

FINDINGS AND OPPORTUNITIES:  
FAMILY VIOLENCE IN CENTRAL NEW MEXICO

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## PREFACE

The United Way of Central New Mexico (UWCNM) asked the Urban Institute to help it identify the current availability of services for victims of family violence in the four counties it serves (Bernalillo, Sandoval, Tarrant, and Valencia), the significant gaps in services and supports for victims, and the opportunities to develop a coordinated community response to family violence. We were also asked to develop recommendations for actions that could move the community closer to a coordinated response and lead, ultimately, to significantly reduced levels of family violence.

The findings described in this report are the authors' synthesis of information gathered through personal interviews conducted during the week of January 27 through 31, plus 15 to 20 telephone interviews in the following weeks with people who were not available during our visit. Altogether, we interviewed more than 70 people involved with agencies and organizations serving victims of family violence and representatives of the faith and business communities in the UWCNM service area. Naturally, when interviewing so many people, we heard many different opinions and had the chance to understand the activities of many different agencies and organizations. We have not tried to include everything we heard in this report; rather, our findings *summarize the most important issues* identified through interviews. All findings included in this report are based on information from at least two informants, and most are a synthesis of information from several interviews.

We provide our summary findings and recommendations in outline format. This report cannot stand as a fully delineated "instruction manual" for what to do, nor, we assume, is this what UWCNM wants. We have identified concerns and identified opportunities that we assume the UWCNM's Board, task forces, and the larger Central New Mexico community will examine. As they make decisions, we assume they will give careful consideration to the details of implementation, with full input from victims and victim advocates as well as from the professionals who may be involved in the immediate issues of change. We would be happy to offer more detailed suggestions should these be desired.

### Organizations visited and persons interviewed:

Organization and Interviewee(s)	Target Population(s)/Activities
<b>Nongovernmental Direct Service Organizations</b>	
ENLACE Comunitario Claudia Medina, Executive Director Rachel LaZar, Community Organizer Lucila Triplin, Case Manager	Monolingual Spanish-speaking women and children affected by family violence—counseling, case management, parenting and life skills, community organizing
Morning Star House Gwen Packard, Executive Director Sheilah Galer, Social Worker	Shelter and supportive services for Native American (and increasingly other) women and children affected by family violence
Women's Community Association Patricia Garcia, Acting Director Arianne Singer, President, Board of Directors	Shelter for women and children family violence victims, batterers' program

Presbyterian Women's Resource Center (formerly Albuquerque Women's Resource Center) Rosemarie Fritz, Behavioral Therapist	Women victims of family violence, many coming from working class, middle class, and upper middle class families
University of New Mexico Women's Resource Center Sandrea Gonzales, Director	First response for university students and staff, counseling and referrals, reference materials
Torrance County Domestic Violence Program Kathy Autry, Director	Provides services and shelter (using motels) for victims of family violence
<b>Medical/Health Services</b>	
UNMH Trauma Center David P. Sklar, Professor and Chair, Emergency Medicine Cameron Crandall, Research Director and Attending ER Physician Michael Bauer, Death Review Team Lori Bloomfield, Social Worker Lisa Dhanes, Clinical Specialty Nurse	Only trauma center in New Mexico. Provides emergency medical care for victims of family violence; screening for family violence, social worker and other referrals. Receives transfers from other hospitals if serious trauma is involved
Presbyterian Hospital Teri Baughman, Emergency Room/SANE Nurse	Provides emergency medical care for victims of family violence; screening for family violence, social worker and other referrals
Lovelace-Sandia Hospital Dr. Richard Ralston, Pediatrician and CEO	Provides medical care
First Choice Community Health Care Heidi Rogers, Family Nurse Practitioner, Southwest clinic	Routine screening of women and children for family violence; counseling, follow-up, and referrals. Serves mostly very poor and isolated populations
<b>Mental Health Services</b>	
La Buena Vida Liz Wagner, Therapist	Community-based outpatient mental health and substance abuse facility serving Sandoval County
Samaritan Counseling Center - Bertha & Eldon Guhl Center for Children and Adolescents Ann Buck, Therapist	Therapist interviewed works mostly with children who have experienced trauma through witnessing violent acts. She has a number of domestic violence cases
<b>Legal Assistance and Advocacy</b>	
Resources, Inc. Shannon Enright-Smith	Court advocacy, help with other civil legal matters; first response with law enforcement to family violence calls
New Mexico Legal Aid Society Angelica Anaya-Allen, General Counsel Gabe Compos	Legal assistance of all types to low-income families
Advocacy, Inc. Sonja Martens, Executive Director	Provides legal assistance to children and families involved with the child welfare system
<b>Coalitions</b>	
New Mexico Coalition Against Domestic Violence Agnes Maldonado, Executive Director Valerie Valles, Youth Education/training Gloria Blea-Johnson, Adult Education/training Toni Romero-Lynn, Office Manager	Statewide advocacy organization for agencies offering direct services to victims of intimate partner violence
Stop Violence Against Women and Children Coalition Elena, Giacci, Coordinator Others interviewed are part of this coalition	Organization intended to promote collaboration among agencies serving victims of family violence

<b>Children's Services</b>	
Protective Services, CYFD, Albuquerque Jessica Hough, Social Work Supervisor	Abuse and neglect investigations and response, including family supports, foster care, adoption
Protective Services, CYFD, Valencia County Pam McKenzie, Office Manager	Abuse and neglect investigations and response, including family supports, foster care, adoption
All Faiths Receiving Home Steve Johnson, Executive Director Len Follick, Clinical Supervisor	Full array of child welfare services (counseling and therapy, foster care), services for whole family affected by family violence, using a wraparound, family systems approach
PB&J Family Services Angie Vachio, Executive Director	Therapeutic child care for abused children
Youth Development, Inc (YDI) Judy Pacheco-Sanchez	Provides a wide variety of services to youth and families
Albuquerque Public Schools Lynn Pedraza, Director, Health/Mental Health Svcs. Shannon Douma, Coordinator, Violence Prevention/Intervention, Health/Mental Health Services Carolyn Williams, School Nurse Betty-Ann Whiton, Counselor	Coordinates activities related to the health and mental health of students in the Albuquerque Public School District
<b>Law Enforcement</b>	
Albuquerque Police Department Captain Kevin McCabe Sergeant Ronnie Watkins, FAST Team Sergeant Beth Paiz, Crimes Against Children Unit	Police response to family violence within the Albuquerque city limits
Bernalillo County Sheriff's Office Sergeant Gregg Marcantel, Homicide/Violent Crimes Unit	Police response to family violence in Bernalillo County outside Albuquerque city limits
Torrance County Sheriff's Department Pete Golden, Sheriff Susan Encinias, Assistant Deputy to the Sheriff	Police response to family violence in Torrance County
<b>Prosecution and Courts</b>	
Bernalillo County District Attorney's Office Ann Badway, Deputy District Attorney Mark Benford, Assistant District Attorney Gary Cade, Chief Deputy District Attorney Betsy Trujillo Von Roemer, Victims Impact Unit	Prosecute misdemeanor and felony cases of domestic violence. Attorneys interviewed work on felonies and misdemeanors; victim advocate works on misdemeanors
Bernalillo County Metropolitan Court Judy Nakamura, Chief Judge Sandra Clinton, Judge Teresa Gomez, Judge	13 Metro Court judges hear over 30,000 misdemeanor criminal cases a year, including over 5,000 misdemeanor DV cases.
Second Judicial District Nan Nash, Judge, Family Court John J. Romero, Judge, Juvenile Justice Center	Family Court issues orders of protection for victims of intimate partner violence The Juvenile Justice Center handles abuse and neglect hearings among other proceedings related to children and youth
<b>State-Level Contacts</b>	
Family Services Division, Community and Behavioral Health Services, CYFD Ken Warner, Chief Kim Cobbs, Program Manager Auralie Tortorici, Program Manager	The Family Services Division of CYFD distributes state funding to domestic violence providers across the state; now responsible for organizing state agencies to consider a coordinated response to family violence

<p>Protective Services Division Roland Trujillo, Deputy Director</p>	<p>The state's child protective services division responds to statewide reports of child abuse, neglect and exploitation and provides foster care, adoption and family preservation services to ensure the safety and well-being of children.</p>
<p><b>Representatives of Employers</b></p>	
<p>The following sectors were represented among the people we interviewed: Manufacturing Banking Health care Financial services Insurance</p>	<p>Policies affecting employee safety (and customer safety in the case of health care providers), benefits, legal assistance, workplace accommodations, to reduce impact of family violence. Also public commitment to focus on family violence as an issue</p>
<p><b>Representatives of Faith Communities</b></p>	
<p>The following denominations were represented among the people we interviewed: Archdiocese of Santa Fe Jewish Presbyterian Latter Day Saints A nondenominational congregation</p>	<p>Policies and actions related to ministry, including preaching, pastoral counseling, adult support groups, youth and other group activities and education, volunteering and contributions, public commitment to focus on family violence as an issue</p>

## **INTRODUCTION**

This report summarizes major findings from our work on family violence for the United Way of Central New Mexico (UWCNM). “Family violence” includes violence between intimate partners (spouses, cohabiting couples, dating couples) and between adult family members and children. The focus of our work was to identify the current availability of and significant gaps in services and supports for victims of family violence in the UWCNM service area. We were also alert to the opportunities to develop a coordinated community response to family violence that helps current victims and works to reduce and ultimately eliminate violence among family members. Based on these findings, and drawing on our knowledge of programs and approaches that work in other communities, we also present a set of suggestions and opportunities on which UWCNM and its community partners could act to achieve their goals.

### ***Findings***

When one interviews more than 70 people about anything, one gets many different opinions and perceptions. Sometimes these opinions converge remarkably toward a shared view, which we try to represent in this report. Sometimes, however, the opinions we hear contradict each other. In situations where we received contradictory information, it was not appropriate for us to take on a detective role, so we have not tried to find “the truth.” Rather, the important point in these situations is that people who need to work together do not agree about the contribution that each makes, and perceive each other’s behavior and the behavior of each other’s agencies quite differently. These different perceptions are the starting place for efforts to improve service coordination and work to reduce family violence.

### ***Presentation of Opportunities for UWCNM Action***

We present a number of opportunities for UWCNM action, which one might consider recommendations. These take two very different tacks. The first focuses on the social context of the UWCNM service community, while the second focuses on the workings of the official justice and services systems. With respect to the social context, we propose activities that UWCNM and its partners can undertake to make an immediate difference, as well as those that have the very long-range goal of changing the local culture to one that rejects violence. Intermediate-range goals are creating a coordinated community response to family violence involving criminal and civil justice and victim services agencies, and developing faith and work environments with strong anti-violence commitments and supportive responses to victims of family violence.

## **UWCNM'S UNIQUE ROLE**

UWCNM occupies an excellent position to make a major difference in the immediate social context of family violence through its connections with community leaders and funders as well as through its own funding and monitoring mission. Most communities do not enjoy the support of such an influential organization as they try to make meaningful changes in the prevailing understanding of and response to family violence. Opportunities to change the social context can start immediately, with results appearing in both the short and long run. Opportunities to stimulate one or more coordinated community-wide responses among justice and service agencies also need to start immediately, but experience in other communities indicates a timeline of 18 to 24 months before significant changes can be expected to make a difference in practice. Finally, some opportunities involve long-term strategies to change a culture from one that supports to one that rejects family violence.

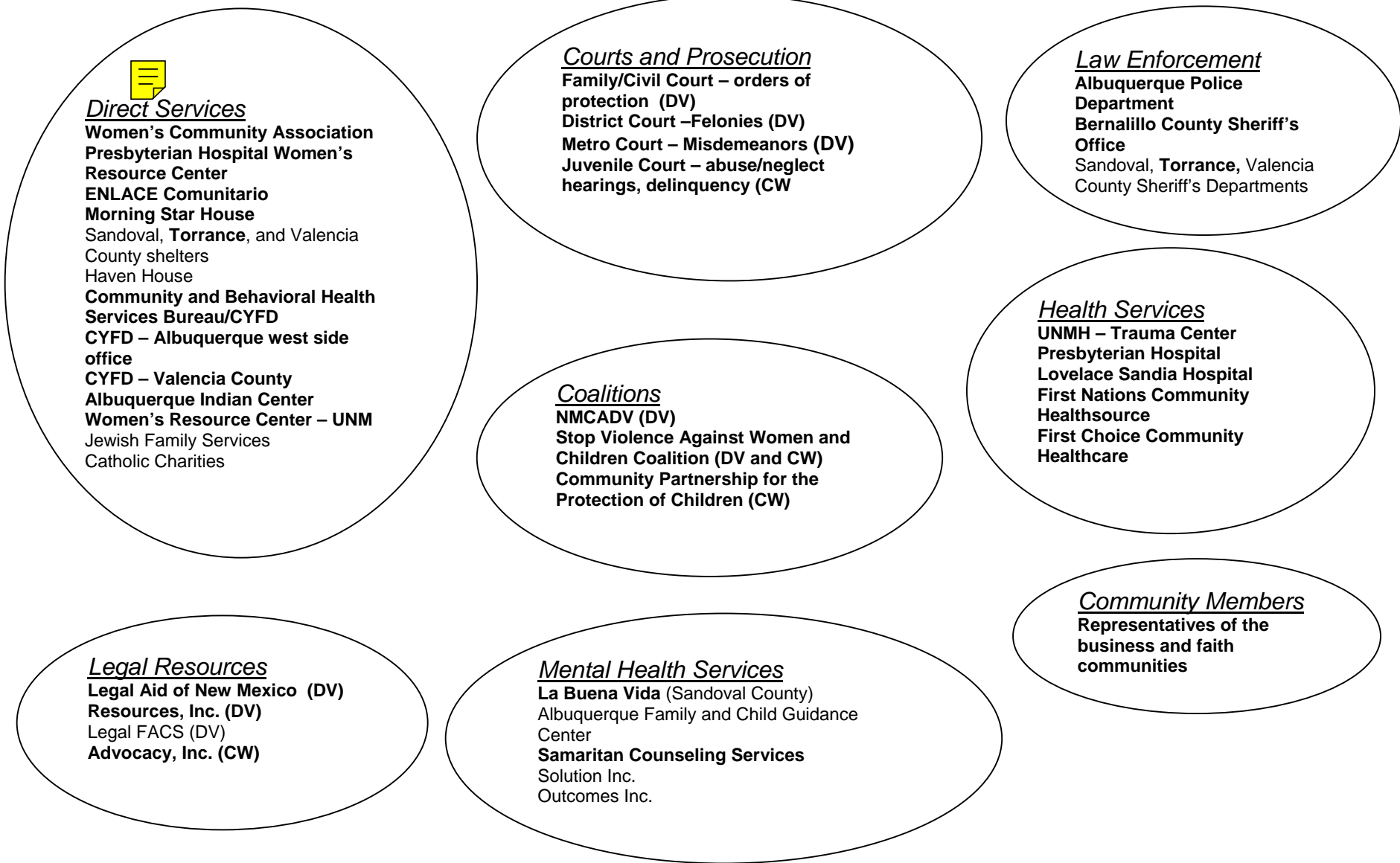
## **DIFFICULTY OF THE TASK**

Of course it will not be easy to make changes sufficient to reduce or end family violence in the UWCNM service area, or throughout New Mexico. No organization can do this alone; UWCNM will need to develop collaborations of support, as well as working to facilitate more collaborative approaches to service delivery and culture change. The goal is truly one that cannot be done without the full community behind the effort. The difficulty of the task is not unique to this community, of course. Rather, it is close to the universal reality for communities of every size. It will take strong leadership, determination, and perseverance to pursue the opportunities we describe to their desired ends of reducing or ending family violence.

## **FINDINGS**

We organize our findings into three categories: strengths and resources, gaps and weaknesses, and issues. We follow presentation of this information with a final section detailing opportunities for UWCNM action. Strengths and resources are the activities and services that already exist and appear to function well in the UWCNM service area. Gaps and weaknesses are the major missing pieces of a coordinated community response, as well as local attitudes toward family violence. Issues are things to think about and work on, such as what might be an ideal structure of services and coordination, or finding solutions to the unusually high dismissal rate for misdemeanor domestic violence offenses. Finally, opportunities include activities on which UWCNM and its community partners might fruitfully build to achieve their service system goals; plus other ideas that could be pursued to expand community involvement and encourage cultural change.

**FIGURE 1: PARTS OF THE CENTRAL NEW MEXICO FAMILY VIOLENCE SERVICE STRUCTURE**  
(**boldface** indicates agencies and organizations interviewed for this project)



## **Existing Strengths and Resources**

Albuquerque and surrounding communities have many excellent programs and practices addressing issues of family violence. Any campaign to increase attention to family violence and make changes that could reduce its occurrence and impact should build on and expand the good things that already exist in the community. Respondents repeatedly mentioned that Albuquerque has many of the right services, just not enough, and identified several strong programs for adult victims of intimate partner violence and children suffering abuse. Figure 1 graphically depicts available services and supports related to family violence. We briefly describe community strengths in this section.

### **SUPPORTIVE SERVICE PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES FOR ADULTS AFFECTED BY FAMILY VIOLENCE**

Resources, Inc., ENLACE Comunitario, and Morning Star House received repeated mentions as strong programs offering essential services. In addition, several respondents mentioned Catholic Charities for its specialized resources for immigrants and undocumented people, Jewish Family Services for counseling and a domestic violence hotline it runs, and two agencies (Outcomes, Inc., and Solutions, Inc.) with which a number of businesses contract to help employees with problems related to family violence. Finally, the New Mexico Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NMCADV) was mentioned for a number of its important activities.

- 1. *Resources, Inc.*** is the primary organization in the community offering advocacy services for victims of intimate partner violence, beginning with a call to law enforcement and extending through all types of legal assistance needed by victims. Resource, Inc. stations nine advocates with the Albuquerque Police Department and others with the Bernalillo County Sheriff's Office. These advocates are available at all times to accompany sworn officers to domestic violence calls. They respond to 140 calls a month with the Albuquerque Police Department, for instance, each lasting between two and three hours. The UNM Hospital emergency room also calls Resources, Inc. advocates to help women who have sought medical assistance. Often these women want medical care but do not want to report to police. Resources, Inc. advocates work with them in any case, but frequently succeed in convincing women to report and/or to file for an order of protection. Resources, Inc. provides court advocacy for protection orders and during an abuser's court appearances, and civil legal assistance that domestic violence victims frequently need to resolve many family matters. Unfortunately, as valuable as this level of support is for those who receive it, Resources, Inc. advocates are only able to cover about 10 percent of law enforcement calls related to family violence.
- 2. *ENLACE Comunitario*** is now a free-standing organization that grew out of activities based at the University of New Mexico. It serves the monolingual Spanish-speaking community, offering case management, counseling, parenting, life skills and empowerment for women,

and therapeutic and life skills-oriented child care for children whose mothers come to adult counseling groups. During the past year ENLACE has added community organizing and culture change activities, developed and implemented by women who have come through program services to become survivors ready to give back to their community.

3. ***Morning Star House*** is a community organization serving primarily Native American victims of domestic violence, although it does not turn anyone away. The organization provides advocacy, education, and support to victims, including civil legal assistance and a parenting program, and will soon add a 30-bed shelter. Participants are primarily self-referrals, through word of mouth in the community.
4. ***Catholic Charities*** has resources specifically for assisting immigrants, and can help women without residency documents in ways that many other organizations cannot.
5. ***Jewish Family Services*** offers counseling and a hotline specifically for domestic violence victims.
6. ***Outcomes, Inc. and Solutions, Inc.*** are two agencies that contract with businesses to provide behavioral health services to employees. A number of businesses interviewed for this project contract with one or the other of these firms, and speak highly of the support they offer employees dealing with family violence, in general and as it affects their work.
7. ***NMCADV*** is a coalition uniting many of New Mexico's agencies with primary missions to serve domestic violence victims to pursue common ends. During the past four years it has changed and expanded its membership opportunities, and worked through advocacy and grantwriting to expand funding for domestic violence services. It maintains an extensive library of informational and training materials, and conducts trainings on a variety of subjects for a variety of audiences. Respondents frequently mentioned NMCADV as providing needed resources and a way for members to network with colleagues who could help each other.

## **SUPPORTIVE SERVICE PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH AFFECTED BY FAMILY VIOLENCE**

8. ***All Faiths Receiving Home*** was established 47 years ago as a shelter facility for abused and neglected children but branched out into other services to children in the 1980s. Now the agency provides a wide range of child and family counseling using a family systems approach. All Faiths already runs groups for child and adult victims as well as some offender groups, and is about to receive funds for a program to help children who witness family violence. All Faiths' Executive Director sees a need for a more empathy-based model for working with offenders, and is in the process of developing one that is expected to help stop abuse by teaching the abuser to understand the effects of violence on children, increasing interest in being a good parent, and developing healthy parent-child relationships.

9. ***PB&J Family Services, Inc.*** is a private child welfare agency established in 1972 that offers therapeutic care for children who have been victims of abuse. It uses a family systems approach as it provides a number of home-based service programs designed to reduce the likelihood of initial or continued abuse. Since 1988, the agency has administered a program for soon-to-be released prisoners that brings prisoners' children to the prison to interact with the parent. The agency also administers a home-based service program for mothers of drug-affected infants and a supportive living program for mentally retarded mothers who can live with their children. Through a program based at the juvenile detention center, the agency also works with juveniles who are parents, teaching them how to develop safety plans for themselves and their children. Like All Faiths, PB&J works to develop therapeutic approaches through which parents acknowledge the impact of their violence on their children as a first step toward changing their behavior.
10. ***Services through Domestic Violence Service Agencies.*** All Faiths and PB&J have a *primary* focus on serving children affected by child abuse and violence, including those affected by intimate partner violence. ENLACE, Morning Star House, the shelter in Valencia County, and several other agencies with a specific mission to serve adult victims of family violence also offer services and supports for children in the families they serve, including counseling and therapy, therapeutic child care, skills building child care, and parenting.
11. ***Youth Development, Inc. (YDI)*** is a private agency focused on youth. It has three divisions—prevention, intervention, and treatment—encompassing 40 different components. YDI offers early Head Start, child custody and visitation, needle exchange programs, Theatre and the Arts, a GED program, a Community Corrections program, and an independent living program for youth aging out of foster care.
12. ***Children, Youth, and Families Department (CYFD), Albuquerque office,*** is the government agency with the primary responsibility for investigating reports of child abuse and determining what types of interventions are needed. While there are always concerns about removing children from homes with domestic violence, several interviewees reported their perceptions that CYFD has a balanced approach in serving families affected by domestic violence. Also, the local office appears to be more aware of the overlap of child abuse and domestic violence following CYFD Secretary Bolson's emphasis on the issue. Locally, CYFD does temporarily remove quite a number of children from homes where they are being affected by domestic violence, but very few of these children remain separated from a parent for long. Many approaches to working with families used by CYFD are designed to empower families, such as family group decision making, and in-house and contractual family preservation services.
13. ***Children, Youth, and Families Department, Valencia Office,*** reported good cooperation in that county among the various agencies involved in child abuse cases—CYFD, law enforcement, the judicial community, and the Valencia Shelter for Victims of Domestic Violence. CYFD also noted a well-regarded community coalition including businesses and

services, the Valencia County Partnership, that has taken on a variety of social issues. Respondents pointed out that a small community sometimes has the advantage of everyone knowing each other and working together to use whatever resources are available.

## **STRENGTHS OF THE CIVIL AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEMS**

### **14. *For adults involved in family violence:***

- Both the Albuquerque Police Department and the Bernalillo County Sheriff's Office have special units of detectives and sergeants that respond to family violence situations meeting the criteria for a felony (level of violence, level of injury, presence or use of an object used as a weapon, and kidnapping, among others). Both departments have a checklist that responding officers are expected to use to improve evidence collection and documentation of domestic violence cases. The Sheriff's Office is taking a number of steps designed to improve how responding officers handle domestic violence cases, including monitoring and providing feedback on the quality of reports submitted by responding officers, working to improve knowledge of and attitudes toward family violence, and strategies that help women assess the level of their immediate risk.
- A small working group consisting of Albuquerque Police Department, District Attorney, and Resources, Inc. staff meet monthly to try to improve system performance on cases involving intimate partner violence.
- The Bernalillo County District Attorney's Office achieves a conviction rate in District Court of about 80 percent for felony domestic violence cases. Most of these convictions result from guilty pleas, which the attorneys attribute to having good evidence from the police record that a felony occurred.
- Metro Court judges have been working together in a small ad hoc committee co-chaired by Judges Teresa Gomez and Sandra Clinton, to which probation, pre-trial services, public defender, district attorney, and law enforcement staff are invited to attend. The committee works to develop court programs to improve the handling of domestic violence cases. They have developed two projects: the Domestic Violence Early Intervention Program and the Metropolitan Court Domestic Violence Pilot Project.
  - o The Early Intervention Program offers first offenders meeting other criteria the opportunity for having charges dismissed after 26 or 52 weeks if they accept responsibility for their behavior, acknowledge need for counseling and participate in it, and work with a probation officer to fulfill the terms of the program.
  - o The DV Pilot Project was recently funded with state and federal resources, after a number of years in development. It will function in two courtrooms for six months, after which its effectiveness will be assessed for continuation. It targets approximately 80 high-risk (repeat) offenders who are post conviction and pre-

sentence. Its goal is to provide court supervision to these offenders to assure immediate consequences for violations of the program and to provide treatment and resources to the offender and family in an effort to modify behavior that leads to domestic violence. Offenders will be under intensive supervision requiring treatment, employment/school or community service, random drug/alcohol screens, and attendance biweekly at court reviews. An advocate will maintain contact with victims, and counseling for victims and children will be available. If victim and offender are going to remain together, the victim must also attend counseling.

- o This committee is also considering the possibility of a “Rocket Docket” to greatly speed processing of certain domestic violence cases—handling all aspects of a case at arraignment.

**15. *For children and youth involved in family violence:***

- The Albuquerque Police Department has had a specialized Crimes Against Children Unit for the past 10 years; the unit handles all felony child abuse cases. The sergeant in charge of the unit screens all child abuse and neglect referrals, regardless of their severity, to determine whether the charge meets the criteria for a felony. The unit works collaboratively with CYFD, and its sergeant is available to all police officers to consult on cases involving child abuse.
- Several respondents whose work focused on child victims of child abuse and other family violence mentioned the children’s “safehouse” used by the Albuquerque Police Department and prosecutors as a valuable resource for children and youth who become victims of violence. Available since the 1980s, when UWCNM first funded this and All Faiths runs it, the safehouse interview room houses staff specially trained in forensic matters and working with children, who interview child victims for law enforcement purposes. UWCNM now funds two similar safehouses in Sandoval and Torrance counties, and Valencia would like to have one also.
- Some Juvenile Court judges make special efforts to reach juveniles regarding violence issues, including family violence. The court has several programs aimed at stopping violent and abusive behavior among children and youth charged with a variety of offenses. The Court’s Juvenile Early Intervention Program serves 9 to 13 year olds charged with fighting. Offenders must view an anti-violence video and a Probation Officer conducts a domestic violence sensitivity workshop for the youth. Another effort, Saying No to Abusing Power, is a weekly program for youth from which the prosecutor receives reports on youth progress from parents and the program’s staff. The Court is currently developing a Program for the Empowerment of Girls, specifically designed to serve girls charged with violent offenses.

## SOME PROFESSIONAL TRAINING IS BEING CONDUCTED

16. ***Training doctors***—As part of its medical school curriculum, the University of New Mexico Medical School has recently added a “simulated case” of a woman in the emergency room affected by domestic violence. Simulated cases present medical students with complex situations that they must work through as part of their training. This simulated domestic violence case represents a considerable expansion of the time devoted to domestic violence as part of physician training. It was added following research at UNMH emergency room that showed the high frequency with which domestic violence was involved in cases presenting at the emergency room.
17. ***Ongoing assessment of additional training needs***—Presbyterian Hospital has a multidisciplinary team, the “Safe at Home” Team, which focuses on domestic violence, child abuse, and elder abuse. The team meets monthly to discuss training needs in the hospital, develop educational and informational materials, and distribute materials to staff and patients. Team members include hospital staff, an APD officer, a representative from the District Attorney’s office, CYFD staff, and two domestic violence provider organizations—Women’s Community Association and the Women’s Resource Center.
18. ***District attorneys train law enforcement officers***—Pursuing their interest in receiving strongly documented cases, district attorneys train law enforcement officers in collecting evidence in domestic violence cases. Because of turnover, training new officers is an ongoing task; recently the district attorney’s office and the Albuquerque Police Department collaborated to assure that *every* law enforcement officer, regardless of time on the force, participated in a refresher course on appropriate handling of domestic violence cases, including evidence collection.

## IMPORTANT EDUCATIONAL AND COMMUNITY AWARENESS MATERIALS ARE AVAILABLE AND BEING USED

Several local organizations, described below, have developed curricula and other materials that they disseminate to a variety of audiences in a variety of ways. Among the most important audiences are school classes, but others are also common. As valuable as these efforts are, due to lack of resources to present them and lack of a systematic approach to covering all who need to receive them, they do not reach the great majority of classrooms, schools, and other youth-serving organizations. All of these activities could be greatly expanded to reach more children and youth, and coordinated to assure that more venues receive the full range of educational materials offered. The same is true for community awareness materials targeted toward adult audiences.

19. ***Working with children and youth through schools and other youth-serving venues:***
  - NMCADV has several curriculum projects for children and youth:

- Awareness training curricula delivered to classrooms and other youth audiences upon request. Five modules focus on dating and intimate partner violence, conflict management, healthy relationships, media and its depiction of women, and bullying.
  - Youth leadership teams from within faith community youth groups and other youth-serving organizations. Youth are first exposed to the awareness training, then sign up to be on a team and develop and carry out a project, and attend an end-of-year banquet at which projects are presented and awards distributed.
  - A new program, Puppets as Lifesavers (PALS), is just starting in elementary schools. It has three components based on less sophisticated versions of the youth curricula—domestic violence, bullying, personal boundaries.
- Morning Star House collaborates with the Albuquerque Public Schools' Indian Education Program to conduct family violence workshops in middle and high schools throughout the city. Topics covered include family violence, dating and relationships, and safety planning. Morning Star also coordinates community awareness workshops with the Southwest Indian Polytechnic Institute, a local community college.
  - ENLACE Comunitario works intensively with the six elementary schools in the southeast area of Albuquerque that have very high proportions of children from immigrant families. Efforts include increasing awareness among teachers, counselors, and children, and assuring that people know about ENLACE's services to the immigrant population. ENLACE also conducts monthly outreach sessions at a southeast area health clinic much used by the immigrant population. Staff present educational videos in Spanish about domestic violence, maintain flyers in waiting rooms and bathrooms, and otherwise work to reach women in isolated situations.
  - CYFD recently committed part of its \$200,000 public education budget to a media campaign to combat domestic violence—*See Mommy Cry*. The campaign's main component is a 40-minute documentary that aired on the local PBS and NBC television stations in December 2003. Both stations provided two hours of commercial free prime time for the campaign. Local CBS and ABC affiliates are now running domestic violence spots on their radio stations. UWCNM has funded a series of shorter "pathway" training videos, which will be distributed to community groups to help members identify and appropriately refer victims of domestic violence. For middle- and high-school youth, CYFD will distribute a video on dating violence and healthy relationships to every school district statewide. In addition CYFD has launched a website ([www.nmsafedate.info](http://www.nmsafedate.info)) to provide additional age-relevant information and resources.

### ***Other Audiences, Other Training Resources***

20. ***NMCADV conducts educational seminars for health professionals***, offering continuing education credits to social workers, psychologists, and psychiatrists, and also to phase 2

medical students. Much of this work focuses on providing basic information about domestic violence, rather than specific approaches and techniques for working with victims or for collecting evidence related to court cases.

21. ***Resources, Inc. also conducts training seminars for health professionals***, and reports that it has been receiving more requests for training on family violence from physicians' groups, family clinics, and similar health care providers. The training offered by Resources, Inc. includes approaches to screening for and recognizing that patient symptoms stem from intimate partner violence, and knowing what to do and how to offer help when it is needed.
22. ***NMCADV's Corporate Initiative Project*** developed a model human resources handbook and model curriculum for businesses, under a grant from the Family Violence Prevention Fund. The materials are available to any employer, with or without accompanying training. This handbook provides a valuable resource to employers, potentially helping them take steps to protect their employees and reduce the effects of family violence on their business.
23. ***Corporate attention to family violence*** is one area of growing activity, and one that could be an important part of a UWCNM campaign to reduce family violence in central New Mexico. Some local businesses have extremely comprehensive and supportive employee policies, and could play key roles as leaders in helping corporations and other businesses follow suit. Most of the people representing businesses that we talked with for this project expressed willingness to learn how their business could do more for its employees, and many expressed willingness to be publicly associated with a UWCNM campaign to help reduce family violence in the community.

## ***Gaps and Weaknesses***

The need for, and lack of, several types of assistance for family violence victims were mentioned so frequently that we highlight them as major gaps in central New Mexico's response to family violence. These include civil legal assistance, language and cultural competence, services for children and youth, intervention programs for batterers, and access to help for non-poor women. In addition, law enforcement and other respondents noted some gaps specific to law enforcement, which we note in item 29 below. Finally, everyone mentioned the ways that public attitudes toward family violence constitute a major weakness in the community's willingness, and consequently ability, to respond.

24. ***Civil Legal Assistance***— Some legal resources are available (Resources, Inc., Legal Aid) and perceived as excellent. They can serve as models for the various types of legal help that family violence victims need. But the help available is only a small proportion of what is needed. Very large gaps exist in the availability and affordability of civil legal assistance—including assistance to obtain orders of protection, but existing with even greater need for proceedings related to divorce, child custody, property settlement, and immigration issues such as self-certifying for legal residence and determining eligibility for various public benefits.

Most help is available for orders of protection, from Resources, Inc., New Mexico Legal Aid Society, and several of the organizations serving Hispanic, Native American, or immigrant women. Legal FACS provides forms and instructions for requesting an order of protection, but women must feel able to navigate the courts themselves for these to be useful. Only in the past five years has Legal Aid provided full legal assistance to family violence victims, and it is only able to serve 250 people each year. Resources, Inc. and some of the family violence service organizations provide the services of attorneys for matters beyond protection orders, but funding fluctuates and therefore so does the availability of this type of help.

An interesting note is that the state has decided to invest TANF resources in civil legal assistance for women on TANF whose family violence situation blocks their ability to comply with TANF requirements to work and ultimately to leave welfare. These grants go through NMCADV to its members, putting one attorney in each member agency to help women with civil legal matters related to family violence.

As bad as the situation with respect to civil legal assistance is for most women, it is particularly egregious for non-English-speaking women and those without legal documents. Very few people providing civil legal assistance are bilingual, making accurate communication about sensitive issues a significant problem. Even fewer people are knowledgeable about issues related to immigration and domestic violence, or that federal law provides avenues for undocumented women experiencing domestic violence to achieve legal residency on their own, through U visas or VAWA petitions. In the entire state of New Mexico, only one attorney who is bilingual in Spanish spends full time filing applications for these visas and petitions—she works for Catholic Charities in Albuquerque, in that agency's Immigration Services Department.

- 25. *Language and Cultural Competence***—Truly bilingual resources are scarce, as are services that accommodate cultural differences. The greatest need is for bilingual Spanish speakers, but ability to respond in other languages is also needed. First responders, whether police or medical, tend not to be bilingual; the consequence is that many non-English speakers do not ask for help from any of the agencies that might record their situation as family violence. Thus they remain hidden victims. Many key agencies and activities, including police, courts, attorneys, medical and mental health services, can access translators and interpreters for essential moments such as court appearances, but do not have staff able to provide truly competent services within a given language or cultural context. This gap exists even in some shelter services, and includes counseling and mental health services in which cultural understandings may be particularly important for aiding victims.

Also, family violence advocates and counselors in agencies that see a wide range of women need training to understand some issues pertinent to immigrant and undocumented victims. For instance, basic knowledge of eligibility requirements for public benefits would prevent an advocate from sending someone to apply for a benefit for which she is not eligible. In

addition, more people need to understand the options that federal law provides to obtain residency for immigrant and undocumented women experiencing domestic violence.

One way to address the gap in language and cultural competence would be to fund the domestic violence agencies that are recognized as possessing this competence to hire and train staff who could be outstationed in locations that see many victims of domestic violence but are not themselves primarily domestic violence service agencies. Such staff could serve as advocates and also provide much-needed follow-up with women who will otherwise not seek “regular” domestic violence services. Important venues to cover include primary health clinics and emergency rooms, as well as the various components of the civil and criminal justice systems with which victims interact.

26. ***Services for Children and Youth***—A number of respondents mentioned that children in families with intimate partner violence seem able to get services only if their mother is in a shelter. People in all parts of the service system and beyond, including the adult victims and abusers, have not fully absorbed the impact of family violence on children. Children’s behavioral responses to family violence (such as aggressiveness, hyperactivity, fear responses, or withdrawal) may surface in systems such as schools, where failure to recognize root causes may result in misdiagnosis and inappropriate responses. Further, few resources are available for youth experiencing violence either in their families or in dating situations, unless they themselves become offenders (see item 15).
27. ***Services for Abusers***—There are far more batterers who need to attend intervention programs than there are programs for them to attend. Further, New Mexico, unlike some other states, has no standards for batterer intervention programs, nor has any assessment been done to learn how effectively existing programs prevent future abuse. Even when courts order batterers into treatment, they are not able to monitor compliance (i.e., attendance), nor do they have routine policies of rescinding a batterer’s probation status for failure to attend treatment or for otherwise violating conditions of probation, except in one or two small court programs. Improving the availability and effectiveness of services for batterers is linked to an important issue mentioned by many people we interviewed, and discussed below at some length—attitudes toward battering need to change to view battering as unacceptable.
28. ***Services for Non-Poor Women***—As national surveys amply document, family violence occurs in households at all income levels. The problems that poor women have in establishing independent households when they leave violent homes are well known. Less appreciated are the circumstances of women fleeing the family violence that occurs in comfortable economic circumstances. Such women often do not control any family resources—part of their victimization lies in their husband’s complete control of all financial and other resources. When they leave they have nothing, except on paper. Their “paper” situation often makes them ineligible for assistance targeted toward women living below poverty level.

- 29. Law Enforcement Gaps**—Respondents from law enforcement and other agencies mentioned a number of important gaps in the way that law enforcement handles family violence cases at present.
- Several respondents mentioned the very helpful performance of the Albuquerque Police Department’s now-disbanded Domestic Abuse Response Team (DART). DART, which had been supported by a federal VAWA grant, was disbanded along with a number of other special teams. A number of respondents from community agencies serving women family violence victims praised DART, referring most particularly to the good relationships they had with its officers, who had volunteered for the team from a commitment to work specifically with the issue of family violence.
  - Timely access to information:
    - **Police access to information on court actions about abusers**—A difficulty mentioned by law enforcement respondents is that officers responding to family violence calls cannot access information about warrants and temporary restraining orders in effect against an abuser, because such information is not automated. If it were available, an officer responding to a scene and finding the abuser still present might be able to make an arrest even if the immediate situation did not call for one.
    - **Judicial access to police reports**—Another technology/information gap involving law enforcement is the time it takes for police reports to reach judges—judges have no electronic access to these reports, and we have been told it can take weeks for hard copies to reach judges. Both law enforcement and judges mentioned this as one of many factors contributing to problems in case processing.
  - Finally, we were told that a significant number of calls to APD that are dispatched as “probable domestics” never get reported as such. The figures we heard were about 10,000 “probable domestic” calls compared to about 6,000 cases that result in a police report of domestic violence. We have no verification of these figures from APD, but if true it is not clear what is happening with the approximately 4,000 calls that are not reported as domestic violence. This loss of potential cases, coupled with the very high dismissal rate for misdemeanor domestic violence cases in Metropolitan Court (see item 32 below) suggests that a very large majority of domestic violence incidents could be falling through the cracks in the criminal justice system.
- 30. Urban-Rural Resource Discrepancies**—We concentrated most of our interviewing effort in Albuquerque, but were able to interview a number of respondents in Sandoval, Torrance, and Valencia Counties. Respondents lamented their absolute lack of resources to address family violence at a level of “best practices.” They also noted, however, that they compensated for this shortage of resources by working closely together to make the most of what they had. For instance, respondents for Valencia County expressed strong sentiments about how well the agencies responding to child abuse coordinate and do not overlap

services. Torrance County respondents said that because they do not have much to work with, they all pitch in and see what they can do. In cooperative environments such as they describe, additional resources would probably be efficiently and effectively spent. Even cooperation among official agencies, however, cannot affect underlying conditions that produce high rates of family violence, or change cultural attitudes that say such violence is “family business.” Respondents in Torrance County, for instance, readily acknowledged having a very severe problem with family violence, and that the relatively ingrown nature of the community made it very hard to make a difference.

### **31. *Increasing knowledge and changing attitudes.***

Many respondents mentioned that prevailing attitudes in central New Mexico do not attach much importance to family violence. People see this violence as “a family problem” rather than as a crime, and far too many believe that family violence happens to “the other guy,” but not in their community, congregation, or circle of friends. Thus there is considerable work to be done to educate the central New Mexico community to the prevalence of family violence, the damage it does, and the ways that it affects the future through perpetuating violence, increasing health costs, increasing business costs, and in other ways. Respondents mentioned many signs of this lack of seriousness, including:

- Respondents from law enforcement described the attitudes of many officers that domestic violence is not that important.
- Judges do not have to take training in domestic violence, and some respondents felt that the attitudes of some judges reflected old ideas of seriousness of domestic violence, including the need to corroborate women’s testimony.
- UNM curricula for training professional counselors and therapists does not include much content related to violence against women, from how to detect its effects in clients to how to handle one’s own reactions to it, let alone how to help clients deal with it. Future mental health professionals still remain hardly conscious that clients presenting problems with relationships or sexuality may have unresolved issues with sexual assault or childhood physical or sexual abuse. Nor are most of these professionals tied into any network that includes the major agencies helping family violence victims.
- State law does not provide increasing penalties for multiple misdemeanor domestic violence convictions. This treatment of battering that does not rise to the level of a felony in any single instance, but which displays a pattern that is clearly violent and repetitive, is in marked contrast to the ways that state law handles drunk driving and stalking. In both of those crimes, penalties escalate for repeated episodes, reflecting the conviction of lawmakers that such behavior is more serious when it is habitual.

## **Issues**

Our interviews surfaced a number of important but complex issues that deserve the more complete attention of open community discussion. These are issues about which many stakeholders feel strongly, but rarely see things in the same light. Our job as evaluators did not include determining the relative merits of our informants' opinions and perceptions, which sometimes conflicted. Rather, our job is to inform the community that important issues exist, resolution of which will probably be essential for reaching the UWCNM goal of improving community response to family violence. UWCNM could be instrumental in fostering open discussion and working toward a mutually satisfactory resolution of these issues. To that end we identify the elements of each issue that we heard in interviews.

### **32. *Holding offenders accountable through the criminal justice system.***

The criminal justice system (CJS) includes law enforcement, prosecution, the courts (including the public defender, pre-trial services, and probation), corrections (jail and parole), and the laws under which they operate. Many parts of the Bernalillo County CJS are trying in various ways to improve their handling of domestic violence situations. Most indicated at least one committee, task force, special project, or special unit with this purpose. It appears that each CJS agency invites representatives from at least some other CJS agencies to participate on its committee, task force, or project—but so far the level of cross-agency or multi-agency investment has not been high. These agencies seem to have some willingness to improve their functioning but to date they have not all done it together, in part because the neutral forum that will probably be necessary is lacking.

Little progress will be made until all elements of the CJS work together to improve the system—without blame and with the best interests of families and the community as the uppermost goal. Here we note the various interrelated performance issues that came to our attention in the course of our interviews.

- ***Issues for law enforcement include*** 1) priority placed on domestic violence—bringing back DART or similar structure, improving training and attitudes; 2) discrepancies between calls dispatched as domestic violence and domestic violence reports; 3) consistency and quality of evidence collected for probable misdemeanor as well as probable felony incidents; 4) responding officer access to information about offenders; 5) ability to supply judges with timely police reports; 6) time burdens on officers (sometimes needing to be in three or four courtrooms at the same time); and 7) full participation with representatives from other parts of the CJS.

Interview also respondents noted some hopeful signs within local law enforcement agencies, including:

- o Law enforcement officers appear, on average, to be taking a more active role in collecting evidence. Respondents from the felony division of the District Attorney's

office said that over the last five years they have seen improvements in the quality and relevance of evidence collected, more from the Bernalillo County Sheriff's Office than from the Albuquerque Police Department, because the Sheriff has made a particular point of collecting good evidence in these cases and has backed up the mandate with training and monitoring. Even so, quality and quantity vary from officer to officer. Because of turnover among police officers, constant training is needed along with supervision and monitoring reports for quality. The prosecutors stressed the importance of getting tape recordings of statements made at the scene, medical releases, witness statements, pictures, and other information *at the scene at the time*, because it won't be there the next day. (In Torrance County, respondents described a different situation, where the issues in collecting high quality evidence are those of inadequate training and lack of resources, not willingness.)

- o The Bernalillo County Sheriff's Office is undertaking a number of steps to improve the quality of domestic violence cases, including both evidence collection and retaining the victim's cooperation:
  - Responding officers have a checklist to follow in collecting evidence; supervisors review the case record to see whether the checklist has been completed and related evidence is included in the record.
  - The Homicide and Violent Crimes Unit/CID of the Sheriff's Office has developed a knowledge and attitude survey on family violence and intends to administer it to all officers. The results will be used to shape future training. Unit staff have worked with staff of UNM Hospital to develop this survey and the risk assessment tool noted below.
  - The Sheriff's Office has created a new liaison position in its Homicide and Violent Crimes Unit to work with victims of felony domestic violence. The liaison will be able to follow up with victims, working with them to assess the risk of imminent harm to themselves and their children and work out appropriate protective measures.
  - Relationships are reported to be improving between the Sheriff's Office and the Albuquerque Police Department. Representatives of the Sheriff's Office report good relationships with the Assistant District Attorneys handling felony cases in District Court (although not so much with the prosecutors for Metropolitan Court).
- **Issues for Metro Court (misdemeanor) prosecutors include** 1) problems associated with the six-month rule (which requires that domestic violence cases be resolved within six months or be dismissed); 2) turnover and training, especially in how to prosecute cases successfully without a witness/victim present; 3) ability to retain contact with witnesses/victims (due to severely inadequate victim/witness advocacy staffing); 4)

defense right to interview prosecution witnesses, especially in combination with the six-months rule; 5) lack of specialization (due to method of assigning attorneys to courtrooms, which also are not specialized).

- On the felony prosecution side, the District Attorney's office has recognized the importance of victim advocates for successful prosecution and has committed local resources to support advocate positions that began under federal grants. Advocates help to keep the victim engaged and increase the odds that she will show up for court appearances, thereby reducing the likelihood of a dismissal (and simultaneously empowering the victim).
- ***Issues for judges/the courts include*** 1) the dismissal rate in Metropolitan Court for misdemeanor domestic violence offenses was reported to us as between 73 and 76 percent, depending on which respondent we were interviewing; 2) incredibly heavy case burden per judge of criminal cases (about 10,000 to 15,000 cases a year each); 3) lack of specialized dockets; 4) paucity of alternatives for what to do with batterers (little available batterer treatment); 5) difficulty getting police records; 6) the six-month rule; 7) disinterest of accused abusers in the terms of Metro Court's special programs, as they have to admit guilt whereas their odds are very good (3 to 1) that their case will be dismissed if they just wait long enough.

Every representative of a criminal justice agency mentioned the Metro Court misdemeanor domestic violence dismissal rate to us, citing a recent published account showing that this was either the highest or among the highest dismissal rates in the nation (according to the Metro judges, about 50 percent is more average). Among other things, dismissal means the alleged abuser's record does not reveal suspected domestic violence and that subsequent incidents, if they occur, may be treated as first-time offenses.

All respondents expressed concern, and many reported efforts within their individual agencies to improve the situation, as described in item 14 above. Many reasons for this very high rate are possible, including inadequate evidence collection, uncooperative witnesses, attitudes of those in many parts of the system, law enforcement arrest policies, laws that do not cover important situations, and probably others. This seems to be a situation that needs fixing, but that efforts of individual agencies are unlikely to fix. The situation calls for the combined, integrated efforts of many stakeholders, good recordkeeping and monitoring, routine feedback and troubleshooting for individual cases, and community input. If a primary issue is uncooperative victims, criminal justice agencies are unlikely to be able to change the situation on their own. As we note below under "Opportunities," UWCNM may be able to create a role for itself by providing a neutral ground, airing issues, assuring community input, supporting a coordinator/facilitator and data collector/case tracker/feedback provider, and monitoring progress.

### 33. *Developing useful roles for the Women’s Community Association.*

For many years the Women’s Community Association (WCA) provided the only domestic violence shelter facilities in Albuquerque. It has a huge facility by domestic violence shelter standards (100 bed capacity), and in addition to shelter offered counseling programs for adult victims and programs for children and batterers. However, WCA earned itself a very unfavorable reputation among other providers in the community, and among women seeking services as well. After more than a decade of difficulties, its Executive Director resigned, its premises were cleansed, some services were temporarily suspended although the shelter itself remained open at all times, and an acting director was appointed to “turn the agency around.” The acting director accomplished many things in a short period of time. She also described some big plans for WCA, most especially for WCA to be the community leader on domestic violence issues and for all domestic violence services to center on WCA. As this report may be the first opportunity for the larger community to learn what has changed about WCA, we provide an overview and also discuss issues related to plans to become a community leader.

- ***What has changed at WCA:***

- **Physical plant:** The main part of WCA’s physical facility has been cleaned, painted, and refurnished. Professional kitchen equipment has been donated to upgrade the kitchen, and future plans call for further improvements. WCA has been adopted as the “project of the year” by a group of contractors, who will be doing a lot of work on WCA structures.
- **Staff:** New supervisory staff positions have been created and new staff hired. A children’s program manager is now on board, as well as a children’s therapist and additional child care workers. The new executive director, who begins May 3, has been successful at another New Mexico shelter that faced problems similar to those of WCA. Hiring is currently under way for a clinical director. Expectations for staff skills, competencies, and relations with clients and each other have been set at professional levels, salaries have improved slightly, and funding is being sought to continue improvements in staff development and compensation.
- **Relationships with clients:** Rules that former clients found offensive are gone, safety and security have improved with rooms now offering privacy and the ability to secure belongings; food and water are available at all times; all signs are posted in English and Spanish; the shelter is staffed 24 hours a day, and at least one bilingual Spanish speaking staff person is available at all times.
- **Relationships with funders and supportive services organizations have been pursued:** WCA’s budget has approximately doubled since the acting director took over, with the increase going mostly to staffing improvements.

CYFD has offered extensive support and guidance, including funding for the clinical director position (along with the City of Albuquerque) and for children's services. Plans are to continue to expand, tapping resources that have not contributed directly to the program in the past. New linkages have been formed with service and potential referring organizations, especially in the health area. Health Care for the Homeless now visits WCA once a week to provide medical care.

- **Management systems are being developed:** Budgets, staffing, accounting, payroll, and other core systems are being revised, as are the organization's bylaws and expectations for the Board of Directors.
- **Services have been expanded and continued growth is expected:** Child care and children's activities are now available during the day as well as in the evenings; child and family counseling, case management, and health services have all expanded. Work is being done to improve and expand the Family Violence Prevention Program—a batterers intervention program run by WCA.
- **Plans to become the community leader:** It is hard to see how these plans could materialize, at least in the short run, for a number of reasons. First, WCA's past behavior does not give other agencies any reasons to trust it to listen, to share resources, to respect or have the skills to work with many women, including those from minority populations, or to be a team player. It is not clear whether plans for the future have included discussions with some agencies that currently serve populations the new WCA hopes to attract. Some pressure exists to take advantage of the WCA building's large bed capacity, but it will take some time for women from minority communities to change their current perceptions that WCA does not serve them well. Other agencies also have issues with WCA's past behavior, and will need to be convinced that WCA has changed for the better. These perceptions are not likely to change unless the potential partner agencies, including grassroots organizations that currently *do* serve minority communities well, are present at the planning table and are able to participate as equal partners.

In addition to difficulties in achieving the vision of WCA as community leader on domestic violence issues, there is the question of whether more collaborative working arrangements among equal partners would serve the community better. Given the history of community agencies scrambling to fund themselves even if the results are duplicative or not perhaps the most effective use of resources, it is unlikely that many community agencies will be willing to cede pride of place to WCA. Further, a more collaborative approach of jointly determining what is needed and allocating resources according to principles of the greatest likely effectiveness is a more equitable way to remake central New Mexico's nonprofit response to family violence. WCA does have an opportunity to remake itself into what the

community needs most (probably a well-run shelter) and coordinate for other services with other organizations. UWCNM could play a role in facilitating these dialogues and moving the action toward some mutually acceptable resolution.

#### **34. *Improving across and within agency coordination and collaboration.***

Our interviews revealed that some staff working directly with clients did not know about basic resources in the community related to family violence. Interviews with agency heads sometimes revealed lack of knowledge of other agencies' resources and sometimes even how their own agency's front-line workers handled domestic violence issues with agency clients. Although everyone muddles through, the community's ability to serve victims of family violence would undoubtedly improve if more working together, coordinating, sharing resources, avoiding duplication, and complementing each other's efforts occurred.

As an example of duplication, almost all family violence agencies have some type of outreach/education program, but all or most of the outreach appears to be going to the same places and saying the same things—usually basic “myths and realities” presentations commonly referred to as “DV 101” following the tradition of introductory college courses that provide breadth but no depth on numerous topics. These DV 101 modules are most commonly given to school health classes whose teachers are interested. It would be good to use, or develop if they don't exist, more intensive and stimulating curriculum modules and be sure that more classrooms in more schools are exposed to the material. The new teen videos being produced by the *See Mommy Cry* project may help with this, as they are being distributed to every school statewide. But the commitment still has to be there to use these videos and other resources, and to be sure that every child is exposed to anti-violence material repeatedly until the message sticks. It is possible that an increased commitment to interagency communication and coordination could result in doing a better job with the current level of resources being invested in education and outreach, for more audiences, at a deeper level.

In an ideal community response, as described below under “Opportunities,” agency heads (or others with the authority to commit an agency to change) would work together to make systems work better, monitor their own and each other's agency performance, look for issues/problems/bottlenecks and take actions to correct them, and hold each other collectively accountable. In the process, agency heads would assure that people at every level in their own agencies were aware of and participated in the changes and knew how to access other agencies in the community to serve clients better. We encountered a number of instances in which direct-service workers did not appear to know what resources were available, or did not know how to recognize family violence. For instance, doctors and nurses in some emergency rooms and public clinics do not screen for family violence or respond appropriately when they encounter it. Some do, but these positions experience very high turnover so training is a constant need that sometimes does not happen. And school personnel interviewed for this project described the general lack of training common

to teachers and other school staff in recognizing the signs of family violence and knowing what to do about it.

It is hard to achieve such levels of full awareness and conscious self-examination in an environment of scarce and shrinking resources, but such an environment makes it all the more necessary to try. **The focus of these efforts needs to be on what is best for families and victims, not what is best for one or another agency. Keeping the focus on what will help victims most tends to produce more creative thinking and cooperation rather than repeating old ways.** To really make this happen, agencies must trust each other, because without trust they will not be willing to think in new ways. Anything UWCNM could do to increase trust across the agencies and organizations involved in family violence would certainly be an important contribution.

Some respondents also expressed concern about pendulum swings toward new issues and the possible danger of forgetting the old ones. Current attention on the effects of domestic violence on children is important, but needs to be pursued in a way that balances the needs of women and children. Some domestic violence providers are worried that, because children are more attractive to the general public as “clearly innocent” victims, the new attention will draw resources away from services for women, whom many members of the public still blame for their own victimization. Careful attention must be paid to avoiding “mother-blaming” and inappropriate removal of children from parental control. At the same time, the past may have seen too little awareness of the risks to children from domestic violence situations, especially in the light of recent analyses showing that most cases of child death and serious injury come from homes in which the mother is also battered. The various community stakeholders will likely need help sorting out the proper balance and determining the roles for which they are best fitted in helping all family members in violent households.

## **OPPORTUNITIES**

In addition to the strengths and resources currently available, our interview respondents identified some indications that things may be moving in the right direction. In general, these indications are specific to individual agencies and interactions, and have already been mentioned in relation to strengths, gaps, or issues. If these indications proceed in the direction they have begun, they will improve the community’s ability to respond appropriately to family violence.

Interviews also revealed some opportunities to help stimulate even more change. These opportunities are a blend of conclusions drawn from the entirety of what we heard during interviews and recommendations based on what we think will be needed to reduce family violence in central New Mexico.

UWCNM asked the Urban Institute to help it identify steps it might take to improve central New Mexico's response to family violence. This is an enormous mission. Some steps will involve improving the performance of specific agencies and organizations. But almost all the efforts of victim service and justice system agencies focus on helping victims of family violence after it occurs. The real challenge is changing the culture, enlisting the larger community to rethink its acceptance of family violence and make violence unacceptable as a way to resolve conflicts, build self-regard, or defend honor. A second challenge is to promote true collaboration among existing agencies and services, such that competition and duplication are reduced, intra- and inter-organizational functioning improves, and people affected by family violence receive the help they need through resources that honor and support their culture and community.

## OPPORTUNITIES TO INCREASE COLLABORATION

Central New Mexico already has a number of committees and coalitions—perhaps too many—involved in issues of family violence. Yet at present they appear to operate mostly at the level of information-sharing and advocacy rather than as venues for improving collaboration and coordinated community response. And they take a lot of time; more than one respondent commented on what it would take to cover them all—as many as 40 meetings a month, one person calculated—and that many of the same people attend the different meetings without necessarily producing a payoff in improved *system* response.

Current activities that could result in increased collaboration among agencies and organizations addressing family violence should be encouraged and facilitated in every possible way to work *collaboratively and to increase collaboration*. As noted earlier, the focus of these efforts needs to be on **what is best for families and victims, not what is best for one or another agency**. Keeping the focus on what will help victims most tends to produce more creative thinking and cooperation rather than repeating old ways.

Four levels of interaction have often been used to describe how communities work together to address an issue—communication, coordination, collaboration, and coordinated community response.

- *Communication*: Talking to each other and sharing information is the first, most necessary, step. This means friendly, helpful communication, not hostile or negative communication.

Communication may happen between front-line workers (e.g., a police officer and a victim advocate), middle-level workers, and/or chiefs/directors/heads of agencies. It may occur among personnel in two systems, three systems, and so on up to all the systems in a jurisdiction. Communication between people at the same level in two agencies does not guarantee that people at other levels in the same agencies are also communicating, or that the different levels in the same organization have clear, open communication. In many communities the parties who need to work together to create a coordinated system of services for victims of family violence have not reached even this first level. Everyone operates in isolation, or worse, in hostile interactions that do

not advance understanding or assistance for victims. This is true both within and between agencies.

- *Coordination*: At this level, agency staff work together on a case-by-case basis and may even do cross-training to appreciate each other's roles and responsibilities. Coordination often produces better results for clients, but, in contrast to collaboration, it does not involve significant changes in each coordinating agency's goals or the ways that it operates. It is more a matter of "we'll each do our own thing side by side, and not get in each other's way."

Again, coordination may happen between front-line workers, middle-level workers, and/or involve policy commitments for whole agencies by chiefs/directors/agency heads. It may occur among these personnel in two systems, three systems, and so on up to all the systems in a jurisdiction. Also again, coordination between people at the same level in two agencies does not guarantee that people at other levels in the same agencies are also coordinating, or that the different levels in the same organization coordinate well with each other.

- *Collaboration*: Collaboration adds the element of joint analysis, planning, and accommodation to the base of communication and coordination. Collaborative arrangements include joint work on developing protocols for each agency that let each agency do its work in a way that complements and supports the work done by another agency. It also involves regular feedback to determine ways in which the collaborative interactions could be further altered to improve client and system outcomes.

Collaboration cannot happen without the commitment of the powers-that-be. In this respect it differs from communication and coordination. If chiefs/directors/agency heads are not on board, supporting and enforcing adherence to new policies and protocols, then collaboration is not taking place (although coordination may still occur at lower levels of organizations). Conversely, collaboration is not working to change community response if *only* agency heads are involved. Every level of an organization, most particularly the front-line people who work directly with clients, must understand and operate on collaborative principles. Collaboration may occur between two or more agencies or systems.

To these three levels of interagency relations that promote better treatment of family violence victims we add a fourth level. When *all* of the essential and most of the desirable systems and actors in a community collaborate, their activities may be considered a ***coordinated community response (CCR)***. We use this term here to distinguish this type of community-wide collaboration from collaboration among two or three agencies.

- *Coordinated community response* goes beyond collaboration in several directions.
  - o First, all of the critical systems in a community must be involved. This includes the criminal justice agencies of law enforcement, prosecution, and the courts (and ideally,

probation and parole); the civil courts; agencies providing supportive services to victims of family violence; and hospitals and other health agencies. It is also extremely helpful if others are involved, including clergy, businesses and their employee assistance programs, mental health and substance abuse agencies, agencies and organizations serving women in communities isolated by language, culture, ethnicity, geography, or other factors, and batterer intervention programs.

- o Second, CCR entails *organizational commitments*, not just personal ones.
- o Third, CCR entails a functioning feedback mechanism. In many communities this is a monthly (or more frequent) meeting of those most actively involved in responding to victims, to deal with individual cases and also iron out problems with the system. Some communities have also found that forcing themselves to collect data on the progress of cases and then to review the data at the monthly meetings shows them their progress and provides a powerful positive incentive. It also reveals bottlenecks and system glitches that may then become the focus of ongoing system change.
- o Fourth, CCR includes an ongoing mechanism for thinking about what comes next, asking what needs to be done, how best to accomplish it, and, finally, what needs to change for the goals to be accomplished. This mechanism can take one or more of a number of forms, such as a task force or council, regular meetings of partner agencies, and quarterly retreats. Whatever the mechanism, it must translate into shared decision-making and planning at multiple levels, as well as the expectation that each part of the system must modify its own activities to support and complement the work of the other parts.
- o Fifth, it is a great deal easier to maintain the first four elements of a CCR if someone is being paid to serve as coordinator, and if that coordinator has the necessary administrative support in the form of telephone, fax, photocopy, and other mechanical aids, and most particularly staff assistance.

A community may work on coordinating its response to family violence at several levels. Activities surrounding justice system response to family violence is an obvious focus, but so is collaboration among organizations addressing issues involved in family violence that often do not work together, such as domestic violence, child abuse, substance abuse, and mental health agencies. Even more ambitious would be tying in the activities of businesses and faith communities.

True collaboration takes hard work and patience. Each participating agency and organization must examine its own practices and goals, compare them with those of other agencies, come to some mutual understandings of who does what best, share best practices but also acknowledge and bolster each other's unique powers and skills (e.g., only police may make arrests; only medical personnel should treat serious injuries; people may be best understood and served by others who share their language and/or culture, at least at first), and change agency practices that impede progress. It is rare for agencies and organizations to achieve true collaboration without a

coordinator—a person whose responsibility it is to bring people together and help them keep working together until real change happens.

We note a number of areas and opportunities for increasing collaboration and working toward a coordinated community response in UWCNM’s service area.

**35. *Use Your Clout as a Funder***—UWCNM should think about using its influence and resources to increase collaboration among the relevant agencies and organizations in its service area, focusing on one or more of the following opportunities:

- Take advantage of an existing organization, the Stop Violence Against Women and Children Coalition, that has all or most of the right membership to create a coordinated community response to family violence. Since UWCNM funds most of the members, it is well positioned to introduce and increasingly enforce cooperation, planning, goal-setting, performance monitoring, and systematic feedback to improve response, eliminate bottlenecks and communication failures, reduce duplication and interagency competition, and move the community forward. UWCNM could support a coordinator for the Coalition and, working with other funders, put some teeth into insisting on creative thinking and collaboration.
- Funders could hold not just single agencies but the Coalition as a whole accountable for *system* effectiveness, not just within-agency head- or bed-counting. Working with the Coalition or a similar mechanism, funders could help develop and agree on appropriate outcome measures, insisting on some that really matter—actual outcomes, not just process indicators. Then make sure good records are kept, outcomes reported, underperformance or system glitches examined and addressed.
- Identify simple, effective solutions and work to get them applied elsewhere. For example, The UNMH emergency room had been trying to increase the adequacy of screening and identification of patients whose presenting problems were associated with family violence. Staff training in signs and symptoms had no effect. However, adding a check box to the intake form, asking “is this patient here for domestic violence” doubled the number of people identified as domestic violence victims. Appropriate steps could then be taken to counsel and refer.

**36. *Focus on Holding Offenders Accountable, Starting with Reducing the Metropolitan Court Misdemeanor Dismissal Rate***—We discussed this issue at length as item 32 above, and won’t repeat the details here. UWCNM could take the near-universal concerns within CJS agencies about the 70+ percent dismissal rate as an opportunity. UWCNM could offer resources to help open the process, coordinate this work, improve collaboration, and set up a systematic recording and feedback system such as was suggested above, to help the agencies involved look at their own processes and improve them over time.

**37. *Focus on Increasing Collaboration Among the Schools and Community-Based Organizations***—Schools could be doing a lot more to recognize the signs of family

violence, intervening appropriately, and participating in preventing family violence among the next generation. Albuquerque Public School employees we interviewed reported that the schools do not have any specific programs to prevent or recognize family violence. Currently, when a school employee recognizes violence issues within a family the situation is referred, first internally to the Health and Mental Health Team (which can help with counseling and schooling needs), and then to CYFD. Interviewees noted that teachers and administrators need training on the signs of family violence, what to do when they identify violence, and available resources. A school administrator noted that the school system is not legally responsible for providing violence prevention and mental health services, so it does not hold itself accountable for these things. However, all respondents representing the schools noted that because they have the best access to children, they have good potential for developing important prevention and intervention approaches for family violence. All expressed interest in doing more around this issue, but noted that they could not do it with internal resources. They would like to work more extensively, and more systematically, with community agencies to compensate for the school system's lack of relevant resources. All were aware that exposing students to family violence issues and developing effective curricula is essential for preventing family violence in the future. UWCNM could support community organizations to do more prevention work in the schools, and facilitate school-community coordination such that more community-based organizations get involved in doing violence prevention work in the schools, and that schools and classrooms are covered more systematically and routinely than they are at present. In exchange, all parties would be encouraged to develop and deliver curricula beyond basic "myths and realities" presentations—curricula able to draw students in, get them engaged in re-examining their acceptance of violence, and teach alternatives to violence as a way to resolve conflicts.

- 38. *Participate in and Take Advantage of State-Level Efforts***—Because the governor has made domestic and family violence a priority of his administration, the issue has some visibility, and possibly some muscle behind it. UWCNM should be sure it knows what is happening among relevant agencies at the state level, and work locally to be sure that agencies in its service area take full advantage of state initiatives to improve community response to family violence. Examples include:
- o *Special efforts housed in the Governor's office to examine state options to reduce domestic violence statewide, including potential changes in law, policy, and practice.*
  - o *New and ongoing venues where coordination between domestic violence and child welfare service providers can occur.* Since October 2003, state CYFD officials have organized meetings among state officials responsible for responding to domestic violence and child protective services (CYFD), mental health (Department of Public Health), and sexual assault (Department of Human Services). Meetings include some domestic violence service providers (but possibly not representatives of small grassroots organizations serving specialized communities). These agencies and representatives have met monthly since the new governor took office. Their task is to ask how each agency could improve its response to family violence, separately and collectively. After

analysis, they are supposed to develop a plan to implement changes, and then work with counties to assure that the changes occur. Discussions have moved to examining possibilities of integrated funding that would support service providers to work with and for the whole family. The possibility that some “domestic violence” funding might go to “child welfare agencies” and vice versa is causing some consternation, suggesting that more work is needed to help service providers focus on the goal of what is good for families and not get lost in what is good for agency survival.

- o *Learning from and responding to institutional changes suggested by the work of child abuse and domestic violence death review teams.* For instance, the domestic violence death review team (DRT) is about to issue its third annual report. The DRT has tried to identify times and places when different actions by officials might have prevented homicide; then relevant agencies are supposed to examine their operating procedures and make appropriate changes to reduce risk. The third annual report assesses progress in making those changes, and tries to see whether they make any difference (i.e., whether they reduce domestic violence-related homicides). This type of feedback loop, with those who could make changes being held responsible by their peers for accomplishing the promised changes, can make a big difference in agency change. According to a number of DRT members interviewed for this study, participation in the DRT’s analytic process has helped them see domestic violence in terms of risk and risk reduction. They are particularly in the business of lowering the risk of death. They have learned to see that there are things their agencies can do to help victims reduce risk. Coming to this perception has made a difference in their willingness, and by transference the willingness of their agencies, to respond and to take seriously the risk of death from domestic violence. UWCNM could help establish similar review procedures for local agencies and facilitate agency change by providing coordinator and perhaps data collection resources to help with organization and feedback.
- o *State review of mental health services*—The state Department of Mental Health has begun a review of mental health services available statewide, and the nature and location of major gaps. Mental health services for victims of family violence (women and especially children) is a major gap—not simple counseling, but help for major trauma, depression, and other responses to victimization. UWCNM should be sure it knows the process of this review, perhaps contributing local information about gaps. It could also use the results for its service area to pinpoint additional areas of need and incorporate mental health providers in efforts to develop a community-wide response to family violence.
- o *Possible alliance with interests committed to reducing alcoholism*—The state has a major initiative under way to reduce alcoholism, drinking, and drinking-related automobile accidents. While misuse of alcohol and illegal drugs does not *cause* family violence, it does serve as a releaser for aggression, and thus is frequently associated with violent incidents to both intimate partners and children. Substance abuse is also confusing to law enforcement officers responding to violent incidents. It might be

possible to form an alliance with interests working to reduce alcoholism and problem drinking, and to work together on issues that will reduce violence. This might prevent the two issues from coming into conflict or creating the impression that one must “choose one” issue rather than joining forces and maximizing scarce resources. The things to avoid in pursuing this possibility are supporting a belief that substance abuse “causes” violence, or that particular groups are being targeted unfairly by an association with alcoholism.

## **OPPORTUNITIES FOR WORKING TO CHANGE CULTURAL SUPPORTS FOR VIOLENCE**

Most approaches to reducing family violence start with the violence’s criminal nature and look to the criminal justice system for solutions. A common rallying cry is to “hold offenders accountable,” which usually translates into achieving criminal convictions for misdemeanor or felony violence. No one doubts that a strong justice system response is an important element in confronting family violence. But because it must always enter the picture after the fact, it can never actually *end* violence. For that, we need to change the culture that accepts violence as “not really bad” and sometimes even “good.” Many respondents felt that the real difference UWCNM could make would be to use its stature and connections to begin to change the culture in central New Mexico that supports violence. Below we identify several avenues that UWCNM could pursue toward this ultimate end.

**39. *Help develop a major commitment from faith communities***—Culture will not change in any significant way without massive involvement of mainstream organizations. Faith communities are particularly important for reaching isolated communities of language and cultural minorities who do not and will not use agencies and programs publicly identified with family violence. The goal should be to get ecumenical associations in New Mexico committed to making family violence a major issue, for which they develop materials, give conferences and training, and so on. Most of the people we interviewed from the faith community represented individual congregations, and most of their congregations are not focused on family violence as an issue. But most of these respondents said they would become involved and work with their congregations to become more involved if the larger organizations to which they belong took up the issue, offered training, held conferences, disseminated materials, and so on. Some activity is already happening, and could be built on and expanded.

- The New Mexico Conference of Churches has pursued an emphasis on family violence, and could renew and expand it.
- The Archbishop of Las Cruces issued a pastoral letter urging significant positive changes in the ways that priests address issues of family violence, and the Archdiocese of Santa Fe has already taken significant steps through its Family Life Program. The pastoral letter called on priests to speak out from the pulpit against family violence and explain that the church does not condone or support it. A number of priests have done

so, especially during the last two Octobers during Albuquerque’s annual anti-violence week. The Archdiocese has also held workshops and whole-day conferences to educate the clergy about the cycle of violence, characteristics of perpetrators, effects on victims, stalking, and other family violence issues. Also included were discussions of the ways that some common religious messages don’t work in family violence situations, such as “forgive and forget,” “don’t break up the family” (emphasize that the violent person is the one threatening to break up the family), and that couples counseling is not appropriate. The Archdiocese also uses materials prepared by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, including a letter, “When I Call for Help” that discusses scriptural misinterpretations that lead to some of the most common religious responses. Seminarians and office staff in individual parishes are also receiving information about family violence. Some of our respondents who work with victims say that the women who come to them are reporting significantly different reactions recently from religious leaders—responses have been more helpful, supportive rather than condemning, and not stressing obedience.

- Law enforcement agencies in the Albuquerque area have a cadre of 40 religious leaders who serve as chaplains. Most serve congregations of low-income people. Each is on call for one full day (24 hours) a month, and does pastoral counseling for victims encountered by the Albuquerque Police Department and for department staff as well. Many of the calls they handle are related to domestic violence. This group meets once a month, to take care of chaplaincy business and to hear speakers on topics relevant to their work. These chaplains have extensive experience with domestic violence counseling, and could become a nucleus for discussing how to involve congregations in changing the culture from one that accepts violence to one that actively rejects it.
- o With appropriate materials and attitudes, congregations could take on this issue in important ways that would reach many people, even in isolated communities. The anti-violence message, and skills to diffuse violent situations or recognize serious risk, could be built into couples counseling and pre-marriage counseling. Congregations can also offer significant supports to family members struggling with family violence. One respondent described an extensive support program within her church, where volunteers, after appropriate training, offer support groups on several issues including domestic violence, sexual assault, divorce, and parenting; and also stress the interrelationships of these issues.
- o Congregations could focus these activities strongly on youth, to make the most difference for curtailing violence in the future. Activities should emphasize their own violence and alternatives available to express their feelings, safe and effective methods to resolve conflicts, how to develop and maintain a positive view of oneself without violence, rejecting violence as inappropriate behavior in almost all circumstances, and so on.

- 40. *Help every part of the community examine how its own beliefs and attitudes may support or condone family violence, and work to establish more supports for nonviolence***—Many cultures include ideas about who owns whom, who owes whom what, who has the right to tell whom what to do, and what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior. Far more than any intervention by police or the criminal justice system, other people “police” each other, enforcing some behaviors, tacitly supporting others, and condemning still others. The most important work anyone can do to reduce and ultimately end family violence is to help everyone, men, women, and children, move toward the idea that violence between family members is always unacceptable. Everyone affected by these attitudes and potential changes must be involved or it won’t work. It takes men with new beliefs to help other men change, just as it takes women with new beliefs to help women change. Each can also help the other, but change efforts are usually most effective when they come from “people like us.”
- 41. *Increase recognition of how family violence connects to many other social ills***—Family violence has been implicated in increased risk for child physical and sexual abuse, substance abuse, juvenile acting out and trouble with law, teen pregnancy and other health risks, running away and youth homelessness, intergenerational transmission of violence, and the public costs associated with all of these. To stimulate local commitment of resources to reducing family violence, UWCNM could commission data collection to demonstrate these linkages (and their associated costs) in central New Mexico.

## **OPPORTUNITIES TO INVOLVE COMMUNITY LEADERS AND BUSINESSES**

- 42. *Involve Civic Leadership***—Organizations such as Leadership New Mexico and Leadership Albuquerque might be enlisted to participate in community education and attitude change campaigns. Another possible linkage might be to arts organizations, which respondents said that citizens do support. For instance, it might be possible to get the symphony to do a “Family Violence Benefit Night.” Encourage the mayor, other elected officials, heads of public agencies such as law enforcement, health, mental health, and substance abuse, to make a significant commitment toward reducing family violence, including devoting resources to relevant activities.
- 43. *Involve Corporate Leaders***—As with some religious denominations, some corporations are already in the forefront of activities designed to reduce family violence. The Albuquerque area already has the structure in place for a corporate initiative on the issue of family violence issues, which could be strengthened and expanded.
- Victoria’s Secret has long been a leader on this issue, reaching out to other corporations and sponsoring a conference and initiative, “Every Workplace is a Safe Workplace.”
  - Corporate Cornerstone Companies have contributed through support for the United Way’s present Initiative Against Family Violence, the pathways videos to accompany

See *Mommy Cry*, and the present study to help guide the UWCNM's future work on family violence.

- There is a group, New Mexico Employers Against Domestic Violence Coalition, which NMCADV supports. This coalition grew out of NMCADV's project to produce and pilot its "Workplace Domestic Violence Handbook." The NMCADV resource is available to help train other corporations.
- Some local businesses have extremely comprehensive and supportive policies around employees and family violence. For example, a manufacturing company in the Albuquerque area takes an active role in training its employees, supervisors, and security personnel in identifying domestic violence issues. The company has established a clear mechanism for employees who are having family violence issues to seek help within the company through the occupational health, human resources, or security departments. No matter where the employees go to report DV issues, they trigger the same response procedures, which include activating the workplace response team; receiving information about legal remedies and personal safety; receiving referrals to a variety of outside domestic violence resources with which the company works very closely; learning safety precautions within the company and discussing safety concerns outside of the company; flexible work rules; and legal action. A health care organization has extensive training of all managers and security personnel, extensive company policies for responding to family violence experienced by employees and by clients, as well as other supports in place and regularly reviewed for their effectiveness. Businesses like these, with their comprehensive domestic violence policies, could become leaders in trying to get other businesses to follow suit. While representatives of some businesses we spoke with said their companies do relatively little around domestic violence issues in the workplace, almost all expressed an interest in doing more and a willingness to be publicly associated with a major culture change campaign.

#### **OPPORTUNITIES TO STRENGTHEN THE SMALL NONPROFIT AGENCIES THAT SUCCESSFULLY REACH ISOLATED POPULATIONS**

44. ***Strengthen Agency Infrastructures***—Many respondents noted the need to reach Hispanic, Native American, and other non-English speaking people at risk of family violence, and their general unwillingness to approach law enforcement or service organizations overtly identified with domestic violence. A number of organizations have developed from the grassroots level that get good marks from the community for their effectiveness at reaching and assisting these women and children. But of course more are needed, or the existing ones need to be able to serve more people. Yet they have difficulty attracting sufficient resources to stay afloat, and at least two have gone under in recent years.

UWCNM already has a small project, called Social Entrepreneurship, funded by the Corporate Cornerstone Companies, which assists small nonprofit agencies to develop their structures and systems through training in nonprofit management to build the skills of effective agency administrators. For example, learning to navigate the world of budgets and funds accounting, fundraising, and organizational development, showing the ability to handle and account for grants and contracts, would increase the willingness of some funders to support a small agency. Other issues might include board development (building and working effectively with a nonprofit Board of Directors, Board responsibilities and Board training, getting the most out of committee work, board-executive director relationships), establishing, managing, and sustaining an effective volunteer program, grant writing and proposal development, and establishing and managing a capital campaign. Another possibility might be to establish an “incubator” agency that could take on many of these tasks for a number of small nonprofits—for example, serving as fiscal agent, keeping the books, writing grant proposals. Expanding existing efforts through Social Entrepreneurship and possibly other mechanisms would greatly strengthen the ability of small agencies to serve family violence victims.