

# **Domestic Violence, PTSD and Brain Injury: Military and Civilian Challenges**

## **Part 2**

**By Deborah D. Tucker**

At the end of Part One of this article we referred you to the Michigan Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence and hope that you have visited their website at [www.mcadv.org](http://www.mcadv.org). At that site you can find the addresses and phone numbers of more than 70 service providers involved with MCADV and also access a resource library jointly developed with the Michigan Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment Board, [http://www.michigan.gov/dhs/0,1607,7-124-5460\\_7261-15002--,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/dhs/0,1607,7-124-5460_7261-15002--,00.html).

If you are reading this publication but reside in another state, then visit the site of the National Network to End Domestic Violence to access the web pages of the other state coalitions: <http://www.nnedv.org/resources/coalitions.html>.

The most effective way that Michigan's judges and court personnel, lawyers, social workers, faith leaders, counselors, probation officers and others who want to help intervene in domestic and sexual violence can make a longer term impact on the problem is to become involved with the nearest local program and join the MCADSV as a member. These organizations work not only to end domestic and sexual violence for the individual families they assist, but also to bring about the changes in our society that currently permit such behavior to continue.

The local domestic and sexual violence programs and the MCADSV want to partner with professionals as well as community groups to reach the "tipping point" on violence where more people condemn the behavior than consider it understandable. Again, we have to be careful to educate the community that violence CAN occur sometimes as a result of Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) or Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) but by far and away the majority of violence will be intentional. Domestic violence is most often the desire to have power and control over others. Victims do not cause the violence perpetrated against them, but rather this kind of violence can happen to anyone who has the misfortune to become involved with someone who seeks power and control over others so much so that he or she will use violence.

Anytime violence results in death we have questions. Homicide accompanied by the suicide of the perpetrator is among those cases most frequently questioned. And those offenders known as "family annihilators" are the most shocking and result in speculation about the contributing factors. While there won't be an offender to prosecute in those cases, we must continue to learn from them to prevent further deaths. There are many who believe that financial stressors are a compounding

contribution to the use of violence by offenders already inclined to it in any situation in which they cannot maintain control. In these recent very stressful economic times in our nation, there are increasing concerns that there will be more instances of offenders who kill all their family members and then commit suicide. All of us have a responsibility to notice the trying circumstances of our family, friends and neighbors and to provide access to information that may help alleviate the most egregious of circumstances people are facing with the more frequent loss of employment and the associated outcomes, such as foreclosures and homelessness. I recommend that in your efforts to address violence in your communities that you draw into your discussions the social workers who can help families access state and federal economic support as well as employment specialists. Please note the guidance provided in the side bar on income levels and poverty.

The opening page of the National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence section on military domestic and sexual violence can be accessed at the link below: [http://www.ncdsv.org/ncd\\_militaryresponse.html](http://www.ncdsv.org/ncd_militaryresponse.html) and leads to many more organizations and entities that can be helpful.

When you do conclude that the violence is not motivated by power and control but is the result of TBI or PTSD, where do you turn? Among the resources will be the military services, the U.S. Coast Guard, the Veteran’s Administration and organizations such as Military One Source. Links and phone numbers for these entities can be found at: [http://www.ncdsv.org/ncd\\_contacts.html](http://www.ncdsv.org/ncd_contacts.html).

We specifically recommend two of the many listed there that can help:

Military One Source can be reached at (800) 342-9547. Their website is: <http://www.militaryonesource.com/skins/MOS/home.aspx>.

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The updated 2009 Poverty Guidelines for the 48 Contiguous States and the District of Columbia were published in the January 23, 2009 edition of the *Federal Register*. The first column represents family size and the second column represents the maximum amount of income for that household size to be considered ‘in poverty’ according to these federal guidelines. These guidelines are used in determining financial eligibility for a number of programs.

Family size  
Poverty guideline

1	\$10,830
2	14,570
3	18,310
4	22,050
5	25,790
6	29,530
7	33,270
8	37,010

For families with more than 8 persons, add \$3,740 for each additional person.

More information and a link to the complete *Federal Register* Notice is available at <http://aspe.hhs.gov/POVERTY/09poverty.shtml>

The National Center for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder at the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs can be reached at [www.ncptsd.va.gov](http://www.ncptsd.va.gov) and provides excellent basic information about PTSD and also operates a PTSD Information Line at (802) 296-6300.

One important advance made as a result of the Defense Task Force on Domestic Violence, with the support and leadership of many members of Congress is that each military installation has an identified Victim Advocate. The Victim Advocates have the capacity to meet and talk with victims to provide information and support and are no longer required to make a report to command, as discussed in Part 1. Specifically, victim advocates provide assistance to victims, training for other professionals and collaboration with community based organizations to ensure services to the many military victims who reside in the local community surrounding the 300 military installations world-wide. In fact while living on the installation is often easier for the families, limitations of housing results in more than 60% residing in the local community and frequently accessing community based services for help. The Directive Type Memo or DTM that follows is a compilation of many that were issued piece meal to assist commanders, law enforcement, victim advocates, JAG officers and others to know their roles and responsibilities in a coordinated response to domestic violence:

[http://www.ncdsv.org/images/DA%20Involving%20DoD%20Military%20and%20Certain%20Aff%20Personnel\\_8-21-07.pdf](http://www.ncdsv.org/images/DA%20Involving%20DoD%20Military%20and%20Certain%20Aff%20Personnel_8-21-07.pdf)



A specific agreement was made with the National Domestic Violence Hotline to offer support to military related victims of domestic violence.

Help is available to callers 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Hotline advocates are available for victims and anyone calling on their behalf to provide crisis intervention, safety planning, information and referrals to agencies in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Assistance is available in English and Spanish with access to more than 170 languages through interpreter services. If you or someone you know is frightened about something in your relationship, please call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or TTY 1-800-787-3224.

Advocates there have received annual trainings from DoD staff and they provide the link to local providers of services as well as explaining policies of the Family Advocacy Programs and how to contact them. Visit [www.ndvh.org](http://www.ndvh.org) for more information.

### **Creating Cooperation, Coordination and Collaboration to End Domestic Violence**

Partnerships have to be deliberately developed to bring about the kind of changes that are needed to successfully end violence. Not all relationships have to be collaborative,

however, to serve the purpose, but rather there needs to be agreement about how intense and frequent the contact to meet the agreements necessary to improve the prevention and intervention into domestic violence.

**Cooperation:**

- Relationships usually formed around one area of information exchange.
- Resources and organizations kept separate.
- May be short-term or project-oriented.
- There will be little planning or evaluation, but will be some problem-solving.

**Coordination:**

- Relationships may be broader in scope and more in-depth communications occur.
- Resources are specifically allocated by the partnering organizations and individuals will be designated as responsible for the effort.
- Usually longer-term, more of a program rather than a project and involve some planning and evaluation.

**Collaboration:**

- Relationships are very intertwined with open communications designed to problem-solve and create new approaches.
- Resources are avidly shared and may be sought jointly.
- Responsibilities and roles in the effort are clear, with leadership coming from both/several organizations.
- The venture has an articulated vision and is planned, with evaluation and redesign based on performance.

Let's take the example of a battering intervention and prevention program (BIPP) providing assessment, classes for batterers, reporting to the courts and to the probation department. Such a program would *cooperate* with the local alcohol treatment agency to ensure that all batterers being considered for referral to the program are sober enough to actually benefit from the classes. The BIPP may establish a cooperative relationship that results in referrals made first for assessment by the alcohol program before accepting a referral for entry into their program. They may *coordinate* with the jail and the probation department to ensure that every person arrested for domestic violence is interviewed by the BIPP staff and given information about the BIPP program and policies. The BIPP program will *collaborate* with the courts to ensure that referrals made for their services are appropriate, often attending

all hearings on assault cases or protective orders to assist the Judge to craft appropriate orders. The BIPP program will *collaborate* with the local domestic violence victim service agency to ensure the victim's input is considered in the orders that may affect the family, such as visitation. This kind of deliberate discussion of the roles and responsibilities to one another and to the victim leads to a greater chance for effective intervention to create change in the batterer's conduct, beliefs and behaviors.

These examples are offered to inspire thought and discussion about how various potential partners can construct their agreements, hopefully within a larger context of a coordinated community response (CCR) involving all the players in victim services and offender accountability. The CCR needs to reach out and include representatives of their counterparts in any military related service located within their area. And for every community, there are going to be National Guard units that may be deployed, preparing for deployment or returning at any given point. Those organizations can be reached by visiting: <http://www.guardfamily.org> and click to find the state link. The following site has local information on a state by state basis as well: <http://www.guardfamily.org/Public/Application/ResourceFinderSearch.aspx>.

### **Tips on Involving Military Personnel in your CCR**

Outreach to any profession requires thought and planning. Just because civilians reach out and invite military professionals to become involved in cooperative work does not mean they will jump at the chance. There are a whole host of reasons for that not the least of which is that the demands on any of the key professionals you'll want to invite can be intense. It is not unusual to find people at their desks at 7:00; that means both at 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.!

The top attorney, a Staff Judge Advocate (SJA) or Judge Advocate General (JAG) will most likely be an O-5 or O-6 and be independent in making decisions regarding his or her time and if invited to participate by the District Attorney or a Judge may well readily accept. But law enforcement, medical personnel, victim advocates and even the chaplains may be accountable for their time to senior leaders. Depending upon the involvement of political leaders in your community in the CCR, invitations are more likely to be successful when delivered at the top and then filtering down. So, for example, if you really want to get the law enforcement and victim advocates able to participate in a CCR, the best way to actually make it possible for them to regularly attend could be to have the Mayor or a member of the Commissioner's Court directly involved in the CCR to make a formal request of the Installation Commander or his designee. At most Army installations, the Installation Commander rarely interacts with city and county officials and may actually himself be in Iraq or Afghanistan, but the Garrison Commander may have lunch every month with all elected officials in the area. This can translate in the other services as well, so it could be that the Wing Commander in the Air Force is the more appropriate contact or the Station Commander in the Navy. Talk with your public officials to learn more about the

leaders at the installation you're reaching out to and visit the websites of the fort, camp, base or station to read the bios of all the key professionals.

It is important to address people by their rank and to avoid the use of first names unless invited to use them. The following links can be helpful to better recognize the insignia denoting rank:

<http://www.defenselink.mil/specials/insignias/officers.html>

<http://www.defenselink.mil/specials/insignias/enlisted.html>

Many positions will be filled by civilians, who in many cases will have previously served themselves in the military. At most installations, the Family Advocacy Program Manager will be a civilian and generally speaking, will have been there for some time. Given the frequent moving of military personnel, this person may offer a historical perspective on the challenges and successes in developing their responses to domestic and sexual violence.

Typically the law enforcement lead will be a commissioned officer and he or she will be assisted by a Deputy Director who is a civilian. Usually that civilian is retired from a nearby police department or sheriff's office and knows the surrounding communities and law enforcement well. So, again, asking your Sheriff or Police Chief about the law enforcement personnel at the installation you're reaching out to will usually result in finding that they have a prior and continuing relationship. There should actually be some kind of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in place between each local law enforcement agency and the on installation police agency. These agreements have long been something that is checked as part of the installation management review process out of DoD, however, only in the last few years has the requirement that a MOU address domestic violence been in place. Visit:

<http://www.ncdsv.org/images/DevelopinganMOUbetweenInstallationLECivilianLE.pdf>

Chaplains can be an important link to both the helping professionals and the leadership. They are among the three granted the capacity to receive a restricted report from a victim; the other two are the Victim Advocates and medical staff. Chaplains are usually part of the family advocacy program's process of determining whether or not child or adult abuse has occurred and are often involved in the intervention plans. Depending upon their faith tradition and what is offered to them through that, they may have only received the training described in the DTM:

<http://www.ncdsv.org/images/DomesticAbuseTrainingChaplains.pdf>.

Generally speaking, whenever civilians seek to establish relationships with installation personnel, they are going to be welcomed. The military recognizes that domestic and sexual violence are challenges to them as well as civilian communities. This may seem obvious, but for many years leaders resisted accepting that this conduct was taking place within the military services. Perhaps the biggest change in the last ten years

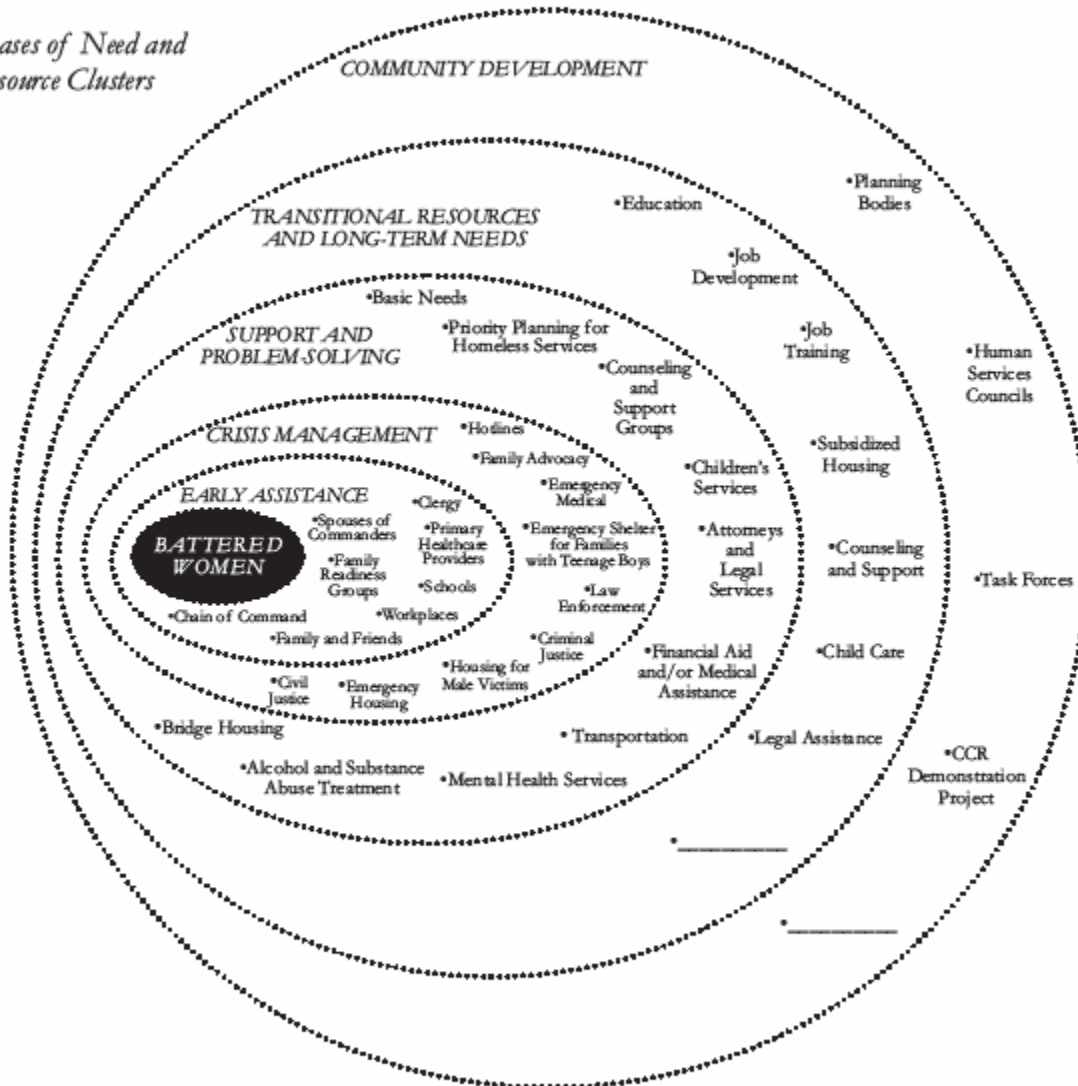
has been that acceptance. Leaders have received training to better understand these issues and it is very rare now to hear a military professional deny that violence is an issue or to quickly excuse the conduct by asking what the victim did to provoke the attack. It will continue to be a challenge for the military to separate the classic domestic violence motivated by power and control from other incidents of violence that may be the result of brain injury or PTSD. Regardless of the underlying cause, the offender must be held accountable and the appropriate intervention ensured. Victims must be supported and assisted to preserve their safety and well-being. And civilian and military communities have to draw together to construct the programs and services that will effectively intervene and prevent.

One last visual to consider, initially developed by the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence as part of their Community Audit process, which the Army's CCR Demonstration Project at Fort Campbell modified is the *Continuum of Caring: Community Resource Clusters* adding in those elements specific to the military community. By considering the needs of victims over time it becomes clearer what must be constructed through cooperation, coordination and collaboration to bring about change.

# CONTINUUM OF CARING: COMMUNITY RESOURCE CLUSTERS

*Coordinated Community Response Demonstration Project 2006  
Fort Campbell Army Installation with Christian County, KY and Montgomery County, TN*

*Phases of Need and  
Resource Clusters*



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