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U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services

COPS
COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING SERVICES
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR
Victims of Crime

POLICE
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Creating an Effective Stalking Protocol

Appendix I: Process Evaluation of the Implementation of an Anti-Stalking Protocol by the Philadelphia Police Department

A Report to the National Center for Victims of Crime and the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services by Graham Farrell,[35] Laura Wyckoff,[36] and David Weisburd.[37]

December 2001, revised January 2002.

Summary of Recommendations

The thirteen recommendations listed below are based on and need to be read in conjunction with the findings and conclusions in the body of this report. They are grouped into four areas:

Recommendations for Police Management and Training

1. Efforts to implement anti-stalking protocols in police departments should only be conducted with the full support of the chief of police.
2. Supporting video statements by chiefs, and repeated public verbal support for anti-stalking efforts, should be considered for formal inclusion as part of the model anti-stalking protocol.
3. Training should give an even greater emphasis to definitional issues than occurred in Philadelphia, particularly the facts that the crime of stalking need not necessarily involve physical violence or strangers. Tests of officer knowledge of these fundamental issues may be an appropriate component of training.
4. Consideration should be given to follow-ups and checks to ensure that all the officers targeted for training are reached.
5. Consideration should be given to the development of FAQ sheets for trainers and key players involved in implementation efforts, to address skepticism and highlight critical points about stalking.

Recommendations for Improving Crime Prevention Impact

6. Future efforts to implement anti-stalking protocols need to significantly emphasize non-traditional crime prevention measures to tackle stalking.

7. A phased implementation plan may best facilitate future efforts. Initially, 'traditional' practices, such as charging and arrests, should be the focus, using data to provide feedback on these spearhead issues. Later, additional preventive measures and tactics should be highlighted.
8. Police information technologies should be designed to allow the tracking and cross-referencing of repeat callers, locations, victims, and offenders.

Recommendations for Inter-Agency Work

9. Judges, other court officials, and representatives from other local agencies that encounter stalking, such as housing and social services, should be considered for inclusion in multi-agency groups seeking to prevent stalking.
10. Consider including court officials and officials from other agencies in training sessions relating to stalking, perhaps as attendees at training for police officers.
11. Non-police agencies should be consulted as early as possible during the process of tailoring a model protocol to suit local needs.

Recommendations for Future Research

12. An impact evaluation, or series of impact evaluations, should identify the components of the protocol that most effectively reduce stalking and address the needs of victims.
13. A nationally representative survey of police officer knowledge and views relating to stalking should be commissioned by the Department of Justice. Should the findings concur with those of the Philadelphia study, the next logical step would be the development of a national program of research on stalking.

I. Introduction

This is an executive summary of a report constituting a process evaluation of the implementation of an anti-stalking protocol by the Philadelphia Police Department (Farrell, Wyckoff and Weisburd 2001). That report contains additional material, including a review of the literature relating to stalking and police responses, full details of the qualitative and quantitative methodologies, supplementary background information, extensive analysis and quotations from the in-depth interviews with agency officials and other qualitative fieldwork, and more comprehensive coverage of the study's quantitative surveys that are touched on only briefly herein. We are grateful to the many people who cooperated with and facilitated this research in a range of capacities.[38]

By far the most important finding of the process evaluation is that an anti-stalking protocol was put into operation by the Philadelphia Police Department under the advice and guidance of the National Center for Victims of Crime. This was no mean feat and provides a firm basis on which to build for the benefit of stalking victims and society as a whole. However, since the report does not whitewash the difficulties encountered in Philadelphia, readers should be careful not to overlook the positive contribution made by this important demonstration project while pondering the problems and imperfections in the process. The key recommendations are that the efforts begun in Philadelphia should be extended to include impact evaluations, and that tactics to prevent stalking should be refined and developed.

II. Research Design and Method

A range of research techniques tapped into a variety of sources of information, providing multiple and overlapping process indictors from a variety of angles and perspectives. The research had three main research strategies: qualitative in-depth interviews with agency officials, observational fieldwork, and quantitative surveys. The research was conducted between May 2000 and October 2001.

In-depth interviews with police officers were conducted in three of Philadelphia's six police Divisions: the Northeast Division, where implementation of the protocol took place, plus two other Divisions for comparative purposes. Interviewees included captains, detectives, victim assistance officers, patrol officers, and operations room officers–that is, the key players involved in handling stalking calls and cases. In-depth interviews were conducted with officials from the District Attorney's Office, local victim service organizations, and the advisors to the implementation work who were employed as consultants by the National Center for Victims of Crime. A semi-structured interview instrument was tailored to specific interviewees. Over 100 persons were interviewed in depth. Most interviews were taped, and typically transcribed by a third party. Additional observations, comments, feedback, analysis, and interpretation by the field researchers were normally written-up on the same day or days immediately following fieldwork. Observation at various meetings and ride-alongs in police patrol cars provided additional insight into the implementation as well as into police working practices, and fieldwork notes were developed into short written reports that informed the main report. Individuals and agencies are anonymous in the report where appropriate.

The complementary quantitative aspects of this evaluation consisted of two surveys of police officers. Over 2000 surveys were completed for the project. The first survey was a training evaluation survey given to officers who attended the stalking awareness training relating to the implementation of the anti-stalking protocol. The second was a survey of officers' knowledge and views on stalking, conducted at police roll-calls in the Implementation Division and a comparison Division. A key aim of the demonstration project was to raise police officer awareness of stalking, since recognizing the problem was held to be a prerequisite to the development of an appropriate response. Utilizing a quasi-experimental design (before and after training, with a comparison Division), the survey allowed a comparison of aspects of officers' knowledge and views before and after training, facilitating the development of indicators relating to this part of the implementation process. The focus of the evaluation was thus the implementation process, including officer knowledge, views, and practices, rather than of the impact upon levels of stalking in Philadelphia.

III. Key Findings

This section first describes key findings relating to police officers' knowledge, views, and practices prior to the protocol. This is followed by insights, from various parties, into the development and introduction of the protocol, and views on the protocol. It then describes findings relating to training and other aspects of implementation, and subsequent knowledge, views, and practices of police officers. Frequent quotations are included as empirical evidence where they illustrate, describe, or capture the essence of a particular argument or issue. Key survey findings are integrated into the body of the text.

1. Police Knowledge, Views, and Practices Prior to the Protocol

Prior to the protocol, police officer knowledge of stalking, its legal definition, and the appropriate police response, was limited (see also Farrell, Weisburd and Wyckoff 2000 for survey findings). The crime of stalking was, for the most part, not recognized by police officers. It was therefore was not viewed as a problem. The following statements, from two patrol officers and a captain respectively, encapsulated the situation:

> "I don't recall anything being given to us about stalking. I don't know what the definition of stalking is. It's sad…there is no definition out there. We may have briefly gone over it in the academy. . . . I don't even know if the detectives will be able to tell you what stalking is. As far as I know I've never seen anyone arrested for that. I don't know if it's taken seriously."

"We really don't have cases where we say 'Oh, this is stalking.' "

"Stalking is pretty much fairly new. I only say that from my own experience . . . as far as stalking goes we are probably where we were with domestic violence five years ago. . . I know of only a couple of stalking cases in the last three years or in my whole career."

As these interviewees indicated, police officers reported that there had been little or no previous training relating to stalking. A captain reported some training but implied it was brief and not particularly memorable:

"I do remember training on stalking . . . I think when it was introduced to the crime codes, and I don't remember when that was. But I don't remember any follow up, or any specific departmental memorandum regarding stalking."

A representative from the District Attorney's Office noted the need to train police patrol officers on the collection of information at the first response to stalking:

"The patrol officer is important to me when I get to trial. When I ask "What was the demeanor of the victim or the defendant?," "Where were the kids?" . . . those [the patrol officers] are the people who are going to make the assessment, who are going to make the decisions.. . . So why not arm them with a little bit of understanding? So when they have to integrate themselves into the scene they can move it closer to conviction, or understanding and prevention, or any of these goals."

It was evident from the pre-training interviews and surveys that there was broad scope for improving police officers' knowledge and practices relating to stalking.

2. The Development of the Anti-Stalking Protocol

A model anti-stalking protocol was developed by the National Center for Victims of Crime. It drew upon a wide range of sources, involved consultation between the National Center for Victims of Crime and nationally-recognized experts, and went through many stages of draft and revision. It was a pioneering effort–arguably the first comprehensive protocol of its kind–notwithstanding that revision may be made to the model in the future, as part of the ongoing learning process.

The implementation in Philadelphia overlapped with the closing stages of the development of the model protocol, and so the model protocol was revised as lessons were learned, and with input from those

involved. Consequently, the protocol adopted by the Philadelphia Police Department was very similar in form to the model protocol. In practice, this evolved as a practical means of testing and refining the model protocol, as well as allowing the police department to 'buy-in' and acquire ownership of the protocol. The National Center for Victims of Crime employed two consultant professors, each with extensive experience of policing, to act as advisors to the implementation process.

The importance of top-level police support for the project cannot be over-stated. It was clear that not just the formal support, but the public appearance of support from the Commissioner, played a key role. One of the consultant advisors to the implementation noted the significance of this factor:

> *"Every time we've had a meeting [the Commissioner] made a point just to walk through the room to say 'Hi' to [us]. That alone [means] everybody in the police department [knows] we got the official blessing, and [that] this means he knows what's going on.... [T]here was never a time he didn't come in. Like he's walking through, just passing through . . . Because he [the Commissioner] did that there were no other stumbling blocks in this process."*

A police inspector, head of the Research and Planning Unit, was assigned responsibility for the management of the project from police headquarters. This assignment of responsibility was important, since the Inspector served as a direct link between the Implementation Division and Headquarters, ensuring accountability as well as sending a strong message that the project was taken seriously at Headquarters. At one particularly critical juncture, the importance of this role was evident, when the Inspector served as a champion for the project. This occurred during the first training session when all departmental detectives working on domestic violence, and all departmental Victim Assistance Officers, were present. When an aspect of the protocol was criticized by detectives, and a murmur crept around the room suggesting that this part of the protocol was unacceptable, the Inspector interrupted the training session and clarified, in no uncertain terms, that officers would do what they were told and that the protocol was the official line.

3. Views on the Protocol

Reactions to the protocol document were, for the most part, extremely favorable–indicated not least by the fact that it was adopted by one of the nation's largest police departments. As always however, some views were mixed, and reservations were particularly expressed in relation to the potential difference between theory and practice. The

full spectrum of views on the protocol is captured by the statements below.

A representative from the District Attorney's Office was extremely positive:

> *"My initial impression when I sat down and read it is that it is incredibly inclusive, so that it's clear that folks talked about and included every aspect of stalking that I've seen."*

A representative from a local victim services organization expressed mixed views:

> *"On paper it looks good. But I think [in practice] it's ridiculous for people to do all the things they have to do. If it's realistic it's good –I just don't think it is."*

A representative from the police command staff was cynical about the practicality of the protocol:

> *"To do all of the things I saw on there [the protocol document], you would hope you only got one or two cases a week. In reality, we would have to triple our manpower to do all the things. Very unrealistic."*

A police captain from elsewhere in Philadelphia who had consulted with the domestic violence detectives who had attended the stalking awareness training was blunt on the issue:

> *"A lot of these things are unreasonable in a big organization like this."*

It was evident that, depending on the perspective and role of the observer, the ambitious nature of the protocol could be viewed as either a strength or a weakness.

4. Stalking Awareness Training for Police Officers

Training of police officers took place on two days, April 25, 2001 and May 2, 2001.

The first training session was a day-long session dedicated to victim assistance officers and domestic violence detectives from across the department, and was attended by officials from local victim service organizations, the district attorney's office, and other observers. The second was a series of one-hour sessions aiming to train all police officers in the Northeast Division where the protocol was to be implemented. The protocol officially went 'live' on the day after the second training session.

There was almost universal agreement from attendees from various agencies, as well as from trainees, that the training given to officers was of good quality. It was held to be well prepared, of substantive and useful content, and well presented. Both the style and the substance of the training were captured by a representative from the District Attorney's Office:

> "The style of presentation was wonderful. The subject matter was extremely inclusive. The tapes and examples were great–the more visual aids the better–brought it to life. Made [it] a sensory experience.
>
> I thought the training itself was well researched, well presented and well dressed. The right accessories. What can I add? I don't know, I don't think there was much. There was nothing I felt was missing."

A police Victim Assistance Officer noted the awareness-raising aspects of the training:

> "It was like a wake up call to look for it more. Try to get hold of it. Get a better grasp."

Although impressions of the training were largely positive, some commentators thought there could be a change in emphasis, while still others remained cynical about the subject. One agency official thought the link between stalking and domestic violence required greater emphasis to break the stereotype:

> "I thought the training was good …[But]… I wanted to see more focus on the domestic violence aspect of it … that's where I think most issues are. I think in the family violence cases they [the police] are not attuned to think this way. … I think police think it is the Hollywood version of stalking."

A patrol officer and a detective from different training sessions appeared each suggested that the definition of stalking was too broad, which could indicate skepticism or that the subject matter had not necessarily been understood:

> "According to [the] new training, almost everyone is now stalking. Everything that used to be harassment or threat or anything is now stalking."
>
> "The way they phrase stalking–it just about covers every one of the jobs we've ever had. We would have stalking constantly, because they really left it really wide open."

A representative survey of trainees was conducted with 372 police officers as they completed the one-hour training sessions. Of those surveyed, 86% thought the training was needed, and 70 percent thought it provided them with new information. Trainees were asked sets of questions relating to the course, the material, the trainers, and on various aspects of definition. On a five-point scale, most trainees typically gave the course a score of good or very good in every instance, feeling that the objectives were clearly stated (87 percent), the material well organized (84 percent), visuals were used effectively (75 percent), and that there was ample time for participation (83 percent). Eighty two percent of trainees gave the training course an overall rating of good or very good. With regards to the quality of the trainers, over 80 percent of trainees ranked the trainers as good or very good on each of five measures, and 91 percent of those responding scored trainers as good or very good on an 'overall' measure.

The legal definition of stalking appeared to be complex for trainees to understand. It seems likely that this is because the definition of stalking is more complex than what people expect from their stereotypical or even 'common sense' perception of the crime. The training emphasized definitional issues. However, when surveyed on the substance of what they had learned, police officers demonstrated difficulties with the definition of stalking. Only 11 percent of those surveyed were able to correctly answer a multiple-response question on the definition. Many incorrectly checked the options stating the stalking must involve strangers or that physical violence must take place. While many respondents knew that emotional harm to the victim and repetition of the act must occur, few knew that these two items alone were the minimum criteria for stalking to have occurred. An optimistic interpretation of the findings would be that the multiple-response options confused officers. To be conservative, we would therefore recommend that future such surveys utilize several different measures to study definitional issues.

We conclude from the survey and the subsequent in-depth interviews and fieldwork, that it is insufficient for officers to rely on common sense to understand and define stalking, and that this leads them to an incorrect stereotypical definition. We therefore recommend that future training sessions incorporate an even greater emphasis on definition, perhaps including some simple testing of officers or other means to try to ensure that the requisite facts are retained.

One agency official asserted that, although the Philadelphia training had been high quality, that this did not necessarily mean the same quality could be replicated elsewhere:

".. [The instructor] developed the training piece. It's one thing to take this model, but to synthesize it into your own training, into your own policy, you need that extra [ability]. That alone is a major accomplishment. I don't know how, when you've got 19157 police departments in the United States, how that would be done in each police department, or if that's doable at all."

The training in the Philadelphia Police Department did not achieve full coverage of the target group of police officers. Two independent quantitative indicators (the exit survey of officers, plus the subsequent follow-up survey) suggested that around 70 percent of police officers in the implementation division received training. The subsequent qualitative research also offered supporting evidence when several of the patrol officers selected for in-depth interviews were found not to have attended the training, and the research team was obliged to increase the number of qualitative interviews to account for this factor.

The fact that a significant proportion of police officers, perhaps as many as a third, did not receive training on the anti-stalking protocol, could reasonably be expected to dilute the impact and quality of the anti-stalking effort. Future training efforts should consider means to increase the coverage among the target group, through routine follow-ups and checks.

5. Local Victim Service Organizations and the District Attorney's Office

The demonstration project was clearly police-led, since it was the police who held primary responsibility for implementing the protocol. The involvement of other agencies, particularly local victim service organizations and the District Attorney's Office, was encouraged since it was recognized that the protocol would flourish with inter-agency cooperation. These agencies were informed of the process and invited to participate in the implementation of the anti-stalking protocol. As noted above, these agencies were very supportive of the protocol and its substance. Together with this positive view however, more than one agency official expressed the view that they would have expected to have been consulted earlier in the process. One agency official captured both these viewpoints:

"I think they should have included the DA's Office and advocacy groups much sooner than they did. I think the result is good though, I don't know if I would have done it drastically different. I think that at the point we were involved, everything was already scheduled–you know, with the training dates. It was a little late in the game."

Another observer was direct:

> *"[It took a] good effort to get this thing [the implementation] moving as quickly as possible. . . . They put the model in and they got it going, but now when they realize the model should include outsiders . . . after everything was done and the model has been developed, they called in the outsiders. The outsiders get offended. So its not hindsight from that alone to see how [other agencies] reacted to be invited after the facts."*

The possible tardiness of the involvement of other agencies notwithstanding, the quality of the subsequent collaborative effort was also of note. It is not uncommon in multi-agency crime-related partnerships for the police to dominate. This occurs for various reasons, often reflecting greater resources, a clear mandate to act against crime, and an independent and direct approach to tasks. In Philadelphia, an official who had been impressed by the protocol document and the police training sessions subsequently expressed reservations about the aspect of inter-agency collaboration:

> *"I underestimated the difficulties in finding a partnership with an institution like the police. There is a huge cultural gap with dealing with the police. How do we approach them? When do we call them? Who do we talk to?"*

Differing working practices, as well as widely varying resources–notably the police having more than other agencies–were acknowledged to make collaboration difficult:

> *"We tend to be less hierarchical [than the police]. . . We need to figure out the pieces of the police department and where we need to make connections. . . . We recognize that we need to make connections in their training bureau. . . . in the commissioner's office, crisis centre, the head of detectives, the head of patrol, the internal affairs, the special victims unit. . .the Victim Assistance Officer, the officers that work with the DAs, the family violence and sexual assault unit . . . I don't think it's out fault or the police's fault. The [police] force has over 7,000 people. We are trying to do what we can. It's time consuming and difficult."*

While the issues raised here are far from new, and there is a growing literature on such issues as they relate to inter-agency collaboration, this does not detract from their significance. It would be unlikely for any collaborative effort to overcome all such discrepancies, and achieving a partnership with the least-worst inter-agency conflict may be the best that can realistically be hoped for. However, the evidence would suggest that involvement of non-police agencies at an earlier stage of the demonstration project may have been beneficial.

6. Courts, the Judiciary, and Other Community Agencies

Several interviewees noted that judges could contribute to the anti-stalking effort, provided that they (and other court officials) receive appropriate training. The popular image of the "all-knowing judge" was belied by comments from representatives of local victim service agencies and the District Attorney's Office indicating that some judges do not always understand the issues:

> *"We know what the abusers say when they get into court. They make themselves very pitiful. They make the judges buy into it. . . . [B]ecause judges are go-getter . . . they don't understand somebody learning survival strategies that involve rolling over [a reference to the possibility that some victims are passive]. . . . It is very hard to get people to understand that picture."*

> *"I've seen judges listen to the stalking cases. How do you convey that she moved out, and [that, when] he leaves a box of candy in the back of her car, that is really scary to her? And that she wants the law to do something about it? It's not the punching. It's not the physical stuff. So it's harder to see."*

In a similar fashion, a police Victim Assistance Officer astutely captured the fact that prosecutions deriving from police work ultimately depend upon the decisions of judges. This simple observation suggests that key players at each stage of the criminal justice system must be equally practiced at dealing with stalking cases:

> *"We are not the judicial system. We put them in, but we don't let them out."*

The possibility of including court officials to a greater extent, at various stages of a multi-agency process relating to an anti-stalking protocol, is something that future efforts might consider.

It is also possible that anti-stalking efforts could benefit from the inclusion of a broader range of community agencies. Although this was not directly tackled as part of this process evaluation, future efforts might consider the possibility of involving other community agencies. Housing departments, for example, often have civil remedies to various types of crime (including threats of and actual evictions) that might be readily adapted to stalking cases, and integrated as part of a protocol. Other agencies such as social services would be potentially fruitful as a source of information regarding stalking cases. In some instances, existing inter-agency partnerships focusing on domestic violence might be a useful focal point for the introduction of an inter-agency approach to anti-stalking efforts.

**7. Police Views, Knowledge and Practices after the
Protocol Went 'Live'**

After the anti-stalking protocol "went live" in the Northeast Division
of the Philadelphia Police Department, both the qualitative and
quantitative aspects of the research conducted prior to the protocol,
were replicated. There was a year between the two sets of surveys and
interviews. This allowed some comparison of the knowledge, views,
and practices of police officers from before and after the training and
the introduction of the protocol. The views of officials from other
agencies were also sought.

A representative from the District Attorney's Office gave an extremely
positive indication that the work being undertaken would prove
beneficial, stating

> *"Since training, there were some wonderfully worded probable cause affidavits
> and arrest warrant affidavits. And they included a lot of the training and
> protocol steps. [The Assistant DA] has seen an amazing
> improvement…[The Assistant DA] thought one affidavit was beautiful–it
> included all things from the training, and was worded well."*

Perhaps reflecting their different roles in the implementations efforts,
the local victim services organization did not appear to have the same
experience, with a representative noting

> *"It is hard to look at the protocol and figure out what the resources are [that
> will do the tasks], how they can handle it. I haven't seen any ripples [positive
> effects] from it. . . . I don't think I have had any cases from Northeast."*

Two months after the introduction of the protocol, there was
preliminary evidence from the Implementation Division that the
number of stalking-related charges had increased. For this component
of the research, a quasi-experimental retrospective analysis was used
to investigate the departmental charge data. Charges in the two-
months after the protocol was introduced were compared to charges
for the same two-month period the year before, and change in the
Northeast Implementation Division was compared to change in the
remainder of the police department. This analysis showed that, while
the volume of charges in the remainder of Philadelphia had remained
stable, the number in Northeast had increased by seventy percent.
However, the short time periods involved meant that the numbers
involved were relatively small and were insufficient to state that the
difference was statistically significant after a chi-squared test although
the difference was close to significant at the 10 percent level.

A measure of increased stalking charges may not necessarily be an unambiguously positive indicator. One police captain implied that it need not necessarily reflect new cases that would previously go unrecognized, if stalking was an add-on charge to existing cases. The implication could be that administrative rather than more substantive change could inflate the number of stalking charges:

> *"I talked to my domestic team–He says we've been adding it [a stalking charge] on. In [terms of the number of] cases, it has been only a few weeks now, but they have been adding it on [to the list of charges]. I don't know about beforehand. They have been adding it on as an additional charge."*

Although beyond the scope of the present study, future research efforts might examine the extent to which increases in charges for stalking are due to charges that are added to existing cases, or due to the identification of 'new' stalking cases that would not previously have resulted in charges for any type of crime. While both are positive indicators, it would be hoped that an initial spearhead would see an increase in the add-ons, followed by an increase in 'new case' charges.

Police Victim Assistance Officers

Victim Assistance Officers (VAOs) handled the reports on stalking in the implementation division, but held mixed views on whether the quality of reports from patrol officers had increased. Note again the importance of the quality of the patrol officer reports since, as the District Attorney's Office had noted, these reports can play a prominent role in prosecutions. At a group interview, contradictory views were presented in the following exchange between two VAOs:

> VAO1: *"They [patrol officers] have to ask who, what, when, where, and how? Have to ask these things. We have some officers that will continually write the same report from the day they get on [the job] to the end. [The report] [d]oesn't say what was said or what was done, etcetera. Even after the training [on stalking] we get reports like that."*

> VAO2: *"But I have noticed the reports have changed and are getting better."*

At least one VAO recited an instance where it was clear that the stalking awareness training had improved the VAO response to a stalking case:

> *"[I told the victim] to be aware, to get a security system, put her car in the garage. She has a huge fence. Sensor lights. [I told her to] Make the neighbors aware. Her coworkers are aware. [I told her to] Take security measures. She came to me before the training. The training was very helpful."*

Another VAO seemed to justify previous practices relating to stalking by shifting the 'blame' (for not recognizing stalking) to the victim. The following quote could be seen as ironic in the context of the fact that, even after the training, a firm grasp of the definition of stalking still seemed to elude many police officers:

> *"it's that the victims aren't relaying it properly. Maybe they don't know the actual meaning of the word stalking."*

However, other VAOs suggested that their working practices were not significantly changed by the protocol. They suggested that, after patrol officers, the primary changes in the manner that the police would handle cases came via the work of the domestic violence detectives, who would liaise with the District Attorney's Office:

> *"I am not doing that much different than I have for five years. The difference is, what are they [the detectives] doing up there?"*

Police Detectives

Changes were clearly beginning to occur in both the awareness and working practices of the detectives in the Implementation Division, and in detectives in other divisions who had attended the training. Again however, the nature of the change was not wholly unambiguous. To retain individual anonymity, the following quotations reflect views from detectives from different divisions, since all had attended the stalking awareness training.

Some detectives clearly felt that the training had been beneficial and had directly influenced working practices, as suggested by the following:

> *". . . now I look into it [stalking] a lot more. It makes you more aware. The training helped me. I keep the folder, I have the folder. Now I can get the complainant in here. We charged before with stalking, but now I think it is a little more awareness."*

Another detective noted that they now had no problem or 'price' with making arrests for stalking:

> *"I just had a phone call. I arrested her husband [previously], and he was charged with stalking, and put on probation. And now he is out stalking her again. And then I have to talk to the complainant and we have to go through the whole arrest process. Stalking–we have no price about [problem with] arresting someone for stalking, and we do it."*

Evidence from this detective suggested stalking charges were being introduced:

> ". . . He never assaulted her [previously]. And then that night, he did assault her. And that went to the [other police] division. The charge is terroristic threats and stalking. They are all misdemeanors. That way if he does it again, it can become a felony when he is convicted of it. And now she has a protection order."

One detective, like the VAO who blamed victims for not recognizing stalking, also deflected criticism from police officers by finding fault with the victims:

> "But she's had an off-and-on relationship with him. In her sense she didn't feel she was being stalked. When you think of stalking you think of textbook-type things–things you see in Hollywood. Maybe our complainants aren't smart enough to realize this–'Oh, I'm being stalked.'"

What to do with skepticism?

It was clear from interviews with those involved with the implementation, that ensuring uniformity of practice among detectives could be extremely difficult. Since the detectives dealing with stalking typically worked two to a division, it was observed that a single detective, who rejected stalking as a priority for policing, could significantly affect the workings of that division. The relevant division and detectives are anonymous here, to avoid identification of those involved, but the significance of the problem for effective implementation of an anti-stalking protocol should not be under-estimated. Skepticism can be contagious. The views of one cynical and hardened officer can spread and influence the views and perceptions of colleagues. This possibility was suggested in the following statement from an agency official, where the influence of a seasoned detective's skepticism was evident:

> "I think [the detective] is really smart. [The detective] may be cynical, might be burnt out, but from our first meetings [the detective's] assessment has been proven right. I looked at those [case reports] . . . and stalking is nonexistent."

Note that this viewpoint of the 'nonexistence' of stalking in Philadelphia is empirically contradicted by the evidence provided by police officers who were dealing with stalking cases as well as the fact that the research team examined a sample of a dozen stalking cases files from each of the police department and the District Attorney's Office. However, it highlights the possibility that some police officers or agency officials do not take stalking seriously, that continual

monitoring of detectives may be necessary, and that those responsible for implementing anti-stalking efforts should be forewarned of the possibility of skepticism. In one interview, it was suggested that offenders committing stalking offenses deserved sympathy since they often did not realize the severity or impact of their stalking behavior.

Those responsible for implementing an anti-stalking protocol need to be prepared to tackle seasoned police officers, and even officials from other agencies, who remain cynical. As a means of overcoming this problem, one of the consultant advisors to the implementation suggested that local data collection, which would allow the provision of evidence to cynical officers, would arm implementers with locally-relevant empirical evidence on the extent and nature of the stalking problem. We would recommend such preliminary data collection exercises be considered for adoption in jurisdictions where anti-stalking measures are to be adopted. We would also recommend (detailed further below) that trainers and implementers be armed with a list of FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) that directly address the types of stereotypical views raised by cynics.

Police Officer Survey Findings

The survey of police officers was conducted before and after the introduction of the anti-stalking protocol, in the Implementation Division and a Comparison Division. It was arguably not a completely controlled quasi-experimental design since VAOs and domestic violence detectives in the Comparison Division also received training. Any possible 'tainting' of the results caused by this factor would tend to make the findings more conservative, that is, to make the extent of change appear less. In reality, this threat to validity of the pre-post comparison would be expected to have little impact upon the views of patrol officers, whose views are analyzed here.

The surveys presented here were conducted at roll-calls, where 891 surveys were completed of which 779 were from patrol officers. The surveys had a 99.8 response rate since, while there were no refusals, there were two spoilt surveys. Administration was conducted by police roll-call supervisors, with monitoring by the researchers. The survey was short, taking officers approximately five minutes to complete. Consequently, there was minimal disruption of police department staff, and cooperation with the survey was excellent. The end result was a large sample size obtained at relatively small research cost. The brevity of the survey meant that data preparation, data entry, and cleaning remained feasible within the small-scale of the evaluation exercise.

After the training, at least one survey indicator suggested that police officers in the Implementation Division were significantly more aware of issues relating to stalking. Prior to the training, 24 percent of officers in the Northeast Implementation Division reported having been involved with a stalking case in the last five working shifts. This increased to 35 percent in the post-training survey, whereas there was no change in the Comparison Division. The difference was statistically significant (Chi-square=4.652; p=.031; d.f.=1). Although the increase of 13 percent in absolute terms could appear relatively small, it needs to be viewed as a relative figure. The implicit goal of 100 percent of officers reporting involvement in stalking cases is an unrealistically hypothetical maximum. The change might be preferably viewed as a 43 percent increase in the proportion of officers reporting involvement in a stalking case in the last five working shifts, and thus arguably denoting a far greater awareness of the crime of stalking. There was no comparable or significant change in the proportion of officers reporting involvement in domestic disputes.

Prior to training, 17 percent or almost one in five patrol officers in Northeast Division did not know that stalking was a crime in Pennsylvania, a figure which dropped to 4 percent among trained officers. However, officers in Northeast who had not been trained reported similar increases in knowledge of this issue, although there was no change in the level of knowledge in the comparison division. An interpretation consistent with the data would be that it reflects an awareness of the anti-stalking effort in the Implementation Division, even among officers who did not attend the training sessions.

With respect to knowledge of the definition of stalking, the results were inconclusive. Although there was an increase in the correctly identified definition from 13 percent to 19 percent among trained officers, the increase was to 22 percent among officers in the Implementation Division who had not attended training. Further, although there was no change in the level of correct responses in the Comparison Division, the level of knowledge in the Comparison Division was the same as that in the Implementation Division after the training. No explanation for this phenomenon is presented here. However, the finding that only one in five patrol officers had a firm grasp of the definition of stalking (as found in the exit-survey evaluating officer training) reinforces the need for additional emphasis upon definitional issues in future training efforts.

The definitional issues raised by the survey of officers were not necessarily restricted to the police. One official did not appear to note the differences in definition between stalking and domestic violence, overlooking the fact that physical violence need not be present for the crime of stalking to occur as well as the issue of stalking between non-intimates:

"And I think what's missing in this whole discussion about stalking and domestic violence is 'Why do we want a stalking response team?' Why don't we have a domestic violence response team? Not a stalking response team. If there are any problems that are uncovered now with stalking they are really problems that are uncovered in response to domestic violence. That's the real issue here."

Police officers were asked about their perception of the departmental response to stalking. Trained officers were more likely to report that they thought the response was good or excellent (49.5 percent) compared to officers before the training (40.3 percent), officers who did not attend the training (38.1 percent), and officers in the comparison division both before and after the training (44.7 percent and 39.6 percent respectively). However, the extent of change would suggest that, of officers who did not rate the departmental response as at least good prior to the training (60 percent), only one in six developed a more positive perception as a result of the training.

Officers were asked about the frequency with which they filed reports relating to stalking in the last month. There was little indication of change among trained officers. The increase from 18.8 percent to 20.9 percent of officers who filed a stalking report could easily reflect natural variation in the data, as confirmed by variations in the levels of filing of domestic dispute and harassment reports. When officers were presented with scenarios that were possible stalking cases, one involving a stranger and one involving an acquaintance, the most significant changes were notable in relation to stalking by an acquaintance. Prior to the training, 46.1 percent of officers in Northeast Division reported that they would have recorded the 'acquaintance' scenario as a stalking case. This rose to 71.3 percent among officers who attended training. However, it also rose to 63.8 percent among officers from Northeast Division who did not attend training, and there was an increase from 54.7 percent to 64 percent in the Comparison Division. This suggests an overall increase in filing of stalking cases across Philadelphia, with the effect most concentrated among those officers who received training. The departmental wide effect may have been due to the fact that this was a relatively high profile demonstration project involving the public support of the Commissioner.

Both the qualitative and quantitative indicators provide evidence of some increase in awareness of stalking and knowledge of stalking, among police officers who were trained. It was also evident however, that the extent and nature of change was less than might ideally have been hoped for: Where change could be detected it was often relatively small in size and scope. Perhaps the most encouraging indicator related to the increase in stalking charges discussed earlier,

even though that may reflect administrative add-on charges (this is not to say that these are a bad thing) to existing criminal cases rather than the detection of 'new' stalking cases that would have otherwise gone unnoticed by the police.

8. Subsequent Views from Other Officials

Earlier in this report, views of officials were reported which suggested that they felt the protocol looked good on paper, but could prove difficult in practice. Two months after the protocol had gone live, a different official reinforced this view, noting that there seemed to have been few if any cases where tactics other than arrest or charging could be introduced:

> *"Philadelphia [police department] has really been fantastic. Everything moved along. But in terms of the model [protocol], they did not need to use the model for a safety plan or anything else yet."*

Views on the degree of specialization required within the police department to tackle stalking were mixed. The possibility of developing specialized stalking response teams, in fitting with the police department's frequent practice of developing specialized units, had been mooted. One official was clearly skeptical about the requirement:

> *"I spoke with [a representative from the National Center for Victims of Crime] who said [that their report would be] saying 'Set up a stalking response team'. That's ridiculous. Are you going to have a robbery response team? Are you going to have a larceny response team?"*

Difficulties in gaining momentum in the implementation of anti-stalking tactics may have been related to issues relating to the identification of stalking. After two months of implementation, an official observed that measures other than arrest and charging had not yet been used:

> *". . . . . [The police department] have safety plan, a cocooning process. . . they know what that's about. But they don't have an example to put it in place yet."*

It is difficult to reconcile this official's statement with the earlier statements from VAOs and detectives who reported that they had been working on stalking cases, as well as the District Attorney's Office who reported receiving some improved case reports. The statement is perhaps cast in a more revealing light when the official

noted that, since there had not yet been the opportunity to test the range of preventive interventions, the possibility existed that the range of measures might not be effective in preventing stalking:

> *"So someday down the line, if it's there [the protocol], and we use it the first time, and we find out it's the stupidest thing we can think of."*

This statement highlights the need for, a future evaluation should assess the impact of the preventive components of the protocol.

The consultants to the National Center for Victims of Crime reported difficulties instituting the protocol's preventive aspects other than improved efforts to increase arrests and charges for stalking. Thus, although progress was clearly made, it cannot be said with certainty that the degree of change achieved was sufficient to alter police practices in the longer term. Perhaps, however, the two month implementation period was simply too short and further time was needed to establish the less-traditional preventive tactics.

IV. Conclusions and Recommendations

Much was achieved in the process of launching the new anti-stalking protocol in Philadelphia. A significant amount of officer training, some evidence of greater awareness and identification of stalking, preliminary indication of increased stalking charges against offenders, and potential for the introduction of a range of new preventive measures, including safety planning for victims, were all apparent. However, notwithstanding the clearly documented evidence of stalking, there was still no routine use by the police of less traditional preventive tactics two months after the protocol was rolled out. (Progress may have been made subsequently, but a longer-term assessment would be needed to ascertain this.) It is therefore arguable that, at the end of the evaluation period, full implementation of the policy had still not taken place. If methodologically feasible, an impact evaluation should be undertaken in Philadelphia to establish the effectiveness of the protocol in preventing stalking and, perhaps, identify other helpful tactics. However, it would not be appropriate to assess the impact of the protocol until all its preventive aspects are implemented. If an impact evaluation is not methodologically feasible in Philadelphia since much has already changed there, then one should be conducted in another department.

Thirteen key recommendations emerged as a result of the findings and conclusions presented in this report. They are grouped into four broad categories.

Recommendations for Police Management and Training

Police departments have a strict hierarchical structure. As a result, the actual and perceived support of the highest-ranking officers is essential to effect change in departmental policy and practice. In the case of stalking, which is often dismissed as a trivial offense, such high level support must be patently visible to all officers within the department. *Recommendation 1*: Future efforts to implement anti-stalking protocols in police departments should be conducted only with the support of the chief of police. *Recommendation 2*: Supporting video statements by chiefs, and repeated public verbal support for anti-stalking efforts, might be considered for formal inclusion as part of the model anti-stalking protocol.

The crime of stalking can be both complex to comprehend and readily dismissed by police officers and others. Although the Philadelphia training did emphasize definitional issues, these often appear disarmingly simple. The survey suggested that many officers did not full attain a clear understanding of the nature of the crime - most notably the fact that physical violence need not occur, and strangers need not be involved. *Recommendation 3*: Future training should give an even greater emphasis to definitional issues, particularly the facts that the crime of stalking need not necessarily involve physical violence or strangers. Tests of officer knowledge of these fundamental issues may be an appropriate component of training.

Approximately seven of every ten police officers attended training from the division in which it was intended to train all officers. *Recommendation 4*: Consideration should be given to follow-ups and checks to ensure that all the officers targeted for training on the protocol are reached.

Initial and continuing skepticism about stalking, its extent and significance as a crime is not uncommon. It may persist even in the face of training, both among police officers and officials from other agencies. Statements and questions including as 'This is not a problem here'; 'This is not really a crime'; Where is the evidence?'; 'We should be addressing more serious crimes'; 'We have a response to domestics, so why do we need this?' 'Stalking is just the same as domestic violence'' 'We have been doing this for years!'; 'Isn't this a waste of my time?' are likely to arise. Such skepticism may spread within the

department if it is not specifically addressed. *Recommendation 5*: Consideration should be given to the development of FAQ sheets for trainers and key players involved in implementation efforts, to address skepticism and the range of frequently asked questions and statements that it can produce.

Recommendations for Enhancing Crime Prevention Impact

Introducing nontraditional tactics into police work, as demonstrated in Philadelphia, can be difficult. Whereas the police may readily adapt charging and, perhaps, even arrest practices, other crime prevention measures such as safety planning, are often significantly outside the range of their normal working practices. *Recommendation 6*: Future efforts to implement anti-stalking protocols should significantly emphasize non-traditional crime prevention measures to tackle stalking. *Recommendation 7*: A phased implementation plan should be adopted to facilitate the institution of an anti-stalking protocol. First, traditional practices, such as charging and arrests, should be the focus, using data to provide feedback on these spearhead issues. Later, additional preventive measures and tactics should be highlighted.

The was some evidence that the recognition of stalking might be improved through improved information technology designed to link repeated calls from the same victim, the same location, and involving the same offenders. Efforts to integrate the tracing of repeat instances of victims, locations and offenders into police IT is a key issue in the prevention of repeat victimization generally, and specifically in relation to stalking. *Recommendation 8*: Police information technologies should be designed to allow the tracking and cross-referencing of repeat callers, locations, victims, and offenders.

Recommendations for Inter-Agency Work

Judges are key decision-makers when stalking cases go to court. There were suggestions that anti-stalking efforts might benefit from the inclusion of judges and other court officials in the process of developing and implementing a protocol. However it cannot be assumed that all judges and officials from other agencies have a full understanding of the nature of stalking. *Recommendation 9*: Judges, other court officials, and representatives from other local agencies (such as housing and social services) that encounter stalking cases, should be considered for inclusion in multi-agency groups seeking to prevent stalking. *Recommendation 10*: Consideration should be given to the inclusion of court officials and officials from other agencies in training sessions relating to stalking, perhaps as attendees at trainings

for police officers. *Recommendation 11*: Non-police agencies should be consulted as early as possible during the process of tailoring a model protocol to suit local needs.

Recommendations for Future Research and Practice

An evaluation of the impact of the tactics recommended in the anti-stalking protocol is a critical next step in progressing the work begun in Philadelphia. The present report did not, and never set out to, determine whether or not the anti-stalking protocol assisted victims and reduced crime. *Recommendation 12*: An impact evaluation, or series of impact evaluations, should identify the measures in the protocol that result in the greatest reductions in the frequency of stalking and its effect upon victims.

The findings of the survey of police officer knowledge and views relating to stalking, the first of its type, may well be representative of a national problem. Although validation work would be needed, it suggested a significant need for stalking awareness training and anti-stalking protocols in police departments. *Recommendation 13*: A nationally representative survey of police officer knowledge and views relating to stalking should be commissioned by the Department of Justice. Should the findings concur with those of the Philadelphia survey (Farrell, Weisburd and Wyckoff 2000), the development of a national program of work relating to stalking could be the next logical step.

References

Farrell, G., L.Wyckoff and D. Weisburd. 2001. <u>Process Evaluation of The Implementation of an Anti-Stalking Protocol By Philadelphia Police Department</u>. Final Report to the National Center for Victims of Crime and the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. December 2001.

Farrell, G., D. Weisburd and L. Wyckoff. 2000. 'Survey suggests need for stalking training' <u>The Police Chief</u>, 62, 10, 162-167.

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