finally, stress that the concrete examples provided may have little to do with what actually happens in a given community as the mapping process unfolds.

*A clearly articulated philosophy that guides the assessment process is essential.*

Importantly, team members were engaged in an inquiry process with a clearly articulated victim safety and batterer accountability orientation or “lens.” When investigating the community response to domestic violence one sees different issues depending on the “lens” they are wearing. For example, wearing a “victim safety lens” may result in very different findings compared to those that emerged wearing an “efficiency lens,” for example.

Central to this philosophy is being tuned in to the needs and wants of the survivors affected by the systems response. This is not simply a matter of getting one-time input of survivors, but having an orientation to survivor safety and perspective that is unyielding as the partnership progresses. Thus, it is not enough to have an assessment, or inquiry, process in place, but to have that process be firmly guided by clear overarching goals – in this case enhancing victim safety and batterer accountability.

*Suspending assumptions and pursuing inquiry with an open mind will lead to an understanding of the actual systems response and, ultimately, better recommendations.*

The mapping process creates an opportunity to discover the local response to domestic violence. In this process it is critical *not* to operate on assumptions, but to uncover how the system actually operates in a particular domain. This includes uncovering what the policies and protocols dictate, how communication occurs, etc. Along the same lines, it is critical not to jump to recommendations before a deep understanding of the system is in place. Recommendations that
are firmly rooted in the current strengths and weaknesses of the systems response are better positioned to improve the systems response. 

Further, it is important to view the strengths and weaknesses of the systems response institutionally rather than individually (i.e., about particular individuals or personalities) or interpersonally (i.e., regarding the relationships between particular individuals). This is consistent with the Safety Audit approach developed by Ellen Pence and colleagues in Duluth, MN and is focused on changing polices, procedures, protocols, and forms.

**It is important to give leaders an opportunity to respond to the findings that emerge from the mapping process so they are used constructively.**

The goal of the mapping process is to uncover institutional strengths and weaknesses in the systems response to domestic violence. Inevitably and ideally, there will be issues that need to be addressed. Some of the weaknesses revealed could be of concern to organizational leaders. Meeting with leaders first to inform them of the issues revealed in the mapping process might encourage less resistance once a partnership moves toward implementation. This also creates an opportunity for leaders to respond to the findings in a constructive way.

**Consultants and Local Ownership**

*The support of “third-party” consultants, such as the Battered Women’s Justice Project (BWJP) and the National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence (NCDSV), facilitates and accelerates the partnership process.*

While it is certainly possible for communities to engage in military/civilian partnership in the absence of third-party support, participants from both communities frequently discussed the value of having consultation. They cited the importance of the technical knowledge that the Project Coordinators were able to provide and the perspective such “outsiders” brought to the mapping process. However, participants also discussed the value of the push for the Project to get underway coming from outside of the community and, in particular, from within the United States Department of Defense. Participants also felt that the Project being coordinated by an
external party avoided some of the political tensions that are present within any community and acted as a “neutralizing force.” Such external support avoided some of the issues of turf and territoriality that can plague collaborative efforts. One participant described this as follows:

The kind of questions that the [Project Coordinator] asked me. Some of us [local community members] might not have asked them. There [are] certain assumptions that you make, living anywhere, you know, and she didn't have any of those assumptions so she probably asked questions that made us...think about our system services perhaps a little differently... And also sometimes I think it’s when you’re sort of analyzing, assessing any kind of organization...or a service system, you know, I think it’s easier to talk about things to someone who doesn’t have anything invested in it. That someone, you know, that they’re not trying to make money, they’re not trying to gain position or power, they’re just collecting information. So....I think we probably gave them a lot, perhaps some more information that we would have given say if I had just gone out and asked certain people certain things.

Participants also reflected on the work Project Coordinators did to engage relevant stakeholders, build relationships and nurture the partnership. Such groundwork may overcome historical tensions (for some communities) around coordinating the actions of military and civilian stakeholders.

Fostering local ownership of the project and leadership over the process is a core component of success.

On the flip side of the value of external consultants is the importance of fostering local ownership of the process. Ultimately, local military and civilian partners must execute the assessment process, engage in the mapping teams, develop recommendations and pursue institutional change. Thus, even when the initial thrust for a partnership project comes from the outside, local ownership of the success of that effort will ideally emerge. In the current Demonstration Projects, the consultants assisted, but the work was done locally. There is a critical balance to strike between external support and local control – otherwise, the Project is unlikely to result in sustainable change in the absence of the “third parties.” Thus, consultants must take care to transfer ownership. This involves acknowledging and building upon local
expertise, encouraging local leaders to adopt the Project as their own, and allowing local partners to control the process as much as possible.

Some participants made it clear that it was not simply having third party support that was helpful, but having a consultant who honored local expertise and wisdom. As one participant indicated:

_You could have brought a person from the outside who wasn’t as astute about...what it’s going to take to make this project work, who wasn’t invested in...making it easier for people to do it. Who would be likely to say, “well this is the way it’s got to be and we got to do this, this and this.” And [our Project Coordinator] has not been that way at all...I mean [our Coordinator] really came in and, and said which a lot of people say, we’re really interested in what you think. And everybody goes, “yeah sure,” until it’s something you don’t want us to think and then you’re not all that interested anymore. But that has not been the experience with [our Coordinator]. I mean...we have been able... to talk to her and say...”this ain’t gonna work here. We need to look at a different way to do it.”...I mean we’ve had those talks that were very, very helpful in making the project and the people who work in the project committed to doing it._

**Cross-Cultural Realities**

_Military and civilian cultures have important cultural and organizational differences. These differences must be acknowledged and understood to facilitate the partnership process._

Similar to individuals and groups working across ethnic cultures, military and civilian partners must be aware that they operate within different cultural and organizational milieus. Throughout the partnership, it is essential to be aware of and open-minded about the different perspectives military and civilian partners bring. For example, military culture is oriented to and adept at executing directives. There is an explicit chain of command that makes the implementation of such directives expected and possible. Civilian partners are not likely to have the same structures in place and may have inherently slower processes in place regarding implementation. One participant reflected on this difference:
I know that things on the military side, you know, they were all ready to make all the changes overnight. And I think the hard part is to making changes on the civilian side...Some of the changes involve protocols from...different organizations...[with] separate boards of directors and advisory boards...who are run by grants and...other funds. So it’s much more complicated I think to make some of the changes...I think that the military...[when] they want to [get] something done, you know, someone says “yep, we’re gonna do it” and its done.

The chain of command is very central to military structure and culture and as changes in policy and protocol are discussed, it may be important to understand how recommendations affect the authority of command. One participant described this as follows:

It’s a sub-cultural clash or a cultural clash...I attempt[ed] to explain that if you elect to make that recommendation, that’s fine. But do it with the knowledge. Do it with the understanding that you may win the battle, but ultimately lose the war, because you will alienate the Department of Defense and you will alienate senior leadership...Because one of the – if you look at the history of the military...the authority of the commander is paramount. To take that – to carve away or to chip away the authority of a commander at any level over subordinate soldiers is almost sacrilegious.

External Environment

Responding to changes in the environment with flexibility and ingenuity is essential.

Collaborative efforts frequently face challenges from “external forces,” or those out of their direct control. For example, the war in Iraq began shortly after the Project was proposed. All of the installations involved in the Project were also involved in the war, particularly the 101st from Fort Campbell. Thus, it was more difficult to engage key stakeholders in the Demonstration Project because partners kept shifting as they were deployed. Thus, the deployment resulted in many military contacts changing throughout the Project.
It is essential to be creative in the face of such challenges. This Project not only demonstrates that successful military/civilian partnership is possible, but demonstrates that success can be achieved even when military installations are dealing with massive deployments.

*Communities have unique contexts and histories - exploring and acknowledging local realities is an important part of facilitating collaboration.*

Not surprisingly, the Demonstration Projects in Jacksonville and Fort Campbell shared a similar process and yet had unique manifestations. It is likely that no two military/civilian partnerships will be identical. True in any collaborative effort, broadly speaking, local histories and contexts matter and should be considered. Each Project had unique circumstances regarding everything from geography (e.g., Jacksonville has two installations in one city; Fort Campbell has one installation in two counties across two states) to history (sometimes local histories need to be “aired” so that current collaborative efforts can proceed; other times, not revisiting local history is more prudent). Thus, while “lessons learned” should be heeded, they can not provide a formula for successful partnership.

Attending to local content might require adaptations to the process employed (What resources are in place to support the mapping process? Are there skills/resources that require augmentation in a given community?), the stakeholders involved (What characterizes their relationships?), and the leaders identified (e.g., Who will constitute the most effective leaders and coordinators?). In particular, it is vital to carefully assess the resources available to support a military/civilian partnership effort of the magnitude of the Demonstration Projects. For example, urban settings may have a greater number of individuals who can provide “person power” to support partnership efforts than rural settings. Understanding the current capacity of communities to respond to domestic violence is a critical first step in determining what resources will be needed to make the partnership process a success.
Flexibility, Flexibility, Flexibility

*Expect to be challenged and adapt accordingly.*

The key to successful collaboration is tenacity and flexibility. As one participant said, “the process was very flexible, which I think was incredibly important to making it work.” Many participants talked about the project taking “twists and turns” and the focus and approach frequently changing. While this was sometimes a cause of frustration, it seems to be an unavoidable part of a process where obstacles to participant and progress arise. Thus, flexibility is a core ingredient of success.

*The flexibility...of the demonstration project has made us, has allowed us to drop back and say, you know, that’s not going to work with that [stakeholder]...And here’s probably a different approach and people [would] be okay with a different approach. So many times I think you get caught up in “this is the cookie cutter way we do things.” And this project certainly has not been a cookie cutter project in the sense of we were all willing to do whatever it took to get the information we needed from folks and their cooperation.*

Limitations

While the themes presented in this document were widely reported by participants, it is also important to acknowledge some of the limitations of this inquiry. For logistical reasons, this report does not reflect direct observations on the part of the writer. Further, the participants, while representative of both military and civilian personnel, did not include all parties involved. These individuals may have been those who felt most positively about the partnership process. Still, given the very broad agreement among those interviewed, supporting evidence from documentation of the project and similar themes emerging not only within, but *across* sites, the findings are likely to be reliable.
Conclusions

It appears that the Assessment Phase of the Military/Civilian Partnership Demonstration Projects have both had positive implications for their respective communities. In particular, participants reflected on increased knowledge, improved relationships and changes in policy and practice. In both communities, there are also implementation plans in place that will serve to guide future efforts. Both Projects yielded important lessons learned regarding “key ingredients” to maintain and potential “pitfalls” to avoid. These lessons emerged in seven domains including: a) time, b) participation and engagement, c) goals, structure and process, d) consultants and local ownership, e) cross-cultural realities, f) external environment, and g) flexibility. Ideally, these lessons learned and those gleaned from the Implementation Phase of the Projects will inform future military/civilian partnership efforts.