The 34th Judicial District Attorney Takes On Family Violence Crime:

An Evaluation of the 24 Hour Contact Initiative

June 2011

Noël Bridget Busch-Armendariz, PhD, LMSW, MPA
Principal Investigator

Sapana Donde, PhD
Project Director

Institute on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault
Center for Social Work Research
School of Social Work
The University of Texas at Austin

The 34th Judicial District Attorney Takes on Family Violence Crime: An Evaluation of the 24 Hour Contact Initiative

June 2011

Noël Bridget Busch-Armendariz, PhD, LMSW, MPA
Principal Investigator

Sapana Donde, PhD
Project Director

Staff and Contributors:
Karen Kalergis
Laurie Cook Heffron
Ana Portillo
Shoshi Osiantynksi
Gabrielle Li
Leeann Terwilliger

Institute on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault
Center for Social Work Research
School of Social Work
The University of Texas at Austin

This project was funded by a grant from the Criminal Justice Division of the Office of the Governor to the 34th Judicial District Attorney's Office. Points of view in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the Office of the Governor or the 34th Judicial District Attorney.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments	5
Executive Summary	7
Background	11
Review of Literature	13
Methodology	17
Findings	23
A Paradigm Shift	24
Victim Restoration	29
Strengthened Collaborations	33
Increased Competency	35
Victimless Prosecution	37
Issues for Replication	41
Considerations and Implications	45
References	49
Appendices	51
Appendix A: Interview Protocol for Professionals	51
Appendix B: Interview Protocol for Victims	53
Appendix C: Recruitment Scripts	53

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The research team extends its gratitude and appreciation to the judges, assistant district attorneys (ADAs), law enforcement officers, defense attorneys, and direct-service professionals in victim and offender services who shared their expertise, time, and insight, and who are committed to their communities.

The team also extends its thanks to 34th Judicial District Attorney Jaime Esparza; Patricia Baca, assistant district attorney and chief of the Domestic Violence Unit; and Frank Zubia, director of the Victim Assistance Program, for making themselves available during this evaluation and for their commitment to improving the criminal justice system's response to family violence victims. We also thank the Criminal Justice Division, Office of Governor, for its financial support of this project and its commitment to improving services to victims and survivors of family violence in Texas.

A note about language

Throughout this report, victims and survivors of family violence may be referred to simply as "victims" because this research is grounded in the criminal justice system, and that is the word used to acknowledge that a crime has been committed. The word *victim* is not meant to be demeaning or judgmental. The research team recognizes that at the time of contact with the criminal justice system, individuals have likely survived a combination of physical and emotional trauma. As advocates ourselves, we honor each person's journey and respect that each person may describe themselves and their experience in their own way.

Additionally, our use of "family violence" refers to both acts of intimate partner abuse and violence, and domestic violence. "Domestic violence" is used when referring to proper titles of organizations or programs and when citing literature in which researchers used that term.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview

The 24 Hour Contact Domestic Violence Initiative (24 Hour Contact) is an innovative program that seeks to respond to family violence crimes in ways that hold offenders accountable and restores victims. Its strengths should not be understated. The program provides a new model for the efficacy of handling family violence cases from the prosecution viewpoint, brings increased attention to these crimes within the criminal justice system and the community at large, and shows the benefits of increased community-wide collaboration to address these issues. A paradigm shift of this kind, though, is not without its critics—those who will lag behind, and maintain the status quo. Nonetheless, the evidence shows that victim needs are being met in helpful ways, offenders are being held accountable, and a community shift regarding family violence is occurring. What is most remarkable about the program is the dedication and passion that those in the District Attorney's Office, and the district attorney himself, exhibit on a daily basis in addressing family violence in the greater El Paso community.

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the impact, effectiveness, and efficacy of the 24 Hour Contact program on the criminal justice system's response to victims of family violence and to identify the elements needed for successful replication. The 34th Judicial District Attorney created the program to more effectively address family violence in the community. The program's goals are two-fold: first, to move family violence crimes more swiftly and efficiently through the criminal justice system, and second, to hold family violence offenders accountable for their criminal acts of violence. Although the program's major purpose is to strengthen the prosecution of family violence cases, an important part of the program involves victim restoration, i.e., providing much-needed support and resources to victims.

The program consists of several important components, including home visits to victims by teams of victim advocates and investigators from the District Attorney's Office within 24 hours of an offender's arrest; comprehensive case review meetings with a multidisciplinary team directed by the district attorney; and strong recommendations for offenders to hold them accountable for their criminal acts of violence, thus seeking responsive justice in these cases.

In addition to the 24 Hour Contact program, the district attorney created the annual "Help, Hope, and Healing" conference. This event includes a 22-mile walk across El Paso by District Attorney's Office staff, advocates, allies, and victims themselves, and a series of speakers who provide information to victims about the legal process. Thus, the district attorney's outreach toward victims of crimes goes beyond the 24 Hour Contact program.

Evaluation questions included:

1. What is the impact of the 24 Hour Contact program on the criminal justice system and family violence victims?
2. What are the services provided for victim restoration?
3. Does the program provide for stronger prosecution? In what ways? How are offenders held accountable?
4. Has this program strengthened collaboration of law enforcement, prosecutors, the courts, and victim service providers?

5. What challenges have emerged?
6. What are the program's strengths and promising practices?

Methodology

Four steps were taken for this substantive evaluation:

First, a comprehensive literature review was conducted to examine similar prosecutor-based family violence programs with critical components similar to this initiative, namely increased victim contact and tougher arrest and prosecution policies. Second, qualitative data was collected through 1.) observation of the operational aspects of the program, including program meetings and home visits to victims following the arrests of offenders, and 2.) individual and focus group interviews with professionals (n=43) in the criminal justice system and victims (n=24) served by the program. Third, quantitative surveys were administered during the qualitative interviews with victims in order to obtain more information about their experiences. Fourth, case files of victims (n=21) who provided their consent were reviewed, and relevant data, including responses from the quantitative surveys, were entered into a quantitative database, for further analyses.

In compliance with The University of Texas at Austin Institutional Review Board, participation in this study was voluntary and participants could end their interviews at any time. Specific steps were taken to ensure that all participants' identities remained confidential. Qualitative data were analyzed using thematic and content analyses. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Both qualitative and quantitative data analysis results have been integrated throughout this report.

Findings

1. Implementation of the 24 Hour Contact program has instituted a noteworthy paradigm shift in El Paso, where family violence is viewed as a serious and prosecutable crime that will not be easily dismissed and for which offenders will be held accountable for their crimes of violence. The program also has altered legal practices by criminal justice professionals—including ADAs, law enforcement, and defense attorneys—and increased skill-building, peer support, and mentorship within the District Attorney's Office. Unfortunately, myths about family violence persist, so efforts to address these myths should continue.

2. The 24 Hour Contact program provides significant emotional support to family violence victims and increases their access to important community and financial resources.

3. Collaborations among key players in the criminal justice system and community victim service providers (e.g., law enforcement, local family violence shelter, probation, and the Battering Intervention and Prevention Program) have been considerably strengthened as a result of the program.

4. The prosecution of family violence has been significantly enhanced through the collection of better evidence, an increase in evidence gathering, improved preparation of case files, and an increase in preparedness and effectiveness of ADAs for trial.

5. Victims and professionals in the criminal justice system reported a range of mixed reactions to the district attorney's stance on victimless prosecution. Some favored having the burden of responsibility placed on ADAs, while a minority of victims expressed frustration with diminished control over decision-making regarding the prosecution of offenders.

Considerations and Implications

The 34th Judicial District of Texas is the ideal place for a pilot study to increase our knowledge of the broad impact of a proactive legal practice. As expected with any new initiative, challenges persist, but the potential for replication in other jurisdictions is feasible and credible.

As with all family violence crimes, the right answer for victims and dependent children is neither linear nor clear. What is clear is that given the power and control dynamics of family violence, traditional family counseling methods would be inadequate. Collaborations between criminal justice professionals and victim service professionals could be enhanced even further to support a more holistic community approach to addressing family violence. Financial and infrastructure support for this suggestion need to be addressed.

A general lack of knowledge about family violence in the greater El Paso community is another challenge. Some participants recommended using media, such as public service announcements or commercials, in order to more effectively educate the community about family violence and increase awareness of the district attorney's strong stance on offender accountability.

The 24 Hour Contact program is setting a precedent regarding the adjudication of family violence crimes. Recommendations provided by the program wield power and thus warrant its continuation. Time delays were previously cited as the most significant degrading factor in family violence prosecutions. More study is needed to better understand the delays and the implications for offender accountability. Nonetheless, this program seeks to address this challenge head on.

The district attorney holds the ultimate responsibility and burden of the prosecution of family violence crimes. The domestic violence research recounts the toll that this crime has on those working to ameliorate it. Therefore, policies that address self-care and resiliency-building, such as flexible time off and training, will minimize these ills.

Nonetheless, the staff of the 24 Hour Contact program and the district attorney himself should be commended for their efforts. This program is the only one of its kind in the country to take on this complex social problem in this way. The empirical findings clearly suggest that the program's strengths outweigh its challenges. It is likely to take years to see the full impact and potential of this program. *Taking on family violence* and ushering a community through a paradigm shift regarding this crime is no small task.

BACKGROUND

According to the Texas Council on Family Violence (TCFV), in 2007 there were 189,401 incidents of family violence documented in Texas. In 2008, the 34th Judicial District Attorney's Office handled 4,542 family violence cases. Given the significant number of documented family violence cases, policymakers and practitioners clamor for an effective protocol that provides responsive services to victims and swift justice for offenders.

Program Goals and Structure

The 24 Hour Contact Domestic Violence Initiative (24 Hour Contact) began in August 2008 and was inspired by and developed as a result of discussions between District Attorney Jaime Esparza and Gloria Terry, then executive director of the Center Against Family Violence, El Paso's local family violence shelter. These discussions highlighted the need for the criminal justice system, particularly ADAs, to provide leadership on and shift perceptions about criminal justice responses to family violence crimes.

The 24 Hour Contact program's goals are two-fold: first, to move family violence crimes more quickly and efficiently through the criminal justice system, and second, to hold family violence offenders accountable for their acts of criminal violence.

The program consists of several components designed to fulfill these goals. First, within 24 hours of an arrest of a family violence offender by law enforcement, a team (consisting of a victim advocate and an investigator from the District Attorney's Office visit the home of the victim. The team works to establish face-to-face contact with the victim and to assess whether the victim's physical and emotional needs have been met (e.g., whether injuries have been properly treated, whether the victim needs shelter or counseling, etc.). The team provides the victim with resources, leaving brochures with information regarding crime victims' compensation and contact information for the local shelter and counseling services. The team may also take additional photographs of the victim's injuries. Finally, the team asks whether the victim wants to prosecute the offender, and explains the district attorney's decision-making role in the prosecution of family violence crimes.

Two teams of victim advocates and investigators conduct home visits daily by dividing the city into two sections. Initially, teams completed home visits in the mornings, Monday through Friday. However, because a large volume of cases accumulated over weekends, the District Attorney's Office applied for and was awarded grant funding in October 2009 from the Office of the Governor, Criminal Justice Division, which allowed the teams to conduct home visits on Saturdays and Sundays (the grant funding paid staff overtime). The expansion of weekend home visits allowed the teams to better and more quickly serve victims.

Once the home visits are completed, the teams return to the District Attorney's Office for a multidisciplinary meeting, during which each case is reviewed. These meetings are led by the district attorney or, in his absence, by the chief of the domestic violence unit. Each case undergoes an in-depth review. The district attorney invites representatives from law enforcement, the local shelter, the community supervision and corrections department

(probation), the Battering Intervention and Prevention Program, a local community mental health agency, and others to provide input on the cases.

The teams present cases by reading the incident report filed by law enforcement and recounting their interview with the victim. The multidisciplinary team also reviews prior criminal records, listens to the 911 call, views video taken by the responding law enforcement officer (this feature was recently implemented), and considers any other information that informs the decision of how to proceed. After the information is presented and discussed, the district attorney makes a recommendation that may include battering intervention and prevention counseling, jail time, probation, referrals to the military for prosecution, or pre-trial diversion. The administrative staff records the case discussions, summarizes, and gathers relevant evidence. This information is then given to the assigned ADA. Because these recommendations are recorded in red ink on the case folders, El Paso criminal justice system professionals (judges, attorneys, etc.) simply began to refer to these cases and this program as *red-writing* cases.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In the last 20 years, the movement to recognize domestic violence as a crime and address it within the criminal justice system has sparked a proliferation of strategies and policies designed to hold offenders more accountable for their criminal acts of violence (Danis, 2003; McCormick, 1999). These strategies and policies have received their fair share of criticism, as oftentimes victims' wishes and needs are not considered in decisions made by the criminal justice system and, as a result, victims are perceived as being disempowered (Mills, 1998). Research studies conducted to examine the efficacy of these policies and strategies have focused on studying outcomes, such as reductions in recidivism rates and perceptions of victims, offenders, and legal professionals. Proactive legal strategies discussed in the literature—mandatory case filing, mandatory prosecution, and coordinated community responses—may be most relevant to the practices of the 34th Judicial District Attorney's Office.

Peterson and Dixon (2005), in research conducted in New York state, examined outcomes associated with non-mandatory case filing policies (i.e., cases filed only if victims demonstrated a vested interest in prosecution within 24 hours of the offender's arrest) and mandatory case filing policies (i.e., cases filed despite victims' wishes). Non-mandatory case filing policies resulted in greater conviction rates, and prosecutors' time and resources were devoted only to those cases in which victims wished to pursue prosecution. Alternatively, mandatory case filing policies resulted in lower conviction rates and a greater court oversight for a larger number of cases in the criminal justice system. Although mandatory case filings could be viewed as time-consuming and inefficient, prosecutors viewed this policy as a positive outcome, as it was thought to serve as a protective factor for victims. Receiving court oversight was thought to potentially deter offenders from committing future acts of violence. Thus, Peterson and Dixon's research raises important questions about offender accountability and the benefits of filing all domestic violence cases, given that a greater number of offenders would experience some sort of criminal justice intervention, even if it involves simply monitoring their behavior.

A follow-up study conducted by Davis, O'Sullivan, Farole, and Rempel (2008) examined whether mandatory case filing resulted in more prosecution of cases for trial and how victims perceived these different case filing policies. Results indicated that mandatory filing procedures did not impact prosecutors' decisions to move forward with cases. In fact, most cases were dismissed. Furthermore, mandatory case filing procedures were not associated with lower recidivism rates. Interestingly, however, victims reported some favorable responses to the mandatory case filing procedures and to the idea that they were not responsible for making decisions about prosecution. Even if they did not support mandatory case filing policies for themselves, victims appeared to support the policy if applied to other victims' situations that were perceived to be more threatening with a greater likelihood of injury.

Considerable research has been conducted that provides some understanding and insight into the impact of mandatory arrest policies in the deterrence of domestic violence, namely that these policies have mixed results (Sherman and Berk, 1984; Pate and Hamilton, 1992; Sherman, Smith, Schmidt, and Rogan, 1992). The research on the impact of mandatory prosecution policies on offender accountability, on the other hand, appears to point to less encouraging

findings. Davis, Smith, and Nickles (1998) examined prosecution outcomes of domestic violence misdemeanors and found that these did not affect the likelihood of recidivism rates for offender.

Davis, Smith, and Taylor (2003) conducted further research to investigate the impact of a district attorney expanding case screening criteria to increase the proportion of domestic violence cases prosecuted in response to the implementation of a mandatory arrest policy and other pressures. The district attorney prosecuted cases based on the merits of evidence available for cases and not on victim cooperation. Results indicated that, after the expansion of case screening criteria, the influx of cases doubled processing time. Additionally, in the time period following the change in screening, researchers found that conviction rates declined (namely because a wider range of cases had been accepted for prosecution) and that there was a significant increase in the proportion of defendants who committed misdemeanor and felony crimes. Following the case screening policy change, victims reported less satisfaction with prosecution outcomes because they felt the offender had been punished too harshly. Therefore, they were less likely to report that they felt safer because of court outcomes. The researchers concluded that the results may have been partially due to the lack of adequate resources of time and personnel needed to devote to the influx of cases.

Dugin, Nagin, and Rosenfeld (2003) investigated whether certain domestic violence prevention resources resulted in exposure reduction (reducing contact between abusers and victims) or retaliation (provoking conflict in the relationship between abusers and victims without reducing victim exposure). Their research showed that more aggressive arrest policies were associated with fewer homicides of unmarried partners. However, they also found that as more prosecutors' offices became willing to accept cases of protection-order violations, homicide of both unmarried and married white females and unmarried African American males rose. The authors contended that moving forward with prosecution without ensuring that victims are adequately protected from their abusers may be harmful.

Finally, Guzik's (2008) qualitative study with offenders revealed that batterers were not impacted by mandatory arrest and prosecution policies in the ways that the policies were intended—that is, to send offenders a clear message that their behavior is wrong and needs to be remedied. In fact, batterers came away from their criminal proceedings feeling that the court system was biased, flawed, and unjust.

In research that focused on victims' experience with the criminal justice system, Miller (2003) examined mandatory arrest policies and victim empowerment in Dade County, Florida. Results indicated that the more satisfied a victim was with the police action that was taken, the more legal power the victim believed she wielded. Victims who perceived themselves as possessors of high levels of legal power felt safer in interactions with their partners. Miller argues that the analysis of the Dade County data shows that victims' personal power can be strengthened by alignment with legal power. When victims find themselves empowered personally and legally, they have a better chance of influencing their abusers to not commit further acts of violence and of feeling safe.

Research (Hare, 2006) examining victims' opinions on prosecution actually found that a majority of participants in the sample (70.2%) wanted to file charges and were in favor of prosecuting

their abusers for domestic violence. These results mirrored another study in which 65.2% of female family violence victims favored filing charges and prosecution of domestic violence (Weisz as cited in Hare, 2006, p. 625). Hare noted that for those women who opposed prosecution, their primary reason was the perception that what they had experienced had been minor or unintentional. This is contrary to what is usually thought as reasons for non-prosecution: fear of retaliation or revictimization. Although the study's participants were not a random sample, these results are an important contribution toward understanding and documenting victims' opinions and feelings about prosecution.

Another area of research examined the impact of coordinated community responses to domestic violence to determine whether these more holistic and collaborative approaches have an impact on offender accountability as defined by lower recidivism rates. Despite some methodological limitations, Murphy, Musser, and Maton (1998) found some promising results that the cumulative effects of successful prosecution (as defined by guilty verdict or probation before judgment), probation monitoring, and compliance with court-ordered counseling was associated with lower criminal recidivism. Greater involvement with the intervention system as a whole was also associated with lower rates of recidivism.

Salazar, Emshoff, Baker, and Crowley (2007) examined the impact of a coordinated community response intervention implemented by a community-based organization (Men Stopping Violence) in two Georgia counties. This initiative focused on increasing sanctions imposed on domestic violence offenders by the criminal justice system and on decreasing recidivism rates of offenders. Results indicated that law enforcement increased their arrests of domestic violence offenders in both counties, although women were increasingly arrested in addition to men. There was an increase of prosecution rates and sentencing to probation and batterer-intervention programs in one county. The other county, however, did not experience the same effects, despite having a district attorney committed to addressing domestic violence. The authors discussed important challenges and limitations that may have confounded the results, including the lack of resources on the part of the district attorney who advocated for domestic violence sanctions and a lack of support and collaboration from all parties involved. Furthermore, the intervention was implemented from an outside community organization rather than from within the criminal justice system itself. Thus, many contextual factors may have impeded the success of the intervention.

Similar contextual factors also may have impeded the results from a study examining the Victim-Informed Prosecution (VIP) project (Cattaneo, Goodman, Epstein, Kohn, and Zanville, 2009). The VIP project was designed to help facilitate the process of communication between domestic violence victims and prosecutors regarding the prosecutorial process**.** Results indicated this project was not as successful in helping to increase victims' perceptions of having a voice in the process. However, the authors noted a lack of a substantial number of victims who actually had contact with prosecutors (as most of the victims had misdemeanor cases), difficulties with turn-over of prosecutors, and a lack of support and commitment to the program from all partners and team members. For those victims whose cases were felonies and subsequently interfaced with prosecutors, the VIP project did show positive results. However, the sample of victims with felony cases was very small, limiting interpretation of the results.

Despite conducting as thorough of a literature search as possible, there were no published studies or literature to date that documented or discussed a program similar to the 24 Hour Contact program. To date, most victim-centered programs have been brought to prosecutors' offices by community-based organizations. The 24 Hour Contact program combines an effort to increase offender accountability while simultaneously providing victim-centered resources to promote victim restoration. Thus, the 34th Judicial District Attorney's 24 Hour Contact Domestic Violence Initiative is a unique model that significantly contributes to the current literature on proactive legal policies.

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the impact, effectiveness, and efficacy of the 34th Judicial District Attorney's 24 Hour Contact Domestic Violence Initiative on the criminal justice system's response to family violence and to identify the elements needed for replication.

Questions addressed through the evaluation process included:

1. What is the impact of the 24 Hour Contact program on the criminal justice system and family violence victims?
2. What are the services provided for victim restoration?
3. Does the program enable stronger prosecution? In what ways? How are offenders held accountable?
4. Has this program strengthened collaboration of law enforcement, prosecutors, the courts, and victim service providers?
5. What challenges have emerged?
6. What are the program's strengths and promising practices?

Four steps were taken to achieve a substantive evaluation:

First, a comprehensive literature review was conducted to examine similar prosecutor-based family violence programs with critical components similar to this initiative, namely increased victim contact and tougher arrest and prosecution policies. Second, qualitative data was collected through 1.) observation of the operational aspects of the program, including program meetings and home visits to victims following the arrests of offenders, and 2.) individual and focus group interviews with professionals (n=43) in the criminal justice system and victims (n=24) served by the program. Third, quantitative surveys were administered during the qualitative interviews with victims in order to obtain more information about their experiences. Fourth, case files of victims (n=21) who provided their consent were reviewed, and relevant data were entered into a quantitative database—along with responses from the quantitative surveys—for further analyses.

Data Collection Procedures

Data was collected between August 2010 and January 2011.

Interview Protocols

An interview guide was created for criminal justice and victim service professionals (see Appendix A), with a range of questions designed to understand the challenges, benefits, and issues of replication of the program. The professional interviews were conducted in English only. A semi-structured interview protocol also was created for family violence victims served by the program, with open-ended questions about their experiences with the 24 Hour Contact program as well as survey questions using Likert-type scales that gauged their experiences (see Appendix B). Interviews for victims were offered in English and Spanish, as 25 percent of victims spoke Spanish only. The majority of interviews were audiotaped and transcribed. Several participants preferred not to be audiotaped; therefore, interviewers took copious notes to record their

responses. In addition, if victims consented, evaluators summarized and quantified information contained in their case file.

Description of Participants

Participants represented two distinct groups: professionals and victims. Table 1 provides a summary of participation by professionals. Professionals were staff members of the District Attorney's Office who directly engaged in the 24 Hour Contact program—trial division and unit chiefs, the director of the Victim Assistance Program, victim advocates, investigators, administrative personnel, and allied professionals who interfaced with the 24 Hour Contact as family violence cases moved through the criminal justice system (judges, law enforcement officers, shelter staff, probation and Battering Intervention and Prevention Program staff, and defense attorneys). These professionals were selected for participation based on their knowledge about and interaction with the 24 Hour Contact program as well as through snowball sampling, during which participants were asked if they knew anyone involved with the program in a professional capacity that would be able to speak to its challenges and benefits.

TABLE 1. Participation by Professionals

	Total Number of Participants
District Attorney's Project Team Members and Allied Professionals*	43

**Note*. To protect confidentiality, specific professional roles are not identified.

Table 2 provides a summary of participation by victims. Family violence victims consisted of 24 victims with closed cases (n = 8) and open cases (n = 16). Closed cases were those in which a final disposition has been reached and open cases were pending final disposition in the court system.

TABLE 2. Participation by Victims

Victim Interviews	Total Number of Participants
Open Cases	16
Closed Cases	8

Table 3 provides descriptions of the family violence victims. All victims interviewed ranged from 18 to 53 years of age. However, two victims who wanted to participate were under the age of 18. With approval from the University of Texas at Austin Institutional Review Board, the evaluators interviewed their adult parents. The majority of victims (86%) were women, while 14% were men. Most victims reported being unemployed (62%) with 38% of victims being

employed. Fifty percent of victims were in dating relationships with their offenders, and 40% were married to them. A small percentage of victims were either divorced from their offenders (5%) or in another dating relationship (5%). The majority of victims were English-speaking (75%), while 25% were Spanish-speaking only. Most offenders did not use a weapon (71%), but a significant minority (29%) did. Fifty-two percent of victims reported that offenders had been intoxicated during the domestic violence incident and no victims reported being intoxicated.

TABLE 3. Descriptive Statistics of Family Violence Victims (n = 24)

Descriptive Variables		Percent
Gender	Female	86%
	Male	14%
Employment Status	Unemployed	62%
	Employed	38%
Relationship to Offender	In dating relationship	50%
	Married	40%
	Divorced	5%
	In another dating relationship	5%
Language	English	75%
	Spanish	25%
Offender Armed?	No	71%
	Yes	29%
Offender Intoxicated?	Yes	52%
	No	48%
Victim Intoxicated?	No	100%
	Yes	0%

Note. The total N = 24, although the overall sample (n) varied slightly among demographic variables.

Victims with open cases were invited to participate in this project after the home visit from the victim advocate and investigator. The 24 Hour Contact team completed its standardized protocol and then briefly described the evaluation to inquire if victims were interested in participating. Teams were provided a script regarding how to recruit potential participants (see Appendix C).

Victims with closed cases were contacted by staff from the District Attorney's Victim Assistance Program. To maintain confidentiality, the District Attorney's Office staff randomly chose male and female victims. Staff members received a script detailing how to recruit potential

participants (see Appendix C). To address the issue of pre-literacy, staff contacted victims by telephone rather than letter.

Protection of Human Subjects

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) at The University of Texas at Austin reviewed and approved this evaluation. Written informed consent was obtained from all professionals. Two victims preferred to participate by telephone, so the consent form was read orally and verbal informed consent was given. All other victims provided written informed consent. The consent process was available in English and Spanish for victims.

Participation was entirely voluntary. No personal, identifying information of either victims or professionals were requested through the course of the data collection or used in the analyses. Care was taken to assure victims that their participation would not affect services they received or were receiving from the District Attorney's Office or the community.

Given the nature of the study, steps were taken to ensure that the interview process was not traumatic for victims. Victims were interviewed by licensed professionals or professionals with degrees in social work and clinical psychology. Throughout the interview, the interviewers were alert for any indication of distress from a participant. As a part of the protection of human subject's protocol, if any signs of stress were observed, immediate crisis intervention counseling was provided to help reduce the participant's discomfort. Interviewers also provided referral numbers to the National Domestic Violence Hotline and contact information for the local shelter, if needed. Interviewers also ensured that the participant was psychologically and emotionally stable before ending the interview. No adverse events occurred.

Data Analysis

Responses to open-ended interview questions were analyzed using a qualitative methodology of content and thematic analysis techniques. Textual data were systematically gathered and analyzed. Line-by-line open coding of data was used and the data were organized and grouped into properties and developed into contextual themes around the research questions. Findings were grounded with the use of direct quotes from professionals and victims. In order to be representative in selecting comments for inclusion, all responses that represented diverse thought, actions, or decisions associated with the research questions were reported. No personal information was collected from participants. Three methods to enhance the rigor and trustworthiness of the data were utilized: member checking, peer debriefing and support, and establishing an audit trail. Descriptive analyses were performed on the quantitative data and the findings were reported in aggregate using descriptive statistics.

Limitations

This evaluation was primarily exploratory in nature and used a non-probability convenience sample. To our knowledge, however, no other prosecutor-based program in Texas or the United States currently addresses family violence with the protocol used in the 24 Hour Contact program. While the findings obtained in this evaluation may or may not be readily generalized to all other prosecutorial programs, the findings are considered to be highly useful for any criminal justice system setting that prosecutes family violence crimes. Furthermore, because many of the

participants in this evaluation have roles similar to their colleagues in other settings, the findings may be useful to other jurisdictions when considering replication.

Another limitation is that no offenders were interviewed or surveyed. Instead, professionals from community supervision and corrections and the Battering Intervention and Prevention Program provided some insight into the impact of the 24 Hour Contact on offenders. A follow-up evaluation might include interviews or an evaluation of the program's impact on offenders.

FINDINGS

Findings from qualitative and quantitative data analysis are organized into the following five themes:

FINDING 1.1 — Family violence is "no joke" in El Paso County

Shift in perception of family violence

In the past, family violence crimes may have been minimized. In fact, it was reported that ADAs often dismissed family violence crimes prematurely because of the complexities involved, such as victims changing their minds and not being willing to be involved in the prosecution of the case. However, following the implementation of the 24 Hour Contact program, participants indicated that family violence is now being taken more seriously as a significant societal problem in the 34th Judicial District of Texas. One participant reported that the program has made it "respectable to try family violence cases as opposed to something that should be kept in the family." Another indicated that "family violence is no longer a joke in El Paso County or a nuisance cause of action."

Participants highlighted several other positive outcomes from the implementation of this program, such as family violence crimes receiving the attention and importance that they deserve and victims' rights being taken into consideration more so now than in the past. One participant highlighted that the program has reduced the stigma for victims to come forward and report family violence, noting, "It's become a respectable complaint, like a civil right."

"Red writing"

A significant issue raised by various members of the criminal justice system was the *red writing*, (i.e., recommendations written in red ink on those case files handled by the 24 Hour Contact team during case file review meetings). Participants expressed mixed feelings about these recommendations. Some professionals felt that the red writing actually strengthened the prosecution of family violence crimes because of the increased efficiency with which cases moved through the criminal justice system. Advantages of the red writing included reports that the recommendations were taken more seriously, mainly because the red writing represented the opinion of the district attorney himself on the case. The red writing was noted to force cases to trial as it reduced defense attorney strategies of delay or dismissal. Because the red writing was viewed by professionals as being "set in stone," this tactic appeared to provide ADAs with leverage. For instance, if defense attorneys wanted to negotiate the recommendations, they had to consider which cases they chose to leverage. In other words, dismissals and negotiations to lesser pleas were no longer standard protocol.

However, a number of disadvantages to the red-writing recommendations were noted. Participants reported that these recommendations were "not very popular" among various criminal justice professionals. Participants indicated that the red writing created a heightened confrontational atmosphere between ADAs and defense attorneys because cases were considered less negotiable. In fact, one participant reported that the limitations regarding negotiation of recommendations for offenders were "painful" for defense attorneys. Consequently, defense attorneys were known to "bust the chops of prosecuting attorneys"—i.e., give them a hard time about not negotiating for lesser pleas—as a way to counteract the negative effects of the red writing.

Because the red-writing recommendations were determined relatively soon after offenses, recommendations also were viewed as more harsh than warranted by the time the case went to trial, thus limiting offenders' willingness to plea to the recommendations. Furthermore, the red-writing recommendations were reported by some participants to be ineffective because they neither address the root cause of family violence nor encourage true behavioral change. Finally, it was thought that red-writing cases may "clog" the court dockets.

Offender accountability

Participants cited several examples to support their perception that offenders were being held more accountable for their behavior. Some participants indicated that the district attorney's hardened stance on offender accountability resulted in higher conviction rates. Other participants indicated that offenders had learned that the district attorney would hold them accountable. Furthermore, offenders received harsher punishments for re-offending, particularly because the district attorney now tracks re-offenders.

Another important outcome for offenders was the impact of pushing more cases to trial. Participants reported that trials served as an important deterrent for offenders because of the embarrassment and humiliation offenders may experience when evidence is presented to a jury. Furthermore, the impact of violence in the lives of children within the context of the theory of learned behavior of family violence was highlighted as an educational tool that ADAs used during trials.

Finally, participants reported that, as a result of stronger cases for prosecution, offenders pled guilty more often. This led to an increased likelihood to seek helpful interventions, such as battering invention and prevention counseling. Furthermore, some participants indicated that the District Attorney's Office could use the threat of jail time as leverage to push offenders to seek help through interventions. Although the majority of victims interviewed indicated that their offenders had not received much intervention, a few reported that their partners had received help as a result of the prosecutorial process. Interventions received by offenders included substance abuse counseling, battering intervention and prevention counseling, and ongoing drug testing. Qualitatively, victims reported improved communication in their relationships with offenders, improvement in the offender's character, and an improved ability to parent as partners.

FINDING 1.2 — Permanent change requires unrelenting persistence

Data analysis indicated that the 24 Hour Contact program has increased knowledge and awareness, enhanced crisis intervention skills, and fostered mentoring and peer support to improve the level of competency regarding family violence across multiple criminal justice entities.

Increased competency

Participants from varying professional backgrounds (i.e., law enforcement officers, judges, ADAs, defense attorneys, victim advocates) cited the challenging dynamics of family violence and expressed empathy for both victims and offenders. Responses reflected knowledge and awareness of the cycle of violence, how interpersonal violence is transmitted across generations

of families, and how societal and cultural factors contribute to the perpetuation of violence. Thus, data analysis indicated an enhanced level of understanding regarding family violence and the factors that complicate these cases.

Participants described specific ways in which the 24 Hour Contact program triggered an increase of training opportunities within the District Attorney's Office. For example, participants reported that victim advocates received specialized training in crisis intervention for family violence. In addition, the District Attorney's Office shifted from a small specialized family violence unit to a system of many ADAs prosecuting these crimes. This shift has provided a breadth of experience and opportunity in trying family violence crimes across the organization.

As a result of the transition from a specialized unit to a more generalized focus on family violence, several strategies involving mentorship were developed to help provide extra support to ADAs who were new to family violence cases. For example, ADAs who had not routinely tried family violence crimes in the past were encouraged to consult with colleagues who had expertise. ADAs also reviewed cases in regular meetings and received input on how to address common problems. Some participants indicated that this shift in support has resulted in an increased bonding among ADAs and in mentoring relationships.

According to participants, camaraderie also developed among the staff of victim advocates, investigators, the unit chief, and administrative personnel working together as part of the 24 Hour Contact program. The team was passionate about seeking justice for family violence victims. Other important factors cited included a respect for other members' perspectives and a sense of collaboration, professionalism, and trust in other members' contributions. Team members were very clear regarding their roles and duties as part of the program. Thus, participants indicated that team members rarely overstepped boundaries with one another and were able to work together effectively despite differing perspectives and opinions regarding victim restoration.

Myths about family violence

Despite 40 years of advocacy, training, laws, and policies designed to position family violence as the crime it is, data analysis revealed that the 24 Hour Contact program is still hampered by perceptions of family violence that reveal a need for continued education and training. For example, results suggested that officers responding to family violence may benefit from receiving additional training regarding the dynamics of family violence to enhance their ability to work more effectively, e.g., understanding why victims stay in abusive relationships and the difficulty victims experience in extricating themselves from the offender.

Furthermore, although ADAs were described by a majority of participants as having increased effectiveness, a small number of participants indicated that both defense attorneys and ADAs still are learning about the complexity of family violence crimes and as such, even the most seasoned counsel might find it difficult to persist. Though positive gains have occurred since the program began two and half years ago, it is clear that systemic change takes time.

A need for a "holistic, comprehensive" approach

Family violence is a pervasive social problem that requires a comprehensive community response. The district attorney represents a critical element and needs other organizations to take an equal stand against family violence. For example, one participant indicated that placing offenders in jail does not truly rehabilitate their abusive patterns of behavior, as jail environments do not foster or promote responsibility, accountability, or honesty.

Another participant expressed that the red writing does not address the needs of victims regarding intervention and treatment. Several participants felt that a "couples counseling" or a "family counseling" approach should be the treatment of choice, during which both offenders and victims could receive assistance. Another recommended a "holistic, comprehensive" approach to family violence at the criminal justice level to assist families and couples entrenched in the cycle of violence. However, participants said scarce community support was a major obstacle in creating this kind of integrated intervention.

FINDING 1.3 — Prosecutors are the "fall guys"

Although data suggested that many viewed the program as a positive and useful intervention, others have balked at the hard stance on family violence. One participant criticized the District Attorney's Office as not thinking "outside the box" regarding helping offenders and not being sympathetic to the people involved in family violence crimes. Others viewed ADAs as interfering in family matters.

Consequently, when offenders are held accountable, there is a ripple impact on the family unit. Victims have complained because their partners were deported or received jail time, and offenders have reportedly vilified the district attorney's staff as a way to coerce victims against cooperating with the prosecution. One participant reported that there was no glory in prosecuting family violence, as ADAs were often deemed to be the "bad guy" because of their efforts to hold family violence offenders accountable. Thus, prosecution of family violence crimes continues to be challenging and ADAs carry the lion share of the burden.

While ADAs were sometimes criticized, data analysis results indicated that ADAs and other 24 Hour Contact team members struggled with the unintended economic and psychological consequences to victims and families as a result of criminal consequences for the offender. In part, the district attorney opens the program review meetings to a variety of community professionals to open dialog about these consequences.

FINDING 1.4 — The criminal justice system plays offense

ADAs

Participants reported an increase in commitment and personal motivation on the part of ADAs to prosecute family violence cases, despite the lack of a complaining witness. Participants also noted that the district attorney's support for the program has motivated them to face the challenge of seeking justice in these cases. Where in the past ADAs have seen family violence

cases as often unwinnable drudge work, they have taken new pride in prosecuting these cases. Expertise in the District Attorney's Office has expanded considerably.

Law enforcement

Participants also reported a significant shift in law enforcement's response to family violence. For example, qualitative data indicated that law enforcement has instituted a "zero tolerance policy" for family violence and are responding more seriously to related 911 calls. This shift has been due, in part, to the increased collaboration between the District Attorney's Office and law enforcement.

Several victims reported witnessing this shift in response to their calls for help. One victim stated:

> Last time when the police officer came, [the offender] gave all his keys to the officer when he left the house. I left to go run some errands and when I came back, I found him very comfortably in the bedroom. Therefore, I am very afraid that he will do the same again. . . . But I believe I might be able to control the situation in case he was to show up. I feel like I am being backed up. I feel I can trust the police department. I trust they will rush here, unlike the last time when they told me they would come and they never did. [*translated from Spanish*]

Another victim reported:

> They responded very well because it all began since eight o'clock in the morning and they arrested him at 7 p.m., and all day long. I had been calling them because they told me "if he comes, call us". So I called them like four times, and they came four times, and they tried to get him. They did not give up, because many times they say "well, we are here but he is not there" or something, but these cops were very fast and they never said "no". It was very good. [*translated from Spanish*]

FINDING 1.5 — Defense attorneys get into the game

Many defense attorneys have also had to respond differently on behalf of their clients charged with a family violence crime. In fact, defense attorneys, like ADAs, are more fully preparing their cases, and therefore reportedly charging higher fees for the extra preparation time. Because the 24 Hour Contact team talks with the victims immediately, victims understand that they are not required to participate in the prosecution of the offender. This frees the victims from the responsibility of holding the offender accountable. Previously, defense attorneys might have persuaded victims to drop the charges. Now victims are informed that the district attorney may proceed without their participation.

Victim Restoration

FINDING 2.1 — It's a lifeline

The District Attorney's Office's efforts to immediately contact and check in with victims within 24 hours of the offender's arrest was noted as being particularly helpful to victims. Participants suggested that immediate contact may significantly reduce their fear of the unknown regarding the consequences of their calls for help as well as their uncertainty regarding how their complaints of family violence will be handled by the District Attorney's Office. Furthermore, home visits were key to cutting through transportation barriers for victims. Rather than having to travel to the District Attorney's Office to receive information about their legal rights and available services, the 24 Hour Contact program delivers this information directly to victims.

Victims themselves reported a range of emotions in response to the program. Several were surprised by the immediate home visits. Others indicated that they initially felt fear until the 24 Hour Contact team explained why they were coming to their homes. Still others felt embarrassed that the team knew what had happened. When victims were repeatedly not reached at home or did not answer or return telephone calls, the 24 Hour Contact team tried to reach them at their places of employment. In these cases, the team was concerned that the offender might be keeping the victim from receiving help. However, some victims were uncomfortable with the team members coming to their place of employment.

The majority of victims reported positive experiences with contact from a victim advocate and investigator through home visits or phone calls. A significant number of victims framed the visit as "helpful," "good," and supportive. One said that it was "wonderful that they come and follow-up and follow through." Another victim stated that "seeing the interest that the District Attorney's Office has in my situation, well that comforts me very much." One victim shared that waiting 24 hours after the arrest was "good." Several reported that the immediate contact demonstrated that the 24 Hour Contact team cares about and is trying to help victims. Even those who initially felt intimidated or fearful reported a positive understanding of why the victim advocate and investigator had come to their homes—to provide help and resources as well as to see how they were doing. One victim stated:

> At least I know I am not alone. I know that in the event that something happens, there will always be help. . . . I know that they have my back because they were calling me and calling me and calling me afterwards, "that I am Mr. so-and-so" and they would leave me messages and say, "Whenever you need anything, please call this number." Yes they were calling; did call more than once. Even after [the offender] was released from jail, they kept calling me to ask if I was O.K., if I needed any help. And actually the police department called me as well to keep helping me. [*translated from Spanish*]

Table 4 provides a summary of the mean scores of victim participants to survey questions assessing their feelings about the 24 Hour Contact program. Victims indicated that the home visit they received from the 24 Hour Contact team was very helpful. Victims also reported feeling safer after the 24 Hour Contact team members visited them than before. Generally, victims

reported that they were very satisfied with the home visit from the 24 Hour Contact team. As stated earlier about family violence is very complex for victims and their children. However, in consideration of their report the program seems to be offering additional resources, safety, and connection.

TABLE 4. Responses by Victims to Survey Questions

Survey Question	Mean Score	N	Scale
How helpful would you rate the visit you received from the District Attorney's office?	4.17	24	0 – 5
How safe did you feel before the people from the District Attorney's office visited you?	2.86	21	1 – 4
How safe did you feel after the people from the District Attorney's office visited you?	3.48	21	1 – 4
How satisfied are you with the home visit that the District Attorney's office did in response to your case?	3.35	23	1 – 4

Note. High scores indicate higher values on each variable.

FINDING 2.2 — Information about services increased

The 24 Hour Contact team provides victims with valuable information and support that enhances victim restoration. Participants across the board reported that the team used multiple strategies to assist victims by providing information on community resources, funds and services for victims, emotional support and caring, assistance with helping victims prioritize their needs and focusing resources in that direction, education on the cycle of violence in order to plant seeds for victims considering leaving their relationships, direct contact information for the 24 Hour Contact team, information on protective and restraining orders, and the district attorney's stance on victimless prosecution. Victims with children also received education on the impact of the offender's behavior on their children and were encouraged to seek resources for their children. Finally, the presence of bilingual staff conducting home visits also was highlighted by one victim as particularly helpful:

> It was very important and a good experience. . . . They were very courteous and attentive. The man that called was by no means rude or demeaning and plus he spoke to me in Spanish, which was very important to me since I don't understand English very well. . . . So that was extremely relieving to be able to speak with someone who was professional and courteous and able to talk to me in Spanish. Very good experience. I personally enjoyed it very much. [*translated from Spanish*]

The 24 Hour Contact team also has assisted victims with accessing services that enhance victim restoration. Several victims reported obtaining protective orders, seeking counseling services, and accessing shelter services. One victim credited the team with having prompted this process:

> [The 24 Hour Contact team] gave me numbers, counselors who I can talk to . . . I still get in touch with them. I stay in touch with my caseworker from the shelter. [Other services from the shelter] are really helpful. . . . looking for a job, helping me look for an apartment. Transportation, if the kids needed to be going to school. Stuff like that.

Several victims in the sample reported that they had not accessed services offered through the 24 Hour Contact program, but noted that it was because they did not believe they needed the services. Some of these victims reported that they found it helpful just to have received all of the information from the team, even if they did not access the services. Other victims reported wanting to access services, but cited personal barriers that interfered with their ability to do so, such as problems finding childcare and problems finding time in their schedule for counseling due to demanding jobs. Finally, some professionals cited other enhanced educational and healing opportunities, such as the "Help, Hope, and Healing" conference, for providing benefits to victims that go above and beyond the contact they receive from the program.

FINDING 2.3 — Victim perceptions are changing

Several victims who had experienced family violence in the past reported a significant change with the response from the 24 Hour Contact teams. One victim who had gone to a family violence shelter following the arrest of her partner reported that she had been visited by a 24 Hour Contact team at the shelter:

> I was still scared because of what had happened to me. . . . They talked and told me more about the program and everything, so it helped me a lot. I wouldn't be here right now. . . . Back in past times, I wish they would have been there for me when stuff like that was to have happened . . . because it's not just this time it happened. It happened several times. But I never had the courage of calling because I was scared. But when I did call and they visit over here, I was happy to see and I was able to talk to them about my situation that had happened.

FINDING 2.4 — Gaps in victim services persist

For the most part, the 24 Hour Contact program was seen as a source of useful information and assistance for victims, as well as increasing access to services provided for victim restoration. A minority of victims reported that they did not receive helpful information. Some regarded the program as being biased toward women victims. However, the overall evaluation revealed that all victims were given the same information. It should be noted that the majority of family violence community services respond more effectively to women because they make up the vast majority of cases. This is not, however, a commentary on the services provided by the program.

A minority of victims would have appreciated more information about the offender's case. However, it is not clear that this information was withheld; rather it is likely that, given the complexity of the criminal justice system, it was not readily available.

Challenges with victim services were also noted, such as not enough options for counseling services. However, these services clearly fall outside the scope of what the District Attorney's Office can address and may be indicative of the need for a comprehensive, holistic community approach to family violence. Nonetheless, the weekly 24 Hour Contact meetings that professionals attend are likely to facilitate a stronger approach (see section below for additional discussion).

Strengthened Collaborations

FINDING 3.1 — The epitome of an effective criminal justice system

Strong leadership

Some participants noted that the district attorney himself was responsible for the 24 Hour Contact program's strong and positive impact. One participant described how the district attorney created a positive, welcoming environment and fostered collaboration by including allied professionals from varying disciplines in weekly case file review meetings. This regular weekly contact between various professionals reportedly built rapport and strengthened their relationships with the District Attorney's Office. One participant commented, "This is kind of the epitome of what we call a criminal justice system," indicating that the 24 Hour Contact program had become a "synergistic program."

During the multidisciplinary case review meetings, the district attorney often calls upon the expertise of community partners to provide insight about specific cases. This encouragement of input from diverse professionals enhances the decision-making regarding recommendations for the offender. For example, the local mental health agency may cite compounding mental health problems to explain an offender's behavior. Decision-making regarding recommendations for the offender are also enhanced and better informed as a result of direct contributions made by representatives from the Battering Intervention and Prevention Program (e.g., determination of the offender's appropriateness for the program). Finally, as described above, both the sheriff's office and the police department's collaboration with the 24 Hour Contact team resulted in enhanced law enforcement information-gathering at the time of the crime to strengthen evidence for prosecution.

Reciprocal exchange of information

The increased communication has led to a collaborative exchange of information to address complex, often difficult issues such as divergent organizational missions. For example, local family violence organizations are typically mission-driven toward client self-determination, and although the program confers with victims about their wishes to participate in prosecution or not, the District Attorney's Office moves forward with offender prosecution and accountability, with or without the victims' cooperation. These discussions have not been without some conflict; nonetheless this multidisciplinary team has stayed engaged with each other over the past two years to better understand each other's positions and more effectively respond to family violence crimes.

Increased training opportunities

Finally, participants reported that, due to this increased weekly contact, various professionals were actively involved in creating training opportunities about family violence for other legal entities in the criminal justice system. For example, participants from the local shelter and the Battering Intervention and Prevention Programs indicated that they often provided training to judges, ADAs, and victim advocates from the Victim Assistance Program. Trainings were reportedly provided by members of the 24 Hour Contact team to ADAs, law enforcement, and shelter staff. These examples indicate that the impact of the 24 Hour Contact program enhances

the capacity of both the District Attorney's Office and other community organizations and criminal justice professionals.

Increased Competency

FINDING 4.1 — The program has strengthened prosecution cases

Collection of better evidence

Findings indicate that more effective evidence is collected for 24 Hour Contact cases. Participants credited the immediate contact made by the teams as significantly increasing evidence collection, such as photographs of injuries and the increased ability for ADAs to obtain updated contact information for victims. As part of their protocol during home visits, the teams also inquire about whether the victim wants to prosecute. However, during this inquiry, victims are never encouraged or coerced to prosecute. Several participants noted that this procedure was helpful in the prosecution of the cases at the trial level.

Increased gathering of evidence

Participants noted an increase in the gathering of evidence from law enforcement that increases the likelihood of holding offenders accountable. In the second year of the program, law enforcement in El Paso began to use video to document victims' statements at the scene. All evidence collected by law enforcement is uploaded to an electronic server accessible to ADAs.

Improvements in the preparation of case files

Case files are more complete and comprehensive as a result of the initiative. Because the 24 Hour Contact team prepared case files so efficiently, attorneys rarely have to return them for further investigation. This saves time and resources because cases move through the criminal justice system more efficiently.

Increased effectiveness in preparedness of ADAs

As noted above, findings indicate that as the district attorney is more committed to prosecuting family violence crimes, preparedness of ADAs for trial has also increased. The front end preparation by the 24 Hour Contact team has provided ADAs with the ability to more effectively prepare complaining witnesses (i.e., victims) for trial. Moreover, it was suggested that victim preparation also reduced the anxiety and fear of those testifying in trial. Finally, there appeared to be new-founded respect for ADAs because of the increased awareness of the difficult and challenging nature of these cases. Clearly these cases require advanced litigation skills.

FINDING 4.2 — Challenges to successful prosecution of family violence persist

Coping with the dynamics of family violence

Judges, law enforcement, ADAs, victim advocates, investigators, defense attorneys and others noted that a significant difficulty with prosecuting family violence crimes is that victims often reunite with the offenders. The research on this aspect of family violence is prolific and underscores reasons such as fear, promises of reform, love (when the offender is not abusive), loyalty, lack of economic and social resources, parenting resources, and the dependence on the offender. Consequently, victims often change their minds and may ask that the charges be dropped or dismissed. If a victim has reunited with the offender, she/he may feel pressured to change her/his initial account of the incident. Most victims want the offender to get help.

While some data suggested that victimless prosecution may be a positive historical shift toward holding offenders accountable, the absence of a complaining witness, particularly in these cases, makes prosecution of family violence crimes particularly difficult. One participant said, "Most people think if she doesn't want to press charges, why should I care?" Judges, in particular, are faced with child custody decisions, and the burden to keep children safe.

Coping with logistical challenges

Victimless prosecution makes it even more important that the information gathered at the scene be robust enough to stand up in court, in lieu of the victim's testimony. However, evidentiary complexities complicate the process of preparing family violence cases for trial. For example, it was noted that family violence cases involve a significant amount of daunting paperwork. Additionally, the admissibility of victim statements has been a challenge, particularly when a law enforcement officer summarizes the statement from the victim rather than providing a verbatim victim statement from the scene.

Coping with cultural factors

Cultural factors also were identified as complicating the dynamics of family violence cases even further, and subsequently making prosecution of these cases particularly challenging. For example, El Paso has a large military presence, with its own culture and system of justice. As a result, family advocacy military personnel attend 24 Hour Contact case review meetings, and the team has established a protocol for how to handle cases in which the offender is a member of the military.

The proximity of El Paso to the U.S.-Mexico border brings a number of cultural and political issues to bear on the prosecution of these crimes. Many thousands of people cross the border every day, and if a crime is committed in the United States but the offender flees to Mexico, it is more complex to seek justice for the victim. Complicating matters is the fact that some family members are U.S. citizens or permanent legal residents and others are not.

Coping with time delays

Delays have a significant negative impact on cases. Prior to the initiation of the program, it may have taken two years for a case to be tried. This time delay is wearing for victims, many of whom have either reconciled with the offender or moved on with their lives. The program significantly addresses this confounding issue. Nonetheless, red-writing recommendations were viewed by some as "static" while cases were "dynamic." If delays persist, the fair adjudication of these cases is still at risk.

Victimless Prosecution

FINDING 5.1 — Victimless prosecution is possible

Family violence victims reported experiencing a wide range of feelings and perceptions about victimless prosecution. Table 5 indicates the results from survey responses regarding victimless prosecution. Results indicated that victims generally reported feeling satisfied with the District Attorney having the final decision regarding their case.

TABLE 5. Responses by Victims to Survey Question Assessing Victimless Prosecution

Survey Question	Mean Score	N	Scale
How satisfied are you with DA's decision to move forward with your case with/without your permission?	3.14	22	1 – 4

Note. High scores indicate higher values on each variable.

Positive feelings and perceptions

As stated previously, the District Attorney's Office is willing to hold offenders accountable even when a victim does not want to participate in the process. One victim said victimless prosecution prevents victims from being re-victimized:

> I think it is a good idea because they want to protect you. They might think, "well maybe she is not thinking that she can get hurt again, so we are going to make sure she is O.K. or that nothing further happens." So, yes, I do like that, I agree with that. [*translated from Spanish*]

Confusing or not hard enough on offenders

Several participants noted a different experience. For example, one victim discussed how a misunderstanding regarding victimless prosecution led to upset feelings:

> I thought it was funny I didn't get subpoenaed for the trial. But I went anyway and when they told me "Well do you want to prosecute?" that threw me because I thought they were doing it. And I didn't understand that and I thought that was what the woman had said last night, "Well, no, they need you to prosecute." I thought I was just a witness. Where I kind of thought, "Well, if he realizes that I was subpoenaed, it wasn't my idea, then maybe he wouldn't retaliate." So that was kind of upsetting.

Interestingly, the above response indicated a perception that victimless prosecution was a way for victims to obtain justice without having to place their safety at risk by testifying against the offender.

Other participants felt that the outcome for the offender was not harsh enough. For example, one stated, "I think they should do more and have stricter consequences. However I do think that at least it is a start." Another victim shared:

> I am happy but what they gave him, my ex, I know five years is not a lot . . . I would rather them [court] given him [offender] more years or to life. . . . I'd rather [the courts] . . . punish [offenders] and not come out here and then go back again. I'd rather they get punished for what they really did and not just give them a short time and that's it. I'd rather they really punish them.

Regretful

Some victims felt that they should have some decision-making influence. One victim's comments summarized these feelings:

> I don't think that is right . . . I didn't do anything to the state . . . why would they pick it up and hold it against me that way? I think it should be my word; he didn't do anything. It was a misunderstanding that we had and . . . I was in this relationship for 19 years and I still carry on that weight. I just don't think it's right—that it's fair.

Other victims indicated that they had just wanted the offender to get help and not be arrested. One victim stated that she felt: "Bad. I feel very bad about my brother getting arrested." This simple statement communicates the emotional intensity and complexity that victims face when they have reported family violence and their loved ones experience negative consequences.

Neutral feelings

Finally, a small number of victims reported feeling neutral, or not having an opinion at all. While they said they understood that it was the district attorney's role to prosecute cases without a complaining witness, they did not report strong feelings either way. Regarding the impact of victimless prosecution on the community, one victim indicated that "some people are in shock about what [the District Attorney's Office] are doing."

FINDING 5.2 — Reluctance endures

The criminal justice system is still reluctant to pursue family violence crimes without the victim's testimony. Several participants discussed the perception across multiple professional roles that the criminal justice system should not intervene in "family matters," especially if victims are not willing to or interested in moving forward with prosecution. One participant stated that there is a "real reluctance to get involved with familial matters especially when you don't have part of the family there." This reluctance can make successful prosecution very difficult, as criminal justice professionals and juries may question why ADAs would try such cases in the first place.

Participants also expressed significant concerns regarding the lack of public awareness and education about family violence, which ultimately impacts outcomes. More specifically, the issue of voir dire (i.e., the process by which prospective jury members are questioned about their biases and backgrounds before they serve on a jury) was identified as a particularly challenging process for ADAs prosecuting family violence crimes. One participant said the biggest legal challenge was:

> Getting the jury to agree with you. That is one thing that you have to hit hard on voir dire and you have to let them know . . . that is what we had on trial on Wednesday. That was one of the things we hit hard on, voir dire. We realized that the law does not require us to have a complaining witness . . . I mean the crime took place. We try to weed out the people that . . . definitely want the victim to be there. . . . And we have had a few of them that went to trial, but they found them not guilty. And that is what they said, hearing back from them, is that they didn't hear from [the victim]. So it is like, you know, we talked about this! You know, this is voir dire, if you had a problem with it, you should have rose your hand when we asked.

Nonetheless, it was clear that ADAs consider it their responsibility to present the most convincing case in order to educate juries and hold offenders accountable.

ISSUES FOR REPLICATION

Findings show the need and utility of replication in Texas and beyond. Interestingly, even victims who had criticized the program as unfair indicated that they felt the program should be replicated in other areas. In response to the question of whether the program should be replicated, one participant said:

> Yeah . . . it will make other people think that there is somebody else that cares . . . that they are not alone. Because that is what I felt like . . . I was thinking this was already done with and that's it, but for somebody to actually show up and say. "You know what, we know that this happened." That was good.

Another participant commented that "there needs to be more programs like these with even more help and resources because there are a lot of people that . . . don't have a way to reach out or find this help."

Core elements needed for replication

Participants reported several core elements needed for replication of the 24 Hour Contact program. One primary element cited across the board was "buy-in" of all the key individuals involved. Data analysis revealed that buy-in involved being committed and dedicated to a certain belief system about family violence, i.e., that family violence is not to be tolerated, that offenders need to be held accountable, and that victims need and deserve support and assistance, even if they are caught in the cycle of family violence.

Participants further indicated that replication depended heavily upon the leadership of the district attorney in the jurisdiction. Several participants indicated that a district attorney would need to be committed to addressing the societal problem of family violence and that this individual characteristic would drive the district attorney's interest in replicating the program in that jurisdiction. Data analysis revealed that making the commitment to address family violence and clearly articulating this stance would result in a ripple effect on the key personnel working under or in conjunction with the district attorney. Given this commitment and dedication, the district attorney would be more likely to institute organizational changes and personnel allocations to support this effort.

The district attorney would need to have effective leadership skills, including the ability to persuade other parties in the criminal justice process that prosecuting family violence effectively requires a systems approach. The district attorney needs to forge positive and meaningful collaborations to conduct the weekly multidisciplinary meetings; have the ability to inspire staff to foster commitment to addressing family violence; and work within the office's budget and personnel resources to ensure that no one is overburdened.

In addition to the district attorney's effective leadership in addressing family violence, participants highlighted the importance for ADAs, and the staff comprising the 24 Hour Contact team, to also be dedicated to and passionate about family violence. ADAs would need to be particularly knowledgeable and tenacious to try family violence crimes, as these cases were

noted to be some of the most complex to prosecute in the criminal justice system. Data analysis also suggests that ADAs would have to work toward educating juries about victimless prosecution as well as be discerning about their selection of appropriate jury members.

Staff conducting home visits need to possess the skills to interact effectively with victims, particularly a sense of empathy and compassion, sensitivity to and awareness of the cycle of violence, and the ability to effectively use crisis intervention skills when needed. Replicating jurisdictions would need to be thoughtful and mindful about choosing staff members so as to create a cohesive team in which members would be able to work together with mutual respect, trust, and professionalism. Due to the difficult nature of the work involved with the 24 Hour Contact program, team members would ideally be able to build strong, supportive relationships with one another so as to counteract the negative effects of working with family violence. Data analysis also indicated the importance of clarifying and identifying the roles and duties for team members. The program is "labor-intensive." Cases accumulate over the weekend so weekend work is probably necessary.

Finally, technology and the availability of electronic data, as well as a collaborative information-sharing system, enhanced the program's implementation in El Paso. For example, 24 Hour Contact team members and ADAs from the District Attorney's Office could access information (e.g., police reports, criminal histories, etc.) about offenders and victims via shared electronic databases from the police department. This greatly enhanced the ease with which the program could carry out its goals.

Additionally, El Paso County uses the District Attorney Intake Management System (DIMS), a specialized program that links ADAs and law enforcement for the purpose of screening cases for prosecution. Participants reported that using DIMS is critical to the replication of the 24 Hour Contact program. Because of DIMS, ADAs and law enforcement can more effectively communicate with one another at the moment police officers respond to 911 calls about family violence, and ADAs have the opportunity to make decisions about which cases the District Attorney's Office will take on. This screening process has the benefit of reducing the volume of cases that would enter into the criminal justice system and, subsequently, concentrating the efforts of the 24 Hour Contact and ADAs on cases that would be likely to have positive outcomes if prosecuted.

Unique challenges for maintenance and replication

<u>Training issues</u>

Other challenges discussed by participants involved the training of victim advocates. Participants noted that victim advocates varied in terms of their level of experience and their confidence in working with family violence victims. One participant highlighted the difference between those who are inherently comfortable and adept at working directly with people versus those whose strengths lie with management of logistical needs, e.g., paperwork. These differences pose a unique challenge when considering how victim advocates are trained. Victim advocates were noted to require more training across the board on crisis intervention and/or effective strategies to work with victims.

Heavy workload

The high volume of family violence cases could be overwhelming to manage for the members of the 24 Hour Contact team. As was described earlier, due to the high volume, the program had been flooded with cases, particularly on Mondays, which made it extremely challenging for the team to establish contact with every victim in person. Although grant funding was secured to pay victim advocates and investigators overtime to conduct home visits on weekends, that grant has ended. To compensate, team members have adopted a flexible work week to stagger coverage in order to carry out home visits. The sheer nature of working on family violence cases seven days a week was described as "tiresome" and was taking a toll on workers.

Emotional and physical toll

Data analysis results suggested that professional entities across multiple roles in the criminal justice system are indeed impacted by the emotional toll that family violence cases can have on people. This is not unique to the District Attorney's Office, though. One participant acknowledged that family violence cases are "very challenging and a lot more dynamic" than other cases, while another participant described family violence cases as "demoralizing." Participants said family violence cases were "draining" for judges and ADAs alike. The primary issue highlighted by participants was the "entrenchment" of victims in the cycle of violence. Some indicated that it seemed as though circumstances had to escalate to a crisis level before people were willing to seek help, and they expressed frustration that people did not seek help sooner. Others felt that some victims viewed counseling as "punishment." One participant commented:

> Victims need to make that decision to move themselves from that situation…. [The 24 Hour Contact team] has done as much as it can. It can only lend a hand. It can't pull somebody out for them. It's just the reality of these cases.

Participants emphasized that victims' dependence on offenders, as well as their mindset of wanting to help and change offenders, was difficult to encounter, particularly if victims have experienced significant violence. Finally, participants indicated that it was challenging to observe victims' lack of awareness about the importance of counseling for their children. In fact, some participants noted that there seemed to be denial and minimization on the part of many victims and offenders about the impact of family violence on their children. It is understood that victims are not responsible for offenders' behavior and that offenders are most responsible for putting children at risk. However, it also is painfully obvious that victims must be responsible for making the best interest of their children a priority, given that active offenders are incapable of doing so. The denial and minimization was interpreted by participants as a coping mechanism for victims to forget trauma. Even if participants were able to understand and feel empathy for victims, data analysis suggested that continual exposure to trauma and the victims' entrenchment in the cycle of violence was still challenging for members of the 24 Hour Contact team.

CONSIDERATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The 24 Hour Contact Domestic Violence Initiative is an innovative program that seeks to respond to family violence crimes in ways that hold offenders accountable and restores victims. Its strengths should not be understated. The program provides a new model for the efficacy of family violence cases in the context of a prosecutor's office, increases attention about these crimes in the criminal justice and community at large, and calls for increased collaboration of community resources to address these issues. A paradigm shift of this kind is not without its critics—those who will lag behind and maintain the status quo. Nonetheless, the evidence supports that victim needs are being met in helpful ways, offenders are being held accountable, and a community shift regarding family violence is occurring. What is most remarkable about the program is the dedication and passion that those in the 34th Judicial District Attorney's Office, and the district attorney himself, exhibit on a daily basis in addressing family violence in the greater El Paso community.

As discussed earlier, previous literature on proactive legal policies to more aggressively address family violence and hold offenders accountable has revealed mixed results regarding the effectiveness of these policies upon recidivism and victim safety. However, it is important to note that oftentimes contextual factors were either cited as a barrier or not considered in the interpretation of findings. Some studies (Cattaneo, Goodman, Epstein, Kohn, and Zanville, 2009; Dugan, Nagin, and Rosenfeld, 2003; Salazar, Emshoff, Baker, and Crowley, 2007) acknowledged these factors, such as lack of partnership with community entities, lack of buy-in from important legal entities such as law enforcement, lack of implementation of victim-centered service efforts in the face of aggressive prosecution policies, and the imposition of family violence interventions from community agencies on— rather than being generated within—the legal system.

However, many of these contextual limitations and challenges do not exist or are minimized for the 24 Hour Contact program because it was created and implemented by a district attorney with an eye toward aggressive prosecution of family violence using a multidisciplinary, collaborative framework while providing much-needed emotional support and resources designed to promote victim restoration. Whereas other researchers have discussed the negative implications that victims may experience as a result of proactive legal policies to address family violence (Dugan, Nagin, and Rosenfeld, 2003), victims have responded, for the most part, positively to the 24 Hour Contact program. In fact, recently a victim advocate received a call from a person who got the victim advocate's name through a co-worker and asked for information about community resources. This example highlights an endorsement by victims, who by in large view the District Attorney's Office as an ally and source of support. Thus, the 34th Judicial District of Texas represents an ideal pilot study to increase our knowledge about the broad impact of proactive legal practice without many of the confounding factors of other studies and projects.

Also to the credit of the program, the staff has received inquiries from prosecutors from around the country to learn more about this innovative program and to discuss ways to replicate the program in their jurisdictions. The district attorney has welcomed these inquiries and hosted representatives to observe the program in action. Thus, the potential for replication of the 24 Hour Contact program in other jurisdictions is probable.

Nonetheless, several challenges persist. First, as with all family violence crimes the right answer for victims and dependent children is neither linear nor clear. The right answer, withstanding any repeated victimization by an intimate partner, is very complicated. Research indicates that victims often remain with their abusers for a variety of economic and emotional reasons (McCormick, 1999), as well as fear of reprisal. Given this reality, participants in the current evaluation discussed the need for innovative interventions to eradicate the recurrence of family violence. Professionals across the criminal justice system suggested the utilization of a holistic, comprehensive family systems approach toward treatment of family violence. Along these lines, some recommended that the district attorney's red-writing recommendations include family counseling as well as counseling services and education about family violence for both offenders and victims. These suggestions were not meant to demoralize victims and their children. Rather, they were meant to support victims' decisions to stay with offenders and to be safe. However, given the power and control dynamics of family violence, it is clear that traditional family counseling methods would be inadequate. Other participants expanded this notion, indicating that collaborations between criminal justice and victim service professionals could be enhanced even further to support a more holistic community approach to addressing family violence. Financial and infrastructure support for this suggestion need to be addressed.

A general lack of knowledge about family violence in the greater El Paso community is another challenge. Although victims reportedly appeared to be become increasingly aware of the district attorney's stance on family violence, the extent of public consciousness about the seriousness of this crime was not clear. Some participants recommended using media in order to more effectively communicate about family violence. One example included creating public service announcements to increase awareness of the National Domestic Violence Hotline (1-800-799-SAFE) and the local family violence shelter. Another example was to develop commercials about the 24 Hour Contact program and the district attorney's strong stance on offender accountability. As one victim reported, "It wasn't until everything went wrong that we learned of these resources. It would be best if they focused more on disseminating information about these resources to the public."

Although the red-writing recommendations presented its own set of challenges for judges and defense attorneys, overall it appears that the program is setting a precedent regarding the adjudication of family violence crimes. The red writing wields some power, and thus warrants continuation. Some participants recommended that the red writing be used as a motivating tool for offenders who need counseling and intervention.

Time delays were previously cited as the most significant degrading factor in family violence prosecutions. More study is needed to better understand the delays and the implications for offender accountability. Nonetheless, this program seeks to address this challenge.

The district attorney has the ultimate responsibility and burden of prosecuting family violence crimes. The domestic violence research recounts the tool of this crime at all levels of responses, not just in the criminal justice system. Therefore policies that address self-care and resiliency-building such as flexible time off and training will minimize these ills.

The staff of the 24 Hour Contact program and the district attorney himself should be commended for their efforts. This program is the only one of its kind in the country to take on this complex social problem in this way. The empirical findings clearly suggest that the program's strengths outweigh its challenges. It might take years to see the full impact and potential of this program. T*aking on family violence* and ushering a community through a paradigm shift regarding this crime is no small task.

REFERENCES

Cattaneo, L. B., Goodman, L. A., Epstein, D., Kohn, L. S., and Zanville, H. A. (2009). *Violence Against Women, 15,* 1227-1247.

Danis, F. (2003). The criminalization of domestic violence: What social workers need to know. *Social Work, 48,* 237-246.

Davis, R. C., Smith, B. E., and Nickles, L. B. (1998). The deterrent effect of prosecuting domestic violence misdemeanors. *Crime and Delinquency, 44,* 434-444.

Davis, R. C., Smith, B. E., and Taylor, B. (2003). Increasing the proportion of domestic violence arrests that are prosecuted: A natural experiment in Milwaukee. *Criminology & Public Policy, 2,* 263-282.

Davis, R. C., O'Sullivan, C. S., Farole, D. J., and Rempel, M. (2008). A comparison of two prosecution policies in cases of intimate partner violence: Mandatory case filing versus following the victim's lead. *Criminology & Public Policy, 7,* 633-662.

Dugan, L., Nagin, D., and Rosenfeld, R. (2003). Exposure reduction or retaliation? The effects of domestic violence resources on intimate-partner homicide. *Law & Society Review, 37,* 169-198.

Guzik, K. (2008). The agencies of abuse: Intimate abusers' experience of presumptive arrest and prosecution. *Law & Society Review, 42,* 111-143.

Hare, S. C. (2006). What do battered women want? Victims' opinions on prosecution. *Violence and Victims, 21,* 611-628.

McCormick, T. (1999). Convicting domestic violence abusers when the victims remain silent. *Brigham Young University Journal of Public Law, 13,* 427-450.

Miller, J. (2003). An arresting experiment: Domestic violence victim experiences and perceptions. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 18,* 695-716.

Mills, L. (1998). Mandatory arrest and prosecution policies for domestic violence: A critical literature review and the case for more research to test victim empowerment approaches. *Criminal Justice and Behavior, 25,* 306-318.

Murphy, C. M., Musser, P. H., and Maton, K. L. (1998). Coordinated community intervention for domestic abusers: Intervention system involvement and criminal recidivism. *Journal of Family Violence, 13,* 263-284.

Pate, M. and Hamilton, E. (1992). Formal and informal deterrents to domestic violence: The Dade County Spouse Assault Experiment. *American Sociological Review, 57,* 691-697.

Peterson, R. R. and Dixon, J. (2005). Court oversight and conviction under mandatory and nonmandatory domestic violence case filing policies. *Criminology & Public Policy, 4,* 535-558.

Salazar, L. F., Emshoff, J. G., Baker, C. K., and Crowley, T. (2007). Examining the behavior of a system: An outcome evaluation of a coordinated community response to domestic violence. *Journal of Family Violence, 22,* 631-641.

Sherman, L. W. and Berk, R. A. (1984). The specific deterrent effects of arrest for domestic assault. *American Sociological Review, 49,* 261-272.

Sherman, L. W., Smith, D. A., Schmidt, D. D., and Rogan, D. P. (1992). Crime punishment, and stake in conformity: Legal and informal control of domestic violence. *American Sociological Review, 57,* 680-690.

Appendix A
Interview Protocol for Professionals

Professional Background Questions

1. What agency do you work for and how long have you worked for them?
2. What is your role in the El Paso District Attorney's Domestic Violence Project?

Program Questions

1. To what extent have you worked with the El Paso District Attorney's Domestic Violence Project?
2. What do you consider to be the major benefits of this program?
3. What do you consider to be the challenges or barriers associated with this program?
4. How do you think the program has helped to enhance your contact and/or your work with victims?
5. What ideas do you have for continued enhancement of the program?
6. How do you think the program improves victim restoration?
7. How do you think the program has increased the criminal justice system's response to domestic violence victims?

Appendix B
Interview Protocol for Victims

Interview Questionnaire: Open Cases

1. The first step of the district attorney's project is to come to the home of someone who has experienced domestic violence within 24 hours of the arrest of the offender. What was it like to have those two people show up on your door step?
2. What was your understanding about why they were there?
    a. Did you receive any information that was helpful to you?
3. What three things were helpful?
4. Tell me about any concerns that you had or have as a result of their visit.
5. How do you feel about the District Attorney having the final decision on whether or not to prosecute?
6. Would you recommend this kind of program for all District Attorney's in Texas?
    a. If you could change or improve anything about the District Attorney's program for domestic violence, what would it be?
7. What would have helped you more?

Interview Questionnaire: Closed Cases

1. The first step of the district attorney's project is to come to the home of someone who has experienced domestic violence within 24 hours of the arrest of the offender. What was it like to have those two people show up on your door step?
2. What was your understanding about why they were there?
3. How has your life changed since the two people contacted you?
    a. Did you receive any information that was helpful to you?
4. What three things were helpful?
5. When you think back on the two people contacting you at your home, how would you describe that experience to a family member or friend?
6. Tell me three good things that came from them coming to your house.
7. Tell me about any concerns that you had or have as a result of their visit.
8. How has this program changed your relationship?
9. How do you feel about the District Attorney having the final decision on whether or not to prosecute?
10. Would you recommend this kind of program for all District Attorney's in Texas?
    a. If you could change or improve anything about the District Attorney's program for domestic violence, what would it be?
11. What would have helped you more?
12. If you have received counseling or other services to help your situation, do you think that the District Attorney's program helped you to access those services?
13. Was your partner/spouse/family member (offender) recommended to receive any treatment (Battering Intervention and Prevention Program? Drug and Alcohol counseling?)
    a. If so, was this helpful?

Survey* Administered to both Open and Closed Cases

*Items used with permission and taken from Miller (2003)

1. How helpful would you rate the visit you received from the District Attorney's office?

(least) 0 1 2 3 4 5 (most)

2. How independent are you?

(low) 1 2 3 4 5 (high)

3. How safe did you feel before the people from the District Attorney's office visited you?

(very unsafe) 1 2 3 4 (very safe)

4. How safe did you feel after the people from the District Attorney's office visited you?

(very unsafe) 1 2 3 4 (very safe)

5. Did you want your partner to be arrested?

Yes No

6. How satisfied are you with the <u>home visit</u> that the District Attorney's office did in response to your case?

(very unsatisfied) 1 2 3 4 (very satisfied)

7. How satisfied are you with the DA's decision to move forward with your case with/without your permission?

(very unsatisfied) 1 2 3 4 (very satisfied)

8. How were you affected by the district attorney's decision to move forward with the case (or not move forward with the case) without your permission?

a. Felt helpless?

(none) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (a lot)

b. Felt powerful?

(none) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (a lot)

c. Felt out of control?

(none) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (a lot)

d. Felt in control?

(none) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (a lot)

e. Felt afraid?

(none) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (a lot)

f. Felt brave?

(none) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (a lot)

g. Felt weak?

(none) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (a lot)

h. Felt strong?

(none) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (a lot)

i. Felt discouraged?

(none) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (a lot)

j. Felt encouraged

(none) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (a lot)

k. Felt hesitant?

(none) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (a lot)

l. Felt determined?

(none) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (a lot)

Appendix C
Recruitment Scripts

Directions for Open Cases

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP IN RECRUITING PARTICIPANTS!

A few guidelines:

1. DO NOT ASK ANY VICTIM TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY WHO YOU FEEL IS CURRENTLY EXPERIENCING TRAUMA OR HAS UNMET SOCIAL OR MEDICAL NEEDS.

2. ONLY TALK ABOUT THIS STUDY WITH VICTIMS WHO ARE 18 YEARS AND OLDER.

3. IF THE VICTIM IS HESITANT AFTER HAVING UNDERSTOOD WHAT IS INVOLVED, YOU MAY COUNSEL THE CLIENT *OUT* OF PARTICIPATING.

4. THE INTERVIEW WILL BE BETWEEN THE RESEARCHER AND VICTIM. YOU WILL NOT BE PRESENT DURING THE INTERVIEW.

Recruitment Script: Open Cases Only

Before I go I'd like to tell you that researchers at the School of Social Work at The University of Texas at Austin are doing a study on our efforts to help domestic violence victims in El Paso. They would like to talk with you about your experiences and thoughts on our coming out here today, and any suggestions you have on how the program could be improved to better serve people who are experiencing domestic violence. It's your choice if you want to talk to them. It will take about 10–20 minutes. They will not ask you any personal information and they will not ask about the incident. If you want to talk to them, this will not impact your relationship with our office or any other agency.

Would you like to participate?

Directions for Closed Cases

THANK YOU FOR HELPING US RECRUIT PARTICIPANTS FOR OUR STUDY. THERE ARE SEVERAL GUIDELINES THAT YOU SHOULD USE WHEN RECRUITING PARTICIPANTS:

1. DO NOT ASK ANY VICTIM TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY WHO YOU FEEL IS CURRENTLY EXPERIENCING TRAUMA OR HAS UNMET SOCIAL OR MEDICAL NEEDS.

2. ONLY TALK ABOUT THIS STUDY WITH VICTIMS WHO ARE 18 YEARS & OLDER.

3. PLEASE USE THE ATTACHED INFORMATION SHEET TO INTRODUCE THE STUDY.

4. REASSURE THE VICTIM THAT HE/SHE HAS NO OBLIGATION TO PARTICIPATE. PARTICIPATION IS COMPLETELY **VOLUNTARY**, AND THE VICTIM MAY REFUSE TO PARTICIPATE WITHOUT ANY PENALTY OR LOSS OF BENEFITS OR SERVICES. HIS/HER PARTICIPATION WILL HAVE NO IMPACT ON HIS/HER RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN, THE EL PASO DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE, OR ANY OTHER ALLIED AGENCY. IF THE VICTIM IS HESITANT AFTER HAVING UNDERSTOOD WHAT IS INVOLVED, YOU MAY COUNSEL THE CLIENT *OUT* OF PARTICIPATING.

5. ONCE YOU SHARE THIS INFORMATION, ASK THE VICTIM IF HE/SHE IS WILLING TO PARTICIPATE.

6. WE ARE ONLY INTERESTED IN RECRUITING VICTIMS WHO ARE INTERSTED IN PARTICIPATING. THERE IS NO OBLIGATION ON YOUR PART TO RECRUIT FOR THE STUDY.

7. WE (AT IDVSA) WILL EXPLAIN THE INFORMATION SHEET AGAIN BEFORE THE BEGINNING OF THE RESEARCH INTERVIEW AND ASK THE VICTIM AGAIN IF HE/SHE IS WILLING TO PARTICIPATE.

8. THE INTERVIEW WILL BE BETWEEN THE RESEARCHER AND VICTIM. YOU WILL NOT BE PRESENT DURING THE INTERVIEW.

9. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT HOW TO RECRUIT PARTICIPANTS, PLEASE CONTACT DR. NOËL BUSCH-ARMENDARIZ AT 512.751.8337.

Recruitment Script: Closed Cases Only

Researchers at the School of Social Work at The University of Texas at Austin are doing a study on our district attorney's domestic violence program. They would like to talk with you to know how you feel about what we are doing at the District Attorney's Office to help people who have experienced domestic violence, like how you felt about us coming out to your home to talk to you about what happened with your boyfriend/girlfriend/spouse/partner, and services you received as a result of talking to us. They will also ask you how you feel about the outcome of your case, and how you feel about the criminal justice process. You don't have to participate if you don't want to. If you decide you want to participate, you will get $20 for your time. It will take about 15–45 minutes. They will not ask you any personal information and they will not ask about the incident.

Would you like to participate?

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

IDVSA

INSTITUTE ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

The mission of the Institute on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (IDVSA) is to advance the knowledge of domestic violence and sexual assault in an effort to end interpersonal violence. IDVSA accomplishes this through research, education, training and technical assistance, and collaboration with university and practitioner communities, and the community at large.

It is the vision of IDVSA that its multidisciplinary, researcher-practitioner, collaborative approach will enhance the quality and relevance of research efforts and their application in service provision. That vision has been realized in our recent research focus in the areas of human trafficking, domestic violence, sexual assault, and resiliency in service providers.

IDVSA is made possible through grants from the RGK Foundation, the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health, the Shield-Ayres Foundation, Alice Kleberg Reynolds Foundation, and Dean Barbara White of The University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work and Dean Larry Sager of The University of Texas at Austin School of Law.

IDVSA Researchers and Staff:

Noël Busch-Armendariz, PhD, LMSW,MPA Director and Principal Investigator The University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work Regina Jones Johnson, DR PH, MSN, RN Co-Investigator The University of Texas at Austin School of Nursing Jeana Lungwitz, JD Co-Investigator The University of Texas at Austin School of Law	Karen Kalergis, MA Associate Director for Education & Communications Laurie Cook Heffron, LMSW Associate Director for Research Shetal Vohra-Gupta, PhD Postdoctoral Fellow Sapana Donde, PhD Postdoctoral Fellow	Leeann Terwilliger, Americorps VISTA Interpersonal Violence Education Coordinator Graduate Research Assistants: Elizabeth Endres Amy Jones Gaby Li Shoshi Osiatynski Eden Robles

Email us at IDVSA@mail.utexas.edu

Copies of this and other reports at http://www.utexas.edu/research/cswr/idvsa/