Collaboration in family violence intervention: A process evaluation of the Hamilton Family Safety Team

A Thesis submitted in fulfillment of the
requirements for the Degree of
Master of Social Sciences
at the University of Waikato
Te Whare Wananga O Waikato

by

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2007

Abstract

The Family Safety Team (FST) is a collaborative intervention developed to address family violence in New Zealand. Interagency collaborations are effective at addressing the social supports for battery, improving the systems and responses of agencies that address battery, and improving cohesion and consistency across agencies. The FST has a particular focus on justice system agencies.

The purpose of this research was to evaluate the Hamilton FST. The research was conducted using in-depth interviews with FST members and others directly involved with the project, archival research using police family violence files, observation of FST meetings, and a focus group with battered women. The evaluation was constructed around four aims: to identify any barriers to establishing the FST, to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the Hamilton FST, to determine the adequacy of the FST structure, and to assess the extent to which the FST has improved the ability of agencies to enhance the safety and autonomy of battered women and hold offenders accountable.

An overall finding of this evaluation was that people are feeling very positive about the Hamilton FST. The evaluation found that the FST has increased contact and communication between community and government agencies, and there was improvement in each agency's awareness of the policies, processes and protocols of other agencies in the FST. The evaluation found some limitations in the amount of monitoring and measurable outcomes from the FST, but this was understandable considering the infancy of the project and the time taken for members to understand their roles and the function of the FST. However, there were some positive developments in police responsiveness: an improved police attitude towards family violence cases, and an increase in cases coded as family violence.

An important finding of this evaluation was that the Hamilton FST is functioning as a genuine collaboration. This seemed to be due to: mutual respect and an equal distribution of power among FST members, trusted working relationships, recognising each member for their area of expertise, and the role of the coordinator. There are, however, some limitations of the FST model that FST members need to acknowledge.

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INTRODUCTION

Violence against women by a male partner is a human rights concern as it has an enormous impact on the mental, emotional and physical well-being of those affected (Heise, Pitanguy, & Germain, 1994). "By sapping women's energy, undermining their confidence, and compromising their health, gender violence deprives society of women's full participation" (Heise, Pitanguy, & Germain, 1994, pix). The way in which violence against women is understood, how it is defined, and understanding the dynamics of abuse; all impact on the way violence against women is addressed and responded to. This thesis acknowledges the structural and social influences behind violence against women. It does not take the perspective that battery is a behavioral or psychological problem of some individuals. To take such a perspective often results in victim blaming and does not address the social structures and institutions that maintain the use of violence against women. In contrast, this thesis supports a feminist approach, which maintains that violence against women is performed in the context of unequal gender roles and hierarchical power relations that deny women the tools necessary for self-development and empowerment (Tifft, 1993).

Thesis outline

This thesis is an evaluation of the Hamilton Family Safety Team (FST). The evaluation was necessary to determine whether the project was making a difference to those experiencing domestic violence by improving agencies' responsiveness. It was also necessary to identify any areas in the programme structure where improvements could be made, and to help the FST to refine their policies and practices. The aims of the evaluation are included at the end of the introduction.

The first section of this thesis is a literature review, which is split into four main components: understanding violence against women, the justice system's response, the use of interagency collaborations, and the development of collaborations in New Zealand. The initial discussion begins by examining the dynamics of violence against women, outlining the dynamics of abuse and emphasising the social and institutional practices that maintain the use of male violence against women. The second component

of the literature review reflects on the justice system's responsiveness to battery, with an analysis of the police, Family Court and Criminal Court. This section emphasises the need for justice system agencies to be integrated and to coordinate their responses, so that they compliment each other, rather than contradict. The third section discusses the use of interagency collaborations, outlining how they can be effective, and uses international examples of interagency models from Duluth Minnesota, USA and Cardiff, Wales. In this section I argue that improving individual agency responses will result in further fragmentation of services, and will not stop battery. I argue that because of the complexity of battery, responses and systems need to be combined and coordinated to have an impact. The final section of the literature review addresses the development of interagency collaborations in New Zealand. Included in this section is an outline of the collaboration in Hamilton, the agencies in Hamilton, and the development of the Family Safety Team initiative.

The second section of this thesis is a description of the methods used. Methods employed were observation of FST meetings, archival data collection using police family violence reports, a focus group with battered women, and in-depth interviews with FST members and agency representatives. This is followed by the findings of the evaluation. The findings begin with a description of the FST as it is implemented in Hamilton, including the aims of the project. This is followed by a synthesis of the issues battered women face with justice system agencies. The remainder of the findings section is structured by the four aims of the evaluation. I discuss the challenges with establishing the project, the strengths and weaknesses of the FST, how the FST has improved agencies' responses to enhance the safety and autonomy of battered women and to hold offenders accountable, and the adequacy of the structure of the FST.

Each aim is concluded in the findings section. The thesis then ends with the conclusion. In this section I reflect on the main themes from the findings, and relate these to current literature on battery. I also discuss some of the problems with the FST model, some recommendations for the Hamilton FST, and priority areas for further research. In this report the terms battery and battered women are used as they describe the victims and all the actions involved in violence against women (when discussing literature or comments by participants that use alternative labels, I refer to the label they employed). Battery and

battered women are very powerful and vivid terms, well reflecting the severity of violence against women. They also acknowledge the controlling coercive dynamics involved. Jacobson (1994) refers to battering as the methodical use of violence, threats and intimidation to produce fear in, and control over, women.

Understanding violence against women

The dynamics of abuse
This section will not explain the causes of battery. Rather, it will outline a feminist approach to battery, the dynamics involved, the relationship between domestic violence, culture and society, and the relationship with power and control.

Theoretical perspectives
The theory around the dynamics of battery is not relevant only to academia; rather, the theoretical stance adopted by policy makers and service providers, explicitly or implicitly, shapes the approaches taken to respond to battery in the community. The feminist approach considers violence as a tactic of coercive control to maintain power. The feminist perspective of domestic violence is based on two main concepts: male female relations, and power and control (Yllö, 1993). As Yllö (1993) explains, "Domestic violence cannot be adequately understood unless gender and power are taken into account" (p47). The feminist approach is critical of research suggesting women are as violent as men, arguing that battery involves a range of techniques, including: intimidation, isolation, threats, and physiological and physical abuse (Kurz, 1992); while women's use of violence involves a limited range of acts, and is not usually intended to cause physical injury (Dobash & Dobash, 1992; Dobash & Dobash 2001). A feminist approach regards men as the primary perpetrators and women as their primary victims. This is based on numerous studies, such as the US National Violence Against Women Survey (NVAW), which found that men physically assault their partners at three times the rate that women do (Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998). There is acknowledgement that women do occasionally use violence against men. However, as Dobash and Dobash (2001) explain, it is in "A context in which they have been repeatedly assaulted by the man and are trying to defend themselves and/or stop his violence" (p271-272). Research by Walker (1984) demonstrates that women use violence as a reaction to their partner's

violence. Walker (1984) found that when women do not live in an abusive relationship, they are less angry and manipulative, and are unlikely to use violent behavior (Walker, 1984). Furthermore by analysing what causes women use violence against their partners, Saunders (1988) found that self-defence was the most common motive. However, others are sceptical of the feminist argument of women only using violence in self-defence. Mills (2001) argues that although victim's use of violence in self-defence is justified by law, it can be just as threatening and dangerous as violence by the batterer. Therefore, Mills (2001) continues, women's use of physical violence needs to be examined as one aspect of the dynamic of intimate partner abuse, not dismissed as irrelevant due to the violence being in self-defence.

The feminist approach is critical of our social acceptance of an inherently patriarchal system, which enables men to batter. The feminist definition of patriarchy is not based on individual men; rather, it is power based, and is inclusive of a range of social norms, institutions and social structures, which perpetuate male power and dominance (Yllö, 1993). A feminist approach asserts that violence against women, as a tactic of male dominance and control, occurs in the context of a wider social system of male power. Violence is maintained, not only through men's dominant role, but also through women's economic dependence on men, which is an instrumental factor in their inability to leave their violent partners. To overcome the use of violence against women, feminists argue that we need to challenge the:

> Social attitude and beliefs that undergird male violence and renegotiate the meaning of gender and sexuality and the balance of power between women and men at all levels of society. (Heise, Pitanguy, & Germain, 1994, p1).

Power and control

Continued battering is intentional and is used for the purpose of maintaining power and control over another person (Tifft, 1993). The power and control analysis emphasises that violence against women is a part of a pattern of behaviours, and not individual or isolated acts of violence (Pence & Paymar, 1993). Pence and Paymar (1993) argue that physical and sexual assaults occur infrequently, but they reinforce other power and control tactics, which include: threats, coercion, intimidation, emotional abuse, isolation, economic abuse, using male privilege, threats involving children and denying the abuse. These tactics make up what is known as the 'Power and Control Wheel' (Figure 1),

which was developed in Duluth, Minnesota, USA through consultation with battered women. The spokes of the wheel are the tactics men use to manipulate, dominate and control women; while, the rim of the wheel represents the physical and sexual acts of violence. Thus, each of the spokes, the power and control tactics, have a direct link to physical and sexual violence, and this link is what gives each controlling tactic its power.
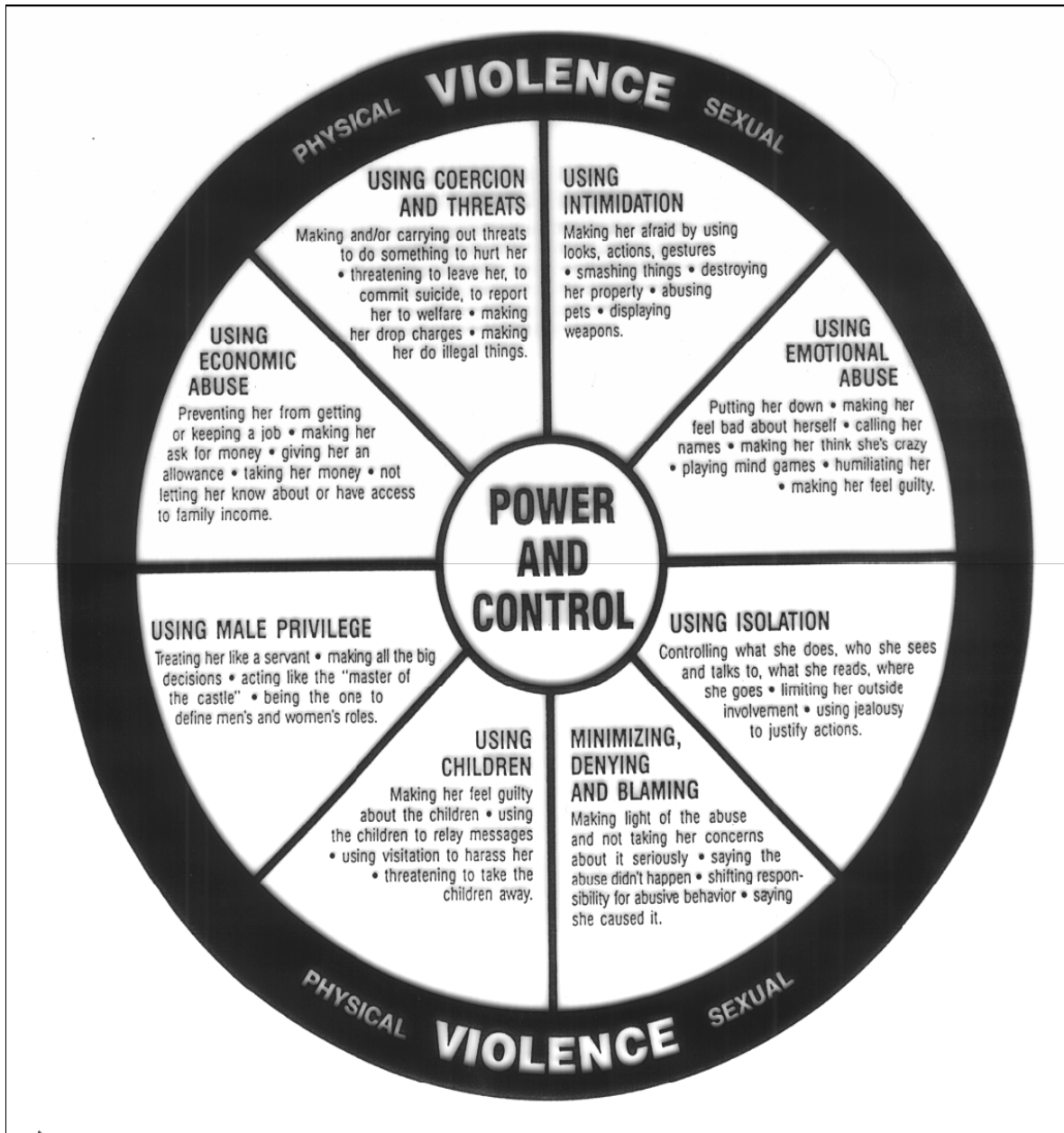
Figure 1
Power and control: Tactics of men who batter
Source: Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, 206 West Fourth St, Duluth, Mn.

Batterers do not always need to use physical violence in order to control and dominate women. After physical violence has been used, men have the ability to control their female partners through intimidation and threats of violence, with additional acts of violence used to reinforce their control (Dobash & Dobash, 1998). The power and control model also emphasises the importance of context in domestic violence. A seemingly trivial event, such as name calling, becomes more significant when it is viewed as one event in a web of controlling, intimidating and fear provoking behaviours. The meaning of an act can only be understood in the context within which that act occurred. Individual acts, when viewed in isolation, may seem trivial but, added together, they amount to battery. Feminists argue that the use of battery and controlling tactics on women is legitimised through hierarchical gender roles, and an acceptance of male dominance and female subordination.

> Physical violence often operates to maintain and reestablish power relations. When men physically batter their partners, this behaviour serves as an enforcer of men's exercise of institutional and personal power. (Tifft, 1993, p13).

Agency responses that put power and control central to their understanding of violence against women recognise that such violence is both deeply engendered and centered on domination; it is not simply an escalation of conflict.

Social support for violence against women

This thesis asserts that men who batter are not doing so as a result of individual psychopathology; rather, they are affected by social and cultural influences and inequalities in the distribution of resources and power that support their use of violence. Tifft (1993) explains that battering is an extension of power and control over someone else, yet to have control is highly valued and entrenched in the structure of our society. Our communities encourage men to have control over resources, money, nature, employees, emotions and children. Thus, Tifft (1993) argues "To control – that is, to dominate and assert superiority – is central to most men's sense of manhood" (p133). Robertson (1999) reports that supports for battering are prevalent in New Zealand society, stating that New Zealand communities maintain "Powerful cultural supports which legitimate male hegemony and condone violence against women" (p34). Ritchie and Ritchie (1990) provide a similar view arguing that "Violence is embedded in the cultural patterns which we pass on from generation to generation through socialization, education and participation" (p63). A survey on the attitudes New Zealand adults held

about the use of force in certain situations found a high level of support for the use of physical force as a social control (Ritchie & Ritchie, 1990). Violence is embedded in male culture, as young men are encouraged to take risks, to be physical, competitive and aggressive (Dobash & Dobash, 1998). Although not all men possess such characteristics, they still possess male power and superiority as it is ratified by those men who do (Dobash & Dobash, 1998). Thus, violence against women is deeply intertwined with gender roles and stereotypes that maintain male physical aggressiveness, and male dominance and superiority over women, as Heise, Pitanguy, and Germain (1994) explain:

> Violence should not be considered an aberration, but an extension of a continuum of beliefs that grants men the right to control women's behavior. (p2).

The subordination of women is maintained by institutional practices, including marriage and the family. Straus (1980b) labels a marriage license "A hitting license" (p40) due to the extensive amount of husband-wife violence that occurs and is condoned by society and by law. The privacy around the family unit allows abuse to occur unknown to anyone outside of this group. Kurtz (1992) notes that, although contemporary laws endeavour to protect family members against abuse, social norms still promote the use of violence in the home as a means of control. Kurtz (1992) argues that, while women are fulfilling the domestic duties and men are the financial providers and making the major decisions in the family, the status and power of the husband is greater than that of the wife. So long as these gender stereotypical roles are maintained, "Marriage still institutionalizes the control of wives by husbands through the structure of husband-wife roles" (Kurtz, 1992, p28). This control is maintained through a woman's economic dependence on her husband. If she is not economically independent it is evermore difficult for her to leave an abusive relationship.

Why women stay in abusive relationships

There is a complex web of social, personal and material factors involved in a woman's ability or inability to leave her violent partner. Hoff (1990) describes a battered woman's situation as a catch-22, and stated:

> They are caught between remaining in a violent relationship and venturing into the labyrinth of welfare, homelessness, unemployment, and single parenthood – all of which confer low social status. (p47).

Research has shown that women who leave an abusive relationship permanently have left temporarily several times before. A study by Dobash and Dobash (1979) reported that 88 % of battered women had left their partner at some time. Of these women, the majority (80%) had left at least two or more times (Dobash & Dobash, 1979).

The difficulty in leaving a violent relationship may be due to what Walker (1984) described as learned helplessness, which occurs after repeated experience of the cycle of violence. According to Walker (1984) and Tifft (1993) women stay with their batterers because of the loving phase which brings hope and promise that the batterer will change, and the abuse will not happen again (Walker, 1984). Walker (1984) argued that repeatedly experiencing the cycle of violence results in battered women becoming passive and helpless to the point where they can no longer determine that leaving their abusive partner is in their best interest. Other explanations involve the numerous social and material factors influencing women's ability or inability to leave a violent relationship. Most significant is fear of retaliation. Women are most at risk of battering, and often experience an escalation of violence, when attempting to leave an abusive relationship (Bowker, 1993; Itzin, 2001). Attempts to leave can also result in retaliation against the victim's friends and family (Bowker 1993). Another reason women stay is self-blame. Batterers often blame their victims for their use of violence and this blame can be internalised by battered women, who believe they are responsible for the violence, or that they deserve to be abused (Itzin, 2001). Itzin (2001) also states that women in abusive relationships tend to minimise the nature and extent of the abuse they suffer, and may eventually accept the violent behaviour as normal. Another barrier to leaving is not having anywhere to go. A common characteristic of the batterer is to isolate women from their family and friends, thus limiting where they can go for help. Furthermore, as noted earlier, many women in domestic violence situations are completely, or substantially, dependent on their partners for financial support (Dobash & Dobash, 1979).

To understand battery, it is necessary for one to consider the issues of power and control, social supports for battery, and the difficulty of leaving an abusive relationship. But another crucial factor is how violence is understood by the various cultures in the community.

Cultural perspectives on violence against women

A New Zealand study looking at attitudes towards family violence across cultures (Māori, Pakeha, and Pacific Island cultures) found there are a range of beliefs and attitudes about family violence, and how it is best addressed (McNeill, Dadelszen, Gray, Duituturaga, Good, & Ash, 1988). The study found that Māori participants overwhelmingly believed that Māori are responsible for their own violence and getting the whanau involved was the most appropriate way of dealing with the problem of battery, as in this environment the abuse is everyone's problem (McNeill et al, 1988). To a lesser extent, other agencies mentioned as helpful responses to violence were the police and the courts (McNeill et al, 1988). In contrast with the Māori participants, the Pakeha participants believed violence is the responsibility of the abuser, claiming that everyone needs to be responsible for their own actions (McNeill et al, 1988). About half of the Pakeha participants thought the victim should also take some responsibility for their situation. Very few Pakeha participants commented on the responsibility of the family, friends or neighbours. This is perhaps a symptom of an Anglo American culture that encourages independence, contrasting with the more collective lifestyle prominent in Māori and Pacific Island cultures (Mead, 2003).

As with the Māori participants, participants from Pacific Island cultures believed the family, in particular the elders, needed to be the centre of any interventions into family violence (McNeill et al, 1988). Because of the mana the elders hold, there is a greater chance the batterer would take note of such a person, rather than an outsider (McNeill et al, 1988). Community leaders, such as church leaders, need to be involved in developing and implementing solutions to domestic violence at a community or societal level, to advocate for the needs of Pacific people (McNeill et al, 1988). The Pacific respondents commented that the resources and facilities currently available for victims of battery did not meet the needs of Pacific Island people. It is important to know how cultures vary in their perspectives to be able to provide the most effective, and culturally appropriate, responses to violence against women. This particular study by McNeill et al (1988) highlights the differing perspectives of three cultural groups, and emphasises the importance of tailoring agencies and their services to fit the needs of the different

cultures in their community to be able to effectively address the problem of domestic violence.

The prevalence of violence against women

The prevalence of domestic violence is very difficult to quantify, but it is widely acknowledged in contemporary literature as a significant problem. For example, research performed by Straus, Gelles and Steinmetz (1980), found that "Physical violence occurs between family members more often than it occurs between any other individuals" (p32). However, research on the prevalence and nature of domestic violence provides conflicting results. Some studies controversially conclude that women perform as many acts of violence against their male partners, as men do against women (Fergusson, Horwood, & Ridder, 2005; Straus, 1980; Straus, Gelles, & Steinmetz, 1980). Such conclusions are typically drawn from studies using a Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS). There are numerous and significant limitations of the CTS, which consequently question the appropriateness of this method to measure battery. The most significant problem with the CTS is the simplicity of the analysis that is applied to a complex situation, making it an inadequate measure of the complexities of domestic abuse (Walker, 1984). Further criticisms of the CTS have largely discredited its use as an effective tool in an analysis of battery (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 1998; Giles, 2005; Kurz, 1992; Yllö, 1993).

Research, both in New Zealand and overseas, that does not use a CTS, predominantly concludes that women are, overwhelmingly, the victims of intimate partner violence (Dobash & Dobash, 2001). Yet the prevalence of domestic violence occurring is still difficult to quantify. The 1996 New Zealand Women's Safety Survey (NZWSS) looked at the extent of physical and sexual violence against women, by their current or recent partner (Morris, 1997). They found that 24% of participants with current partners and 73% of participants with recent partners had experienced acts of violence committed by their partners (Morris, 1997). Participants with recent partners identified more serious acts of violence used against them, than those with current partners. Morris (1997) suggests this is an indication of the escalating nature of domestic violence, and reflects the sharp increase in violence that occurs when women leave their partners.

One of the more recent studies on the extent of battery was the New Zealand National Survey of Crime Victims (NZNSCV), which was conducted in 2001. The 2001 NZNSCV reported that 26% of women had experienced at least one act of violence by a male partner in their lifetime. Fanslow and Robinson (2004) measured the prevalence of violence against women by a male partner in the Auckland and North Waikato regions. They found that 33% of participants in Auckland, and 39% of participants in the Waikato reported at least one experience of physical or sexual violence by their partner during their lifetime (Fanslow & Robinson, 2004). These results demonstrate a slightly higher occurence of domestic violence than that indicated by the 2001 NZNSCV. However, it is difficult to draw direct comparisons between the surveys. Fanslow and Robinson's (2004) study was restricted to the Auckland and North Waikato regions, rather than reporting from the whole country as in the 2001 NZNSCV. Thus, Fanslow and Robinson's (2004) findings may be influenced by characteristics of the two communities studied, and may not be an accurate representation of the New Zealand population as a whole. Furthermore, the greater rate of violence in Fanslow and Robinson's (2004) survey could be attributed to the inclusion of sexual abuse in their definition of violence, allowing for a wider range of battering tactics to be included than in the NZNSCV, which was restricted to physical violence.

The 2001 NZNSCV and the 1996 NZWSS both found differences in women's experience of violence between ethnic groups. The 1996 NZWSS found that Māori women had experienced more violence by their partners, than non-Māori (Morris, 1997). Of the participants with current partners, 44% of Māori participants and 22% of non-Māori participants, reported experiencing violence by their partners (Morris, 1997). Of the women who have separated from their partners, 90% of Māori and 70% of non-Māori reported acts of violence against them by their ex-partners (Morris, 1997). The 2001 NZNSCV also found that the prevalence of violence was higher among Māori women than for non- Māori; almost half (49%) of Māori women reported they had experienced violence by their partners, compared with 23% of Pacific women and 24% of New Zealand European women. Another study by Ford (1986) recorded the ethnic breakdown of complainants and people complained about from police reports of domestic violence cases in the Hamilton district. Ford (1986) reported that the majority of complainants and people complained about were Caucasian (52.5% and 52.1%

respectively). Māori made up 43.6% and 44.2% respectively and Pacific Island people made up 2.1% of both categories. Although Māori did not make up the majority of complainants or respondents, Ford (1986) states that Māori were disproportionately represented in both categories, as Māori make up only 16% of the Hamilton population. Ford (1986) suggested socio-economic and age demographic issues were responsible for the over representation of Māori, but provides no evidence to support this.

Despite methodological changes to the 2001 NZNSCV, the results are still believed to be an underestimation of the actual extent of domestic violence in New Zealand (Morris & Reilly, 2003). The survey used a computer-assisted self-interviewing (CASI) methodology, which excludes potential participants whose literary, language or computer skills are not adequate to complete the task. It is also easy for participants to give incorrect answers, for ease or speed of completion. Furthermore, this survey focuses on domestic violence as a crime; thus, participants may only reveal information about incidents they perceive to be criminal acts, potentially excluding what the law regards as minor offences. The survey is also limited by the definition of violence, as it does not include emotional or psychological tactics of abuse, nor does it allow for calculations of the cumulative effects of battery. Rather, it views each act of violence as an individual and isolated incident. Although Morris and Reilly (2003) claim this survey provides more detail on women's experiences of domestic violence than previous surveys or police statistics have provided, this survey undoubtedly underestimates the prevalence of battery in New Zealand. Although the prevalence is difficult to determine, it is widely regarded in academic literature as a significant problem. So, who is responsible for addressing this problem?

The state's responsibility to protect women from battery

As determined from the discussion above, battery is gender-based violence and is considered a form of discrimination, which impacts on women's human rights (United Nations, 2007). Because of this, the state has a role in ensuring the safety of battered women. The discussion below details the historic tendency for the state and state agencies, such as the police, to stay uninvolved in battery, as it occurs in private and not public realms. However, there is growing recognition that it is the state's role to

intervene, in the otherwise private sphere of the home, to hold offenders accountable and to protect battered women. This can be seen in the changes in police policies and the responses of the criminal courts, described below. More recently, recognition that the state has a duty to intervene has been recognised by the United Nations.

The United Nations has asserted that it is the role of the State to ensure suitable and effective initiatives are in place to overcome all forms of violence against women, with specific reference to family violence. The United Nations Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) has adopted a recommendation that States are responsible for protecting women from the violence of individual men. The recommendation is that:

> States may also be responsible for private acts if they fail to act with due diligence to prevent violations of rights or to investigate and punish acts of violence, and for providing compensation. (United Nations, 2007).

The United Nations CEDAW (2007) stresses the importance of the empowerment of women as a method of eliminating the violence they experience. Therefore, states need to ensure that any responses not only protect women, but that they do so in a way that supports and encourages women's empowerment and autonomy.

The Justice System's response

The justice system involves a number of primary institutions that battered women access for help and protection (Busch & Robertson, 1994), including the police, criminal and civil courts, and probation. On a broader level, the justice system shapes societal attitudes towards domestic violence (Robertson, 1999). But is the justice system the most appropriate system to respond to battery and all the complexities that are involved? Does criminalising battery stop it from occurring and enhance women's safety?

The justice system's responsiveness to battery

There is debate around the appropriateness of the justice system to be able to address the complex range of issues involved in domestic violence. Proponents of the justice system claim many benefits from its implementation; for example, it holds batterers accountable for their use of violence, and can reduce recidivism (United Nations, 1993).

It aids the development of a community response to battering, which views domestic violence as unacceptable and punishable by law, and it demonstrates the victim's right to be protected above and beyond the need to preserve their relationship or family (United Nations, 1993). Furthermore, a justice system response also provides the opportunity for victims to make informed choices about what they want to do.

However, others view the justice system as an inappropriate and ineffective response to domestic violence, criticising the response for focusing on punishment and not rehabilitation, the inability of the justice system to stop recidivism, and its inability to provide adequate safety to victims. Furthermore, a prison sentence or criminal record may punish the victim as well as the batterer, particularly if the victim and her children are financially reliant on the offender as the sole income earner (United Nations, 1993).

The justice system is criticised for sharing with society a bias that upholds the privacy of the home and family, resulting in non-intervention (Busch 1994; Busch & Robertson, 1994). The inadequacy of the response is visible throughout the justice system, as gaps have been identified between women's experiences of violence and the justice system's response to that violence (Busch & Robertson, 1994). The gaps can manifest in a number of ways: for example, the victim blaming response by the justice system which tends to minimise and trivialise the violence (Busch & Robertson, 1994). Such a response by the justice system serves to condone the perpetrator's use of violence, and further victimises those looking for protection (Busch, 1994).

Dutton (1987) reviewed a range of empirical studies, from various jurisdictions over North America, on the justice system's response to violence against women. Dutton (1987) describes what he terms as "The 'winnowing' process" (p190), whereby the amount of domestic assaults against women is diminished at each stage of the justice system's response: reporting, detection, arrest and conviction. Dutton (1987) claims that for any given incident of domestic abuse that occurs the violent male offender has a 0.38% chance of being punished by the Courts. "For every 100 wife assaults, about 14 are reported, 7 detected, 1 arrest is made, 0.75 men are convicted, and 0.38 men are punished with a fine or jail" (Dutton, 1987, p200). Dutton's (1987) review of research suggests there is a dominant filtering effect within the justice response to domestic

violence, as the majority of incidents do not result in an arrest or conviction. However, Dutton (1987) notes that this winnowing effect of domestic violence cases is not necessarily unusual, and occurs for other crimes as well. The justice system process is slightly different in New Zealand from that it is in the USA; however, Robertson (1999) says that the overall winnowing effect occurs here in a similar way. Unlike in the USA, New Zealand police are responsible for the prosecution of offenders. Therefore, there are no prosecutors screening out cases; however, in New Zealand the screening occurs before making an arrest and again after offenders are taken to court by using diversion or withdrawing charges (Robertson, 1999); thus, the winnowing trend is believed to be the same in New Zealand.

This thesis supports the view that an effective justice system response is necessary to ensure that battery is not justified or legitimised by law. The justice system must hold batterers accountable for their violence to demonstrate an unequivocal message that battering is a real and significant problem that is punishable by law (Busch & Robertson, 1994). This thesis is supportive of Busch's (1994) perspective, which says that to deny women the appropriate punishment of their abuser, is to justify the violence they have suffered. However, as discussed in the section above on understanding violence against women, battery is about control, power and domination over women, and the use of battery is supported by societal and cultural institutions and practices. To end domestic violence, criminalisation, alone, is not enough as it does not change the societal supports for battery (Tifft, 1993).

> Criminalizing the batterer does not change the societal-organization or cultural context within which battering takes place…criminalization is not sufficient to change the problem of violence against women. (Tifft, 1993, p134).

The justice system plays an important role in enforcing sanctions on offenders. The justice system's agencies need to improve their responsiveness, but this needs to be done in combination with other agencies that focus on countering the cultural and social supports for battering (Tifft, 1993). So long as there are social supports for such behaviour, the justice system alone will not stop battering from occurring.

The following discussion outlines some of the most significant problems within the justice agencies of the police, Criminal Courts and the Family Court; and some of the

methods that have been established to counter these problems. The first barrier of the justice system's agencies is that battered women are often reluctant to get involved in the system, and to call the police for help.

Accessing help

Women do not always report criminal acts of abuse against them. To report the abuse women have to believe that doing so will be beneficial, that the police will believe their claims and treat the incident seriously (Hanmer & Saunders, 1984). Victims who do call the police for intervention usually do so once they have reached a crisis point in a particular incident (Ford, 1986). Ford (1986) reports that victims are mostly calling police in incidents of physical violence, where they need protection from an assault that has, or is still, taking place. The majority of calls to police come from witnesses or bystanders, those who are not directly involved in the violence. The 1996 Women's Safety Survey found that it was very rare for battered women to request the help of police (Morris, 1997). Only 11% of women, who had suffered physical violence from their partner, had ever requested the help of police (Morris, 1997). Women with recent partners reported asking for police intervention more than women with current partners, which Morris (1997) regards as a symptom of the deteriorating nature of domestic violence relationships and because of the increase in violence when and after a couple separate.

In a sixth month evaluation of the Hamilton Abuse Intervention Pilot Project (HAIPP), the rate of women requesting police intervention was much higher. Of the 45 battered women who were interviewed, 34 women had reported incidents to the police (Robertson & Busch, 1992). Eleven women said they suffered repercussions from their partners for calling the police, including: verbal abuse, threats, damage to property and physical abuse (Robertson & Busch, 1992). However, despite the repercussions, all but five women said that they would call the police again in similar situations. The higher rate of requesting police intervention from the HAIPP evaluation is likely to be due to the sample. The sample is of women in the HAIPP programme, and many are in attendance because their partners had been referred to the men's stopping violence programme. Therefore, the HAIPP evaluation is using a sample of battered women who

are accessing help, thus it is more likely that these women would have called police compared with a general sample of battered women. Due to this sample limitation in the HAIPP evaluation, Morris' (1997) study is likely to be a more accurate reflection of amount of battered women who call police for help. As battered women request police intervention infrequently and reluctantly, it is important that the police respond positively when they are called, so that women will be more likely to call them again if they are needed. However, past research has shown police are reluctant to get involved in cases of battery.

The police response

A major problem with the justice system, in general, and the police, in particular, is a traditional reluctance to get involved in cases of battery. The police are the front line of the justice system. They are the first to respond to domestic violence incidents, and have the ability to trigger action from the other institutions in the justice system. There have been many changes to policies and laws to recognise and criminalise domestic violence as a serious offence. However, these laws must be effectively enforced by police to have any significant impact.

The history of the police is one in which they were hesitant to be involved with domestic violence cases (Buzawa & Buzawa, 1990; Victims task force, 1992). Police viewed domestic incidents as nuisance or petty complaints, which did not receive a high priority (Ford, 1986). The lack of police interest was due to a number of underlying assumptions about domestic violence and about police work. For example, there was a belief that domestic violence was not part of real police work, and domestic violence offenders were not considered real criminals (Ford, 1986; Victims Task Force, 1992). Furthermore, there was a belief that domestic violence was a private family matter, not a public one for the police to be involved in. The inconsistency of victims of domestic violence enhanced police under-enforcement, as victims would call police with no intention of pursuing charges (Kurz, 1992), or victims would change their minds during the process, resulting in an unsuccessful prosecution (Feder, 1999). The masculine ethos, prevalent in the police, led to police sympathising with the, usually male, offenders as the violence was

viewed as an understandable response to provocation (Victims Task Force, 1992), and the fault lay with the female victim (Ford, 1986).

However, in New Zealand during the 1980s, reports and police statistics were beginning to demonstrate the need for domestic violence to be considered a serious crime. For example, the Roper report, published in 1987, stated that 80% of all violence was family based (Taylor, 1997). As a result of such findings, there was more focus on domestic violence and a new policy emerged whereby police were to arrest offenders when there was evidence that an offence had been committed (Taylor, 1997). Thus the problem of police under-enforcement in cases of battery was identified, and the solution developed was to implement new police policy that required police to take action against batterers.

Based on this policy, police must take domestic violence offences seriously. Officers are required to focus their actions on protecting the victim, arresting the offender, and ensuring the victim has access to support and information (Taylor, 1997). The policy requires some degree of collaboration between violence related service agencies in the community (a topic addressed in the following section). The police policy mandates a pro-arrest policy for domestic violence incidents.

> The policy requires police to arrest and charge offenders whenever there is evidence of an assault, of danger to the victim or of the breaching of a court order. (Victims Task Force, 1992, p155).

Victims should not be asked to make a complaint. Instead police should obtain adequate information, through good investigation methods, to sustain a prosecution without the victim testifying (Victims Task Force, 1992). Furthermore, the policy requires police to refer victims to an agency where they can receive immediate and ongoing support (Furness, 1994).

The 1989 arrest policy was intended to improve the police response and ensure greater consistency. However, an in-depth study performed by Busch, Robertson, and Lapsley (1992), demonstrated that the policy was poorly implemented and found little improvement in police response to domestic violence. Thus many of the problems with the police response that the policy addressed were still occurring in the field, as discussed in the following sections. However, this finding was not unusual. Ferraro (1989) studied

the implementation of a presumptive arrest policy in Arizona, which had many similar characteristics to New Zealand's pro-arrest policy. Ferraro (1989) found many of the same problems with implementation as in New Zealand, including a lack of understanding of abuse, sexism and labeling domestics as family fights giving them low priority. Reflective of the New Zealand situation, Ferraro's report concluded that there was very little change in police response after the implementation of the arrest policy (Ferraro, 1989).

Arrests

Lack of police involvement in cases of battery lead to a second problem in the police response: this was their unwillingness to arrest batterers for their use of violence. As the police have kept themselves uninvolved with domestic disputes, discussed above, very few arrests were made. Again, policy changes were intended to address this problem in the police response, and increase arrest rates. The development of the 1989 arrest policy in New Zealand required police to arrest a suspect if there is sufficient evidence to believe that an assault has occurred, regardless of whether the victim consents or objects to the arrest (Mills, 2003; Office of the Police Commissioner, 1996). The implementation of a pro-arrest policy was initially based on a 1981 study with the Minneapolis police department, which found that offenders who were arrested were substantially less likely to re-offend (Berk & Sherman, 1988). However, subsequent studies dispute the findings; for example, Berk, Campbell, Klap, and Western (1992), provide an analysis of four subsequent studies, which found that arrest was no more effective than other police intervention methods at reducing recidivism. Using a pro-arrests policy for domestic violence incidents is intended to act as a deterrent for batterers (Berk, 1993), to encourage police to view domestic violence as a serious crime and to undermine societal attitudes and institutions that support the use of violence and male domination (Buzawa & Buzawa, 1990). The most significant benefit of the pro-arrest policy is the impact on the victim. Arresting the offender takes pressure off the victim to make a decision about prosecuting her partner. Due to the coercive and controlling tactics prominent in abusive relationships, women are no longer in a position of empowerment, where they can make autonomous decisions, or be aware of their options.

But despite the arrest policy, studies of police responses to domestic incidents in New Zealand show police were still reluctant to arrest domestic violence offenders (Busch, Robertson, & Lapsley, 1992; Morris, 1997). Reasons given include a low rate of successful prosecutions, minimal penalties for prosecutions that were successful, a belief that domestic violence is not real police work, and an informal policy of minimal intervention for domestic incidents whereby police restore order and leave. Moreover, frequent reports of abuse at the same address were not taken seriously, with police concluding that the victim must be at least partially responsible for their situation, thus they were unwilling to take action (Busch, Robertson, & Lapsley, 1992). Busch, Robertson, and Lapsley (1993) report that another significant issue in police lack of arrests is the tendency to put the onus of the decision of whether to arrest on the victim. This was a clear transgression of the police policy, which specifically states that, where possible victims should not be asked if they wish to lay a formal complaint (Office of the Police Commissioner, 1996; Victims Task Force, 1992). This response demonstrated police ignorance of the dynamics of battery. Requesting victims to decide if they wanted their abuser arrested or not, assumed that the victim had the power to make that choice and ignored the victim's vulnerability to intimidation by their abuser (Busch, Robertson, & Lapsley, 1993). It incorrectly assumed that battered women have accurate information, support and advice to be able to make such a decision (Hoyle & Sanders, 2000).

Recording

A further area of critique of the police response to domestic violence incidents is police administration. The Victims Task Force report (1992) identified problems with the recording of information. Information needs to be recorded on all reported incidents, including: callout summaries, if warnings have been issued, whether a protection order is in place, and the outcome of the response. Therefore, when police are attending an incident they are aware of prior events that have occurred. Without such a process, single events are attended in isolation, rather than as one of many similar events, which, according to the Victims Task Force report (1992), has resulted in an underestimation of the dangerousness of the victim's situation. For example, a single, seemingly minor offence on its own may seem trivial and thus result in a warning, but when viewed in the context of other incidents, this one event is no longer so trivial. Viewing an event within the context of other incidents, through efficient recording, coincides with the dynamics

of battery previously discussed. Accurate recording would prevent situations where perpetrators are continually being warned for things, such as breaches of protection orders, with officers unaware that the perpetrator had previously been warned.

Improved police response

As discussed above, a number of problems have been identified with the police response to cases of battery, including a lack of intervention, lack of arrests, and lack of recording. The main solution to these problems has been developing new police policies. However, research has found that the policies were not well implemented, and that despite policy changes the police response was overwhelming inconsistent and police had an extremely narrow conception of what constitutes domestic violence (Busch, Robertson & Lapsley, 1992; Morris, 1997). Consequently, the policy changes alone were not adequate to improve arrest rates and overall police responsiveness to domestic violence cases.

Two US researchers, Feder (1999) and Kurz (1992), provided insights into why policy changes are not successful, and how police responsiveness can be improved. Feder (1999) argues that what has to change is police understanding of, and attitudes towards, domestic violence. Officers need to believe that domestic violence incidents are a legitimate part of police work, and such incidents require police intervention to reach an effective outcome. These beliefs, Feder (1999) argued, will result in an increased likelihood of arrests when responding to callouts. Therefore, based on Feder's (1999) argument, police need further training and education to increase their understanding of battery. Kurz (1992) also reported on the need for more intensive training to increase understanding of the dynamics involved in battery, commenting:

> It is possible that a good training program could lead the police to 'see' battering more clearly, to discard their old labels of battered women in favor of more favorable, feminist ones. (Kurz, 1992, p32).

Furthermore, Kurz (1992) reported on the importance of having a system in place to monitor the enforcement policies. Successful police policies need to be supported at all levels of the justice system, and not restricted to the police, to ensure a consistent response across agencies (Kurz, 1992). More coordination across justice system agencies would ensure a consistent response to new initiatives. From this perspective, the police policies need support from the Criminal Court, Family Court, Judges and probation officers, so that an arrest is not made in isolation.

In light of research reporting the ineffective implementation of police policy (Busch, Robertson & Lapsley, 1992; Morris, 1997), the inconsistency of police interventions, and growing evidence supporting the argument for utilising interagency collaborations (discussed below), a new initiative was developed to counter the problems with police responsiveness. The solution was the development of a collaborative interagency project, HAIPP. The pilot programme centered on establishing effective interagency policies to raise the arrest rate, to enhance offender accountability, and to ensure victim safety. The HAIPP model of interagency collaboration was established in Hamilton in 1991. The project is discussed in more detail below under the section on New Zealand collaboration. The discussion here focuses on the effect of the HAIPP on police responsiveness.

The pilot project was evaluated at several stages over the three year period. In a one year evaluation, the analysis found 16% of domestic violence incidents resulted in arrest during the first year of the project, compared with 14.6% in the seven months prior to the project commencement (Robertson, Busch, Glover, & Furness, 1992). Although this seems low given a pro-arrest policy, it is not possible to determine why arrests were not made; for example, whether an offence was actually committed, or if there was sufficient evidence to make an arrest. Moreover, the difference in results is not statistically significant, and there were substantial fluctuations between months and seasons. The authors concluded that the percentage of arrests was lower than it should be under a pro-arrest policy (Robertson, Busch, Glover, & Furness, 1992). However, later evaluations reported dramatic improvements in police responsiveness. A 1995 review of the HAIPP concluded that there was a notable increase in male assault female offences, arrest rates and convictions (Dominick, 1995). There was also an increase in battered women requesting police intervention, and improved victim satisfaction with the police response (Dominick, 1995; Robertson, 1999).

Therefore, the HAIPP evaluations showed that the implementation of a collaborative approach had a positive impact on police responsiveness, and improvements were recorded in areas previously regarded as problematic. The following discussion outlines the most significant problems with the Family Court, noting that some of the problems

in the Family Court extend to the Criminal Court as well. There is particular emphasis on the protection order process, including police enforcement of the orders.

The Family Court

Family Courts were established in New Zealand in 1980 as a forum for dealing with relationship breakdowns (Victims Task Force, 1992). Central to the Family Court proceedings are mediation and counseling services. One responsibility of the Family Court is their role in issuing protection orders. There is concern, however, regarding women's understanding of the Family Court's services available to them. New Zealand studies have shown that many women are sceptical of the Courts, are unaware of what is available to them, do not understand the law surrounding domestic violence, and therefore are reluctant to participate in the Family Court process (Robertson, Busch, Glover, & Furness, 1992). Gaps have been identified between women's experiences of violence, their reality of the dangers they face, and the Family Courts interpretation and response to that violence (Busch, 1994; Busch, Robertson, & Lapsley, 1993). As Busch (1994) notes, women come to the Family Court for protection from what they perceive as a significant problem. However, the Family Court's interpretation is at odds with their experience of domestic violence (Busch, 1994).

Thus, a significant problem with the Family Court is the gap between women's experience of battery and the Court's response. The gap is characterised by the judicial response addressing the relationship between batterer and victim, rather than addressing the violence (Busch, 1994). Busch (1994) identifies a number of different examples of the gap, including the following: courts may pity the batterer, view him as being pathetic, in need of therapy and not as someone from whom a victim needs protection. Such a reaction trivialises the fear and danger the victim is feeling. Another example of the gap is the Court's failure to recognise certain tactics and strategies of battery, as abusive and violent behaviours. Busch (1994) concluded that:

> In certain instances victims who are in need of protection orders are left further exposed to their abusers' power and control tactics by the court's actions. While the abusers may be 'kept in the ballpark', it is those seeking protection who are often alienated from the court processes. (Busch, 1994, p115).

Protection orders, requested by applicants, are issued by the Family Court and enforced by the police. There are two types of conditions of a protection order; the first a non-violence condition whereby the respondent must not physically, psychologically or sexually abuse the applicant, damage or threaten to damage property, or encourage anybody else to commit these acts against the applicant (Domestic Violence, 2004). These conditions apply to every case. The second type of conditions are the non-contact conditions; for example, the respondent can not go to the home or workplace of the applicant, follow them, phone, mail or text them (Domestic Violence, 2004). In New Zealand, respondents who have protection orders made against them are mandated to attend a men's stopping violence education programme. Failure to attend results in a warning and a summons to attend from the Family Court; any further failure to attend can result in prosecution (Robertson & Busch, 1992). Breaching an order, including non-attendance at stopping violence programmes, is an arrestable offence, with a maximum penalty of a $5000 fine or a six month prison sentence (Domestic Violence, 2004).

The 2004 New Zealand Family Court statistics showed that the majority of respondents (people who are served with the order against them) and applicants (people requesting the order for protection) were Pakeha / European, making up 53% and 58% respectively (Bartlett, 2006). Māori were the next biggest ethnic group with 30% of respondents and 28% of applicants. The distribution of ethnicities for respondents was similar to the distribution for applicants in each ethnic group, however, Pakeha had slightly more applicants than respondents, and Māori and Pacific groups had slightly more respondents than applicants (Bartlett, 2006). The ethnic breakdown of applicants and respondents highlights the need for culturally appropriate family court services. The majority of judges, councillors and lawyers are Pakeha (Victims Task Force, 1992), yet just under half of the respondents and applicants belong to non European/Pakeha ethnic groups.

An evaluation of the Domestic Violence Act 1995 reported that despite the intentions of the act, there are still problems with people not applying for the protection that the act provides; in particular, people on low incomes, people in same gender relationships,

Māori and Pacific people, and victims with gang associations (Barwick, Gray, & Macky, 2000). Furthermore, the evaluation identified cost as the biggest barrier to accessing protection; and, to a slightly lesser extent, shame, a lack of confidence in the court process, and an individual or cultural acceptance of male domination and violence (Barwick, Gray, & Macky, 2000). Other research with battered women has identified further barriers to requesting and obtaining an order, including: a belief that protection orders are ineffective and meaningless, the difficulty in understanding the process involved without legal assistance, the personal cost involved in a process that is emotionally and physically taxing, and fear of reprisal for applying for protection (Lesorgen, 2001; Robertson, Busch, Glover, & Furness, 1992).

Protection orders do not guarantee safety, or stop the violence from occurring (Lesorgen, 2001). To prevent future violence the offender has to believe that the protection order will be enforced (Walker, 1984). New Zealand studies on protection orders suggest that this is not occurring, thus battered women's safety is put at risk (Busch, Robertson, & Lapsley, 1993; Lesorgen, 2001). Lesorgen's (2001) study found that, despite all applicants in the sample experiencing breaches of their protection orders, all of the breaches were not reported to the police because of a lack of confidence in the police, resulting from inadequate police response when they had reported previous breaches. For example, police may not take women seriously, or they may make women feel like they were wasting police time. Furthermore, Lesorgen (2001) reported that police did not seem interested in recording complaints for what they considered minor breaches. Despite protection orders being inclusive of all types of abuse, breaches where applicants were psychologically abused were not enforced to the same extent as physical abuse. Lesorgen (2001) found that women are unlikely to call police for breaches that consist exclusively of psychologically abusive behaviours, as they are discounted as trivial by the police. It is unclear whether a lack of police action against psychological abuse is due to a lack of understanding of the dynamics of psychological abuse, or because of the lack of evidence to support the victim's claims if the offender has left the scene.

Breaching a protection order is a criminal offence, and, in accordance with police policy, offenders should be arrested and prosecuted. However, there is evidence of an informal police policy where respondents were warned for committing minor breaches, rather

than being arrested as police policy requires (Busch, Robertson, & Lapsley, 1992; Lesorgen, 2001). Again, this showed that the development of police policy to improve arrest rates for breaches of orders was not having the desired effect, and further initiatives needed to be developed to ensure that the policy was implemented as intended. Allowing minor breaches to occur underestimates the fear experienced by victims, and ignores the dynamics of domestic violence. A seemingly trivial breach may be a further tactic by the batterer in a continual campaign to intimidate, dominate and control the victim (Busch, Robertson, & Lapsley, 1993). The final area of the justice system to be discussed is the Criminal Courts. The identified gap in the Family Court is also evident here.

The Criminal Court

The Criminal Court plays a significant role in holding offenders accountable for their violent behaviour, and delivering a very clear message that violence against a partner is unacceptable (Busch, 1994). Busch argued that abusers must be held accountable for their violence, and "Penalties for their use of domestic violence must be appropriate and must challenge the view that domestic violence is less significant then stranger violence" (Busch, 1994, p105). However, the general approach of the justice system and the Criminal Courts in particular, is to view each act of violence in isolation from the context in which it has occurred (Robertson, 1999). Viewing domestic violence as individual incidents, for example, one slap or one punch, trivialises the violence.

> The full meaning of such injuries and the violence which it has caused them can only be understood if they are placed in the context of a continuing domestic relationship characterised by fear, intimidation and other terrorist tactics. (Robertson, 1999, p111).

The criminal courts hold an overarching view of domestic violence as a symptom of a dysfunctional family, or a two-to-tango situation whereby the victim is just as responsible for provoking the violent attack, as the man is for committing the offence (Busch, 1994). Unlike victims of other violent crimes, battered women are frequently considered responsible for the violence performed against them (Hart, 1996).

Battered women face significant barriers to participate safely in the criminal justice process. Barriers include victim blaming attitudes, fear of retaliation, and battered

women's reluctance to prosecute their batterers. The reluctance to prosecute is due to numerous reasons, including the financial cost involved, and the inadequacy of any penalties that are imposed in relation to the offence (Busch, 1994). When serious assaults are trivialised by the courts, and given minimal charges, victims may conclude that the cost and risks involved in going through the process outweigh the consequences for the batterer (Lesorgen, 2001). Inadequate charges can also result in women losing confidence in the justice system, and further discourage women from utilising those agencies (Hart, 1996; Lesorgen, 2001). Furthermore, battered women risk increased violence from going through the court process, rather than gain protection (Busch, 1994; Hart, 1996). Women may be more concerned with their future safety and preventing future violence, rather than with the criminal conviction of the perpetrator for crimes that have already been committed (Hart, 1996). The fear of retaliation is of particular significance when considering that domestic violence escalates in severity and frequency over time (Busch, Robertson, & Lapsley, 1992; Walker, 1984).

A further barrier to battered women participating in the Criminal Courts is when women have to testify against their batterer in court if there is insufficient corroborating evidence to prosecute without her testimony. A United Nations' report (1993) documents a number of methods to support and protect battered women during this process. These include the provision of victim advocates to accompany the victim through the court process, preventing the publication of the victim's name or personally identifying information, not allowing any pre-trial contact with the offender, and developing a cooling off period before the perpetrator is released (United Nations, 1993).

Concluding comments on the Justice System

As discussed, there are numerous problems evident in the responses and systems of each of the three justice agencies discussed: police, Criminal Court and Family Court. Initiatives have been developed to improve the justice agencies' responsiveness, with varying amounts of success, such as changes to police policy and the establishment of inter-agency collaborations, such as HAIPP. There have also been developments at the government level, with the passing of the 1995 Domestic Violence Act, and the

development of the Te Rito document, which is the government's family violence prevention policy. Te Rito aims to change societal attitudes by encouraging societal intolerance towards domestic violence, to coordinate responses across agencies, to provide education and support, to ensure methods are culturally appropriate, and to ensure the commitment to family violence prevention is consistent and ongoing (Ministry of Social Development, 2002).

However, despite these measures to improve the responses and structures of the justice system agencies, further improvements and new initiatives are needed. Changes need to be made in individual agencies to improve their responsiveness to battered women and offenders, but they need to be made collaboratively across the agencies in the justice system. This will ensure that any improvements in one agency's response is supported and complemented by the other agencies. Additionally, the improvements need to occur in collaboration with community agencies to address the cultural, social and institutional supports for battering (Tifft, 1993). Improvements in the justice system alone will not stop battering from occurring so long as there are social supports for such behaviour.

An increasingly popular method is to employ a collaborative multi-agency approach to strengthen the enforcement of the criminalisation of battery, improve the consistency across justice system agencies, and address the social supports for battery, such as the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project (DAIP) in Duluth, Minnesota, USA, outlined below (Pence & Shepard, 1999). Busch and Robertson (1994) say that the gaps between the justice system response to violence and battered women's experiences of it, as discussed above, can be attributed to a lack of coordination between justice agencies and between government and community agencies. Interagency approaches aim at identifying and closing those gaps. Coordination is needed within the criminal justice system, as well as beyond, to include collaboration across all agencies that respond to battered women, their children, and to batterers.

Interagency Collaboration and coordination

What is interagency collaboration?

Although there have been improvements in specific areas in the justice system, coordinated efforts were developed after concerns over fragmentation, inconsistent responses, and a lack of a shared vision and understanding of battery across agencies. Domestic violence is deeply woven into social and cultural practices and institutions, and as such the complexity of the problem requires a combined and coordinated effort from a range of agencies in the community (United Nations, 1993). Coordination helps to ensure that existing systems and structures work faster and better for victims, that victims are protected and receive the services they need, and that batterers are held accountable for their abusive behavior.

A common focus of interagency approaches is developing the responsiveness of the justice system services (Pence & McDonnell, 2001). A second focus of interagency approaches is ensuring all agencies' responses are consistent, that they compliment each other, rather than having conflicting or contradictory responses (Pence & McDonnell, 2001). Furthermore, interagency coordination focuses on ensuring that agency responses are centralised around victims' safety and autonomy (Pence & McDonnell, 2001). It is important to note that although collaborations ensure responses focus on victims' safety, victim safety is not a goal of the collaboration itself. Collaborations focus on building victim safety into the responses, and not use it as a goal of the collaboration as this could have the opposite effect and actually be harmful to victims, and result in victim blaming (Pence & McDonnell, 2001)

Thus, the focus of a collaborative approach is on achieving consistency across agency responses, with attention given to victim safety and autonomy within those responses (Pence & McDonnell, 2001). Any proposed changes to a system or response, determined by an interagency collaboration, must be considered in the context of the effect it will have on victim safety and autonomy, that will not impair victims' safety, but enhance it (Gamache & Asmus, 1999). This is echoed in the United Nations (1993) report, which stated:

[Victim] rights, needs and interests are most important. All strategies, including the application of legal sanctions and other measures, must take women's safety into account. (United Nations, 1993, p57).

Interagency approaches are based on a belief that to achieve consistency in responses and a focus on victim safety, institutional structures must be coordinated (Pence & McDonnell, 2001). Furthermore, reform efforts need to focus on the social, cultural and institutional practices that support battering and place blame on victims (some of which were discussed at the beginning of this chapter) and aim at shifting the responsibility for batterer accountability from the victim to the community (Pence & Shepard, 1988; Pence & Shepard, 1999).

With reference to the New Zealand community; police policy and the Te Rito document (both mentioned in the preceding section) each encourage the development of an interagency approach to domestic violence. One of the nine guiding principles in the Te Rito document states the need for integration in domestic violence approaches, which can be achieved through interagency coordination (Ministry of Social Development, 2002). The police family violence policy documents the need to protect victims of domestic abuse, and to refer victims to support agencies for immediate and ongoing support (Office of the Police Commissioner, 1996). The policy reports that a coordinated interagency approach needs locally developed protocols, which include the provision for the support and protection for victims, the rehabilitation of offenders, and strategies in place to monitor and evaluate services and responses. The document also states that a coordinated interagency approach needs to centre on creating consistent responses and having no gaps in service provision (Office of the Police Commissioner, 1996).

Why use interagency collaborations?

The underlying implication from the discussions on understanding violence against women and the justice system's response is that improving individual responses to domestic violence can only have limited success at reducing the occurence of abuse and ensuring women's safety. However, collaboration across a range of agencies has the potential to have a substantial impact on stopping battery.

The primary reason given for the promotion of interagency collaborations is that the needs of battered women and their batterers extend across several agencies' services, including justice system agencies, support, advocacy and education services (James-Hanman, 2001). The services women need to access are not all provided by one agency, but by many; therefore, to provide the best service to women, these agencies need to work together and provide a consistent and holistic response. James-Hanman (2001) notes that such an approach is not new, as many Refuges have worked collaboratively with other community agencies for decades, and have campaigned for more interaction between agencies to address the conflicting operation of services and policies between agencies in responding to domestic violence. However, it was only recently that the interagency collaboration style of work has been formalised (James-Hanman, 2001). McGuire (date not provided) emphasises that new laws or policies are most effective when they are implemented through a collaboration, as this ensures all agency responses will be consistent within the new initiatives. When an agency does not understand its role in a new initiative the responses to victims and offenders become inconsistent and gaps appear in the responses, allowing offenders or victims to fall through the cracks (McGuire, date not provided).

The coordination of agencies means gaps and duplications in service provision can be identified (James-Hanman, 2001). With an interagency approach, agencies are working together to recognise the complexity of the problem, learn about other agencies' services, provide support to one another, respond to a wide range of victim needs, and develop methods for working together (United Nations, 1993). Further benefits were identified by James-Hanman (2001) who reported that an interagency collaborative approach increases public awareness and understanding of battery, increases agencies' understanding of the dynamics of battery, and provides a holistic intervention service.

> Interagency work, when done properly, can achieve great deal. It can be an extremely effective method by which appropriate services can be provided; it can enable effective intervention and prevention work to take place and it can lead to the many unhelpful or inaccurate attitudes about domestic violence being challenged and changed. (James-Hanman, 2001, p271).

The benefits of having a coordinated approach can be seen in the evaluations that have been conducted on projects that are already established, for example DAIP in Duluth, Minnesota, USA, the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) in Cardiff,

Wales, and HAIP in Hamilton, New Zealand. Each of these projects, described below, demonstrate the effectiveness of interagency approaches in reducing incidences of violence.

Features of an interagency collaboration

Collaborative approaches have the potential to make a significant impact on the occurence of domestic violence in the community, and the safety of battered women. There are a number of key features necessary for an effective interagency collaboration. They include: a shared philosophy, developing protocol and policy documents, trusted relationships, mandated authority in agency representatives, monitoring responses and evaluation of the collaborative.

Shared vision and philosophy. Central to interagency collaborations is the need for a shared vision, a common understanding of domestic violence, and what constitutes an appropriate response. Pence and Shepard (1999) describe this as "Creating a coherent philosophical approach centralizing victim safety" (p16). A shared philosophy is necessary to be able to determine goals for the collaboration project. Such goals usually centre on victims' safety, offender accountability, and changing societal attitudes around domestic violence. The collaboration group has to challenge members on how they think about domestic violence cases and the dynamics involved, and what role the victim, offender, agencies, and the community plays in ending the violence (Pence & Shepard, 1999). The collaborative group needs to find consensus on these issues, and they need to put battered women's safety first. However, according to James-Hanman (2001) developing a shared philosophical approach is one of the most difficult aspects of working in an interagency collaboration, as it unlikely that all the agencies involved will share the same understandings. Furthermore, each agency will have differences in work practices and different political or policy based positions, making the development of a collective vision and collective understanding of battery very difficult to establish (James-Hanman, 2001).

> The process of developing mutual understanding and building cooperation takes time. It requires a willingness to value the status and contribution of each discipline. It also requires patience and trust. (United Nations, 1993, p49).

James-Hanman (2001) also states that the definition of abuse needs to be continually reviewed as the concept is not fixed, but evolves as new knowledge on battery emerges.

Developing protocol and policy documents. The second key feature of interagency collaborations is the development of protocol and policy documents for the agencies to work by (Pence & Shepard, 1999; United Nations, 1993). Developing a set of guidelines and procedures for the response of each agency in the collaboration promotes a united response across services, and encourages cooperation among members (United Nations, 1993). Agencies need to be organised so their responses compliment each other, and do not contradict or undermine other agencies' responses. Furthermore, the responses need to be consistent so that each agency can predict the likely response of other agencies in given situations (Pence & Shepard, 1999). Pence and Shepard (1999) note that developing policy and protocol documents can consume an extensive amount of time, but the documents are as much about the content as they are about the process of getting them established. The process needs to involve thorough discussion, the equal inclusion of agencies' expertise, research findings and the experiences of victims (Pence & Shepard, 1999).

Relationships and trust. The third feature of interagency collaborations is enhancing the networking and trust across agencies. To develop effective networking and relationships, Gamache and Amus (1999) recommend using small groups when identifying problems and developing solutions; they believe that people will be more willing to discuss problems with their own agency and be less defensive, when the discussion is conducted in small groups. Developing trusted relationships between the agencies can be enhanced by producing successful reforms and outcomes, which are mutually satisfactory for all the agencies involved (Gamache & Amus, 1999). When trust is established, information sharing and communication becomes very open between the agencies, and they will allow themselves to be open to scrutiny by others in the collaboration (Gamache & Amus, 1999). Information sharing and trust across agencies forms part of the foundation of an effective collaboration. The United Nations (1993) report stated that interagency collaborations are primarily spaces for communication and information sharing, developing mechanisms for agencies to work together and coordinate their responses. Having a high level of trust has "[Facilitated] the development of increasingly

sophisticated networking processes that address highly complex issues related to the justice response to domestic violence" (Gamache & Amus, 1999, p70).

Authority of members in the collaboration. The fourth feature of successful collaborations is the importance of selecting appropriate people to be involved in the project. Gamache and Amus (1999) say that for a collaborative to be able to discuss policy level matters, the participants need to have the authority to make policy decisions for their agency. For example, Gamache & Amus (1999) suggest having quarterly meetings attended by the heads of agencies to keep them informed about the project's activities and developments, and to discuss and make decisions on policy level changes. However, such people usually have limited time, and may lack detailed knowledge of the day-to-day practice of the organisation. Therefore, when analysing the practices of an agency, experience is needed from people who work directly with the service delivery. Gamache & Amus (1999) recommended that a representative from each agency be selected to work in the collaboration who is knowledgeable of their agency's responses and procedures, and has the time to commit to the collaborative effort. James-Hanman (2001) provide two similar alternatives for the agency representative, arguing that the representative can either be a senior member who has the authority to make decisions and commit resources on behalf of the agency, or the representative can be someone who does not have that authority, but must have open access to people in the agency who can make such decisions.

Monitoring agency responses and systems. A further feature of interagency collaborations is the need for monitoring and tracking systems to be put in place. As noted above, victim safety is central to domestic violence collaborations. Falk and Helgeson (1999) report that developing protocols and enhancing the networking and information sharing across agencies can improve women's safety in two ways: by holding individual offenders accountable, and by holding the justice system agencies accountable for how they respond to battery. Collaborations can monitor systems and responses to women and offenders at an individual case level, but also on a macro level, whereby:

> Tracking systems can be set up to monitor the movement of cases through the criminal justice system and to provide information on how well the community is responding to domestic violence cases. (Pence & Shepard, 1999, p18).

By monitoring and analysing at a macro level, trends in responses can be identified, gaps in the system or response are made visible, and the analysis can determine whether implemented policies or processes are being actively performed as intended (Falk & Helgeson, 1999).

Essential services. Other common features of domestic violence based collaborations include: ensuring essential services are available to battered women in the community, such as emergency housing; ensuring appropriate sanctions are in place for offenders as well as rehabilitation services; and ensuring that agencies' responses protect children and understand the effect battery has on children (Pence & Shepard, 1999).

Evaluation. The final component common to domestic collaborations is the need to evaluate the coordinated response itself, and this needs to be performed from the perspective of victim safety (Pence & Shepard, 1999). Evaluations are needed to determine if the project is meeting its goals or objectives, and to determine if and where alterations or refinements need to occur (Shepard, 1999). Furthermore, Shepard (1999) believes that community intervention projects have an ethical obligation to evaluate the impact they are having in the community to address domestic violence. Despite the best intentions of a project, Shepard (1999) argues, evaluations are necessary to ensure battered women are not being put at further risk of abuse as a result of the project, rather, that battered women's safety is enhanced.

Challenges

With many interventions there are both benefits and weaknesses of the initiative. Interagency collaborations have the potential to be very effective at addressing domestic violence related issues and ensuring women's safety. However, this is when they are done properly. "An interagency approach is also a style of working that is fraught with difficulties and which, when not done properly can actually have the effect of worsening the situation" (James-Hanman, 2001, p271). If the features described above are not included, or the following challenges are not addressed, the collaboration will not be effective. It is important to be able to identify the challenges to be able to improve the intervention, and minimise the potential impact of any weaknesses that are unavoidable.

The first challenge to interagency coordination is that agencies may have differing philosophy, training and understanding about the dynamics of battery and the best ways to address it. Furthermore, members may be unwilling to view an issue from an alternative perspective, restricting their views to the perspective of their own field of expertise (United Nations, 1993). Thus the first necessary feature of an effective collaborative, developing a shared vision philosophy would not be obtained. This challenge is magnified when there is a history of mistrust between particular agencies involved (James-Hanman, 2001).

Another challenge to interagency coordination is being able to evaluate the intervention across the different agencies involved. Agencies that collect data for analysis commonly collect the information in a manner that is congruent with their agencies' understanding of what constitutes violence and that is suited to their way of working. This creates problems for analysis and comparison across agencies as, for example, different definitions of violence result in different information gathered. Furthermore, what information that is collected, and how it is structured, can make it difficult to combine all the information together from the different agencies. As James-Hanman (2001) explains, "Those agencies who do collect some data rarely do so in a co-ordinated or consistent fashion. Comparisons are thus problematic" (p270).

A potentially significant problem for collaborations is in the distribution of power. Due to the range of agencies in a collaborative, there is a risk that the more powerful, usually state agencies, will dominate the collaborative resulting in a dictatorship rather than consensus based collaboration (James-Hanman, 2001). When the more powerful statutory agencies dominate over the less powerful, usually community based agencies, they may impose their own definitions of abuse, their own agendas and their own solutions onto the group (James-Hanman, 2001). This is despite the fact that the community agencies are commonly regarded as those best informed on the issues and barriers battered women face (James-Hanman, 2001). Unequal distribution of power is a significant risk for collaborations, and can result in outcomes fitting the needs of an agency, rather than the needs of battered women.

Related to the distribution of power, a further challenge to an interagency collaborative is losing sight of the overall focus or purpose of the project (McGuire, date not provided). There is potential for the focus to shift away from victims' needs, to a focus on an agency's needs or priorities, which may or may not be synonymous with victims' safety. McGuire (date not provided) argues that the lack of focus is often the result of inadequate leadership.

As noted in the section on understanding violence against women, domestic violence affects women from all despite economic, class, ability and ethnic backgrounds. Therefore, to be able to provide appropriate responses that are equally accessible to all battered women, it is important that the needs of all sections of society are represented in the collaborative. The United Nations (1993) report specifically detailed the importance of community based advocacy group's involvement in collaborations for this reasons. The report argues that by having a grass-roots connection with people who are accessing the services, the advocacy groups will have a sound understanding of the gaps and barriers in the responses provided. Therefore, such advocates can be effective in developing practical solutions ensuring the needs of specific groups of women are met; such as, ethnic minority groups, women with different levels of ability, and the varied needs of women in different age brackets (United Nations, 1993).

The most commonly identified challenge for collaborations is a lack of resources, which is frequently the cause hampering the development of initiatives (United Nations, 1993). Lack of resources can result in initiatives being developed because they fit the resources available, rather than because they are most needed (James-Hanman, 2000). The lack of resources include; the lack of time available in collaboration members due to heavy workloads, heavy workloads of the agencies in the collaborative, and a lack of financial resources to implement initiatives within and between the agencies (James-Hanman, 2000; United Nations, 1993).

Existing models of interagency collaboration

Multi-agency approaches are growing in popularity across the world. Although it is difficult to evaluate their effectiveness, MARAC in Cardiff, Wales and DAIP in Minnesota, USA both demonstrate the benefits of employing a multi-agency approach.

Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) in Cardiff, Wales

MARAC includes representatives from the police, probation, health, housing, refuge, a child protection agency and the Women's Safety Unit who are a community agency that provide advocacy for victims, advice, legal services and counseling (Robinson, 2006). The conferences, attended by a representative of each of these agencies, are held fortnightly, to "[Provide] a forum for sharing information and taking actions to reduce future harm to high-risk victims and their children" (Robinson, 2006, p762). Cases are taken to MARAC after a risk assessment is performed by police at domestic violence call outs. The risk assessment involves fifteen yes/no questions to determine who are at most risk of repeat violence. At the meetings, representatives contribute the information they each have about the victims or perpetrators involved, from their agency's information. MARAC then discuss and create plans for agencies to respond to enhance victims' safety.

Robinson's (2006) evaluation identifies a number of strengths of MARAC. Firstly, there were reports that MARAC had improved the responses of the individual agencies, as they were assisting victims more efficiently. Robinson (2006) also identified an increase in information sharing, which was essential to be able to provide efficient and effective assistance to victims, as the services come from a variety of agencies. Although acknowledging confidentiality issues as a potential barrier to information sharing, the report is clear that "Effective multi-agency work requires agencies to be able to share confidential information with each other" (Robinson, 2006, p775). The importance and uniqueness of each agency is respected. However, the importance of community agencies was emphasised, as they have grass roots knowledge and direct relationships with the people involved and can, therefore, provide information from a victim's perspective. Robinson (2006) reports that the issue of trust was a commonly raised theme during the MARAC evaluation, stating that the agencies were willing to share information because they had established trusted relationships between the members at

MARAC. However, it is unclear if this trust extends beyond the members, to the agencies they are representing. To share confidential information, one would expect agencies would have established trust that each agency will respond appropriately.

Robinson (2006) also documents the weaknesses of the MARAC model. First, there was the challenge of a substantial increase in workload for the agencies and the agency representatives in MARAC. The most significant limitation of the MARAC model is that it only addresses cases that are very high risk, saying that it does not have sufficient resources to further extend their service (Robinson, 2006). There are many victims who score lower on the risk assessments and therefore are not addressed by MARAC, but who would benefit from the holistic service provision MARAC ensures. There is also concern over those who had a low risk score at the assessment, yet the risk may escalate rapidly. Such cases are currently not identifiable, yet they are potentially very high risk.

Despite the limitations of the MARAC model, Robinson's (2006) evaluation concluded that MARAC has been a successful intervention in enhancing victims' safety by reducing repeat offending in high-risk cases. Sixty six percent of victims did not request police intervention after MARAC interventions and, from interviews with victims, 63% said they had not experienced any further violence or abuse.

Domestic Abuse Intervention Project (DAIP) model

Another type of collaboration is the DAIP model. DAIP is a feminist based intervention project designed to address the social and cultural supports for battering, and to shift the responsibility of batterer accountability away from the victim, and onto society and the responding agencies (Pence & Shepard, 1988). DAIP works to transform the way systems are structured for responses, and to transform individual agency responses (Pence & McDonnell, 2001). DAIP focuses on ensuring responses are consistent and that they centralise victims' safety (Pence & McDonnell, 2001). DAIP is made up of victim advocates, police, prosecutors, probation officers, court workers, mental health providers, policy makers and judges (Pence & McDonnell, 2001). DAIP aims to end domestic violence by coordinating the justice system and other agencies. The DAIP project is structured around four primary objectives, which are believed necessary to achieve this goal. They are:

1) To protect the victim by bringing the assailant into the judicial system through reducing the screening out of cases.

2) To protect the victim by imposing and enforcing legal sanctions on the assailant that will deter him from committing further acts of violence.

3) To protect the victim by providing safe housing, legal advocacy, and education.

4) To protect the victim by coordinating interagency information flow in responses and monitoring procedures and policies.

(Pence, 1989, p21)

Referring to objective one, Pence (1989) states, that policy and procedural changes in justice system responses can have a positive impact on the number of cases going through the justice system, and the number of successful prosecutions. Under objective two, DAIP developed education groups for men who batter. Attendance at the programmes is mandated by the courts. The programmes focus on how to handle conflict and teach techniques, such as time out. The programmes also challenge social beliefs about the role of men and women to teach men that their abuse stems from a belief in their right to control and dominate women (Pence & Shepard, 1988). Under objective three, shelters are provided for battered women; here other services such as legal advocacy can also be accessed, so that women can make informed choices. The shelters also provide education groups for women, where they can talk about their experiences, learn about the different forms of battery, and the importance of consistent offender accountability (Pence & Shepard, 1988). The fourth objective is the most relevant to the FST (discussed below), as it relates to monitoring, rather than service provision. As batterers commonly blame their victims and deny or minimise their use of violence, it is important that all interventions deliver a consistent message that battery is not acceptable (Tifft, 1993). Under the fourth objective, DAIP monitors agencies' responses to ensure they are complying with the agreed protocols and policies.

The primary focus of DAIP is on the justice system. DAIP has instigated numerous changes in policy and practice across the justice system process. For example, in the police response, DAIP encouraged a new police policy requiring that offenders be arrested when there is probable cause an assault has occurred or if a protection order has been breached. Policy also requires police to contact shelter advocates when arrests are

made, so they can attend to the victim to provide support and information. With the support of DAIP, shelter advocates were also permitted access to police records to provide follow-up support to women where arrests were not made.

Evaluations of DAIP indicated "Significant reductions in rates of abuse, particularly during the first three months of the intervention process" (Pence & Shepard, 1988, p291). For example, in Shepard's 1985 evaluation, 69% of battered women reported they had not experienced any physical abuse, and significantly less psychological abuse, one year after their partners had participated in the DAIP men's programme (McDonnell & Shepard, 2000; Pence & Shepard, 1988).

The development of interagency collaboration in New Zealand and Hamilton

Although there have been many agencies in the community working with domestic violence, there has been little or no coordination of them, particularly between government and community agencies. Dominick (1995) reported:

> Agencies acted independently of one another, sometimes with conflicting philosophies and procedures, often without sharing information. This frequently rendered responses by individual agencies ineffective. The responses often worked against the protection and safety of the victims (p2).

As a response to the growing concern over the inconsistency of agency responses and an increase in awareness of the extent of domestic violence and the effect it has on battered women and their children, a number of new initiatives were developed to improve responsiveness and decrease fragmentation (Dominick, 1995). Such initiatives included the adoption of the police pro-arrest policy in 1989, the 1996 police family violence policy, changes to legislation with the 1995 Domestic Violence Act, and the establishment of the Family Violence Prevention Coordinating Committee (FVPCC) in 1986. The FVPCC was established to coordinate ongoing action of government and community agencies working in the field of domestic violence (Balzer, 1999). Their role was to design and implement a national project to stop domestic violence. Using information on the Duluth DAIP project, the FVPCC agreed to initiate a coordinated

multi-agency approach to address the justice system's response to reduce domestic violence, which became HAIP.

Hamilton Abuse Intervention Project

Hamilton was chosen as the site to run the interagency collaboration because of its size, the support from the local refuges and other community agencies, ethnic composition of the city, and because Hamilton had previously piloted the police arrest policy (Balzer, 1999). Launched in 1991, HAIPP was adapted from the Duluth DAIP model to suit the unique cultural, legal and socio-economic characteristics present in the New Zealand, and specifically, the Hamilton community.

HAIPP endeavored to incorporate each of the key features of an effective interagency collaboration, included in the preceding section, through the combined efforts of each of the agencies involved. The agencies involved in HAIPP are those who directly respond to domestic violence, including the police, the District Court, Corrections, Family Court, Te Whakaruruhau (Māori women's refuge), and the Hamilton Refuge and Support Services (HRSS). The project was established to achieve a consistent and coordinated response to domestic violence by establishing collaboration between agencies that respond to domestic violence (Dominick, 1995; Furness, 1994). By providing a coordinated response, HAIPP was designed to improve victim safety and offender accountability, and deliver a consistent message to batterers and the greater community that domestic violence is unacceptable (Robertson & Busch, 1992). Key elements of HAIPP included:

1) An active police policy of arresting assailants;
2) The sentencing of convicted assailants to a structured education programme;
3) An advocacy and support programme for victims of abuse;
4) Close co-operation between community groups and statutory agencies; and
5) Monitoring of agency performance and compliance with project policies.

(Dominick, 1995, p1).

The agencies participating in HAIPP agreed on policies, processes, protocols and practices; but some philosophical differences remained (Dominick, 1995). Therefore,

contrary to the list of characteristics needed for an effective collaboration, documented above, HAIPP demonstrated that a coordinated response can be obtained through agreed polices, procedures and protocols, without complete agreement across all agencies on the philosophy of battery (although some agreement was achieved). Dominick (1995) emphasised the importance of collaborations establishing agreed protocols and procedures, as collaborations rely on consistent responses across agencies, and such documents ensure this. However, consistent with Pence and Shepard's (1999) experiences with DAIP, an extensive amount of time was needed to develop protocol and procedure documents through a collaborative process (Dominick, 1995). Furthermore, the protocol and procedure documents needed to be affirmed internally in each agency for staff to comply with them (Dominick, 1995).

Evaluations found dramatic improvements in the justice system agencies' responses as a result of HAIPP (Dominick, 1995; Robertson 1999). Specifically, there was an increased number of battered women calling police and an improved satisfaction with the police response (Dominick, 1995). The arrest rates for assault in domestic violence cases increased twofold, with a substantial improvement in the rate of convictions (Dominick, 1995). The evaluator concluded that the improved rate of prosecutions was predominantly due to the work of the HAIPP court advocates (this role is described below), because of the support they provided the victims but also because of their monitoring of the police prosecutors. During the pilot phase, no battered women declined to give evidence, if it was needed for the prosecution of their batterer (Robertson 1999). Again, it is likely that this was a result of the court advocates working with the women.

Monitoring

In its monitoring role, HAIPP focused on agencies' compliance with the HAIPP protocols, victims' safety, and identifying service responses where there were gaps in ensuring victim safety or offender accountability (Dominick, 1995). Dominick (1995) found that the monitoring systems that were in place were comprehensive, but there were limitations on what was getting monitored. The monitoring that was occurring on the government agencies was viewed positively by those agencies; for example, the police and corrections departments reported that HAIPP monitoring was a beneficial

contribution to their agency's performance as it ensured agencies were actively complying with the agreed upon HAIPP protocols (Dominick, 1995). HAIPP became the Hamilton Abuse Intervention Project (HAIP), when its status as a pilot project was removed. At the end of the pilot period in December 1994, the FVPCC withdrew its involvement, and there was a change in political climate, resulting in a massive cut in government funding for the project. Due to budget cuts and re-structuring, the government decided to stop funding HAIP's monitoring of agency responses, which was approximately 65% of HAIP funding (Balzer, 1999). Lack of funding also resulted in HAIP having to withdraw the court advocate services. Although HAIP did not fold, the funding cuts had lasting ramifications, and devastated HAIP's ability to perform its monitoring role.

HAIP now delivers services and also coordinates interagency collaboration. Services currently run by HAIP are the men's education programme, support groups and advocacy for battered women, and a 24 hour crisisline. In its coordinator role, HAIP holds monthly interagency meetings to promote ongoing close connections across agencies. The interagency meetings were an important forum to improve the communication between agencies. As a result of the improved communication, agencies in the HAIP regularly contacted each other directly. The interagency meeting also resulted in an increase in agencies' awareness of each other's roles.

Services and agencies operating in Hamilton

The following is a description of agencies in relation to the HAIP collaboration as they illustrate the agencies' roles unique to the Hamilton area, in addition to the generic roles the agencies perform. These descriptions are intended to provide some detail on the environment in which the FST was established in Hamilton.

Police

Many aspects of the protocols between HAIP and the police reiterate national police policy. For example, police are required to arrest when there is evidence of an assault, without seeking a complaint from the victim (Office of the Police Commissioner, 1996). Furthermore, men who assault or breach protection orders are to be charged; warnings

should not be given, and offenders are not to receive police bail (Office of the Police Commissioner, 1996). These aspects of national police family violence policy are integral to the HAIP philosophy as such methods provide immediate protection to victims and reinforce the message that battery is unacceptable (Furness, 1994). However, there are some additional protocols HAIP and police agreed to that are not part of national police policy. For example, police are required to notify the HAIP crisisline when they attend a domestic violence incident, whether an arrest is made or not, to ensure victims receive support and advice (Busch & Robertson, 1994). Additional protocols have put the performance of Hamilton police under greater scrutiny (Busch & Robertson, 1994). For example, a women's advocate reviews the police phone logs to ensure police policies regarding arrests and charges are implemented in every appropriate case (Busch & Robertson, 1994).

Refuges

The role of the refuges is central to the collaborative response to domestic violence. As well as providing safe emergency housing, and one-on-one advocacy and support to battered women, HRSS and Te Whakaruruhau staff attend callouts from the 24 hour HAIP crisisline (Furness, 1994). Contact to crisisline is predominantly initiated by police who are required to call after attending a domestic violence incident (Furness, 1994). By calling crisisline an on-call advocate from the Refuges attends the address to provide immediate support and advice to battered women and inform them of the services that are available (Furness, 1994). The Refuges are also involved in the monitoring of police, as they ask victims about the response they received, and direct any issues back to the police (Busch & Robertson, 1994).

Courts

A frequently cited problem with the court processes is battered women withdrawing charges they had laid, or being unwilling to testify in court against the abuser (Feder, 1999; Kurz, 1992). It is intended that the police policy of collecting sufficient evidence would be adequate in ensuring that offenders can be prosecuted without victims testifying in court. Furthermore, where there is evidence, police are required to arrest without a victim complaint, thus victims are not able to later withdraw the charges.

However, further focus is required on monitoring police responses to ensure that such policies are enforced.

Corrections officers have the responsibility of advising judges on sentencing and ensuring offenders adhere to community based sentences (Furness, 1994). There is an informal agreement between HAIP and corrections that probation officers will recommend offenders attend the HAIP men's education programme as part of their sentence (Busch & Robertson, 1994). Offenders attend the programme either as a condition of a sentence of supervision, or as a part of parole conditions after imprisonment (Busch & Robertson, 1994). It is also the responsibility of probation officers to ensure offenders comply with the conditions of their sentence, including regular attendance at the HAIP men's programmes (Busch & Robertson, 1994). Should an offender miss a pre-determined number of sessions, they can be charged with breaching the conditions of their sentence (Furness, 1994). HAIP protocols also require probation officers to obtain victim statements from refuge advocates, to ensure victims' perspectives are incorporated in the preparation of probations pre-sentence reports (Busch & Robertson, 1994).

For the Family Court, HAIP protocols require batterers with protection orders filed against them to attend the HAIP men's education programme (Busch & Robertson, 1994). Details on the Family Court's general role of administering protection orders is described above, under the section on the justice system's response.

Court Advocates

The court advocate roles were developed during the initial stages of HAIPP, and were proven to be very effective at helping women through the court process (Dominick, 1995). However, the court advocate roles were later cut as a result of funding restraints. Consequently there were no HAIP court advocates when the FST was established in Hamilton. When existing, the court advocates helped battered women through the court process. They did not provide legal advice, but provided information on court processes to ensure women understood and had input into those processes. The advocates were intended to "Demystify court processes" (Busch & Robertson, 1994, p44), they provided support and ensured victims knew what was going on throughout the process. The court

advocates monitored abusers through the justice system to "[document] departures from intervention policies by prosecutors, probation officers and judges" (Busch & Robertson, 1994, p44).

Men's education programmes

The men's programme is very similar to that in the DAIP model. The programme teaches men how to handle anger and conflict situations, using time out techniques. The main focus of the programme is changing the attitudes and beliefs which reinforce men's right to beat, control and dominate women. The programme teaches men how they use violence as part of a pattern of behaviours aimed at controlling their partners (Busch & Robertson, 1994). The men are then shown an alternative model of behaviour, where relationships are based on respect and equality. There are two men's programmes, a non-Māori group, and a Māori group. Both cover the same content, but the Māori men's programme is delivered in a culturally appropriate way and incorporates traditional Māori values and beliefs (Furness, 1994). As noted above, men who are court mandated to attend must be present at a set number of sessions, or they can be charged for breaching the condition of their bail or sentence. Although such programmes are an individual response to a social problem, they provide the opportunity to challenge the batterers' belief that it is their right to control their partners (Pence & Shepard, 1988).

Women's programmes

HAIP provides one-on-one support to battered women to renew victim autonomy, which complements the services provided by the two refuges. HAIP deliver women's support and advocacy group programmes, to counter the isolation frequently experienced by battered women. The programmes focus on informing women about justice system processes, including how to use and access protection orders and how to get police to enforce them (Busch & Robertson, 1994). The women's programmes are based on the belief that by meeting other victims who have had similar experiences, women can come to understand the nature of the abuse they have suffered and understand that they are not responsible for the abuse (Busch & Robertson, 1994).

HAIP has recently entered into a new initiative with the police and other community agencies, called the POL400 project. This project is multi-agency referral process that is unique to Hamilton. It was initiated out of concerns over the invisibility of children in the responses to domestic violence. Beginning in 2001, this project was intended to identify women and children who were victims during a family violence incident, and to provide support to reduce the risk of harm and isolation battered women experience. Protocols were established between the participating agencies: Police, HAIP, Refuge, CYF, Parentline, Prosecution and Courts. Representatives of each of the agencies make up the POL400 team. The community agencies and the police worked together to develop a new form for the police to use in family violence cases, called a POL400b form. This form documents information on any children who were present at the time of the incident. When police attend a domestic violence incident a POL400 form is completed by the attending officer; if children are present, the POL400b form is also completed. Under this project the police agreed to make the completed forms available for the interagency group to review. Both of these forms provide vital information for the collaborative to make assessments and referrals.

By reviewing each of the POL400 and POL400b forms agencies determine what responses are required for the families, and referrals are made to relevant agencies that will make contact with the victims. At the beginning of the POL400 project, the team met weekly to review cases, and were responding to around 40-45 cases per week. With the advent of the FST in 2005, the meetings changed to daily, and by 2006 there was an average of 50-70 cases reviewed per week. The POL400 team is a new initiative, exclusive to the Hamilton region. It is believed that the POL400 project is filling a gap in service delivery by ensuring a seamless response to the needs of children who have been exposed to domestic violence, and that the response to children meets their needs. Furthermore, it is believed this project ensures agency resources are used efficiently and effectively by matching needs with resources, ensuring there are no duplications in service delivery, and by closing gaps that may make children vulnerable. The POL400 project was an important factor in getting the FST established in Hamilton. It provides the active service responses to cases that the FST monitor and evaluate. (Information on

the POL400 project was taken from unpublished documents made available by HAIP staff).

Child Advocacy and protection

Although not part of HAIP during the evaluations: Parentline and Child, Youth and Family (CYF) are now active members of the POL400 project, to make children more visible in domestic violence responses. Parentline is a child advocacy service, aiming to prevent child abuse and neglect. The Parentline agency provides numerous services for children and parents. As part of the collaboration work in Hamilton, Parentline act as child advocates, and respond to referrals made in the POL400 meetings. CYF also respond to referrals made at the daily POL400 meetings, and are recognised for their statutory authority to protect children. More details on these two agencies are included in the description of the roles of the FST members.

Family Safety Teams

What lead to the development of the Family Safety Teams in New Zealand?

The FST was an initiative developed by the Ministry of Justice, New Zealand Police, and the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services in 2004. The FST was initiated due to the high occurence of battery in New Zealand, and an identified lack of communication and information sharing across agencies. The lack of agency coordination came to public attention with the high profile murders of women and children as a result of battery. Two such cases were the deaths of James Whakaruru and the Aplin sisters, Saliel and Olympia.

Damning reports by the Office of the Commissioner for Children (2000 & 2003), investigating the deaths of the Aplin sisters and James Whakaruru documented the failure and inadequacy of individual agency responses and a lack of attempts to employ culturally appropriate services. But the most significant finding in both reports was the poor interagency communication and information sharing between the agencies that were working with the families (Office of the Commissioner for Children, 2000 & 2003). The report into the death of James stated: "Agencies worked without reference to each other, and ended their involvement assuming that other parts of the system would

protect James" (Office of the Commissioner for Children, 2000, p1). The agencies involved worked in isolation of each other, resulting in no one agency having the whole picture of what was occurring. However, the reports also recognised that there were limited avenues for agencies to be able to share information. Both reports concluded that in order to ensure the safety of children, a comprehensive, holistic and integrated approach needed to be established, in which victims' safety and well being was prioritised (Office of the Commissioner for Children, 2000 & 2003).

Reports such as these, coupled with the growing body of evidence demonstrating the benefits and effectiveness of interagency collaborations, prompted the government into action, resulting in the development of the FST. The FST initiative was intended to ensure better information sharing and better co-ordination of responses for families experiencing violence.

The Family Safety Team, from a National perspective

The FST is a joint venture involving the police, the Ministry of Justice, Child Youth and Family, and the community sector. Representatives from national family violence organisations and government departments formed a working party and advisory group in Wellington. This group established a draft framework for the project and terms of reference. The guidelines for the FST were established in a way that regional differences could be incorporated, so that each FST was unique to the services and needs of the area.

The FST is a three-year pilot programme, which employs a multi-disciplinary approach to reduce the high rate of domestic violence in New Zealand, and to improve the outcomes for the families experiencing domestic violence. The primary functions of the FST's are to improve the collaboration and coordination between all the agencies involved, to make the links between these agencies, and to ensure information is shared between them. The teams are intended to strengthen the justice system responses, and promote better use of services that already exist by matching families' needs with services that are locally provided (Office of the commissioner of police, 2005b).

> Family Safety Teams are aimed at providing a multi-disciplinary response to family violence through assessment, case management and monitoring. The teams will involve police investigators working together with advocates for adult

and child victims to ensure the needs of a family experiencing family violence are addressed. (Office of the commissioner of police, 2004).

The objectives of the FST are to:

- Provide formal systems and structures to support effective interagency co-ordination in response to family violence.

- Provide comprehensive and integrated interventions for families experiencing violence.

- Develop national best practice principles for working with families experiencing family violence, and promote a consistent application of such practices.

(Office of the commissioner of police, 2005).

The FST is expected to achieve these outcomes through a combination of the following duties: information gathering and assessment, monitoring and evaluation, developing new practice and systemic change, proactive intervention, and advocacy to identify gaps and ensure the voices of women and children are integral to all systems (Office of the commissioner of police, 2005a).

There are four Family Safety Teams, covering six areas of the country: Counties – Manukau and Christchurch are fully resourced sites, while Auckland and Hamilton, and Wairarapa and Lower Hutt, share funding and other resources. The general composition of the full regional FST's is shown in diagram 1. However, the combination may change to allow for variations in the community's needs and agency's capabilities.
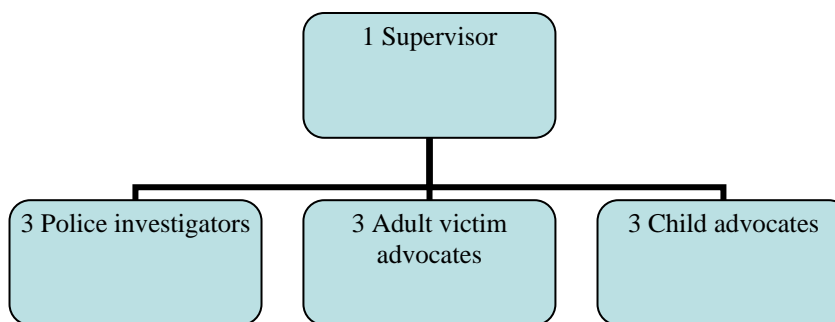
Diagram 1

The generic FST model

Adapted from: Office of the commissioner of police. (2005).

Athough there is a national framework for the pilot programme, including the programme objectives documented above, the FST initiative is designed to be flexible to suit the agencies and community needs unique to each FST area. For example, a FST newsletter encourages each FST area to develop in a way that best meets the needs of the community, noting: "Each team may have a different approach as it gets to know its community and the best way to operate within it" (Office of the commissioner of police, 2005c, p4). It is expected that each region will work collaboratively with the relevant organisations in their community to address issues unique to their region, while still staying within the broad national framework.

Evaluating the Hamilton FST

Pilot projects are important tools for testing new initiatives to address domestic violence. To determine the effectiveness of the project in meeting its objectives, they need to be evaluated. Although the teams in all six areas are part of the pilot project, only those in Counties – Manukau, Wairarapa and Lower Hutt are included in the national evaluation conducted jointly by the Ministry of Justice and the University of Auckland. This gave an opportunity for the evaluation of the Hamilton pilot to be planned and implemented in a way which best suited local needs. Evaluating the Hamilton FST will help to determine what it is doing well and what they need to improve on, clarify their objectives and practices, and determine areas where responses need developing.

The Hamilton FST approached the Community Psychology Programme at the University of Waikato for an evaluation to be conducted. A proposal was developed and circulated within the FST, so that FST members could have input into what was to be evaluated, and how it would be done. It was agreed that the evaluation would involve both process and outcome components. After input from the FST, the aims of the evaluation were established. The aims of the Hamilton FST evaluation are:

- To identify any barriers encountered in establishing the FST model and the factors which have helped to overcome such barriers.
- To assess the strengths and weaknesses of the FST model as implemented in Hamilton, including the working relationships between the participating agencies.
- To assess the extent to which the implementation of the FST has improved the

ability of the justice system and associated agencies to provide a holistic and wrap around response which:

- o ensures the safety of woman and child victims
- o enhances the autonomy of women
- o ensures that perpetrators are held accountable for their use of violence.
- To determine the adequacy of the FST structures to deliver an effective systemic response that addresses the needs of battered women and their children.

It was agreed that the most effective way of eliciting information regarding these four aims would be for the evaluator to: observe FST meetings, conduct in-depth interviews with the FST members and associated stakeholders, and perform a focus group with battered women who have had experience with the agencies' responses to determine what the issues are for them. A literature review was also conducted on: the dynamics of abuse, the prevalence of battery in New Zealand, the justice system's responses, and a review of interagency collaborations. The final component for gathering information was an archival database of the police family violence cases, to determine changes in police responses as a result of the FST by comparing data from before and after the implementation of the FST in Hamilton.

METHOD

This project is primarily a process evaluation, but some elements of outcome evaluations are also incorporated. An outcome evaluation looks at "[whether] a programme has achieved the outcomes it is seeking" (Lunt, Davidson, & McKegg, 2003, p86). A process evaluation addresses what is happening now, what in the programme is doing well and what needs working on. A process evaluation is directed at "[describing] or documenting what actually happened in the context or course of a programme" (Lunt et al, 2003, p85). A number of different methods were employed to contribute to either one, or both, aspects of this evaluation.

The evaluation, predominantly based on qualitative research, was divided into five key components: a literature review, observation of FST meetings, archival research using police files, a focus group with battered women, and in depth face to face interviews with FST members and stakeholders. Apart from the literature review, all of the information collected was from a local perspective; no other data were collected from beyond the Hamilton region. My general approach is informed by the principles and values of community psychology, including fairness, equity and integrity in relationships. The research is based on a commitment to working collaboratively with stakeholders in an effort to maximise the benefits of evaluation information (Patton, 1997).

Literature review

The literature review entailed a search through academic journals, databases, books, and the World Wide Web for literature on domestic violence, and multi-agency collaborations. The literature search was based around five main areas: the dynamics of abuse, an assessment of the justice system agencies' responses to domestic violence, an analysis of multi agency collaborations, the history of collaborations in New Zealand, and the development of the FST initiative.

Participation and observation of FST meetings

I attended numerous FST meetings throughout the evaluation to increase my familiarity with the team and enhance my understanding of the running of the FST. This

observation helped me to identify some of the topics discussed in the interviews. Observing the FST in their working environment allowed me to see how the team worked together, the group dynamics; whether there were potential issues over power or communication, and other such concerns that FST participants may have otherwise not brought up in the interview without being prompted. Of particular significance were the meetings where the FST protocol document was being established. My attendance at FST meetings was always with the approval of the FST, which was confirmed at the previous meeting or through email. I was never discouraged from attending any meetings, and was always made to feel welcome.

Archival database

A pre-post analysis of the police response to domestic violence incidents in Hamilton was conducted using police reports, which included POL400 and POL400b forms. Using Microsoft Access, I developed a database to record information from all the domestic violence incidents recorded by the police during March 6-12th 2005, just prior to the implementation of the FST. This provided a baseline. The first full week of the month was selected to ensure that every day of the week was incorporated to control for variations in call outs due to the day of the week. A second sample was taken from the comparable week in March 2006, the 5th – 11th. The rationale was that comparing the data from the two samples would allow me to assess the impact of the FST on the way police process domestic violence cases. The data from the two samples was compared to determine any changes that had occurred over that time period.

A list of file numbers was created for incidents recorded as 1D, a domestic violence related incident, for the two sample weeks. The file numbers were collected by using the police business objectives database. Any file that was coded as a 1D was recorded by the event number, date and day of week. The police family violence coordinator then accessed the hard copy of these files. However, in doing so the coordinator noticed that some of the files from 2006 were still being worked on, for example, some were still with prosecutions. This simply meant that I had to wait to access these files, or request their use temporarily. All the 2006 files were eventually made available. However, when trying

to access the hard copy of the 2005 files, some of the files did not appear to exist in the current system. The coordinator explains the probable reason for this:

> *I believe the explanation for this may lie in the previous system for capturing data between the CARD report manager and the LES, Law Enforcement System (previous known as the Wanganui computer system). CARD is the resource dispatch system used by the police Comms Centers to deploy units to jobs. A CARD event would generate a temporary file number for certain types of incident and offence codes. This file would remain valid for a 30 day period. When the attending officer submitted the paper work (pol400, for domestic related incidents) the event number should have been matched with the temporary file number and a permanent file generated. However if the CARD event number was not recorded on the pol400 a new file number would be generated without a link to the temporary file numbers. It would appear that the temporary file numbers remained in the Business Objects database which provided the file numbers for this evaluation. I believe the list provided for the 2005 files contained a number of temporary file numbers which in reality never existed as a hard copy of a file.* (appendix G).

This did not happen with the 2006 files as the recording system was upgraded in June 2005. Under the new system (National Intelligence Application, or NIA), the NIA files were linked to the CARD event number, so a temporary file was not created. After some investigation by the police family violence coordinator, a new list of event codes was completed and the files accessed. There were a total of sixty five files, nineteen files recorded for the week in March 2005, and forty six files for the week in March 2006.

In consultation with the police, it was decided to collate data covering such things as information about the 111 call made, what the incident involved, the people present, if a POL400 and POL400b form was filled out, whether Crisisline was called, and what action was taken by the police. Further information was collected on incidents where arrests were made, including what the perpetrator was charged with, the offender's plea, the outcome of the charge, and what the sentence was (see appendix F for a full list of what was collected).

The files contained a range of reports and information. The majority of the information needed came from the occurence logs and the POL400 forms. However, other available reports were accessed if further information was required. I manually loaded the

information from these files into the pre-determined fields in the access database. Some files did not include all the information required; in particular, some files were missing information on the 111 call made. In these circumstances, the event code was given to the family violence coordinator who then tried to access the missing information. However, not all the information required was available, which is why there were gaps in some fields in the database.

Eleven of the sixty four files were offence files; thus, further information was sought on the court processes that the offender went through. The information required along with the event codes and names of offenders was passed on to the FST police supervisor who was able to access the criminal court information and then pass on to me the details required. I then loaded the information into the database.

The analysis of the database involved a comparison of the 2005 files with the 2006 files. Topics compared were: time taken to attend call outs, whether a POL400 form was completed, whether a POL400b form was completed, whether protection orders were in place, number of cases where charges were laid, what those charges were and a comparison of the outcomes of the charges. To calculate the mean police response times, a calculated field was added to the database (time of attendance – time of call). The calculated field was copied onto a spreadsheet. Files were omitted if there were missing values, or negative response times, which occurred when the arrival time was recorded as arriving before the 111 call was made. Then the mean was calculated for each of the two years. The outcomes of each of these comparisons were incorporated into the analysis of the interviews and the battered women's focus group, and entered into the findings of this thesis.

The outcomes either supported the comments made by the participants, or demonstrated contradictory evidence. The database is small, consisting of only sixty four files; therefore, it is difficult to make assumptions on the police and court's responses based on evidence from these findings. However, they do give an indication of changes that have occurred since the FST implementation.

Battered Women's focus group

The interests of women and children involved in domestic violence situations are paramount to the Hamilton FST; thus their views are of foremost concern to this evaluation. The focus group participants were all members of the HAIP women's programmes. After consultation with the women's programme coordinators at HAIP, the focus group took place in the last session of the programmes. The programme coordinators agreed to have the focus groups in one of their session times, and suggested that the focus group would elicit more information if conducted near the end of the programme, thus giving the women time to become used to the programme and used to talking in front of each other. Information about the research, about the focus groups process, and the topics to be discussed were given to the programme coordinators. A session date and length of the focus group was negotiated, resulting in a one hour focus group, covering half a session, on the last day of the programme.

The sixteen focus group participants were from either one of two pre-existing groups, Māori women and non- Māori women's HAIP programme. The women joined together to form one focus group. This was done to encourage discussion between the women, as these two groups were small in size. Utilising a pre-existing women's group was beneficial in three ways. It meant that focus group participants did not have to be individually targeted because of their experience of battery. Secondly, the focus group participants were already comfortable talking in front of each other. Lastly, being from the HAIP programme, the focus group participants were likely to have accessed at least one of the agencies involved in this evaluation.

No personal information was collected from the focus group participants to ensure their safety, including names, ages and ethnicity. All the focus group participants were given the opportunity to read the consent form and it was also read aloud to them before the focus group began. The focus group participants then gave their verbal consent to participate. No focus group participants declined attendance. The two programme leaders and two coordinators also attended and participated in the focus group. This was encouraged to ensure the focus group participants felt safe, and to help start the discussions if they were not forthcoming.

I began the focus group by introducing myself, explaining what I was doing and going through the consent process. These housekeeping matters also helped to break the ice, before the discussions began. The focus group participants discussed their experiences with the police and the criminal court. For each agency the group discussed: what their expectations were of the agency, what was helpful about the services they received, what was unhelpful, barriers to accessing the agency, and recommendations (see appendix D). The group also considered if they had experienced any differences in the agencies' responses over time. The discussion was initially slow developing, with the same people entering into dialogue, and others not. However as the session went on, and with the help of the HAIP workers, everyone participated openly. The focus group lasted for one hour.

With the consent of everyone present, the focus group's discussion was recorded from which notes were later taken to supplement those taken during the focus group. The focus group discussion was recorded on a Olympus digital voice recorder (ws-100). Copies of the notes were sent to the programme leaders for comment or correction, to ensure that I accurately documented the perspectives given by the women during the focus group. Unfortunately, the given hour was not adequate to cover all the agencies needing discussion. As this was the last session for the programme it was not possible to come back and continue the focus group at another time. However, the leaders of the women's programme suggested that they would be able to adequately represent the views of the women in an interview.

The HAIP women's programmes routinely incorporate a session on battered women's experience with agencies they had engaged with, and the women in the HAIP programmes, at times, talk to the group leaders about their involvement with other agencies, especially if they are having difficulties. Thus, the group leaders considered themselves to have a good understanding of the issues battered women experience when engaging with a variety of agencies. The two HAIP programme leaders gave written consent before the start of the interview. With their consent, the interview was recorded, from which notes where taken. Copies of these notes were sent to the programme leaders for comment and correction, and to give them the opportunity to add any additional information. The programme leaders were very clear that they were only

portraying the views of the women from their groups, which may or may not be their own opinions. Because of this, the programme leaders are not identified in this thesis by their role, rather their comments are incorporated with the notes from the focus group, as if coming from the women themselves.

The focus group notes and the notes from the interview with the programme leaders were collated and analysed. A summary of the main topics discussed was included in the findings to document women's experiences with the justice system agencies. The notes were also analysed in conjunction with the agency participants' interviews. The main concepts discussed by the participants were categorised into one or more of the four aims of the evaluation. These issues where then added to the analysis of the agency participants' interviews.

Participant's safety

The safety of all participants was a major consideration in this study due to the sensitive nature of the topic. Safety was of particular concern with the focus group participants. I took the following steps to minimise any risks the focus group participants may have faced due to their involvement in this study:

1. Each person could decline attendance in the focus group, or attend and not participate in the discussion.
2. All participants were reminded that they were free to withdraw from the study at any point and withdraw any information they had previously disclosed. They could leave, without question, at any stage.
3. No personal information about the focus group participants was requested or recorded, including names.
4. Focus group participants were sourced through an agency (HAIP women's programme). Correspondence was conducted through the programme coordinators and programme leaders.
5. I entered into discussions with the programme coordinators and the programme leaders before the focus group, to ensure appropriateness of the intended method and topics to be discussed, for the group. The focus group was modified to incorporate suggestions from the group

leaders.

6. The focus group took place at the HAIP centre, as this is a safe and familiar space for the women.

7. Focus group participants had access to information about relevant services or agencies that can help them, if they needed it.

8. The programme coordinators and leaders from HAIP attended the focus group and were available to provide support if any of the focus group participants needed it. This is necessary as focus groups may, for example, trigger memories of abuse.

In-depth interviews with agency participants

I endeavored to interview all the people directly involved in the function of the Hamilton FST. Attending a FST meeting gave me the opportunity to introduce myself, to explain the research project, and to meet the people involved with the Hamilton FST. After observing numerous FST meetings, I identified the key stakeholders of the FST to be interviewed. In total I interviewed nine agency participants.

The agency participants included the four staff members, who make up the official Hamilton FST. The four official FST members are: the police supervisor, police investigator, adult victim advocate who is employed by HAIP, and the child advocate who is employed by Parentline. From observations in FST meetings there were other people who were considered part of the FST; therefore, these FST members were interviewed as well. They were the service manager from Te Whakaruruhau and HRSS, who is referred to in this thesis as the Refuge representative, and a CYF social worker, who is referred to as the CYF representative. A further CYF worker was added to the FST in an administrative role during the time this thesis was conducted. This person was not interviewed due to illness. These seven people are referred to as FST members or FST participants.

I also interviewed a Parentline representative. The Parentline representative was a FST child advocate but is now a mentor for the FST child advocate. The Parentline representative provides support to the child advocate and provides links to Parentline

management. I interviewed two further agency workers: the project coordinator of HAIP (referred to in this thesis as the HAIP manager) and a Family Violence Technical Advisory Unit (FVTAU) member. Both of these people were instrumental in getting the FST established. HAIP initiated the push to get a FST in Hamilton, and were instrumental in the negotiations to get a team. These two people were selected for an interview based on their valuable contribution to the establishment of, and ongoing commitment to, the running of the FST in Hamilton. Although not officially part of the FST, they both provide support for the FST, and make valuable contributions to the decision making and direction of the FST; for example, both of people were instrumental in getting the FST protocols document established.

Each of these potential participants were individually sent an invitation to be involved in the evaluation, explaining the project and what their involvement would entail (appendix A). The participants were willing to participate. A time, place, and date were mutually agreed upon, either through phone or email contact. Each participant indicated their willingness and consented to being involved informally by phone or email. Formal consent forms were signed at the interview. Despite the option for an alternative venue to be arranged, every participant chose to have the interview at their respective places of work. The interviews were conducted over November and December 2006.

The interviews were semi-structured, with the interview schedules made up predominantly of open-ended questions (appendix C). Similar issues were canvassed with each interviewee; however, the interview schedule was customised to reflect the relationship the participant had with the FST. The topics for discussion derived from the observation in FST meetings and from the literature review. The participants were welcomed to discuss in detail any of the topics introduced, as they felt warranted, and were also encouraged to add any further topics for discussion that had not been covered. This ensured everything that needed to be covered from both my, and the participants' perspective, was discussed. At the commencement of each interview participants were given the consent form (appendix B). I reminded the agency participants about their limited anonymity. I explained that I would not use names or obviously identifying information, but refer to them by their role. This would mean that it is likely they will be

identifiable to readers familiar with the Hamilton FST. This was explained to the agency participants before they gave consent.

I also ensured they realised they were consenting to the interview being recorded. The purpose of recording was to allow notes taken at the time to be supplemented. With consent from the participants, all the interviews were recorded on an Olympus digital voice recorder (ws-100). After each interview I took detailed notes from the recording, not a direct transcription. Copies of the notes were sent to each participant for comment and correction to ensure that I had accurately portrayed their perspective. Two of the nine participants returned the notes with some minor alterations.

All but one of the interviews were one-on-one, between myself and the participant. The child advocate and Parentline representative chose to combine their interviews. This was preferred due to time constraints, and because the child advocate was new to the job, replacing the Parentline representative, who had recently moved out of this role. Thus both of these two interviewees could speak from the position of being a child advocate for the FST, and one from the perspective as a Parentline representative as well.

All the interview notes were collated. Qualitative data analysis was conducted using content analysis which is a way of classifying open-ended material (Wilson & Hammond, 2000). The four aims of the evaluation formed the structure for the analysis. Common themes appearing across interviews were identified, as well as exceptions to these themes. The themes corresponded to one or more of the four aims of the evaluation.

Ethical Statement

This research was conducted according to the principles of the New Zealand Psychologists' Code of Ethics. The Code addresses issues such as informed consent and the protection of personal privacy. The research was reviewed by the Department of Psychology's Research and Ethics Committee, acting under the delegated authority of the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of Waikato. The review included consideration of the implications of the Treaty of Waitangi and the cultural safety of research.

FINDINGS

The findings section begins with a description of the FST as implemented in Hamilton, the roles of the members and the aims of the project. This is followed by a synthesis of the focus group discussions to highlight the issues battered women face with the justice system agencies. The remainder of the findings section is structured by the four aims of the evaluation. I discuss the challenges with establishing the project, the strengths and weaknesses of the FST, how the FST has improved agencies' responses to enhance the safety and autonomy of battered women and to hold offenders accountable, and the adequacy of the structure of the FST.

Hamilton FST

The basic structure of the FST model is flexible and the national FST objectives are very broad so that each FST can be moulded to fit the needs and services unique to each area. The Hamilton FST aims to improve the cohesion between agencies and further develop the existing interagency work. The Hamilton FST focuses on responses of the justice system agencies, to strengthen individual responses and promote cohesion between them. The Hamilton FST is based on a belief that domestic violence is gender specific, that the primary targets of battery are women and their children. Therefore, the needs and perspectives of battered women and children are paramount to the policies and practices of the Hamilton FST. The Hamilton FST strives to:

> Raise the profile of both battered women and their children as being the primary victims of violence and; to secure their safety and autonomy through improved systemic responses. (Hamilton FST, October 2006).

Thus the Hamilton FST protects battered women, but it aims to do so in an empowering way. It supports and encourages women to assert their integrity, independence and freedom to govern their own choices. The Hamilton FST aims to reduce the isolation caused by family violence and to reduce the risk to victims. The FST endeavours to have every domestic violence incident recognised, recorded, responded to and monitored to close any gaps in systemic interventions. The goals of the Hamilton FST are to:

- Coordinate a multi-agency response to at-risk families, through local community agencies and Government agencies.

- Identify and close the gaps in the systems currently operating in the family violence area.
- Hold regular interagency meetings to share information and report on planned responses from previous meetings.
- Gather specific information about children present at a family violence incident and to track these children through agencies and other domestic violence occurrences.
- Tighten the bond between community and Government agencies involved in domestic violence.
- Monitor and evaluate practices and systems.
- Develop new practice and systemic change.
- Advocate on behalf of woman and child victims. To ensure the voices of women and children are central to all services and systems.

(Hamilton FST, October 2006).

The Hamilton FST aims to enhance the cohesion and effectiveness of agencies responding to battery through a shared commitment. For effective interagency collaboration all participating agencies are required to agree to:

- A coherent philosophical approach which centralises victim safety
- Best practice policies and protocols for intervention agencies
- Reduce fragmentation in the systems' responses
- Build tracking and monitoring systems at all levels
- Ensure supportive stable community agency infrastructure and resources
- Intervene directly with the abuser to deter further acts of violence
- Maintain battered women's integrity and autonomy while undoing the harm on women and children
- Evaluate practitioners and systems from the victim's point of view.

(Hamilton FST, October 2006).

How is the FST different from the existing collaboration in Hamilton?
As discussed under the section on interagency collaboration and coordination, there were already established links between domestic violence agencies in Hamilton before

the implementation of the FST. Agencies were working collaboratively and holding regular interagency meetings through the work of HAIP and the POL400 project (described above). The FST pilot was intended as a complementary addition to this interagency collaboration, and to work alongside HAIP and the POL400 project by focusing on monitoring and evaluating the responses to family violence incidents.

The FST is different from the POL400 project, and has further developed the interagency response. The FST has resulted in the development of specialist roles within the police, Parentline, Refuge, CYF, and HAIP. The Hamilton FST focuses on monitoring, evaluation, and developing the interagency system and response modes. The POL400 project responds to and follows up on individual cases. An aspect of the Hamilton FST is to identify and fill gaps identified through the POL400 project. Thus, the FST is reviewing trends across cases, not monitoring individual cases, and this review is used to identify barriers and gaps in the service provision. Furthermore, the FST encourages each agency to improve their individual systems and services.

FST members

The official Hamilton FST is just under half a full FST, with four members. These members are the police supervisor, the police investigator, the adult victim's advocate, and the child advocate. However, the Hamilton FST is inclusive of further agencies and specified roles to be able to adequately meet the Hamilton FST objectives. Therefore, there are further FST members who are considered an essential part of the team; the Refuge representative, CYF representative, and CYF resource assistant. Therefore, although the FST is considered half a team from the national perspective, there are in fact seven members in the Hamilton FST, as shown in figure 3. From the Hamilton FST perspective, all seven FST members are equal team members; there are no distinctions between them. From the diagram, those in the big FST circle are referred to in this thesis as the FST members.
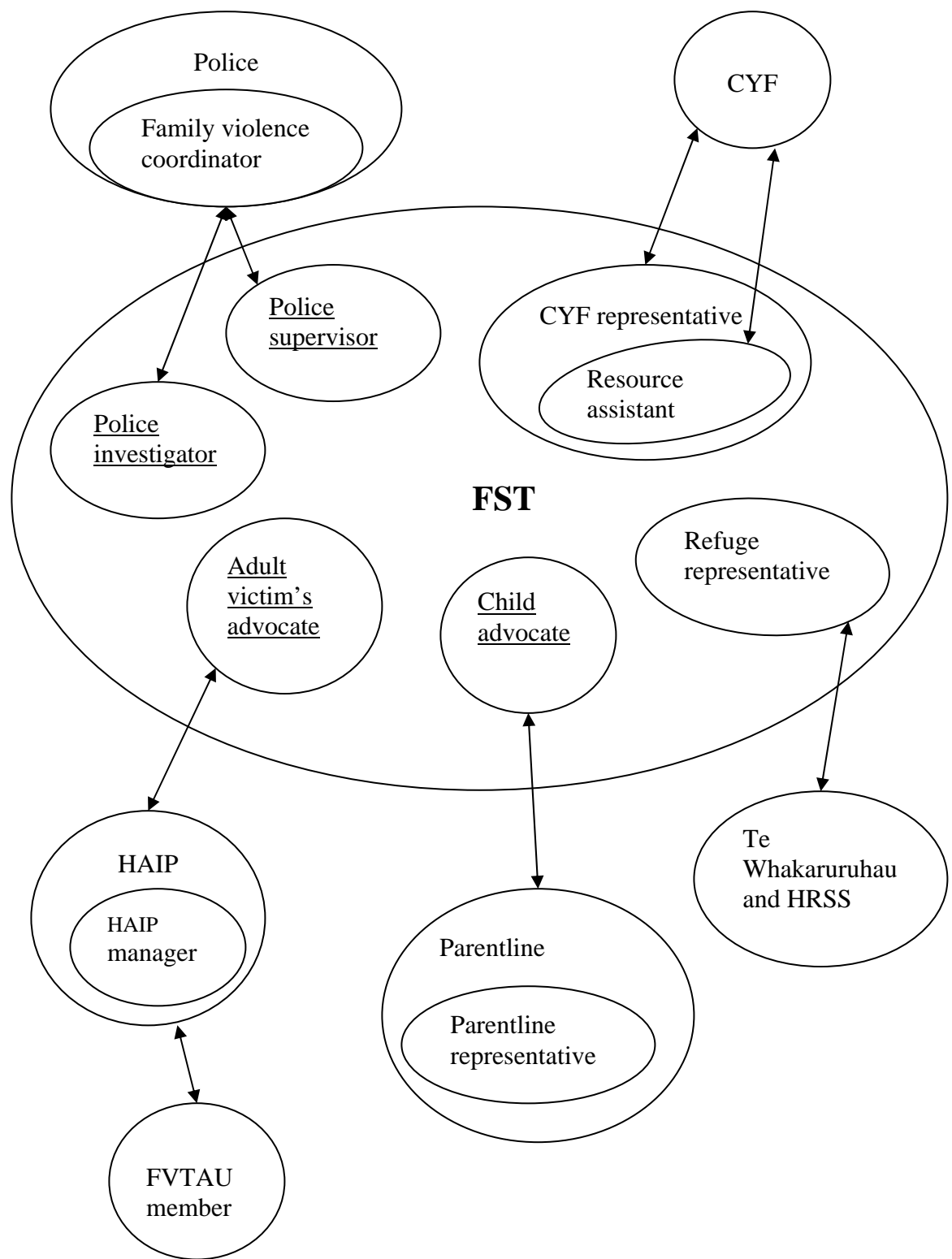
Figure 3

Diagram of the Hamilton FST structure

Anyone from the diagram, the FST members and those outside of the FST circle, are referred to as agency participants. Those FST members who are underlined are the four members who make up the official Hamilton FST half team. Those not underlined are the addition FST members.

Each member in the FST circle is linked to an agency outside of the FST. These agencies are referred to in this thesis as the FST members' parent agencies. Each FST member is employed by their parent agency, and is responsible to both the FST and their parent agency. The agencies hold a contract to provide a FST member. For example, the child advocate on the FST is employed by Parentline, who hold the contract for the child advocate position in the FST. Each FST member provides a connection between their parent agency and the FST. The adult advocate, child advocate, and CYF members each have two supervisors; the FST supervisor and one from their parent agency. The supervision of the police FST members is entirely within the police. The Refuge representative is labelled such, as the person is a representative of both Te Whakaruruhau and HRSS. Although Refuge is not the name of the agencies, it is intended to describe the combination of both of the Women's Refuges. All FST members work out of the premises of their respective parent agencies, except for the CYF members, who share an office with the police FST members, at the police station.

Roles of the Hamilton FST members
The Hamilton FST brings together HAIP, police, Parentline, Te Whakaruruhau and HRSS, and CYF. See appendix E, for a full description of the roles of the FST members. This document is still being developed; therefore, there may be further changes to these role descriptions. A basic outline of each member's role is provided below.

The police supervisor's role is to oversee the whole FST process to ensure it is functioning well, and liaison between the senior levels of the agencies in the FST and other agency stakeholders. The police supervisor is also responsible for looking strategically at the best ways to approach domestic violence. The police investigator looks at how the police address family violence, delivers training to police staff, and provides investigative support. The police investigator also answers queries and provides

information to other organisations in the community regarding police action to domestic violence. The child advocate identifies gaps and barriers in responses and systems in relation to children who are living in a family with violence. The child advocate attends the daily POL400 meetings to oversee cases where children are involved, to ensure appropriate responses were made, or if there were any gaps in service provision. Once gaps or barriers have been identified the child advocate works with the agency involved and suggests changes that need to be made. The adult victim advocate's role is very similar to the child advocate's role; both identify gaps and barriers in services and systems for victims, and oversee the daily POL400 meetings. The adult advocate collects data, monitors domestic violence cases, and makes suggestions on methods that could be employed to address any gaps or barriers identified. The role of the Refuge representative is to be an advocate for battered women, to ensure battered women's perspectives are central to the FST. The Refuge representative also acts as a liaison between refuge workers and the FST, and to maintain links with the other agencies. The CYF representative attends the daily POL400 meeting, and helps to make decisions on whether cases need to go to CYF or a non-government organisation (NGO). The CYF representative then goes out to all cases that are referred to CYF at the daily meeting, visits the family and makes an assessment.

FST meetings
There are a number of different meetings that the FST members are involved with. All FST meetings are held at the HAIP office. The FST have a weekly staff meeting, run by the FST supervisor, where they can raise concerns and ask questions. Some of the FST members also attend the daily POL400 meeting, where referrals are made from the POL400 forms. FST members who attend this meeting are the child and adult advocates and CYF representative. Other agency staff, beyond the FST, makes up the rest of the POL400 meeting participants, including the police family violence coordinator. There is a FST monthly management meeting, which brings together all the agencies involved in the FST to review the FST and discuss where the FST is heading. HAIP run a monthly interagency meeting which is attended by any agency in Hamilton that works with domestic violence. They discuss current policies, procedures, funding and developments that are occurring in their agencies.

Women's experiences with the justice system

The focus group participants discussed the positive and negative aspects of agencies responses based on their experiences.

Police responses

The focus group participants found police responses helpful when police respond quickly to their calls, when they provide security and protection for women to collect their belongings from an address, when police separate the offender and the victim when taking statements, when there are female police officers to take their statements, having officers from a mixture of cultures, and also having officers that are sensitive to the issues battered women face in abusive relationships. Speed of responding and police awareness of the dynamics of battery are both discussed later in this section, as these are issues the FST have tried to address. But it is important to note here that these issues are relevant for women who have experienced battery therefore, the FST are addressing battered women's needs by trying to improve these aspects of the police service.

The characteristics of the police officers, including their gender and ethnicity, are beyond the scope of the FST, and are perhaps things to be considered as part of police recruitment. However, ensuring the agency's responses are culturally appropriate is an important part of any agency. As discussed above in the section on understanding violence against women, research has shown that domestic violence does not discriminate across ethnic groups, and that different cultural groups vary in their understanding of violence and how it should be dealt with (McNeill et al, 1988). These findings are reflective of the focus group's comments, and suggest that responses by service providers – including, but not exclusively the police – do need to reflect the cultures in their community. This could be an issue that the FST monitors, as culturally inappropriate responses may result in battered women feeling further alienated and isolated from the help they need.

The focus group participants also discussed aspects of the police response that they had found particularly unhelpful. The focus group participants mentioned issues such as police not taking a woman's complaint seriously if she is intoxicated. But the main issue

discussed was a feeling of police getting frustrated when women do not leave their abusive partners, and when police get called repeatedly to the same address. The focus group participants discussed what they thought of as a "police timeframe" for when police expect a woman to get out of a relationship. If women are not out by police time, the focus group participants reported that officers are telling women that the police are tired of them calling. The focus group participants said that the police start to blame the woman, if she does not leave. Not all the focus group participants had such an experience, with others reflecting positively on the police response, with one participant commenting that the police were "lovely" and "very helpful". The focus group concluded that it depends on what officer you get, for what response you get.

However, the fact that there are reports of victim blaming suggests police lack understanding of the dynamics of battery. This could have serious implications. As previously discussed, women are reluctant to call the police for help (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Morris, 1997). But when women do call, a positive experience with police is linked to the likelihood of them calling the police again (Hanmer & Saunders, 1984). If women are blamed or told that the police are tired of them calling, women may stop calling police. This not only puts women's safety at risk, but it also results in women being further victimised and further isolated from the help that they need. Police understanding of the dynamics of abuse is an issue that the Hamilton FST is addressing through the police training (discussed in more detail below). The FST members believe that ongoing training and monitoring of police responses will be effective at improving police attitudes and responsiveness.

The focus group participants also discussed barriers to calling the police for help; commenting, that women will not call the police if there is other criminal behaviour at the address, particularly if drugs are present. Furthermore, women are reluctant to call police in fear that CYF will get involved and they will lose their children, or simply because they do not know what will happen or what the police will do. The focus group participants said if women were aware of what that police response is likely to be, they will be less reluctant to call them. To improve police responsiveness, the focus group participants recommended having more officers, a better selection of officers, more education for police on the dynamics of abuse, and having a police unit that specialises

on domestic violence cases so that the responding officers are experienced and aware of the issues involved.

Criminal and Family Courts' responses

When discussing the Criminal Court, the focus group participants were very critical with few positive things to report on. The main reason women went through the court process was "for justice". But it seems this was not the outcome that many battered women experienced.

Aspects of the Criminal Court that were considered helpful included: being able to use the police room so that victims can wait separately from their abusers' supporters, not having to testify in court, or being able to use video testimony. These points are also identified by FST members as areas to be developed, this is discussed further below. The focus group participants emphasised the importance of being informed of what the court process is going to involve, walking through the court room so women know what to expect, and being kept informed throughout the process. These were three of the roles performed by the HAIP court advocates, a service that was re-instated by HAIP after the FST identified this gap.

Unhelpful aspects of the Criminal Court were the amount of time it takes for a case to get to court and the time it takes for a resolution. The focus group participants were critical of the judges, saying that they do not understanding women's experiences of abuse. The seating position in the court room was also identified as problematic, as it allows the batterer and victim to see each other and therefore the victim risks further intimidation from her batterer through gestures and looks. Barriers to participation included having the court room opens to the public so that their batterer's supporters can be in the court room, which is intimidating for the victim. The focus group agreed that if a battered woman goes through the court process and the offender is given a minimal sentence, the woman will be unlikely to use the court system again. One focus group participant commented, "He will come out angrier and there will be payback". The focus group participants were very aware that battered women are putting themselves at risk by going to court, and if the outcome is considered insignificant, the

consequences for the women may be greater than that for the offender. This finding was also reported by Lesorgen (2001), who documented that minimal consequences for serious offences will result in the victim being punished more than the offender, and the victim losing confidence in the justice system. The focus group participants recommended that judges have more training on domestic violence, that screens are always made available for women to use when giving testimony, having a separate waiting room, and having some control over who can come into the court room.

The discussion then moved to the Family Court. The focus group participants stated that women use the Family Court for a variety of purposes, mostly regarding protection orders, mediation, and access to children including visitation and custody issues. The most helpful aspect of the Family Court was being able to get protection orders, and that it allows for fair mediation between partners. The focus group participants discussed the barriers battered women have experienced with the Family Court. A significant barrier to women trying to request a protection order is the cost involved if they do not qualify for legal aid, as one focus group participant commented, "It can cost a fortune ... this is a big issue". Cost was also a barrier identified by Lesorgen (2001), and it seems five years later, this is still an issue. Another barrier identified by Lesorgen (2001), which was also noted by the focus group participants, was the difficulty of understanding the processes involved to request and obtain a protection order without having a lawyer. It seems that the process is unduly complicated and often results in women needing to pay for legal assistance. Furthermore, the focus group participants reported that women are getting told that they need evidence of a physical or sexual assault to be granted a protection order. For example, one woman commented, "Women [are] being told not to waste their time if there's no physical violence". This barrier identified is very concerning. Protection orders can be granted for any type of abuse, not just physical and sexual violence. Discouraging women from applying for orders, and not granting orders, without evidence of physical or sexual violence not only risks women's safety, but it results in women receiving inaccurate information about their right to protection. Furthermore, it suggests that lawyers and family court judges are ignorant to the dynamics of abuse. Requesting physical evidence trivialises the experiences of battered women that do not involve physical or sexual violence, and takes individual acts of violence out of the context of battery. This is something that needs further investigation,

and could be an issue that the FST monitor, to ensure that current Family Court policies are being acted upon.

The focus group participants decided that there are many aspects of the Family Court that are unhelpful, and there are many barriers to using their services, but "The Family Court is just something that they have to do". It seems that women accept the problems with the Family Court as an inevitable difficulty to gain protection or custody of their children. Again this is problematic, and further investigation is needed to determine how the processes can be simplified and made more accessible to battered women.

These were just some of the issues identified from the focus group participants, based on their experiences with these agencies, as battered women. They provide a snapshot of the agencies' responses from a victim's point of view, and they identify what issues need to be addressed. This perspective is needed to understand how the FST has encouraged agencies to be more responsive to the needs of battered women. The remainder of the findings section addresses the processes and outcomes of the FST in Hamilton. The findings are structured around each of the four aims of the evaluation, starting with the establishment of the FST in Hamilton.

Identifying any barriers encountered in establishing the FST model and the factors which have helped to overcome such barriers.

Understanding the function of the FST

As discussed under the description of the FST, the national project was very broad to allow for each FST to develop to the needs and agencies in their respective areas. This meant that at the start of the FST there was little direction for the FST members. The agency participants clearly indicated a difficulty in understanding the purpose of the FST during the initial stages of implementation. FST members were uncertain of the function of the FST and how it was to fit with the existing structures and programmes in the community. This was a significant challenge for the team, and it was not until recently that members recognised the team as a monitoring body, and how it could effectively

perform this function. The police supervisor reported that it had taken the team 12-18 months to gain a full understanding of the entire role of the FST. I believe it was because of this lack of understanding that the FST focused on casework for at least the first 12 months of the project, and did a limited amount of monitoring and evaluation. As previously discussed, a function of the FST was to monitor and evaluate trends in responses, while the POL400 project determined what responses were needed for individual cases, and the agencies responded. The FST were to overlook the responses, but it was not their role to perform the responses or monitor individual cases.

I believe getting to understand what the project was about and how it could work in the community was not a challenge unique to the FST, but an understandable process for a new initiative. It was unfortunate that it took so long to gain this understanding, but the prolonged period of time that was needed can be appreciated when considering the extent of the factors which contributed to the challenge. The agency participants identified a number of challenges during the initial implementation period, which I believe have contributed to the confusion around the function of the FST.

Firstly there was a lack of guidelines from the national bodies that rolled out the project. The FVTAU member criticised the national bodies for their poor inception of the project. Both the FVTAU member and HAIP manager stated that they believed the role of monitoring was imperative, but there were no clear guidelines about what to monitor, how to monitor, and who they were accountable to. The team was not provided with any specific information on how the FST was to function, so they had to determine how they could work as they went along.

> *Nobody in New Zealand really knows what their family safety teams are going to be doing. And so because it is a new initiative we're sorting it out as we go. Which makes for a lot of fluid movement, but it doesn't make for stability.* (Adult advocate).

The further challenge influencing the teams understanding of the FST was a lack of clarity around the individual roles of the members. It was clear from the interviews with agency participants that the FST members struggled to determine and understand their roles in the team. Again an extensive amount of time had to be taken to define the roles, and get them fully established and understood. This is partly because they had to be

developed with little guidance from the national bodies. Understanding the individual roles in the FST is intertwined with understanding the function of the FST. The two go hand in hand. This was highlighted by the police investigator, who reported:

> *The confusion around roles was from people not understanding the difference between monitoring and service delivery, members were unclear whether their role was to deliver services or to monitor and evaluate services.*

This indicates that the initial lack of clarity around the FST relates to the confusion around roles. Whether the focus of the FST was casework or monitoring would have an instrumental effect on the roles of the members, thus if the function was unclear, the roles would also be unclear. Alternatively, the members performing the roles of case workers could have resulted in the confusion over the FST function, as such roles were not compatible with the concept of monitoring. It is my understanding that neither the roles nor the FST function were clear, both supplementing the confusion of the other.

Another factor influencing the FST struggle to understand its purpose, was determining how the FST was going to fit with the existing structures and programmes in the community, including the 15 years of collaboration that already existed, while still maintaining the integrity of the FST pilot. The FVTAU member believed that initially members were not sure what the function of the FST project was and how it was different from the POL400 project. From my initial observations at FST meetings and casual conversations with FST members, I had the impression there was a reasonable amount of confusion between the FST and the POL400 project. For example, the police investigator and adult advocate had both commented that there was confusion in the team around the difference between the functions of the two projects. However, when individually questioned all agency participants, including the adult advocate and police investigator, individually replied that they do understand the differences between the projects, and that the projects complement each other. For example, the police supervisor reported that the POL400 project is about picking up cases and referring them to agencies, while the FST monitors this process and looks for gaps. Some agency participants mentioned there was confusion during the initial stages of implementation, but it had since been resolved.

> *[Initially] it was confusing how the FST and the POL400 worked, or whether the FST was meant to take over the POL400. But its not, it's just a clip on.* (Police supervisor).

I believe that my initial observations were correct, but in the time from my observations to the time the interviews where conducted, the FST members had become clearer on the distinctions between the two projects, as a result of the extensive discussion on the FST protocols and roles of the members during this period. A number of FST members reported that the process of developing the protocols document was very useful in getting everyone to understand the function of the FST and the roles within it. In my opinion if there is any remaining confusion it is not due to a lack of understanding of the functions and roles of the two projects: rather, it is more superficial, such as confusion over meeting names. The cross-naming of meetings can create confusion around what each project does. This is characterised by the adult advocate:

> *The daily meetings are the POL400s, but they call them the FST meetings because they're run by the FST. But the POL400 meeting is run by HAIP, on the Tuesday. It's very confusing, it's extremely confusing. What we need to do is change the name to identify what's happening. It is confusing because both of them are POL400s.*

From the interviews with the FST members there seems to be an underlying understanding of the differing functions of the two projects, and how they fit together. It was suggested that to prevent any further confusion, it may be worthwhile to consider what people are calling the meetings, to ensure the meeting names reflect their role and project association.

Another challenge was finding out where everyone fitted into the team. During the initial stages of the FST implementation, there was tension between some of the agencies as they tried to work out where they each fitted within the FST. The community agencies were used to working collaboratively, as they had been involved with the pre-FST interagency collaboration, but during the initial implementation period the HAIP manager reported the police were driving the FST and making the decisions "Not because everyone wanted them to, but they just did" (HAIP manager). The HAIP manager noted however, that the other FST agencies could not blame the local police for this action, as they were given instructions at national police meetings and on return would act on those instructions by directing the FST. This issue was identified by the HAIP manager only, although the adult advocate and Refuge representative also commented how the community agencies had talked to the police about their role in the FST from the beginning of the project. The community agencies reminded the police that the FST was a collaborative project, that everyone needed to be included in decision

making and determining changes, and they were not there to tell others what to do. The refuge representative praised the police supervisor for being very responsive and considerate during these discussions.

Thus there was a period of finding out how everyone was going to work together, and getting everyone in agreement. The inevitable period of tension while the agencies worked out how they could work together was an understandable challenge for any group comprised of multiple agencies. I agree with the FVTAU member's comments:

> *We're finding what our place is. The power stuff started right at the beginning and will continue to happen, but a lot of that is just trying to figure out where people fit and also where people's bottom lines are. And that's an ongoing, evolutionary, thing.*

I do not believe it ends here. Issues arising from group dynamics will continue to be potential risks for a collaborative: for example, issues over power and communication. Although the initial tension period was resolved, there is potential for similar issues to emerge again. Further discussion on the leadership of the FST is provided later. My comments here are restricted to the initial implementation period only.

Clarity around the FST as a monitoring body also resulted in clarity on the roles of the FST members. Common solutions were found that affected both situations simultaneously. These included developing the protocols document, asking questions, trial and error, and the weekly advocates' meeting.

Developing the protocols document. The protocols document was written for the agencies involved with the FST to provide some clarity around the FST function and the roles of each of the agencies involved. The document incorporates a background to the FST in Hamilton, the common focus, commitment to and understanding of domestic violence across agencies, the specialist roles of the FST, and the team's guiding principles. Furthermore, the document entails a detailed description of the responses by each agency in the FST.

Developing a protocols document required extensive discussion between the FST members. The adult advocate believed that the completed protocols document would be very helpful in ensuring that everyone had a better understanding of what each other's

roles are, and how they knit together. The police supervisor and child advocate reported that the discussion created through developing the protocols document was very beneficial. The discussion clarified what each other's roles are, where they fit in, what their focus is meant to be and what they can expect from each other. However, the child advocate was also critical that the time and process for getting the document established was too drawn out. From observations in meetings and other informal comments, I concluded that many members, although recognising the importance of the document, felt frustrated at the time it took to be established.

Questioning and listening. The child advocate and the Parentline supervisor commented on the benefits of asking questions in meetings. They explained that it is important for people to take extra time to explain things in order for everyone to understand why something is done. Furthermore, a CYF representative commented that understanding other people's roles is achieved by listening to and understanding the different perspectives of the FST members.

Trial and error. The FST is a flexible body, able to alter its focus as needs are identified or circumstances change. According to the adult advocate and the police investigator, the FST has been able to try things out, give things a go, and change things if they do not work. Determining what worked well and continually modifying the team until it identified how it could be most effective, helped define the FST and the members' roles.

Advocates' meeting. There is a weekly meeting attended by the child and adult advocate and the police supervisor, where they plan what they will be doing that week. The adult advocate praised this meeting as being invaluable, crediting this meeting for giving some direction and structure for what they were meant to be doing, things which were lacking until this meeting was established.

I suggest that the roles of the FST members need to be reviewed periodically, to ensure that they continue to be in line with the function and objectives of the FST. A review of roles would also refresh the members on the purpose of the FST, and why their work is so important. Every interviewed member of the FST reported that they now believe they have a good understanding of their respective roles. The child advocate acknowledged

that the roles are always changing and evolving in line with the developing dynamics of the FST; therefore, although there is an understanding now, it may be required to change. The adult advocate claimed that there is an understanding, "But it's not exactly clear" (adult advocate). I believe this lack of clarity for the adult advocate may be a result of being responsible to two entities, the FST and the parent agency, which may have varying ideas on what their FST member's duties are. This is discussed further in the section on the relationship between FST members and their parent agencies.

As previously discussed, the FST spent a significant period of the pilot performing work other than monitoring or evaluating. This was in part due to the majority of the FST members coming from backgrounds where they were involved in front line casework, requiring them to significantly change their roles. But more evidently the lack of monitoring was a result of the FST members' lack of understanding that the FST functions in a monitoring capacity. Although it took an long time to gain this understanding, the process of getting the team to a point where everyone understands the purpose of the FST and the roles of the members, is a process that new collaborations must go through. Furthermore it seems the FST benefited from a period of casework, as members developed an appreciation for the benefits of monitoring and evaluating, and how they can be effective as monitors. The HAIP manager reported that only after spending time on individual cases did the FST understand how they needed to take a step back and review trends from those cases as one method of monitoring and evaluating. Another significant challenge to establishing the FST was building trusted relationships between the community and government agencies.

Building relationships and developing trust

Every agency participant emphasised the importance of maintaining trusted and effective relationships. Any problems with the relationships will have an effect on the FST and on its ability to continue to function in the same capacity. The following comments made by the police investigator are typical of the views held by the FST members regarding the importance of trusted relationships.

> *You can't speed up the building of relationships, you can't speed up the building of trust, but yet they are so crucial to be effective… The relationships is what it's about. It's about people working together, that's the key.* (Police investigator).

However, there were varying opinions on the extent to which these relationships were already established and how much effort had to be put into the development of new relationships. Every agency participant acknowledged that the pre-FST collaboration aided the development of relationships. Some agency participants believed that the team's ability to develop as much as it had was a direct result of the pre-existing collaboration. For example, the Parentline supervisor, with agreement from the child advocate, commented:

> *I think that why this [the FST] has moved quickly is because of the prior collaboration already existing...and the trust that was already built up in Hamilton.*

All but two agency participants claimed the trusted relationships were predominantly held by those who were part of the pre-FST collaboration, but that trust did not automatically extend to the additional agencies. For example, the child advocate, Parentline supervisor and the adult advocate asserted that the trust was already established between those in the pre-FST collaboration: HAIP, Parentline and Refuge, but it had to be developed with the police and CYF. They remarked that the pre-FST collaboration has allowed the Hamilton FST to develop a lot faster than in other areas.

> *It's different to what it is in other areas, they're just building up the collaboration, we've already done that and we're moving forward.* (Parentline supervisor).

Although acknowledged by most agency participants, it was the two police members, the CYF representative and the Refuge representative who emphasised the significance of the challenge of building trust between the community agencies and the police and CYF. For example, the Refuge representative commented:

> *It was a bit tense and difficult initially because we're not trusting, non-government and government agencies. For us it's like 'Oh they've always let us down', and for the government agencies it's 'Well they're not professional enough'.*

These four FST participants discussed details of the measures that had to be put in place to build these relationships. Both the police investigator and the police supervisor recognised that a lot of the collaboration was already set up through the HAIP interagency, but asserted that building trust was still one of the biggest challenges for the FST. The police supervisor reported that that this was achieved due to the people involved; their natures, characters and willingness to make a difference. The police

supervisor stated that when the FST first started there was no trust between the NGOs and government agencies, claiming this was because:

> *They [the agencies] felt that the police and CYF did their own thing, that their priorities were the top priorities, and that the agencies were almost ignored. They felt that any information the agencies gave to police or CYF would be misused.*

The CYF representative reported that initially people were wary of CYF involvement. They were concerned about having CYF involved because of bad experiences they had previously had with the department. Since coming into the FST, CYF tried to build bridges with the agencies, "We've had to iron out those differences" (CYF representative). For example, the CYF representative reported that initially Refuge had no trust in CYF, so the CYF representative and CYF manager held meetings with Refuge workers and developed a memorandum of understanding, which explained what each party could expect from the other. For the other agencies, the CYF representative reported that trust developed over time by participating at the daily POL400 meeting, being accountable, having regular meetings and attending them consistently. The CYF representative believed that their efforts had been successful, as they had developed trusted working relationships with all the agencies in the FST.

The Refuge representative reported how initially the FST was getting a lot of direction from national bodies. The local FST and local agencies would be told what to do, without considering how they function in Hamilton. When the local FST members were told to do something, they would all discuss it and as a team they would make decisions, to ensure that everything the FST did was appropriate for the Hamilton community and achievable with the resources the agencies had. The directives resulted in a strengthening of local solidarity; whereby, all the agencies in the FST were loyal to the team and the decisions they made, rather than automatically conforming to all of the national initiatives. The Refuge representative remarked that that helped to build the trust and the relationships between the government and non-government agencies, as they perceived the government agencies to be "sticking up" for the community agencies.

Knowing that there was little trust between the community and government agencies during the initial stages, the supervisor tried to foster a trusted environment where anyone could raise concerns if they were not happy with something. The police

supervisor reported that this was done on a personal level by responding positively to issues that agencies bought up, and to try and fix them. Also by having staff meetings every Friday, where members were able to bring up any problems, barriers or difficulties, and the FST would look at addressing them. The police supervisor reported that this worked well, and people did bring up issues. The agency participants identified other strategies that helped to build trust, these included; asking questions when people have concerns, explaining why it is a concern, and giving honest replies. Other strategies were spending time together and working together, knowing that each other's agencies are going to respond appropriately, appreciating that people will make mistakes, and admitting to them when they are made, and keeping communication open and transparent.

Summary

The barriers to establishing the FST in Hamilton involved understanding the function of the project and building trusted relationships between the community and government agencies. The FST members experienced difficulties understanding the function of the FST as a monitoring project. There was some confusion around how the FST was going to fit among existing structures in the community, how the FST members were going to fit together, and confusion around member's individual roles. These challenges were largely a result of a lack of distinction between monitoring and service delivery. Factors that helped to overcome these barriers included asking questions and explaining answers, trial and error, regular meetings, and most importantly the development of the protocols document.

The other barrier to establishment was building trust between the community and government agencies. Every agency participant emphasised the instrumental importance of maintaining trusted relationships for the FST to be effective. Some agency participants identified an initial lack of trust between the NGOs and the government agencies, saying that building trust was a significant challenge for the team. The challenge of building trust was eased as the community agencies were already experienced in working collaboratively, and because the police became very receptive to the NGOs ideas. Other factors contributing to the building up of trust between the NGOs and

government agencies included; open and transparent discussions, willingness to work collaboratively, regular meetings including a staff meeting where FST members can raise issues, being accountable, appreciating people will make mistakes, and making decisions as a group to build local solidarity rather than automatically accepting national directives.

Assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the FST model as implemented in Hamilton, including the working relationships between the participating agencies.

The focus of this section is on the strengths and weaknesses of the FTS model as implemented in Hamilton. The first strength is the relationships between the FST members.

Relationships

A major strength of the Hamilton FST is in the relationships it has built between the members and between the agencies. This is particularly evident in the relationships that have developed between the community and government agencies, as the FST has created the opportunity for them to work side by side. This is a valuable development acknowledged by the agency participants, as the community agencies now have significantly more access to the government sector, and an increased desire to work with them. The FVTAU member commented:

> *There is a much greater willingness to work with the government sector on cases. So, more confidence in the government sector to deal with cases appropriately. That's a huge, that's a radical shift.*

As indicated by the FVTAU member, this is largely a result of the trust that developed during the initial stages of the FST. As discussed in the pervious section, the FST had to put a lot of time and effort into developing trusted relationships, as initially there was a period of tension between the NGOs and government agencies in the FST. For example, the relationship and trust that was built between Refuge and CYF, discussed in the previous section.

The developed relationships also resulted in an increased understanding of workplace practices and protocols between of each other's agencies. Nowhere was this growth in relationships and understanding more evident than in development of an effective working relationship between Refuge and the police. The FVTAU member reported:

> *The police working with the community sector on cases is becoming normalised. I think it used to be a bit of a rub for a lot of police ringing the refuge when they had attended a domestic case. But given that the instruction and monitoring is happening internally now, and it can happen on any case and it can happen on any day if not every day, it's kind of like normalised the relationship between refuge and police, or between advocacy agencies and police. It's not seen as coming from outside of them any more, but it's actually part of what they do internally. That, I think, has shifted relationships at a front line level.* (FVTAU member).

This relationship was in part due to the roles of the FST members. Particularly important has been the role of the police FST members in training other police officers, and the role of the Refuge representative acting as a mediator between the police and Refuge so each agency knew what to expect from the other. Through the FST, Refuge has learnt about police protocols and what the police need to make arrests at the scene; so that Refuge can understand why, in some situations, an arrest was not made.

> *They have a level of their own training to feed back to the police, [for example] how they want them to bring in the POL400 by such in such a time… As they went through their processes we would also line ours up to say 'Okay, we'll go through a senior sergeant, and yes they are meant to help us serve a trespass order', just as an example.* (Refuge representative).

Therefore a benefit of the relationships between FST members was that they allowed for agencies to learn about each other's responses, processes and protocols. The FST provided a space to ask questions of other agencies, and to gain information. Each representative acts as a liaison between their parent agency and the other FST agencies, so that they can learn from each other. Improved understanding of other agencies' processes and responses occurred for all the agencies in the FST. The following example involves Refuge and the police.

The Refuge representative reported to the FST police members that some police officers were refusing to serve trespass orders. Through the FST, the police were able to confirm to the Refuge representative that any police member can serve a trespass order, and that they would get a better response from senior officers with more authority. Thus, the FST provided Refuge with access to the police members who could clarify correct

policing processes. Furthermore, they could also provide support to Refuge, as the police suggesting a method to try, and to come back to them if they had no success.

> *For me it was on the instructions of the FST, and being available to say trial this way and if you can't get anywhere then come back to us. And that was cool for us… I was like a mediator between our agency and the FST.* (Refuge representative).

The police were also in need of learning about the community sector responses and values. For example, the police supervisor reported on an increased understanding of how the community agencies work with victims of domestic violence, and how agencies get victims to a point where they are ready to make a change. The police supervisor praised the FST for creating more effective liaison between the non-government and government agencies, commenting that "It's given the non-government agencies a link to the government agencies that they know they can trust and that will respond to them" (police supervisor).

Respect

Another strength of the Hamilton FST is the people who make up the team. Through interviews, observation and casual conversations, it was abundantly clear that the team members held a mutual respect for one another, a respect for the work of each other's agencies, and a belief that domestic violence is most effectively addressed by working collaboratively. I believe that this has provided a positive foundation for the team to work from.

Every agency participant acknowledged that the FST members and their parent agencies have different strengths and skills, and they are appreciated and respected for those. "We're all in the team, working towards achieving the same goal, but coming from different angles" (CYF representative). The agency participants understand that the FST creates the opportunity for the different skill areas to come together to provide a more holistic and wraparound response to victims, children and offenders. The police investigator's comments reflect the perspective of all the agency participants:

> *No one organisation is going to solve domestic violence … but if people work together, or if organisations work together, and address it: you can have an effect, you can have an impact.* (Police investigator).

Furthermore, three FST members reflected on a sense of relief from working in the FST with other agencies who have the same interest. For example, the adult advocate

reported that working together in the FST gave more energy and "halves the stress". The adult advocate and Refuge representative both said that being part of the FST made them feel that it was not just their individual agencies tackling the issue of domestic violence alone, but there were many agencies with similar interests.

FST members

A further strength of the Hamilton FST members is their ability to represent their parent agencies, and to maintain an equal distribution of power across members. Four of the six FST members interviewed each specified that they could adequately represent the perspectives of their respective parent organisations. However, this question became problematic when addressed to the two advocates, as there were conflicting responses as to whether the advocates should have been representing their parent agencies. From the perspective of the Parentline supervisor, child advocate, and CYF representative, it is not the role of the child and adult advocates to represent their parent organisations' perspective. The Parentline supervisor explained how the child advocate is a:

> *Child advocate right over, she's not just representing Parentline. She's a child advocate of the FST, because at the other meetings to do with family violence, there will be a Parentline person there as well.*

The child advocate commented that this is an area of confusion as:

> *People need to separate me from Parentline, which is what they're not doing at the moment…they need to distinguish that the FST is my role even though I come under the umbrella of Parentline.*

However, it seems that the adult advocate and HAIP manager did not share this understanding. Both reported on the ability of the adult advocate to be able to represent HAIP's perspective within the FST, as well as victims' rights. This situation is elaborated on further under the section on the structure of the FST, as I argue that this is symptomatic of an underlying problem with the FST structure. Here I conclude that although the advocates may not have been in the FST to represent their agency, their agencies had been selected to fill the roles of child and adult victim advocates in the FST because they are experts in that area. Therefore, if the advocates are not representatives of their agencies, they are performing the roles that their agencies specialise in; thus, the principles of those agencies are likely to also be the principles employed by the respective advocates.

Every FST member interviewed believed that each person on the FST had the opportunity to have their opinions heard. Each FST member interviewed reported that they are confident raising issues with the FST if they're not comfortable with something. The FVTAU member reported that the FST members are now at that point where they are not scared to bring things up with people or agencies. I believe that for the FST to be able to function effectively, it is essential that this open dialogue and mutual respect is maintained. Members must be able to raise issues they have, direct questions at members or agencies, and have their opinions heard and respected. I believe the reported ability of members to be able to do this is not a result of the FST model, but because of the confidence, strength of conviction and depth of experience of the current members on the team. This was also implied by the CYF representative, who remarked that it was important for team dynamics that the members are experienced and know what they are doing.

If members did not have adequate confidence and knowledge, I believe it is questionable whether they would be able to voice their concerns and adequately represent their agency. I do not believe that the ability of members to do this is based on the FST model as it consists of both community and government agencies. Government department workers have more authority in what they say, simply by virtue of being employed by the state. This perspective was suggested by the FVTAU member, who reported that when the government department workers sit at the FST table they speak with more authority. Therefore, the FST model risks the community agency workers being overpowered or dominated by the more powerful state agencies. The agency participants are very clear that this is not occurring in the Hamilton FST, which is consistent with my observations. I believe the current members from the community agencies are very willing to question the government sectors, and they are very aware of whom they are representing. The FVTAU member reported that it is not uncommon to hear a community agency saying, "You don't want to be pushing us around" (FVTAU member). This comment characterises the strength of the community FST members to maintain the values and integrity of their parent agencies. However, I maintain the belief that the model is structured in such a way that there is potential for this problem to occur.

Consequently, I believe that the mutual respect among members, and their ability to be heard, was not based on the structure of the FST model, but on the confidence and knowledge of individual members. There are other contributing factors that could influence a member's ability to raise issues and be listened to, including: the current non-dictatorial style of leadership (discussed below), the belief in working together, respecting members for their areas of expertise, ensuring everyone has equal input into decisions, and the maintenance of a strong connection between members and their parent agencies so that they do not become isolated within the FST. (This is discussed further in the following section, as risk of isolation is a limitation of the FST structure). Although not a current weakness of the team, because the FST model leaves the community agencies vulnerable to be dominated by the government agencies, it is important that members understand how they are currently maintaining the honest and transparent dialogue between members. The FST members need to recognise how the mutual respect across members is currently maintained so that they are aware of how the team can continue to function in the future and resist this limitation of the FST model.

Decision making authority

The FST members have varying degrees of authority to make decisions on behalf of their parent agency. The people who have been delegated decision making power are the Refuge representative and the police members. The representatives from those two agencies can make decisions and feed it back to their staff, while the CYF members and the child and adult advocates are required to refer back to their agencies before they can make decisions. The HAIP manager specified that the advocates are at a working level and do not get involved in policy level decision making. The child advocate reported on a limited amount of decision making ability, claiming the prevailing method is to go back and consult with Parentline before making any major decisions. This situation highlights the importance of management level buy in, discussed in the section below. If the FST members themselves do not have the authority to make policy level decisions and implement changes, it is instrumental they have access to, and support from, their agencies' management who do make those decisions.

An FST member not having a mandate from their agency, and having to consult back to their parent agency's management, has both positive and negative implications. Not

having a mandate to speak for their agency results in a very slow and drawn out decision making processes, as members had to go back and forth between the FST and their agencies. The police investigator remarked that a major challenge of the FST was the time taken for decisions to be made, a view shared by most of the agency participants. For example, the HAIP manager remarked that time was one of the challenges to effective interagency coordination, as it required a lot of meetings and consultation with everyone before making decisions. However, it seems that the positive implications outweigh the negative. The HAIP manager, for example, commented that the time involved in consulting with parent agencies was a necessary cost of having an interagency coordination, as it led to a more holistic response.

Furthermore, the process of consulting back with one's parent agency ensures that the values and principles of each agency are portrayed through their respective FST members. It ensures collective decision making is maintained and helps to prevent any one agency dominating the decision making, as members are supported by their parent agency and given leverage because they are not acting as individuals, but as a representative of a group. In the case of the advocates, this group is battered women and children. Thus, the process helps to ensure FST members do not become isolated from their parent agencies. Furthermore, referring back to parent agencies ensures that agencies are not just consulted with, but are active participants in the FST. The whole agency is responsible for implementing any changes and being involved with FST initiatives, rather than the responsibility being on one person.

Lack of Justice System involvement

There are three main weakness of the FST: the lack of involvement from justice system agencies, lack of monitoring, and lack of resources. The discussion here begins with the justice system. Although not their only focus, the FST target their monitoring and evaluating on the systems and response of agencies in the justice system. The FVTAU member explained that it is important the FST focuses on organisations that have statutory power as they have the ability to make systemic change and have a systemic impact. Furthermore, the police supervisor reported that there is a belief held by most agencies in the FST that the judicial system and offender accountability are the areas that

need the most work and will have the most effect in the short term. The HAIP manager commented on the principle role of the justice system for monitoring by the FST:

> *The purpose of the FST, primarily, is to monitor the criminal justice response. So that's looking at the police response, that's looking at prosecution and how they work with cases where there are arrests, and how effective and efficient they are. What happens when it gets to court…looking at the court response and what happens after that with probation... That would be the primary focus. Then as a second level, important, but as a second level, is what support or what gaps are there for victims of family violence.* (HAIP manager).

I believe the problem with this focus is that, aside from the police, there is a very limited amount of involvement from justice system organisations, in the FST. I believe the FST need to establish effective working relationships with the justice agencies; such as, the Criminal courts, Family Courts, and probation, if they want to continue with this focus. Without the involvement and support from these justice agencies I believe it would be very difficult for the FST to implement any changes in the justice system. This need was identified by the FVTAU member, police supervisor and adult advocate. For example, the FVTAU member commented:

> *If it was a criminal justice response, you should have family court, district court, community, probation, sitting here at the table as well.*

Getting justice system agencies involved is a challenge for the FST. However, from their interviews, many FST members said that they are aware of this challenge. Thus, the need for more justice agencies to be involved in the project has been identified. The police supervisor remarked that, the project originally came from the Ministry of Justice, and they are still involved in the project at a national level. The police supervisor believes that, if needed, this could give the local FST some leverage to get representatives from the justice system involved in the project, as the FST has come partially from their government department, not just from the police and those outside the justice system.

Lack of monitoring

The second weakness of the FST is a lack of monitoring. The primary function of the FST is to monitor, evaluate and identify gaps in the systems, processes and responses of the agencies that are working with domestic violence. Every agency participant interviewed was very clear on this been the primary function of the FST. As mentioned in the previous section on barriers to establishment, initially the FST members were

unsure of the purpose of the FST and were working on individual cases as a consequence. Although the FST has continued to provide a limited amount of work with individual cases, the agency participants all reported that the focus is now on looking at cases collectively to identify any gaps in systems and service provision. For example, the FVTAU member commented:

> *Their role is to monitor and to evaluate the effectiveness of the front line workers in performing their tasks around domestic violence cases, and to pool that information. To pool it together collectively and then to assess whether current practices are working or not, whether individual responses were appropriate or not, and to implement change if they think that it needs to happen.*

Despite this development in understanding, I was still concerned about the limited amount of monitoring being produced by the FST, considering that this was a primary function of the project. Through observation and interviews, I began to understand that the lack of monitoring was predominantly a result of two factors: a lack of roles in the FST that focus on monitoring, and a delay in getting systems operational to be able to monitor. I understand that under the current FST model, the role of monitoring is predominantly allocated to the child and adult advocates. The advocates are both aware of their monitoring role. For example, the adult advocate reported that the main role of the advocate is data collection, "Monitoring what's happening with cases, finding the gaps and then seeing how they can be plugged". With more staff, more time can be allocated to perform the extensive amount of monitoring and evaluating that is required.

The adult advocate also reported on problems that have made it difficult to perform a monitoring role. The advocates have been waiting for the protocols document to be established, and a memorandum of understanding to be developed so that the advocates can access information from other agencies. They have had to wait for their roles to be clearly defined, so they could be aware of what was required from them as monitors. However, the advocates could have defined their monitoring role independently. The advocates have also had to wait for a computer system to be established for data collection across agencies. The agencies in the FST need to streamline their recording facilities, so that statistical monitoring could be performed across agencies. Due to these numerous obstacles to monitoring the adult advocate claimed: "At the moment I'm just doing what I can". A further challenge for the FST is to not only monitor trends in

cases, but to address systemic change through monitoring. The FVTAU member explained:

> *The whole institution itself [needs] some way of reflecting on its practices and behaviours, and changing those practices and behaviours. And that's a much bigger thing, but that's something that the FST team could ultimately be doing.* (FTVAU member).

My initial concerns around a lack of monitoring subsided as I realised that the FST members themselves were aware of this weakness in the team. Five of the agency participants self identified a lack of monitoring as an aspect of the FST that needs improvement. For example, the CYF representative claimed that the FST needs "Improvements in the monitoring system, which we are already aware of and we're trying to plug that gap". The police supervisor and investigator reported on a lack of monitoring as a problem for the FST, explaining how the FST relied on agencies to do their job properly once cases were referred, as the only feedback that was monitored was whether that person or family had engaged with the agency or not. There was no further monitoring to determine, for example, if a service had an impact; if a change had been made, or if the person had re-offended. The police investigator provided the example, of how the FST could measure the effects of the men's stopping violence programme. Whether men continue to abuse after attending a stopping violence programme, whether they changed, and if they changed, what was it about the programme that made them change? This type of information can be used to improve the services male offenders receive, and increase the effectiveness of those services' at stopping recidivism.

Thus, from my observations, I had initial concerns about what I perceived as a lack of monitoring from the FST. However, from the interviews I realised that the FST members were also aware of the FST's limited monitoring, and how it needed to be improved. Furthermore, the lack of monitoring is understandable considering the initial emphasis on individual cases, the time taken to understand the function of the FST, and the prolonged process involved in getting systems and documents functional. As these initial challenges are largely resolved, and because team members recognised the lack of monitoring, I have every confidence that it will be addressed, and the Hamilton FST will develop into a strong monitoring body. This is beginning to happen as the FST has been considering different monitoring methods, and what issues are in immediate need of evaluation. However, I still maintain that monitoring will be limited by the number of

people or hours allocated, further resources are likely to be needed to cover the extensive and detailed monitoring required.

Lack of resources

The final challenge for the FST is a lack of resources. When questioned about challenges the FST faces, all but two agency participants initiated a conversation about the need for more resources for agencies to keep up with an increased workload that has resulted from the FST. The FST is funded to monitor and identify gaps in service provision. But identifying gaps and recommending solutions is only one half of the solution to improving the responsiveness to battered women and their children, and to ensure batterers are held accountable. The other half is to implement the solutions. Again, this is why it is so important that the agencies' management is supportive of the FST, to be receptive of the FST recommendations and willing to make changes. However, as well as the desire, the agencies also need the resources to be able to implement any changes. The FST is funded to identify the gaps, but the responsibility of implementing changes to fill those gaps becomes a burden on the already stretched community agencies. The child advocate, for example, commented:

> *It's increased this workload, but then what's happened is there is no extra funding for the manpower to cover the extra workload.*

An example of this is evident in the work that the FST has already done. The FST has focused on improving the police response to domestic violence cases. The police have filled a gap in their service delivery by ensuring the cases are coded correctly, making good arrests, and calling Crisisline to get immediate support to victims. Although this is a positive development, praised by every agency participant, it has created a surge in work for the support agencies with no increase in resources to cope. The police being more efficient had resulted in an increase in POL400 forms and therefore an increase in cases for the Refuge and other appropriate agencies to attend. The Refuge representative commented that this is a positive development as more cases are being reported and treated seriously by police; but due to limited resources, Refuge struggle to keep up with the workload.

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This is in turn problematic for the FST, as they rely on agencies to provide the services the FST monitors and to fill the gaps the FST identifies. The Parentline supervisor believed that the goal of making Hamilton a violence free place will not be achievable until the Government recognises the community agencies' workload and funds them accordingly. But it is not just the community agencies who are reporting on the need for resources to cover the work created by the FST; all the agency participants, including those working for government agencies, identified this need. For example, the police supervisor supported the community agencies' plea for increased resources, recognising the vital relationship between the community agencies' service delivery and the FST's monitoring role.

> *The agencies need to be better resourced because we're constantly struggling against funding to try and provide a service that we know will be better for victims.* (Police supervisor).

Secondary to the agencies' lack of funding, the police supervisor, police investigator, adult advocate, and CYF representative also noted a lack of resources as a challenge for within the FST. They each reported on a lack of staff in the FST as a barrier that has hindered the progress of the FST. The police investigator commented:

> *There are a lot of areas that we can be addressing, but at the end of the day we have to be realistic about what we can achieve with the resources that we have… if we had more resources, we would be more effective. But we've got to work with what we've got.*

The police supervisor mentioned the need for specific roles, including a consistent statistical monitoring role to measure and evaluate the data on the recording systems of all the FST agencies. The police supervisor and investigator both mentioned the benefits of having more police officers and investigators in the team to allow for a quicker follow up of investigations, another CYF social worker, and a full time case monitor. However, they say, this is in an ideal world. When discussing the barriers to the FST, the police investigator commented on "The lack of resource [people], but we're lucky to have what we've got".

Summary

The strengths of the FST model as implemented in Hamilton are based on the members themselves, and the relationships that have been established. A strength of the Hamilton FST collaboration is that it allowed for the development of relationships between NGO and government agencies. There is an increase in willingness to work together. These

established relationships also resulted in the opportunity for agencies to learn about the processes, protocols and polices of other agencies in the FST; so each party knew what to expect from an agency's response. The FST members act as a contact person for others in the FST to gain information the respective agencies protocols.

Another strength of the Hamilton FST is that there is mutual respect and an equal distribution of power among FST members. Every FST member reported that they are confident raising issues and targeting questions to any of the agencies, if they are uncomfortable with something, and that each member has equal opportunity to have their opinions heard. However, mutual respect and the equal distribution of power are not a result of the FST model, which leaves community agencies vulnerable to being dominated by the more powerful government agencies. Rather, this is a result of the experience, confidence and knowledge of the FST members, recognising FST members for their area of expertise, the non-dictatorial style of leadership, and believing in the need to work collaboratively.

The final strength of the Hamilton FST is the relationship between the members and their parent agencies. Some FST members are required to consult with their parent agency before making high level decisions. This makes the whole agency an active participation the FST, ensures FST members are supported by their agency, and decreases risk of members being dominated by more powered agencies. Although it does result in a slow and drawn out decision making process.

Weaknesses of the FST in Hamilton are a lack of involvement from justice system agencies, other than the police, in particular the Criminal Courts, Family Court, and probation. Another weaknesses was the lack of monitoring that has occurred. However, this is understandable considering the time needed to understand the function of the FST, the delay in getting monitoring systems operational, and the lack of roles that perform monitoring. As the FST members acknowledge this weakness in the team, and the initial challenges to establishing are largely resolved, it is likely that the monitoring by the FST will develop. The last challenge was a lack of resources within the FST, and for the response agencies to be able to keep up with the increasing workload as a result of the FST.

Assess the extent to which the implementation of the FST has improved the ability of the Justice System and associated agencies to provide a holistic and wrap around response which: Ensures the safety of woman and child victims, enhances the autonomy of women, and ensures that perpetrators are held accountable for their use of violence.

This section goes beyond the establishment and the strengths and weaknesses of the FST. This section looks into the impact the FST has had on agencies' responses, and the outcomes the FST have achieved. During the interviews, the agency participants were asked how they thought the FST has improved the ability of the justice system and the associated agencies to provide a holistic and wrap around response which ensures the safety of battered women and their children, enhances the autonomy of women, and ensures perpetrators are held accountable for their use of violence. The agency participants are experienced experts in their fields. Although they have an interest in the FST being successful, many of them have an extensive history working in the field of domestic violence and therefore, are able to identify any changes that have occurred during the period that the FST has been operational. The following are anecdotal suggestions of the impact the FST has had, based on the experience, expertise, and observations of the agency participants. Also included in this discussion are the outcomes of the battered women's focus group and findings from the archival database conducted using the police files. As can be seen below, some of the FST members' observations are supported by the archival research, and by the comments made by the battered women's focus group, thus adding credibility to their statements.

The most overwhelming response from the agency participants was that all three of these outcomes are interrelated. For example: the autonomy of women, as well as the safety of women and children, is linked to the ability to ensure perpetrators are held accountable for their use of violence. Many of the strategies that have helped with perpetrator accountability have, as a result, also enhanced women's safety and autonomy.

Basic to achieving all three objectives is the collation and sharing of information. The liaison between FST agencies and the growth in knowledge of other agencies' responses has improved the ability of the justice system and associated agencies to provide responses that enhance women's autonomy and safety, and hold offenders accountable. The adult advocate and police investigator both remarked on the increased information sharing that occurred as a result of the FST. "The first priority is sharing information … Sharing information so that victims are supported and offenders can be made accountable" (Adult advocate). But, information sharing is also about having a direct liaison with people from other agencies so people can become informed about agencies' responses, processes and protocols. As previously discussed, the Refuge representative reported how Refuge needed to be aware of CYF and police processes, systems and policies so they know what to expect from their services and responses. If the refuge workers understand what to expect from police and CYF in different circumstances, they can pass this information on to the women they are working with. The details of this has been discussed in previous sections, but it is important to note here that learning the responses of other agencies has reportedly improved the all round responsiveness to women.

Ensuring the safety of women and children

The FST model is centred on the needs and safety of women and their children. When evaluating a service or system, the FST consider if that response jeopardises women's safety, and how that response can further enhance women's safety and autonomy. The FST ensure that the services and processes that women go through are relevant, accessible, encompass all their needs, and do so in a way that enhances the safety and strengthens the autonomy of battered women. The agency participants gave a variety of responses for how they believe the FST has improved the ability of the justice system and associated agencies to provide a holistic response that ensures the safety of battered women and their children.

Faster police response

The first improvement from the implementation of the FST was the increased speed in which the police respond to domestic violence callouts. This improvement was noted by

the Refuge representative, who stated that the refuge workers reported police officers are attending call outs much quicker. A faster response to call outs means women are at risk of abuse for shorter periods of time after the police have been called. The need for a fast police response was identified by the focus group participants, who stated a helpful response from the police was when they respond immediately to a call for assistance. The archival database shows a slight change in response times between the 2005 and the 2006 samples. The database shows the mean police response time from the 2005 sample was 13 minutes, while the mean response time for the 2006 sample was 15.44 minutes. Therefore, the database shows a mean increase of 1 minute, 44 seconds in response times from before the FST establishment in 2005, and after one year of implementation. This finding is contrary to the refuge workers report; however, it is difficult to make any concise conclusions from the database as there were so few 2005 files. Therefore the Refuge report may still be an accurate observation.

Increase in calls from the community

Many of the agency participants identified what they perceived as an increase in domestic violence related calls from members of the public. They do not believe there is an increase in calls directly from battered women, but from the people around them; such as neighbours, friends, family members and health care workers. All of the five agency participants who identified this development believed that the increase in reporting was a result of the work that the FST is doing.

The CYF representative, child advocate, Parentline representative, adult advocate, HAIP manager, and police supervisor all reported on an increase in cases of domestic violence being reported. The following comments by the CYF representative were typical of the agency participants:

> *With the general public we've had a lot more calls, just from Jo Bloggs, saying 'Oh ya know, my daughters in a domestic violence situation, I was just wondering if you could give me some advice, and I've heard of the FST'. We've had a lot of that. Or it might be a medical centre phoning up, saying 'Hey I've heard about the FST, I've got this lady that I'm working with and I'm quite concerned, what can I put in place?' We've had quite a bit of that.* (CYF representative).

The police supervisor and CYF representative believed the increase in calls was because people in the community had heard about the FST, "I think that a lot of that's just been word of mouth, as opposed to anything else" (CYF representative). The CYF

representative believed there is a growing understanding in the community that the FST is a go to group for domestic violence situations, because they have links with all the agencies, the expertise, and will treat their concerns seriously.

It is unlikely that the increase in calls had resulted in an increase in domestic violence cases recorded by police, as many of the calls are for information and advice, and most do not necessarily result in police action. However, the increase in calls to the FST from people in the community does suggest that the FST is providing a service that is relevant to the needs of the community.

Flow on effect of trust from agencies to clients

The CYF representative, police investigator, police supervisor, and adult advocate all conveyed a belief that the trust that has developed between the agencies (as discussed under the sections of establishment, and strengths and weaknesses of the FST) has had a flow on effect. They believe that battered women, who were previously accessing only one or two agencies, are beginning to trust a wider variety of agencies. A battered woman restricting her access to certain agencies was theme evident in the focus group discussions. The focus group participants said that battered women were more likely to access a community agency, and are reluctant to get involved with government agencies. The focus group participants reported that women resist calling the police for fear of CYF getting involved, or because they are uncertain of what the police will do.

The development of trust across a wider variety of agencies was not specifically identified by the focus group participants. There were, however, clear indications that women were noticing positive changes in some agencies responses (such as the police responsiveness discussed above and below), which may encourage other women to access those agencies. Furthermore, the focus group participants were already using a range of services, as they discussed their involvement with, for example: the police, Criminal Court, and the Family Court. But, according to the focus group and agency participants, this is uncommon for battered women generally. The police supervisor believed that the growth in trust is a result of the contact refuge workers have had with battered women, which started to change women's attitudes to other agencies. "We're seeing slow changes in the community, really slow, but they're starting to come about"

(police supervisor). This could affect the safety of battered women and their children, as although the services were previously available, the FST members believe that women are now more willing to use a variety of services.

I am confident that the work the FST has done in establishing trusted working relationships between agencies has allowed frontline workers to pass that trust on to their clients. If a client trusts one agency, they are more likely to trust others that that agency recommends. However, I believe that this flow on of trust across agencies is dependent on the continuation of the effective and transparent relationships between the agencies in the FST. Should the trust between agencies fail, I believe this too will flow onto the clients, and their newly developed trust in an agency could be disestablished. Should the barriers to participation and problematic responses be removed, women's access to a greater range of agencies could be maintained irrespective of the FST relationships.

Improvements needed in justice system responses

Although the agency participants identified some improvements, others believed that the FST is yet to make a significant impact on women's safety. The HAIP manager and the adult advocate both remarked that ensuring the safety of women is a process that is still happening. This is because the FST need to target justice system agencies' responses as they can have a significant effect on women's safety, and as previously discussed, involvement from justice agencies beyond the police is yet to be established with the FST. The HAIP manager commented that the FST has not improved the justice system's response to enhance the safety of women and children.

> *I don't think they have achieved that yet. We did a presentation to the judges earlier this year…acquainting them with the police process, with what they do. So just building some bridges like that, but I don't think they've actually effectively made any differences yet.* (HAIP manager).

However, the HAIP manager acknowledged the improvements in police service delivery, which is discussed below, and noted that improved police processes may have had an effect on women's safety.

From other agency participants' comments, it seems that the FST focus on the police response has improved the safety of battered women. For example, the police supervisor

remarked how the FST encouraged the police to put pressure on the judicial system in the way that police present prosecutions, and by opposing bail. This is discussed further under the section on holding offenders accountable. There has also been some improvement in the community agency responses with the development of the two court advocate positions to help women through the court process (discussed under the section on enhancing the autonomy of women). Despite the FST targeting the justice system, it seems they have had minimal impact on the justice agencies, to improve the safety of women, outside of the police.

According to the agency interviews and literature on interagency approaches (discussed in the introduction), it is in the justice system agencies where women's safety can be markedly enhanced, because they have the ability to impose sanctions on offenders. However, further developments may only be possible if members from justice system agencies become involved in the FST. The police investigator and the adult advocate discussed the need for extensive improvements to be made in the Courts. For example, they believe women need to have access to separate waiting rooms away from their abusers' supporters. The need for the courts to improve their responsiveness to women was discussed by the focus group participants, details on this discussion were provided under the section on women's experiences of the justice system. The focus group participants stated that judges had little understanding of battered women's experiences and do not understand why women may be unwilling to testify. The focus group participants reported that having the offender's supporters in the court room and waiting room was very intimidating, and advocated for: separate waiting rooms, screens, using video testimonies, support and information throughout the court process, and police collecting good evidence at the scene so battered women do not have to testify.

Although numerous improvements are needed, I agree with the police investigator who stated that many of the changes that need to occur in the judicial system would be difficult for the FST to implement as they are policy level changes. Therefore, I believe to enhance women's safety, the FST can, for example, lobby for changes to be made, continue to provide women with support through the court advocates, and educate and provide training to judges and other criminal justice system staff so that they become aware if the dynamics of battery and the issues for victims around the court processes.

For other changes, I believe it would be extremely difficult unless the agencies themselves become involved with the FST. This was discussed under the second aim, because getting justice agencies involved was a challenge identified by the FST members.

Enhancing the autonomy of women

When questioned about how the FST has improved the justice system and associated agencies' responses to enhance the autonomy of women, there were three overwhelming responses from the agency participants. These were; the improved responsiveness and attitude of police, a general improvement in both the community and governmental response services that were already available for women, and the development of the court advocate positions.

Police attitude

Four agency participants identified a change in police responsiveness and attitudes towards domestic violence cases. For example, the FVTAU member commented:

> *There's no, no question at all that the police are far more responsive, and are there and they are doing these jobs, and they are pretty ugly jobs really.*

It is clear that all of the agency participants share this perspective, as the other agency participants' focused on the improved police service delivery as a result of FST training (discussed under holding offenders accountable). The Refuge representative praised the improved police response to domestic violence cases, claiming police have become more responsive to Refuge's requests for help with cases, noting that the senior sergeants are more likely to get involved in helping Refuge with cases when required.

> *There has been a significant change in the attitude to dealing with family violence. They [police officers] deal with it much more seriously, they think about what they're doing much more. They understand and appreciate that there is going to be some accountability for every decision they make, so they make it more carefully. They think about charges, they just think about it much more carefully. And they discuss it with us too, if they're not sure. That's a clear indicator that they are thinking about it.* (Police supervisor).

Police responsiveness and attitude towards women was also discussed by the focus group participants, details of this discussion are provided above under women's experiences of the justice system. The focus group participants explained how police officers need to have a good understanding of the dynamics of abuse, as they discussed reports where officers have blamed women for staying in abusive relationships. The

women believe that the police have a timeframe for when they expect a woman to get herself out of an abusive relationship; commenting, "Because she doesn't leave, they start to blame her". There was no indication whether these were recent experiences with the police, or how commonly this occurs. However, not all the focus group participants had such an experience with the police, as others praised the police for their response. The group agreed that the response depends on the individual officers; commenting, "Some are lovely and helpful…others are a bit blasé". Some women identified a change in the police response, noticing faster response times and officers being friendlier towards women. One focus group participant commented:

> *I have seen changes, I have seen changes. Even in their attitude. Yeah, it's more of the friendly approach… There's been a change in their approach, and they get more response.*

There is evidence that the change in attitude is attributed to the work of the FST. Specifically as a result of the training the police FST members provided with the officers (discussed in the following section). Also by the police FST members following up on every family violence case to ensure that officers are performing responsibly and correctly. To maintain this improved police responsiveness and attitude, it is essential that the FST continue to train and monitor police responses to domestic violence cases. The Refuge representative suggested that Refuge could provide some training to police, to ensure the safety of battered women is always at the centre of the police response. The child advocate and Parentline supervisor also discussed the possibility of Parentline providing training to the officers, as police need to understand how children are affected by domestic violence, even when they are not targets or witnesses of the abuse.

Improvement in services already available

The FST has made some improvements on services already available, which are likely to have improved the autonomy of women as a result. Before the FST was established the POL400 project held a weekly meeting where cases from the police POL400 forms were referred to relevant agencies. Those agencies would then follow up on the cases and make contact with the victim, often involving a home visit. The problem the FST identified with this response was that in some cases, contact was being made with the family up to two weeks after the incident. The police supervisor reported how this was not only pointless, as after such a delay victims do not know what the agency is there for, but it was also potentially unsafe for victims. HAIP and the FST agreed that the

meetings should be changed to daily, rather than weekly. This has improved the responsiveness to victims as agencies are making contact with them within 24 hours of the incident. Making immediate contact allows support agencies, such as refuge, to provide victims with information so they can make informed choices about what they want to do, away from the manipulation of their batterer.

Other improvements reported by the agency participants included the creation of guidelines for the police (in addition to police policy) to ensure that arrests are made when there is evidence, and the responsibility is not being placed on the victim to lay charges. The FST had also encouraged and trained police to stringently control breaches of bail conditions and breaches of protection orders. The police supervisor reported that this was done so that victims understand that if they have a protection order, it will be enforced; claiming that it returns the power to the woman. The police supervisor also stated the FST had encouraged police to submit oppositions to bail and that there has been a notable increase in submissions, commenting that "More and more we're getting DV offenders held in custody" (Police supervisor).

Although each of these agency responses were already available, the FST refinements are expected to have improved the autonomy of women. The improvements gave the community agencies more time and space to access women away from the presence and manipulation of their batterer. The improvements meant agencies could access victims faster after the event, to provide support and give accurate information on what their options are while they are away from the influence of their abuser. For example, Refuge provided women with the information they needed about services, programmes and court processes that were available to victims, so that they could make informed decisions on what to do.

Court advocates

The development of the court advocates' role works to both enhance the autonomy of women and to ensure her safety during the court process. The FST identified a gap in the response to women when they were going through the court process and HAIP re-instated the two court advocate positions. The majority of agency participants, the police investigator, adult advocate, CYF representative, HAIP manager, child advocate and

Parentline supervisor—all remarked on the development of the court advocate positions as a role the FST advocated for, to improve the response to women which ensured their safety and enhanced their autonomy. The child advocate said it is both the court advocates and the refuge workers who are:

> *Working with the adult victim, supporting them and informing them and assisting them through the process. Because a lot of them don't know the process, they're too scared of the process; they're too scared of the offender. But it was providing that support to make that happen…Giving them the option of the protection orders, getting them through those processes. It's just processes that they're not familiar with that will help them get themselves safe as well as their children safe. It's helping them through those processes…Giving them options so that they can be in control.*

The focus group participants were very clear on the need for support during court processes, saying that it is important battered women are informed about the court processes, what they can expect, and that they are kept informed about what is happening throughout the case. The focus group participants reported that it was helpful when they were taken through the court room prior to a trial, so they could see what it would be like, what they needed to do and where to look. The focus group participants praised the victim advisors for helping battered women to get their point across, and also the HAIP victim advocates for making women feel safe and informed, calling them a "wonderful" development. Therefore, the court advocate role is definitely a positive response to the needs of battered women.

Ensuring perpetrators are held accountable for their use of violence.

Justice system focus

The FVTAU member suggested that the current structure of responses around domestic violence is problematic as the emphasis of the responses is on the battered woman and reducing the impact of the violence on her and her children. The FVTAU member explained that this puts the onus on the woman to keep herself safe, rather than putting the responsibility on the offender for his use of violence. Male offenders are relatively invisible as there are very few responses targeted toward men, which again moves the focus away from the offender. The majority of responses to male offenders are in the justice area, which is where the FST is focused. However, these responses need to be enhanced to improve their effectiveness. Although services need to be provided for the

woman to enhance her safety and autonomy away from her abuser; the FVTAU member argued that if the offender is not held accountable, the responses and supports targeted for the victim are almost irrelevant. If there is nothing stopping the offender from accessing his victim, he will continue to target her despite any responses the victim is receiving.

The FST members were very clear about the necessity of ensuring offenders are held accountable for their use of violence, and that offender accountability would, as a consequence, also improve women's safety and create the opportunity for victims to increase their autonomy away from their batterer. For example, the HAIP manager explained how offender accountability runs parallel with providing support for women and ensuring their safety. The HAIP manager stated that education programmes can challenge offenders to accept responsibility for their behaviour, but it is the systems and responses of the justice system agencies that need to be targeted, as offenders need to know there will be consequences for beating their partners. Improving the systems and the responses that are able to hold offenders accountable has been a challenge for the FST due to the lack of involvement of justice system agencies.

Although agreeing with the need to focus on offender accountability and the justice system, the police investigator argued that offender accountability is not the sole responsibility of the police or the justice system, claiming:

> *I think that a lot of responsibility gets place on police for offender accountability. Yes we do have a part to play in that, but I don't think we're the only agency that does.* (Police investigator).

The police investigator argued that offender accountability was not as simple as locking people up. Society needs to take responsibility for giving offenders a clear message that such behaviour is not acceptable and be willing to report abuse and stand up in court as witnesses. Furthermore, the police investigator claimed that all responses that address offenders, need to be held accountable to ensure that such a response is effective at reducing re-offending. The police investigator stated:

> *There is a lot more accountability, I think, on the police in relation to their service or their response. Whereas I think with other agencies there isn't necessarily that same level of accountability.*

The current focus of the FST on the justice system is due not only to its ability to have an influence on batterer re-offending and victim safety, but also because it is in such need of improvement. Areas for improvement are discussed above, under the justice systems response and under women's experiences of the justice system. As the police supervisor remarked, the FST has the current focus on getting the policing aspect of the justice system responses right; once this is achieved, the FST can move its focus onto other areas where improvements need to be made. I am confident that the FST is aware of the developments that are needed in the justice system agencies. The FST are currently trying to attract further justice system agencies to become involved in the project to make such developments achievable.

Top Ten target list

The agency participants described a method the FST employs to hold offenders accountable called, the police "Top ten target list for repeat offenders" (police supervisor). The police supervisor explained that there are three criteria to determine how an offender gets onto the list; Number of repeat offences within 12 months, the seriousness of offence (as there may be few incidents but they may be serious), and a category for instinctive reaction. This last category allows anyone in the FST to have a gut instinct that something is not quite right, and the person should be monitored. The list is reviewed weekly, and may contain more or fewer than ten targets at any one time. Offenders come to notice to be on the list either through repetition in the POL400 forms, CYF notifications, or through the police youth aid top offenders. The police perform a complete profile and history on the listed offenders. They visit offenders to tell them that they have been identified as a top ten family violence target. The offenders are provided with information on programmes and services available to help them. Failing that, the police will target the offenders. Every time an offence is reported, they will not receive a warning; they will be arrested and charged. Although arrests based on evidence should be made for any case, not just for those on the top ten list, the list means police officers know who these families are, and police can be prepared when called out to an incident. Furthermore, for the offenders on the top ten list, the FST target the whole family. The support agencies become involved with the family to ensure victims know what services are available to help them, and remind them if they have a protection order that the police will enforce it every time.

Police training

Every agency participant initiated a discussion on the positive changes in the police response to domestic violence cases. As mentioned under the section on the autonomy of women, four agency participants noted a change of attitude in the police during the time the FST has been operational. Other agency participants commented on the beneficial outcomes of the police training that was instigated, developed and implemented by FST members.

Police FST members provided training to other officers to increase their understanding of battery and how their work relates to the FST and other agencies, believing that this would result in officers becoming interested in the field of domestic violence and therefore improve the police response to such cases. For example, the HAIP manager stated that the officers were informed about what happens to the POL400 forms so that officers know how they are used, and the importance of what they do. The police investigator reported that the training they provided increased the officer "buy in" (police investigator) to the FST as they learnt that what they do does have an effect.

Further training was also provided on specific techniques to employ for the variety of policing duties around domestic violence cases. This included collecting good evidence, preparing files for prosecutions, the importance of writing up files and the importance of enforcing breaches of bail conditions and protection orders. The police investigator explained that after the FST was established, they started training the police officers to ensure that they knew how to deal with family violence cases. The investigator commented:

> *When we initially started we got a really good response from staff. We got, we're getting, really good arrests. We're getting good charges being laid…we're getting really good detailed POL400s.*

The investigator explained that a good charge was, when appropriate, laying charges that carry a greater penalty, that are more reflective of what had taken place. According to the police investigator the training resulted in increased arrest rates, and an improvement in the officers' ability to effectively portray the views of the victim in the impact statements. The CYF representative and police supervisor also remarked that the training improved

the coding practices of officers. Police are recognising family violence and coding it as such, where such an event may have previously been coded as something else.

The archival database supports the police investigator's claims of an increased arrest rate. Only 10% of the 2005 sample of domestic violence files resulted in an arrest, compared with 17% in the 2006 sample. The majority of these arrests were for two charges. Most of the cases included a male assaults female charge and an additional charge of a range of things, including breach of protection order, willful damage, and one of threatening to kill. It is difficult to compare the types of charges laid due to the small number of arrests in the sample: 2 out of 21 incidents for the 2005 sample, and 8 out of 46 incidents for the 2006 sample. Therefore, the database can neither confirm nor negate the investigator's informal observation of an improvement in charges laid. Furthermore, the database does not review each specific case: therefore, conclusions can not be drawn on whether the most applicable charge was laid. It could be that male assaults female was the most serious charge appropriate for these cases.

The agency participants reported on improvements in police recording. For example, the adult advocate, child advocate, Parentline representative, CYF representative and HAIP manager all reflected on an increase in the number of POL400 and POL400b forms filled out and also an improvement in the detail on the forms, which often included additional pages describing the incident. The adult advocate believed this is a result of both the police training and the police FST members' commitment to following up on files where the information provided was inadequate or incomplete, rather than letting files pass uncompleted. The HAIP manager commented on the improved police response:

> *Being more accurate about the police identifying what's family violence, and the training that they would have done, creating a bigger awareness amongst police staff… That is definitely a visible manifestation of their [the FST] success. And we can see that because of how many POL400s that come through now.*

From the archival database, there were 21 incidents coded as family violence during the 2005 sample, and 46 from the 2006 sample. This finding suggests more consistent coding of family violence cases. Although week to week fluctuations can be expected, there has clearly been a significant increase in cases being coded as family violence since

the implementation of the FST. It is unlikely that such an increase will be a result of an increase in family violence between the two weeks sampled, as the samples cover the same full week in both years. As discussed previously, some agency participants believed there was an increase in calls from the public; however, many of these calls were requesting information and may not result in a police call out. Such a difference in the number of cases is unlikely to be the sole result of an increase in reporting and police domestic attending call outs. Rather, it is more likely to be a reflection on changes in police recording and coding of offences as family violence. If police training from the FST focused on identifying domestic violence when it is occurring, coding the incident as such, and ensuring the appropriate paperwork was completed, the increase in domestic violence cases recorded would be a logical outcome.

However, analysis of the database failed to confirm a proportionate increase in POL400 forms recorded for family violence cases; in fact there was a slight percentage decrease. Twenty one out of 21 files (100%) of the 2005 sample had a POL400 form completed; while 39 out of 46 files (85%) of the 2006 sample had POL400 forms completed for domestic violence incidents. I believe this is an indication of the completeness of the sample itself, and not a reflection on the police filling out the POL400 forms. There was in fact an increase in the number of POL400 forms from 21 to 46, but a decrease in the number of POL400 compared to the number of family violence cases recorded. It is likely that the reason for the increase in the number of POL400 forms is that the police are incorporating a greater range of events as family violence. The 2005 sample may be smaller because only the very obvious family violence cases are coded as such, while the 2006 sample includes events that may have previously been coded as something else.

The archival database also shows a slight percentage decrease in the number of POL400b forms completed. Eight out of 21 incidents (38%) from the 2005 sample, and 15 out of 46 incidents (33%) from the 2006 sample. However, no conclusions can be drawn from this, as it is unknown whether children were present at each incident, to warrant a POL400b form being completed. Therefore, one can not determine whether more POL400b forms should have been completed for either of the samples.

The police training was not restricted to an improvement in coding and recording of incidents. The agency participants also acknowledged that the officers are requesting more stringent bail conditions, being more pro-active in ensuring that offenders keep to those conditions, and respond quickly when breaches are reported. The CYF representative claimed that as a result of the training, the police were collecting good information at the scene and responding quickly and appropriately; commenting that "Definitely the police are more hot on the protection orders, the breach of protection orders and restraining orders" (CYF representative). The police investigator and supervisor both cited an increase in police requesting oppositions to bail, as a result of their training.

From the archival database, there where no incidents where a protection order was recorded in the 2005 sample; therefore, no breaches were documented either. It is unknown whether there were no protection orders, or whether protection orders were in place but not identified or not recorded. There were four incidents in the 2006 sample where victims reported having a protection order and this was recorded. This could indicate an increase in women obtaining protection orders, or improvements in police recording when protection orders are in place. Although there were four cases where a protection order was in place, only two arrests were made for breaching the order. One would presume that there were breaches in all four cases for the police to be in attendance and the order to be recorded. It is unknown what circumstances led to the offenders not being arrested for breaching the order, but police policy requires arrests to be made every time an order is breached.

The police supervisor concluded that the quantity and quality of files coming through the FST is increasing, as well as an improvement in the quality of the charges and the success rate of those charges. However, the supervisor added that the statistics on the policing aspects of domestic violence cases do not reflect a great deal of success. Nevertheless the supervisor believed that the FST is setting a good foundation, and as time goes on the statistics will begin to reflect the work that has been done.

The database provides some evidence to support this view. Although it is very difficult to draw conclusions due to the small sample size, the data indicates only limited improvement in police responses after the FST had been operational for one year, with a

substantial increase in cases recorded as family violence. Considering the difficulties in getting the FST established and operational, as discussed under the barriers to establishment, it is not surprising that there were limited improvements. Although there are informal observations of improvements in police responses by the agency participants, and evidence from the archival database or the focus group participants supporting some of these claims, it is clear further developments are needed.

The evidence collected here suggests the FST police training and monitoring of family violence files is having a positive impact on police attitude and recognition of domestic violence. As discussed under the section on the justice system response to domestic violence, police have traditionally remained uninvolved and uninterested in what police termed domestic disputes. Although the positive impact is yet to be demonstrated through specific police outcomes, I believe the development in police attitudes will set the framework for further improvements in specific areas of police responses to domestic violence incidents. For furthers developments in police responsiveness, training needs to be ongoing; targeting specific areas for improvement. The agency participants realised there is a need for training to be ongoing. For example, the police investigator commented that to continue to get such a response from the police:

> *It's important for us to maintain and get on top of that training side of things. That's a problem that I see, with new staff coming through, we need to constantly be maintaining that training.*

Problem or not, training and follow up of cases, is key to improving police responsiveness, as is getting the other justice agencies on board.

Improving police response will have only limited success if it is done in isolation from the other justice system agencies. To continue improvements in the police response from the FST training, I believe the whole justice system needs to work together and coordinate their developments, so that the justice agencies responses compliment and not contradict each other. For example, if police are recognising domestic violence when it is occurring and are starting to make more arrests, this needs to be coupled with appropriate sentences through the district courts. The district courts also need to recognise domestic violence, the dynamics involved, and process and sentence the cases appropriately. Furthermore, probation also needs to play their role. Without this combination, the police alone will have little impact, and may potentially result in

officers reverting back to inappropriate responses to domestic violence incidents, believing that their arrests will not be treated seriously by the courts; therefore it is a waste of their time to prosecute. As can be seen in the following discussion, evidence from the archival database and the focus group participants demonstrates that the courts have a long way to go in improving their responses to domestic violence incidents; but if improvements can be made in the court system, this will reinforce and stimulate further developments in the police responses.

Charges

The archival database highlighted some disappointing outcomes from the court process, after the charges had been laid by police. A summary of the outcomes of charges from the archival database files is given below (table 1). Of the sixteen charges, only two resulted in a prison sentence. In one of the 2006 cases, the offender was arrested but not sentenced until 10 months after the incident. In a 2005 arrest incident, the offender was charged, but not sentenced until 21 months after the incident. One has to question how helpful it would be to the victim, for her offender to be given community service almost two years after calling the police. The focus group participants were very clear in demonstrating their frustration over the time it takes for their cases to go through the criminal court processes, particularly the time it takes for "A case to get going". From these discussions, it is fair to assume that a sentence nearly two years after the complaint was made is unlikely to be viewed as helpful by the victim: rather it is likely she would considered it a waste of her time.

In two separate arrest cases from the 2006 sample, cases were withdrawn due to victims declining to testify (table 1). In one instance the offender was charged and he pled not guilty. The victim declined to testify and the case was dismissed; ten weeks after the incident. Not only was the court case significantly delayed after the event, it seems the case was relying on victim testimony, and not police evidence. In another case from the 2006 sample, an offender was charged with both male assaults female and breaching protection order. The offender was convicted on the breach of the protection order; however, the male assaults female charge was withdrawn after the victim declined to give evidence. The police must have had some evidence to be able to convict on the breach, but this evidence may have been insufficient to secure a conviction for the male assaults

female. In total almost a third, five out of 16 charges, resulted in the case being withdrawn or dismissed. Most of which were a result of victims not giving evidence or writing letters to the court. Although there will be cases that rely on victim testimony to support police evidence for a successful conviction, this database indicates that prosecution is frequently relying on victim testimony.

In accordance with police policy, officers are required to obtain sufficient evidence at the scene of the incident so that victims do not have to testify. Although there will be cases where there is insufficient evidence to be collected and therefore testimonies will be required, it is important that police do not rely on victims and do enforce the police policy by collecting as much evidence as possible.

The focus group participants discussed the topic of victims not wanting to testify, agreeing that the courts need to understand the dynamics of abuse, and to understand why it is so difficult for women to testify against their partner. The group commented that the courts do not realise that victims do not testify because they are too afraid of the repercussions. Relying on women to testify ignores this fear, and sets women up to be re-victimised by the court process. Fear of repercussions, together with the delay in outcomes, length of time involved in the process, testifying in front of the abuser and his supporters, and the minimal sentencing imposed; all demonstrate why women are unwilling to testify. It is simply not worth the risk.

Minimal sentencing is evident in the archival data as well (see table 1). From the total of 10 cases and 16 charges, there were only two prison sentences, three withdrawals, four sentences of supervision (some with a HAIP programme), two cases of community service, and one case where the offender was convicted but given no sentence unless the offender is arrested again within nine months. The focus group reported that if a woman has been through the court process before and the offender got a minimal consequence, she will not do it again. The group explained that going to court is very risky for victims, and if the sentence is too minimal it would not be worth the risk she is taking. The offenders will "Come out angrier and there will be a payback". There are potentially dangerous consequences for the women from the offender, and outweigh the small consequences for the offender from the courts.

Cases	Charge	outcomes	sentence	Time from incident to sentencing	comments
2005					
1	MAF	Convicted	Fine & community service	21 months	
2	MAF	Convicted	6mths prison	10 weeks	
	Wilful damage	Withdrawn			
2006					
3	Assault	Convicted	TCUICU 9mths	3 months	Charge reduced from MAF to assault due to victim letter.
4	Threaten to kill	Convicted	6mths supervision	10 months	
	Common assault	Convicted	6mths supervision		
5	MAF	Convicted	9mths supervision & HAIP	3 months	
	Wilful damage	Convicted	9mths supervision & HAIP		
6	MAF	Dismissed		10 weeks	Victim refused to give evidence
7	BOPO	Convicted	3mths prison	3.5 months	Withdrawn because of no evidence from victim
	MAF	Withdrawn			
8	MAF	Convicted	9mths supervision	2 days	
9	MAF	Convicted	60hrs community service	4 months	Withdrawn after victim sent letter to court
	Wilful damage	Withdrawn			
10	BOPO	Convicted	3mths prison sentence 6mths supervision	3 months	
	Wilful damage	Withdrawn			

Table 1

Table of charges from the archival database of police files.

The focus group participants recommended that the courts, in general and the judges in particular, need education around understanding abuse, and what it means for a battered woman to testify. They said that the fear women face needs to be considered by the courts, and the court environment itself needs to change so that a woman does not have to come face-to-face with her abuser and his supporters. From the archival evidence and the discussions in the battered women's focus group, it is clear the FST has a long way to go in reforming the court processes. However, as discussed previously, the FST is very aware of this challenge, and is looking at ways of getting justice agencies involved to begin to address the barriers and gaps in the court process. I believe that to improve the police responses and any other responses in justice system agencies, it is essential that the developments are supported by each of the justice agencies. This ensures the justice system provides a consistent response to victims and offenders.

Summary

The overwhelming response to this question by the agency participants was that all three outcomes inter-relate. For example, if offender accountability is improved, this in turn increases the safety of battered women and their opportunity for autonomy. So some of the topics included here in one section, also have had an impact on one or all of the other outcome areas.

Ensures the safety of woman and child victims
The agency participants reported on an increase in calls from the public, such as friends, neighbours and health care workers, most of which were requesting information and advise. This suggests that the public see the FST as a go-to group, which is relevant to the needs in the community. The agency participants also reported that battered women are accessing services from a greater range of agencies. Agency participants suggested this was the result of the development in trust between the NGOs and government agencies, which has spread to the women who were previously only accessing community agencies. There have also been improvements in policing (reported on under the offender accountability) that has resulted in improved victim safety. Some agency participants commented that the FST is yet to make improvements in the justice systems responses that will improve victim safety. The FST has provided presentations to judges and got the HAIP court advocate role re-established, but further developments are

needed. The FST members need to encourage the justice agencies to become involved in the FST project to be able to make many of the changes that are needed.

Enhancing the autonomy of women
The FST has enhanced the autonomy of women in three ways; improving police attitude, improving responses that were already available, and by re-instating the court advocate positions. Agency participants commented on the improvements in police responsiveness and attitude towards battery cases. It seems that this was a result of the FST police training, and from the police FST members following up on police responses to ensure the correct procedures were following and coding used.

Agency participants also noted improvements in services that were already available, which is likely to have improved the autonomy of women. The FST, in collaboration with HAIP, changed the POL400 meetings from weekly to daily, allowing support agencies to access battered women within 24 hours of an incident. The FST police training has encouraged officers to stringently control breaches of bail conditions and protection orders, and to ensure officers make arrests without victims having to lay charges. Each of these developments were of previously existing responses, but the improvements have allowed the support agencies to have more, and faster, access to battered women. This is likely to have improved battered women's autonomy, as the support agencies are providing information and support for women to be able to make informed decisions away from the manipulation of the batterer.

Although not part of the FST project, the court advocate roles were re-established by HAIP after the FST identified the need for the positions. The court advocates enhance the autonomy and safety of women going through the court process by providing information and support. The need for this was clearly identified by the focus group participants.

Ensuring offender accountability
The agency participants identified improvements the FST had made in the justice system's ability to hold offenders accountable. Firstly, was the creation of the police top ten target list, which is for repeat offenders. Secondly, the FST police training. This was intended to spark officers' interest in the FST project, to get officers to realise the

importance of what they do, and how their work connects to the FST and the work of other agencies. The training also focused on enhancing specific areas of policing cases of battery, such as collecting good evidence at the scene and enforcing protection orders.

The agency participants reported numerous improvements in the police responses, some of which were supported by the archival database. There was evidence of an increase in arrest rates in domestic violence cases from 10% in the 2005 sample, to 17% in the 2006 sample. There was also evidence of an increase in POL400 forms completed, from 21 in the 2005 sample to 46 in the 2006 sample. This suggests greater consistency of police coding and recording cases, and is unlikely to be a reflection of an increase in domestic violence reported. However, there was a proportionate decrease in POL400 forms completed per domestic violence cases; from 100% of domestic violence cases including a POL400 from in the 2005 sample, to 85% in the 2006 sample. This is most likely a result of a more complete 2006 sample. There were additional improvements reported by agency participants, that were not measured in the archival database, these included; more severe charges being laid to reflect the seriousness of the event, and increase in the detail provided on the POL400 forms, and an increase in police oppositions to bail, and an increase in police requesting stringent bail conditions.

The database found some disappointing outcomes from the criminal courts. The database shows evidence of sentences significantly delayed after the event, and evidence of minimal penalties imposed for battery. The focus group participants clearly explained that minimal sentences will result in battered women being unwilling to participate in the court process again, as the risk to her is greater than the punishment to the offender. The criminal court is an area that the FST need to target.

Determining the adequacy of the FST structures to deliver an effective systemic response that addresses the needs of battered women and their children.

The final component of the findings discusses aspects of the structure of the FST. There are both strengths and weaknesses of the FST model. The weaknesses of the FST model

have the potential to impact negatively on the functioning of the Hamilton FST and its ability to address the needs of battered women and their children. This evaluation has found that many of the potential problems from the model's limitations were not creating problems for the Hamilton FST. But, the FST members need to recognise what they are doing that is countering these model limitations to ensure that they do not become problems for the Hamilton FST in the future.

Need for management level support

Because some FST members did not have authority to make policy level decisions, as discussed above, the management level support from their parent organisation was very important. The CYF representative, adult advocate, police supervisor, and police investigator all specifically emphasised the FST reliance on management level for support. The FST needs agencies' management to support the whole project, their respective representatives, and to implement changes to fill gaps the FST identified. The adult advocate reported that after the FST has identified a gap, it is the managers who have the authority to implement any changes in their agencies, and to instruct staff to ensure gaps were filled and changes were implemented and maintained. The advocate suggested that the FST worker alone would not be able to implement and maintain changes in their organisation without the authority of the management level supporting the changes. Similar comments were made by the police supervisor, who stated that the objective of the FST to identify gaps and barriers is a waste of time if you do not have the senior management in all the agencies supporting the FST initiatives and recommendations.

> *You have to have the management of all the agencies 100% behind you. CYF, police, refuges, HAIP, all have to be 100% behind it… [For example, the FST] said to CYF we needed a social worker, and we got one. CYF said 'yes I see why you need it, here you go'.* (Police supervisor).

Having to rely on management support is a potential weakness of the FST model, as a lack of support could hinder the outcomes of the project. But, management support was considered a strength of the FST, as the FST participants praised the support received from their own and other members' agencies.

From the interviews with agency participants and from observation of the FST, it is clear that not having management level support from agencies would significantly hinder the work of the FST. There is little point in identifying barriers and gaps in service provision if no effort is made to bridge them. Therefore, it is fundamental that the FST ensure that they maintain management support for the project. It is clear that the team is aware of this need and has subsequently developed a method to address it, to ensure that a potential problem is avoided. To maintain the management level support and interest in the project, the FST have initiated a monthly management meeting which brings together the management level of all the agencies involved. They discuss where the FST is heading and review what it has done. Furthermore, it is also the role of each FST member to keep their agency informed, and to act as a liaison between their agency and the FST; thus communication is regular and ongoing, and not restricted to a once a month meeting.

Relationship between members and their parent agencies

There was an agreement across the agency participants that it is the responsibility of the FST members to report back to their parent agency, to liaise between the two groups. For example, the FVTAU member explained that the FST members discuss initiatives collectively, but the person from each of the contributing agencies was responsible for taking that information back to their own areas and implementing any changes that the FST had discussed. The police investigator explained that the FST members are also responsible for building the relationships between their parent organisation and the other agencies in the collaboration. Every FST participant spoke positively about the relationship they had with their parent agency. The adult advocate, CYF representative, child advocate and Refuge representative all believed their parent agencies had an understanding of their roles, and attributed that understanding to keeping in regular contact and providing feedback and updates on FST developments. Furthermore, the CYF representative, police members and Refuge representative all highlighted the ease in which they can get changes implemented by their parent agencies.

The CYF representative and the child and adult advocates all had direct relationships with a supervisor or the management level of their organisation, while the Refuge

representative was from the management level, and therefore reported back to the Refuge staff. The police members reported to their superiors but also had relationships with other police staff as a result of training they had provided. Although all reported on a positive relationship, it is unclear who is involved in the relationships, and whether the majority of each agency understands the work of the FST, or simply the few management level people that the FST members worked with. Interestingly there were varying responses given by the two police members of the team, on whether their parent agency understood the FST and their roles as FST members. The police supervisor claimed that the other police officers do not have an understanding of the FST and the FST police members' roles in that team, despite doing countless training exercises. While the police investigator claimed that there is an understanding, as officers know who they are and come to them with queries, attributing the officers' understanding to the training they provided. Although it is understandable that all police officers will not have a detailed awareness of the FST, as the police department is a large and diverse agency that has multiple areas of interest other than battery. Therefore there will be some officers that have a particular interest in the field of battery and therefore be aware of the FST, and other staff with interests elsewhere. However, this does not explain the difference in the two police FST member's perceptions of police understanding of the FST. The variation in replies from the police members could be due to a difference in what one considers to be an understanding. The police supervisor reported that the police do not understand roles of the FST members or what they spend their time doing every day. This indicates that the police supervisor is referring to a lack of a specific understanding of the FST duties. However, the officers may have a more general understanding of the FST function, which could be what the police investigator was reflecting on.

The structure of the FST requires members to be responsible to both their parent agencies, and the FST. This could create potentially difficult situations for the FST members. The adult advocate mentioned the difficulty of having two bosses when there are conflicting ideas or understanding on what should be done. The adult advocate reported that there needed to be more communication between the two supervisors as there can be conflicting instructions on what needs to be done with daily tasks. I suggest that having two supervisors and being responsible to two entities may have influenced other problems previously documented: the difficulty in understanding one's role in the

team, and the difference in opinion over whether the child and adult advocates are representatives of their parent agencies or not. As noted above, the child advocate, CYF representative and the Parentline supervisor agreed that it is not the role of the child and adult advocates to represent their parent agencies. While the HAIP manager and adult advocate's views contradict this perspective, reporting on an ability of the adult advocate to represent HAIP's perspective. Thus the adult advocate was in agreement with the parent agency supervisor, that the role does include representing HAIP views, yet this was not the view of other FST members. I believe this could be a reflection of the difficulty of having to report to two entities, as they may have varying views on the FST member's duties.

Although the adult advocate limited the difficulty of having two supervisors to everyday tasks, I propose that the structure of the FST allows for FST members to be stuck between their parent agency and the FST, should the two have differing opinions on issues that arise. It could also create confusion in the FST members when given conflicting directives. None of the other FST members interviewed mentioned having difficulties with having dual supervisors. However, there were other situations where the FST and a parent agency had conflicting ideas and the FST member gets stuck in the middle. An example of this is with Parentline. Parentline were the child advocacy agency who held the contract for the FST child advocate position. Parentline did not initially ascribe one person to the role of FST child advocate; rather they preferred to share the role across a number of Parentline staff and had a team of FST child advocates participating in the FST. This meant that at the FST meetings any one of a number of Parentline workers could be there as the child advocate. However, this was not what the FST wanted, as they preferred that one person from Parentline was the FST child advocate. That is, there were conflicting ideas between the agency and the FST on how the role of child advocate should function, and the advocates were stuck between two entities encouraging opposing ideas. In such situations the FST members have very limited authority. This issue was not resolved until Parentline began to understand the perspective of the FST, and agreed to trial having the FST child advocate performed by one person. Although this situation did not seem to create much trouble within the FST, it highlights the point that the structure of the FST model, with FST member's being

responsible to two entities, could be an area for future conflicts to arise, if an agency and the FST differ in opinion.

The difficulties in being responsible to both a parent agency and the FST, and having two supervisors, creates room for potential problems to arise where there are differing views held by both parties, leaving the FST members in the middle. Although only one FST participant identified any problems with this, but it seems to have contributed to some other difficulties the FST have faced; understanding roles of the FST members, and the previous situation with the Parentline child advocates. But of greater concern is the potential for future problems to occur if there is a difference in opinion between the FST and an agency. However, I do not believe that a solution to this problem is to have members solely responsible to, and employed by, the FST. It is important for the autonomy of the members that they remain with their parent agencies.

Isolation and autonomy

The FST model risks members becoming isolated from their parent agency, especially for those who are the sole delegate from their agency. Isolation may result in members being dominated by the perspectives of other agencies. It could result in members losing touch with their parent agency and therefore unable to adequately represent their perspectives. Or it could result in the FST becoming very insular by only referring to a handful of people for judgments and to gain information. However, from the interviews, and in accordance with my observation of FST meetings, all the FST members reported that they do not feel isolated from their agencies and, as noted above, all feel they could represent their clients (battered women and their children) or their agencies' values and perspectives with confidence. However, some members recognised that isolation could occur if they lost contact with their parent agency. It seems that FST members have not become isolated because of their employment relationship and the physical location of their work place.

As discussed under the description of the Hamilton FST, each FST member is employed by, and responsible to, their parent agency. This ensures each member is responsible to an agency, and the agency is autonomous from the FST. If the community agency

workers were employed by the FST, they would become responsible to the state. The FVTAU member emphasised the importance of autonomy of each agency as a method for ensuring FST members can adequately represent their agencies and do not become isolated from them. The FVTAU member claimed that in Hamilton there is a strong emphasis on autonomy, "Working collaboratively together, but working autonomously in the roles we perform" (FVTAU member).

Other FST members discussed autonomy and isolation in relation to the separate geographic location of the members. The majority of the agency participants the HAIP manager, FVTAU member, child advocate, Parentline supervisor and Refuge worker all strongly advocated for FST members to remain located with their parent agencies. These agency participants cautioned that FST members could lose their connection with their agency if they did not work with them. Working from their parent agency ensures access to their agency's expertise, judgments, resources, values, services, training, and up to date developments in their respective fields. Other agency participants were more focused on the difficulties that arose from working in different locations. The adult advocate recognised the benefits of staying with the parent organisation, but also reported on the disadvantage of being separated from the other FST members as it eliminated the informal networking and team building that occurs from working together. Furthermore, being in different geographic locations makes communication difficult, yet it is a fundamental part of maintaining the relationships between FST members. The police supervisor explained how FST members have to make a deliberate effort to keep people informed; not just sharing information but sharing minor things, such as telling everyone if you are having a day off, which could be annoying at the time, but it is essential.

An interesting perspective on geographic location came from the CYF representative who was based at the police station with the police members of the FST and was not based with CYF. The CYF representative believed that despite being located away from the CYF office, there was no risk of isolation. The CYF representative acknowledged that isolation was a potential risk, but claimed it was more likely to occur in situations were the person had minimal contact with their parent agency. The CYF representative claimed that isolation could not happen in this situation due to a constant connection with CYF and good support from them. The representative keeps in regular contact with

CYF by phone and face to face contact twice a week. "I've always got that constant connection going with the department…I'm just not away from there enough for me to ever feel isolated" (CYF representative).

Thus, although the CYF example demonstrates the ability of members to work with the FST and away from their parent agency without becoming isolated, it also illustrates the need for a constant connection with the agency. I believe that the CYF member's situation is fortunate, and not characteristic of what would occur should other members become detached from their parent agency. I believe it is important FST members stay with their parent agencies; as this is in the environment of their expertise and where they can learn and develop their skills. The FST members still have a lot of contact with the FST through the regular meetings, but if everyone was in the same location there is a risk of getting isolated and this would impact negatively on the functioning of the FST. I share the view of the FVTAU member, who commented:

> *the people that are on the FST who are not government department workers, they really do have to be rooted back in a solid organisation which provides them with the analysis, and the support, and the supervision, and the ability to go to the table and negotiate. If they were employed by the state, the state will absolutely manipulate them.*

Coordination role

The FST is a collaboration, therefore every FST member needs to be able to have input into discussions and decisions. There is an overall agreement across agency participants that there is mutual respect and an equal distribution of power among FST members, and everyone has equal opportunity to raise concerns and be listened to. Despite this there is a general agreement across agency participants that there needs to be a person that leads or coordinates the FST on a daily basis. Who this agency is varied according to what people thought it meant to lead the FST. But the majority of responses reported that the FST does need coordination, and that coordinator role is held by the police.

One agency participant reported that the FST was lead by HAIP. The Refuge representative commented: "It's more led by HAIP, that's my understanding, but anyone of us can have a meeting with each other". The FVTAU member reported that it was the community sector that leads the FST, with the support of the government agencies. However, it seems this is based on an understanding that to lead the FST meant setting

the overall direction for the FST, and not the day to day running. Every other agency participant considered the lead or coordinator role to be a practical, day to day role; while the strategic leadership and setting the overall focus of the FST is in the control of the whole collaborative, not with any one agency. For example, the Parentline supervisor, child advocate and adult advocate all explained that the police are not in charge of the FST: they are just one agency in the collaboration. This was also the perspective of the Refuge representative who strongly advocated that the FST is not managed by the police, commenting:

> *Na the police aren't leading it. They need to get off that. I think the head offices are probably thinking they're leading it… It's important, I believe, that it has to have a joint collaborative response between the systems and the non-government agencies.* (Refuge representative).

The Parentline supervisor, child advocate, CYF representative, adult advocate and the two police members all agreed that the FST is a joint initiative and although the police do not manage the FST, it was the police supervisor who oversees the running of the Hamilton FST and coordinates the team. For example, the police investigator reported that the police do not act as the lead agency: they operate equally with everyone else, claiming that the police supervisor was there to "Coordinate and keep everyone on track" (police investigator). The supervisor did not dictate what needed to be done, but kept the team focused.

> *It got landed with the police to lead it. And I don't mean lead it as in they say 'this is how it will be done', I think that with any team you need a head because otherwise you'll end up wondering around aimlessly.* (Police investigator).

I agree with the CYF representative, that the FST members accept the coordination from a government agency because of the manner in which it is performed. "Because of the personalities that are in the police, the other agencies are accepting of [them as] the lead players" (CYF representative). Furthermore, the police supervisor is very aware of the careful balance involved in coordinating a collaborative so that the team is effective at achieving objectives in a collaborative manner. The supervisor acknowledged that police have a tendency to take over and control things, as that is how they had been trained. The supervisor said it is difficult to step back from taking control of the situation, but being aware of this tendency has resulted in the supervisor making a conscious effort "To take a step back" (police supervisor), despite the difficultly in doing so.

This evaluation has found positive support for the supervisor and for the need to have a coordinator role. However, I believe that the current support for the supervisor is not a result of the FST model, but a result of the current personalities in the team, especially that of the supervisor. The police supervisor runs the FST in a diplomatic, non-dictatorial way to ensure that everyone performs as an equal partner in the FST. This is the type of coordination that the members accept. For the enduring functioning of the FST I believe it is crucial that the coordination continues to function in a collaborative, non-dictatorial manner, and that the coordinator continues to be receptive to suggestions and conversations from all members. Should the position of coordinator change to someone preferring to manage the FST in a hierarchical way, rather than coordinate the collaboration, this style of supervision would almost certainly create problems within the team. If these problems could not be resolved, and one member or agency was dictating to others and manipulating the direction of the FST, I believe some of agencies would reconsider their involvement. This is not a criticism of the FST, but an acknowledgement of the type of leadership it requires. It is important to be aware of this to ensure that appropriate candidates are chosen as FST members. It is also important to appreciate that effective interagency coordination would be undermined if one agency tried to drive the project. This situation is discussed further under the volatility of the FST, as the problem is not restricted to the coordinator role; it is also evident in the relationships between the other members.

Volatility of FST

Based on the interviews and observations in meetings, it is my opinion that the FST model is based on the effective functioning of relationships between the team members, and between the agencies. As the police investigator reported, "The relationships is what it's about. It's about people working together, that's the key". Effective relationships involve, for example, mutual respect among members, trusting the other members and agencies with sensitive information and for them to respond appropriately, and having equal opportunity to have your opinions heard. As discussed above, these things are occurring now, but the FST is a dynamic group. Therefore, the relationships are subject to change. I believe that relying on relationships to support the infrastructure of an

effective FST creates the potential for foreseeable problems to have a significant impact on the FST, in particular the impact on the FST should one or more key FST members leave the team. This was an issue discussed in the interviews, and there were varying perspectives on whether the maintenance of relationships and the functioning of the FST are based on the roles themselves, or on the individual people who hold those roles. Should the relationships be maintained by the roles, one could assume that a change in the person filling that role would not have a significant impact. However, if the relationships are maintained by the individuals, a change in members could have a significant impact on the team dynamics and the ability of the FST to continue functioning in its current capacity.

The FVTAU member, CYF representative, Refuge representative and police investigator all favoured the perspective that it is the people, not the roles that maintained the relationships and infrastructure of the FST. The Refuge representative claimed:

> *It was the people that were chosen that made an impact on how our relationships work…I believe its always been the people. You have to have key people that are willing to [create] change to be in those roles. Because you can have really professional skilled people and not have the heart of where we're going and it would be absolutely terrible.*

Thus, according to the Refuge representative, it is neither the roles nor the environment that is maintaining the good relationships: it is the people. If FST members were to leave it would have an impact, "It would change the dynamics of it" (Refuge representative). The CYF representative called the maintenance of the FST "A careful balance", with great potential to fall apart. The CYF representative believed the FST worked because of personalities in key positions, arguing that if members left, the FST would become very fragile and it could fall over if the right people were not chosen to replace them. The CYF representative reported that this is particularly relevant for the supervisor role. A very similar view was given by the police investigator, who commented:

> *Although the team looks strong it can also be a very fragile thing that continues to need work and if you don't have the right people doing that, that team, even though it's strong, will fall apart…I think if you put the wrong person in there the team could quite easily fall apart.*

Others decided that yes it is the people, but it is developing so that it is not solely based on the people. For example, the police supervisor reported that as more people become involved with the FST from the different agencies it expands each area, but only after direct contact with the FST. The HAIP manager and adult advocate believed that the

current effective working relationships are based on the agencies, not the individuals, as individuals in the FST have worked at developing good relationships between each other's agencies. They believed the collaboration will withstand individual people leaving.

> *Some of it is because of the people, but … I'm positive that it's the agencies because we've had different people come … and we talk to the agency.* (Adult advocate).

In summary, it seems that that majority of agency participants think that the individual people have been important in ensuring genuine collaboration and others make the point that the history of collaboration in Hamilton has also been important. So there is more than one factor, but the main factor is the people in the roles. This could create potential problems for the FST; therefore, it is my opinion that it needs to be addressed. I do not, however, believe that this weakness is unique to the FST; rather it is an understandable challenge that would result from working in a multi-agency collaboration. The FST is a dynamic group and staff changes are inevitable. Factors which seem to help maintain effective collaboration are the selection of FST members and regular meetings.

Selection of FST members. One possible method of maintaining effective collaboration is to ensure appropriate people are selected to be FST members. The police supervisor reported on necessary characteristics of FST members, such as: a willingness to understand the value in sharing information, being open to criticism, wanting to make a difference, a "We can do anything you just need to find out how attitude" (police supervisor), not having a personal agenda, being willing to learn and understand, and a positive attitude. The police investigator includes further characteristics, including: the ability to see a number of different perspectives and not just the perspective they represent, and not dictating to other members.

Regular meetings. Another way of retaining the collaboration is having meetings to keep in constant contact and for members to bring up concerns. The CYF representative, police investigator, police supervisor, the child advocate, Parentline supervisor and adult advocate all emphasised the importance of having regular meetings for the initial stages of developing trusted relationships, and to continue to maintain the relationships, particularly because the FST members worked from different geographic locations. Meetings provide opportunity for regular contact and support. In particular the FST

have a weekly FST staff meeting, which provides a space for members to raise any concerns they have. The continuation of these meetings would be essential; particularly when new members come on board, to provide a forum for them to get to know the other members, ask questions, learn how to fit into the team and learn the dynamics of how the Hamilton FST functions. Details on the different FST meetings are outlined above, under the Hamilton FST description.

Summary

This evaluation has found that the structure of the Hamilton FST can deliver an effective systematic response. Aspects of the FST structure that make it an effective systematic response include: having management level support from the parent agencies, the role of the supervisor, and working as a genuine collaborative. However, there were some limitations of the FST model, including the difficulties that can arise from members being responsible to two entities.

Management level support from the agencies in the FST is necessary to ensure that the agencies representatives' are supported, that the FST project is supported, and to ensure that recommendations or initiatives that the FST develop are implemented by the agencies. Agencies' support was a strength of the Hamilton FST, as FST member's praised the support received from their own and other agencies. Every member spoke positively about their relationships with their parent agency.

The role of the supervisor was central to discussions on the FST structure. It is clear that each of the FST members and each agency are partners in the FST, and no one agency leads the FST. There is agreement among members that the supervisor's role is to coordinate the collaborative, rather than manage the FST. The FST members accept the supervisor role being based with a government agency because it is performed in a non-dictatorial manner where every agency is an equal partner with mutual respect and evenly distributed power. If the incumbent left and a new supervisor tried to manage the FST in a hierarchical manner, rather than coordinate the collaborative, this would almost certainly create problems within the FST.

The history of working collaboratively as well as the individual people in the team ensures the FST works as a genuine collaboration. Thus, the effective functioning of the FST is reliant on the individual members and their relationships with the other FST members. There was no evidence that this was creating problems for the Hamilton FST, however, this reliance could create problems if FST members leave. Factors to help maintain genuine collaboration are the careful selection of new FST members and having regular meetings.

The FST members are responsible to both their parent agency and to the FST. This is a strength of the Hamilton FST as it decreases the risk of members becoming isolated from their parent agencies, and it makes the whole agency an active participant in the FST. However, it is also be a weakness of the FST model, as having dual responsibilities and dual supervisors, seems to have caused some past difficulties for the Hamilton FST. But more importantly, there is a risk that it could cause future problems for the team. Should there be a difference in opinion between the FST and an agency, the FST member will be stuck between the two. Despite this, it is important that the FST members stay responsible to and employed by their respective parent agencies, and stay working from their premises. This will ensure FST members do not become isolated, rather that they stay connected to their agency, and have access to the agencies' expertise, resources, training, values and up-to-date developments in their field of expertise.

CONCLUSION

This research was conducted to evaluate the FST as implemented in Hamilton. The aims of the evaluation were to: identify barriers to establishing the FST, assess the strengths and weaknesses of the Hamilton FST, determine the adequacy of the FST model to deliver a systemic response that addresses the needs of battered women and their children, and assess the extent to which the FST has enhanced the ability of the justice system and community agencies to enhance the safety and autonomy of battered women and their children, and to hold offenders accountable. Each of these aims were addressed by using a range of research methods. I conducted interviews with FST members and other agency members, a focus group with battered women, observation of FST meetings, and archival research of the police family violence files.

Each of the objectives were addressed in the previous chapter. The concluding chapter addresses other significant themes to emerge from the evaluation. The first is the challenges to establishing the FST in Hamilton, emphasising the importance of developing the protocols document. I then examine the developments in responses by police and the Criminal Courts, and the challenges to the FST. Factors that make the Hamilton FST a genuine collaborative are outlined. The chapter ends with a discussion of the FST model, limitations of the research, recommendations for future research and the overall achievements of this evaluation.

Establishing the FST in Hamilton

Every agency participant was clear about the difficulty of getting to understand the roles of each of the FST members, the function of the FST, and how it was to fit in with existing structures in the community. The initial lack of understanding of the function of the FST, and the roles of the members, was partly responsible for the limited amount of monitoring performed by the FST, as there was more of a focus on individual cases for at least the first 12 months of the project. Understanding the function of the FST and the roles of the FST members was a challenge that took a significant period to overcome, but it is an understandable challenge in a new initiative. Factors that contributed to overcoming this problem included asking questions, trial and error and

regular meetings. But it seems the most instrumental factor was developing the protocols document.

Shared philosophy and protocols

According to Pence and Shepard (1999), one of the key features of effective collaborations is the development of a shared philosophy as this forms the basis from which goals and objectives can be drawn. Other literature on collaborations emphasises that developing a shared philosophy can be very difficult to obtain, as each agency has their own philosophy, training, and policy positions (James-Hanman, 2001; United Nations, 1993). James-Hanman (2001) adds that the difficulty is magnified when there are agencies in the collaborative that have a history of mistrust. However, this evaluation has found that developing a shared philosophy in the Hamilton FST was established with little difficulty. This was despite the lack of trust between the government and community agencies. The ease in which a shared philosophy was developed was predominantly due to the pre-FST collaboration, a willingness to work collaboratively and respect for each agency's expertise.

According to Pence and Shepard (1999), the development of protocols is a key feature of effective inter-agency collaborations. Pence and Shepard (1999) state that documenting policies and procedures for each agency's response ensures agencies have a united and consistent response that complements each other's services and allows agencies to predict the likely responses in given situations. Pence and Shepard (1999) warn that the development of these documents is time consuming, but it is important that they are created by thorough discussion and equal input from all the agencies involved. This was definitely the situation for the Hamilton FST. From my observation of the meetings where the document was being developed, and from comments of the agency participants, the protocols document took an extensive amount of time to develop. Some agency participants were critical of the amount of time it took. However, other agency participants commented that the process was as beneficial as the completed document, that the discussion created through developing the protocols document helped to clarify members' roles, the purpose of the FST, where each person fitted in the team, and what they can expect from each other. These comments complemented my

own observations of the process. It seems clear that, frustrating though the process was for some, it was beneficial for others. The experience in Hamilton seems to bear out Pence and Shepard's (1999) contention that the time taken in such an exercise is a necessary cost of establishing effective collaboration.

Recommendations:
  (a) That the protocols document be reviewed by the FST intermittently, to ensure that the document is updated and relevant, and to refresh the FST members about their core purpose.
  (b) That any agencies new to the FST are incorporated into the protocols document.
  (c) That any new justice agencies that come into the FST are required to accept the FST philosophy to maintain cohesion.

Improved police responsiveness

Policy changes
A predominant theme of this evaluation is the work of the FST to address the police response to family violence cases. Research addressing the police response has shown that the police have historically remained uninvolved in domestic violence cases (Buzawa & Buzawa, 1990; Ford, 1986; Kurz, 1992; Victims Task Force, 1992). Subsequent policies were introduced which required police to treat domestic violence as a serious crime, to ensure victims had access to information and support, to protect battered women, and to arrest offenders when there was evidence of an offence without victims having to make a complaint. Nevertheless, research has found that the policies were poorly implemented, and that police behaviour and attitudes had changed very little (Busch, Robertson, & Lapsley, 1992).

This suggests that policy level changes, alone, are not enough to change the responsiveness to battered women. Past research has suggested three main factors that are required to change an agency's practice along with policy changes. Firstly, there needs to be education and training around the change. Agency workers need to increase their understanding of the dynamics of battery and improve their attitudes towards battery (Feder, 1999). The second factor is getting support for the changes across a range

of justice agencies, rather than making a change in isolation. An initiative for one justice agency needs to be developed in conjunction with other justice agencies to ensure a consistent response (Kurz, 1992). Thirdly, initiatives, policy or otherwise, need to be monitored to ensure that they are having the effect intended and that the agency is uniformly implementing the change.

The FST addresses each of these three factors. Firstly, the FST is involved in training police to improve responsiveness to established policies and new policies unique to the Hamilton area. As discussed further below, it would useful if the police training involved more discussion of the dynamics of abuse, so that officers can understand the issues of power, control, manipulation, and isolation, which are prominently used by batterers. However, the need to provide training on policy changes is not limited to internal police policies. Dominick (1995) reports, that any collaborative policies or procedures need to be affirmed internally within the implicated agencies, to ensure that the policies are actively implemented and maintained by the agency workers. Therefore any policies the FST establish will need to be ratified by each agency and some training will likely be required to ensure that the agencies' workers implement the policy consistently.

Secondly, the focus of the Hamilton FST is on the systems and responses of the agencies in the justice system. The FST aims to strengthen individual responses and to promote cohesion between the justice sector agencies. To date, the majority of the focus has been on the policing aspect of the justice system, as that is where the FST members have established relationships. Moreover, the Police, as the front-line agency with the responsibility to provide immediate protection, was a logical place to start. The FST members are working at establishing relationships with other justice agencies, such as, the Family Court, the Criminal Court and Probation, to be able to target their responses and systems. The FST members have also kept judges informed of the police protocols through presentations. Therefore, while the FST members have focused on the Police, they are building relationships with other justice agencies and there is evidence of them building support for changes across the justice sector.

The third factor, monitoring, is the core function of the FST. The Hamilton FST's focus is on the monitoring, evaluation, and growth of the interagency system and response

modes, to develop them as required. The FST predominantly review trends across cases, rather than monitoring individual cases. The monitoring is intended to identify barriers and gaps in service provision. In the case of policy changes, the monitoring would focus on expected outcomes from the policy changes, and to determine whether the agencies are consistently implementing the changes.

Recommendations:

(d) That FST policies and protocols are reiterated within the internal policies of the implicated agencies.

(e) That the active implementation and maintenance of FST policies are monitored by the FST to measure consistency of implementation and to measure the expected outcomes as a result of the policy change.

Identified developments in police response

A focus of the FST is to evaluate and enhance the systems and responses of justice agencies. As mentioned, the FST is currently focusing on the policing aspect of the justice system. Each agency participant noted improvements in the police response to domestic violence cases, some focusing on improvements in attitudes and others commenting on the FST police training. There is evidence that the change in responses and attitudes is a result of FST training, and from FST police members following up on cases to ensure the appropriate responses were carried out. One of the focus group participants also reported a change in police attitudes, noting faster response times and police being friendlier towards battered women. This could indicate an improved understanding of the dynamics of abuse, as treating victims fairly is a shift away from traditional responses where police have been unsympathetic towards battered women. However, as discussed in the following section, other focus group participants reported that victim blaming attitudes are still present. The focus group participants concluded that the response women get from the police depends on the individual officer.

Positive outcomes reported by the agency participants included: an increase in arrest rates, improvements in portraying the victim's perspective on the victim impact statements, and improved coding of cases as family violence. The archival database

provides some support for the claims of an increased arrest rate. Whereas 10% of the 2005 sample resulted in an arrest, 17% of the 2006 sample did so. The database also supports claims of improvements in coding, as there was an overall increase in family violence cases from 21 in the 2005 sample, to 46 in the 2006 sample. It is unlikely that there has been such a substantial increase in domestic violence being reported. It is more likely that the increase is due to police recognising family violence and coding a greater range of events as family violence, which may have previously been coded as something else.

The agency participants also reported an improvement on the information that is in the police files, saying police are including more information from the scene of the incident. The agency participants also stated that the improvements in police responsiveness can be seen in the increase in POL400 forms coming through the POL400 project. The archival database also provided some evidence on this. The database found that there was an increase in POL400 forms, from 21 POL400 forms completed in the 2005 sample to 39 forms for the 2006 sample. However, the increase in POL400 forms is not consistent with the increase in cases coded as family violence. From the 2005 sample, 100% of the family violence cases had POL400 forms, but only 85% of the 2006 sample of family violence cases.

As discussed below, it is very difficult to draw conclusions from the database due to the small size of the 2005 sample. The database indicates some improvements in police responses after the FST had been operational for one year, including a substantial increase in cases recorded as family violence. But it also highlights the need for further improvements. It seems there has been an overall improvement in police attitudes and taking domestic violence cases seriously. I believe the change in attitude coupled with continued training and monitoring of police response will set the framework for further improvements in specific areas of police responses. However, the focus group participants identified an aspect of police responsiveness that was concerning. Although some focus group participants reported favorable police responses, others identified victim blaming attitudes in the police.

Victim blaming

Many of the issues identified by the focus group participants are also evident in previous research documenting the limitations of agency responses. One such issue was victim blaming attitudes in the police. Numerous reports have highlighted the historic tendency of the police to sympathise with the batterer, seeing his use of violence as a justifiable response to provocation, and to place blame on his victims for provoking the attack (Ford, 1986; Victims Task Force, 1992). Victim blaming attitudes were discussed by the focus group participants, although it manifests in a different way. That is, the women in the focus group did not report being blamed for provoking an attack; rather, they were blamed for not leaving their abusive partners. The focus group participants spoke of victim blaming when women call police repeatedly, and when women do not leave their batterers according to a "Police timeframe" (focus group participants). It is unclear whether this is a widespread problem across Hamilton police, or a result of a few individual officers. But the fact that victim blaming attitudes were identified as an issue by the focus group participants is concerning.

Whatever its form, victim blaming seems to reflect a lack of police understanding of the dynamics of abuse. Police need to be aware that leaving an abusive partner is not simply a matter of walking out the door. There are extensive social, material, economic and personal factors involved in women's ability or inability to leave (Bowker, 1993; Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Itzin, 2001). Blaming women for not leaving takes the victim's behaviour out of context from the abusive, controlling and isolating experiences the batterer has enforced. Furthermore, it ignores the seriousness of the risk that women take when they leave their batterers, as research has shown that women commonly experience an escalation of violence when leaving an abusive relationship (Bowker, 1993; Itzin, 2001). As documented by Dobash & Dobash (1979) and Morris (1997), battered women are reluctant to call the police for help. Hanmer & Saunders (1984) found that a positive police response is linked to the likelihood that battered women will call the police again for help. Therefore, if a woman feels blamed by police, or feels that police do not appreciate the difficulty of her position, she may stop calling police. This puts her safety at risk, results in her being re-victimised by a service she has called for help and further increases her isolation.

Focus group participants confirm the conclusions of previous research which indicates that there needs to be more education of the police around the dynamics of abuse and how to respond appropriately to battered women. The FST police members are currently providing such training to officers which covers appropriate responses for different domestic violence cases, the importance of report writing, and how the work of the police relates to other agencies. The training is intended to increase officer buy in to the FST project. However, it seems more emphasis needs to be placed on understanding the dynamics of battery. In their interviews, both the Refuge representative and child advocate expressed their desire to have the Refuges and Parentline to do training with the police officers. Incorporating the expertise of such NGOs into the police training the FST provides will help to ensure the needs of battered women and their children are central to the officers' understanding of battery.

By determining areas where responses are problematic, based on evidence from past research and battered women's experience with the agencies, the FST can ensure that their initiatives are addressing the needs of battered women. The FST will need to monitor the ongoing implementation of their initiatives with the agencies to ensure that their initiatives are having the intended impact, and that they are consistently implemented by agency staff.

Recommendation:

(f) That police training:

place more emphasis on understanding the dynamics of battery,

be conducted in collaboration with local NGOs,

be subject to regular evaluation and monitoring.

Criminal court

Evidence from the focus group, the archival database, agency participants' interviews, and past research (Busch, 1994; Hart, 1996; Lesorgen, 2001; Robertson, 1999), is very critical of the Criminal Court's responsiveness to battered women. It is crucial that the FST start to address some of these problems, if they wish to improve the responsiveness of the justice system. Issues surrounding the Criminal Court's response that have been

identified in past research, by the focus group participants and by the agency participants included: the need to inform battered women on what the court processes will involve and on progress through out trial, the need for separate waiting rooms, using screens or video testimony, and the need for the judges to understand the dynamics of abuse and the difficulties involved in battered women testifying.

The focus group participants, archival database and past research also identified the need for more severe sentencing to reflect the nature of the crime. The archival database found that of the 16 charges in the total sample, there were 11 convictions, and only 2 resulted in a prison sentence. Although detail of these particular cases is lacking, the overall impression from this database is that the consequences for battering were rather minimal. The women in the focus group confirmed the findings from past research which has demonstrated that minimal sentencing will result in victims losing trust in the justice system, and result in women being unlikely to use the court system again as the potential risks to her are far greater than the consequences for the batterer (Hart, 1995; Lesorgen, 2001). This is one area of the Criminal Court that the FST needs to be investigating. Busch (1994) says that to hold offenders accountable for their violence, penalties need to be severe to challenge the view that domestic violence is less significant than violence between strangers.

Two of the Criminal Court issues identified above have started to be addressed by the FST. The FST has begun to provide information to judges by giving presentations, but further education is needed. Secondly, the FST identified that support and information was needed for battered women going through the criminal court process, which resulted in HAIP reinstating the court advocates role. The court advocates' role is based around empowering women through the court process, ensuring that they know what to expect and keeping them informed. This not only enhances women's safety and autonomy; it also helps to ensure offenders are held accountable for their use of violence.

The court advocates' role and delivering presentations to judges are two positive developments in the court system; however, significant developments are still needed. I believe further FST developments in the Criminal Courts will be hindered without

greater their involvement and support in the project. The FST have identified the need to improve the responsiveness of the agencies in the justice system, and they are starting to build relationships with the Courts, to get support for the project. It is important that the FST build relationships and get the support of further justice agencies, such as: the Criminal Court, Family Court and probation, as it would be extremely difficult for the FST to encourage changes in the justice system, without their support. By getting such justice agencies involved, the FST can enhance the cohesion between the agencies, and initiatives can be implemented across justice agencies to ensure a consistent response.

Recommendations:

(g) That the FST use the perspectives of battered women (which could be represented by the FST members who work directly with the women, such as the refuge representative) and past research to determine areas for development in the justice system.

(h) That the FST develop a working relationship with the Criminal Court, Family Court, and probation.

(i) That the FST monitor the court outcomes.

(j) That the FST continue to provide training to judges on the dynamics of battery.

Challenges

Aside from the initial challenges in understanding the functions of the FST, there were two other significant challenges identified by the agency participants: a lack of resources and a lack of monitoring.

Resources

According to the United Nations report (1993) a lack of resources is a commonly cited problem of collaborations. For example, the MARAC initiative was challenged by a lack of resources for the response agencies as a result of a substantial increase in workload, created by the MARAC. This was so with the Hamilton FST. Every agency participant interviewed identified a lack of resources as a challenge. There was a lack of resources for agencies to keep up with the increased workload created by the FST, and to implement any changes that the FST recommend. The FST are funded to find the gaps,

but the burden of bridging those gaps falls upon the already stretched response agencies. This is a potentially significant problem for the FST, as they rely on agencies to provide the services the FST monitor, and to fill the gaps the FST identify. There is also a lack of resources within the FST itself. Agency participants noted a lack of staff in the FST as a barrier to development that has hindered the progress of the FST. James-Hanman (2000) has found that a lack of resources in multi-agency collaborations can result in initiatives being developed based on resources available, and not on victim needs. Therefore, if left unresolved, a lack of resources could be harmful to the FST's ability to address the needs of battered women.

Lack of monitoring

Pence and Shepard (1999) believe that monitoring and evaluation are key aspects of a multi-agency collaboration. Collaborations can monitor systems and responses to women and offenders at an individual case level, but also on a macro level. According to Falk & Helgeson (1999), by monitoring at a macro level trends in responses can be identified, gaps in the system or response are made visible, and the macro level monitoring can be used to determine whether policies or processes are being actively performed.

While both the objectives of the Hamilton FST and literature on collaborations emphasised the importance of monitoring, relatively little monitoring has been carried out by the FST, at least initially. However, this is understandable considering the infancy of the FST project in Hamilton, the time spent getting to understand the function of the FST, the initial focus on case work, and the prolonged process of negotiating the protocols. Furthermore, the FST members also reported that they are aware that the FST need to be performing more monitoring, tracking, and evaluating of systems and responses. According to James-Hanman (2001) monitoring across agencies is difficult to establish, because what information is collected, how it is collected, and the definitions used by each agency will be different, and some agencies do no collect any information at all. Therefore, it is difficult and time consuming to establish a method of data collection and analysis that will fit across the range of agencies. Thus, according to James-Hanman (2001) it is understandable that processes for monitoring across agencies

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are still being established by the FST. As the FST members have recognised this challenge, and the initial problems with establishment are largely resolved, it is likely that the monitoring aspect of the FST will be developed. However, the monitoring will always be limited by the number of people or hours allocated. Further resources are likely to be required to cover the extensive monitoring that the Hamilton FST aims to achieve.

Genuine collaboration

A predominant finding of this evaluation concerns the features of the Hamilton FST that make the project function successfully as an interagency collaboration. This evaluation has found that the Hamilton FST collaboration is based on mutual respect and the equal distribution of power among FST members. Mutual respect was established by building effective working relationships and recognising each agency for their area of expertise.

Mutual respect and building trusted relationships among FST members

Through interviews, observation and casual conversations, it was abundantly clear that the FST members held a mutual respect for one another, and respect for the work of each agency. This has provided a positive foundation for the FST to build from. According to Gamache and Amus (1999), networking and trust across members is an important feature of interagency collaborations. Gamache and Amus (1999) claim that trusted relationships enhance information sharing and communication between agencies, and results in agencies being willingly open to scrutiny by others in the collaboration. Every agency participant interviewed was very clear about the importance of building and maintaining trusted working relationships between the FST members.

There was an overall agreement across agency participants that each FST member is respected and has equal opportunity to raise concerns and be listened to. Every FST member reported that they are confident raising issues in the FST if they are not comfortable with something. Every FST member stated that there is open and honest dialogue among the FST members and that FST members will direct questions at any of the participating agencies.

From interviews with the agency participant, it seems that the majority of the relationships were established during the pre-FST collaboration. However, a lot of energy had to be invested into building trust between the community and government agencies. It seems that some of the community agencies were initially suspicious of the police and CYF involvement, based on past power inequalities between state and community agencies. The Refuge representative and the police supervisor, for example, reported that, initially, there was not a lot of trust between the community agencies and the police and CYF.

During the initial stages of implementation, the community agencies talked with the police about their role in the FST, to ensure that the police knew they were one agency in a collaborative, and that they were not there to dominate over or dictate to the other agencies. The agency participants praised the police for their acceptance of, and contributions towards these discussions, saying that the police were "Very receptive" (refuge representative). Furthermore, the police FST members recognised the expertise of the community agencies. The police FST members were willing to learn from the community agencies, and were willing to take on their perspectives. The police supervisor, for example, was very clear on the importance of the community agencies' knowledge, commenting that, without the background experience and expertise of the community agencies, the FST as a group would not know a fraction of what they do.

Within the Hamilton FST, the agency participants attributed a range of factors to the maintenance of effective and trusted working relationships. The FST supervisor initiated a weekly staff meeting for FST members to raise any concerns. Other factors included: asking questions of agencies if they were uncertain or uncomfortable with an issue, providing honest replies, keeping transparent communication, spending time together, working together and knowing that each others' agencies are going to respond appropriately.

Recommendation:

    (d) That the FST maintain the weekly staff meeting, and other regular FST meetings, to ensure a space for FST members to voice concerns, target questions and to ensure FST members do not become isolated.

Equal distribution of power

This evaluation has found that the collaboration is based not only on mutual respect, but also on the equal distribution of power, among FST members. This does not seem to be a feature of the FST model. Rather, it was a result of the individual people in the FST, the role of the coordinator, and Hamilton's history of working collaboratively.

A benefit of the FST model is that it allows government agencies and NGOs to work together. This is a valuable development acknowledged by the agency participants, who stated that the FST has created the opportunity for community agencies to have significantly more access to the government sector, and that there is an increased desire to work with each other. Thus, a positive aspect of the FST model is that government agencies and NGOs are working together. However, as the FST model stands, the community agencies are at risk of being dominated by the more powerful government agencies, as the FST model does not address imbalances of power.

James-Hanman (2000) states that potential problems for collaborations can occur from the unequal distribution of power between agencies. James-Hanman (2000) reports that a the risk of collaborations is that the relatively powerful state agencies will dominate the less-powerful community agencies by imposing their own definitions, agendas and solutions. Therefore, the collaboration may serve the needs of state agencies rather than the needs of battered women. The FST model includes both NGOs and government agencies, placing the role of supervisor with the police. Therefore, based on James-Hanman's (2000) understanding of collaborations, the FST model leaves the community agencies vulnerable to domination, as it does not ensure equality of power among FST members.

However, from my observations and from the interviews with agency participants, it appears there is an equal distribution of power among members of the Hamilton FST. The agency participants reported that each FST member and each agency has equal authority. There was also general agreement that it is the collaboration of agencies that sets the strategic leaderships and the direction for the FST, not any one agency. Therefore, this evaluation has found an equal distribution of power among the Hamilton FST, despite the FST model itself not ensuring this. However, the equality of power is subject to change, so it is important the FST members acknowledge how they are maintaining an equal distribution of power to ensure that this does not become a problem in the future. I believe the relationships and the even distribution of power are being maintained by having experienced and knowledgeable members as part of the FST, maintaining a non-dictatorial style of leadership, holding a belief in working collaboratively, respecting members for their areas of expertise, ensuring everyone has equal input into decisions, and maintaining strong connections between members and their parent agencies so that they do not become isolated within the FST.

Coordinator's role
Although FST members agree that there is mutual respect and an equal distribution of power among FST members, they still believe that there needs to be someone who coordinates the FST. This is the role of the police supervisor. Although the police hold the supervisor role, the FST participants are very clear that the police do not lead the FST; they operate equally with every other agency in the collaboration. The agency participants considered the supervisor role to be that of a coordinator, rather than a manager. That is, they understood that the police supervisor's role is to oversee the day to day running of the FST and to coordinate the FST members, while the strategic leadership was in the control of the whole collaborative, not with any one agency.

From what FST members suggested, basing the supervisor's role within a government agency is accepted because of the manner in which it is performed and the personalities involved. The police supervisor is careful to ensure the FST is effective in achieving objectives in a collaborative way. The police supervisor acknowledged that the police have a tendency to take over and control things, but being aware of this, the supervisor

has made a conscious effort to "Take a step back" (police supervisor), and let the FST function as a true collaborative. It is this type of coordination that the FST members accept. Should the incumbent leave and a new supervisor tried to manage the FST in a hierarchical way, problems would almost certainly be created within the FST. The effectiveness of the interagency coordination would be undermined if any one agency or any one FST member tried to drive the project. This is not a criticism of the FST, but an acknowledgement of the type of leadership it requires. It is important to be aware of this to ensure that appropriate candidates are chosen as FST members.

Improved knowledge of agency processes and protocols
The FST has improved contact and communication between agencies, particularly between the community and government agencies. As a result of the effective relationships between the FST members, agencies have been able to learn about the responses, processes and protocols of the other agencies in the FST. The FST members are a contact for other FST members to provide information about their respective agency's. If an individual agency is concerned about a response that was provided, or if they simply want some information, FST members can provide information on their parent agency's processes and protocols. For example, as previously discussed, the refuge workers were finding that senior police officers were not serving trespass orders. The Refuge representative was able to ask the police FST members what the police policy was on serving trespass orders. Thus the FST provided Refuge with access to police who could clarify correct policing processes. Furthermore, the police FST members could also provide support to the Refuge, as the police suggested a method to try, and to come back to them if they had no success. Without a direct contact with people from a range of agencies, it can be difficult to get such information.

The FST model

Dual accountabilities
Under the FST structure members are required to be responsible to the FST and to their parent agency. This adds complexity to the positions of adult advocate, child advocate and CYF representative, as they each have two supervisors; the FST supervisor and a

supervisor from their parent agency. This was not an issue for the police officers whose supervision is entirely within the police.

All the FST members disclosed positive relationships with their parent agencies. However, one FST member identified a problem from having two supervisors, namely getting differing directives about the daily tasks that the member needed to focus on. While there was only one team member to mention the specific problems of dual accountabilities, it seems that being responsible to two entities may have contributed to other difficulties previously discussed, including the FST members' difficulty in understanding their roles in the FST. That is, the FST and the agency may have different ideas about the role of the worker. For example, both the child advocate and the Parentline supervisor both stated that the role of the two advocates in the FST is to advocate for battered women and children, not to represent Parentline. While, the adult advocate and HAIP manager (the adult advocate's parent agency supervisor) both suggested that the adult advocate represents HAIP's perspectives and advocates for battered women. That is, both the child and adult advocates have a different opinion on an aspect of their roles, but each are in agreement with their respective parent agencies' supervisors.

It seems that requiring FST members to be responsible to the FST and to their parent agency may have contributed to some difficulties for the FST. But of greater concern is the potential for future problems to arise if there are differences between the FST and a parent. If this was to happen, the FST member would be stuck between the two. However, the solution to this problem is not to make FST members responsible solely to the FST. Team members need to have a strong base in their parent agency for the FST to continue to function as a genuine collaboration.

Isolation of FST members
Similarly, as the FST model is made up of one or two individuals from each agency, there is a risk that individual members may become isolated from their parent agencies. Isolation can result in members being dominated by the perspectives of other agencies. Members may be unable to adequately represent the perspectives of their parent agency.

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This could result in the Hamilton FST becoming very insular. In fact, no FST members identified feeling isolated from their parent agency, although several of them recognised that isolation was a risk if the FST members lost the connection with their parent agency. Employment relationships and the physical location of members seem to have helped in this regard.

That is, as previously discussed, each FST member is employed by and responsible to their parent agency. If the FST members were employed by the FST, they would be responsible to the state. This could leave the FST members vulnerable to isolation and manipulation, particularly if there are power imbalances between agencies or between individual members. The FST functions by having the different perspectives of each of the agencies. This needs to be maintained for the FST to function as a collaborative. Therefore, the FST members need to continue to be employed by, and responsible to, their parent agencies.

Furthermore, while the FST members frequently spend time working together at the HAIP office, the members primarily work from their parent agency (except for the CYF member, who, as previously discussed, is located at the police station). Although there are communication difficulties in doing this, retaining a physical link with the parent agencies is important for maintaining a strong connection with the agency and reducing the risk of isolation. It also ensures members are in an environment where they can: develop their skills, receive advice, support, supervision, analysis and up-to-date developments in their respective fields. Being located with the parent agency and consulting with them before making policy level decisions (a topic discussed under the findings), both emphasise that the FST members are representing a group, rather than acting simply as individuals. This adds credibility and strength to their arguments, decreases the risk of being dominated by another agency, and helps build genuine interagency collaboration.

Recommendations:
- (k) That the FST members remain located within their parent agencies.
- (l) That the FST members remain responsible to their parent agencies.

Cautions for the reader and limitations of the research

This thesis is predominantly based on process evaluation, with limited evidence of the outcomes of the Hamilton FST. The outcomes of the FST were intended to be measured using three approaches: an archival database analysis of police files, interviews with FST members as experienced experts in their fields, and from a focus group with battered women who have had experience with agencies' responses. The focus group with battered women was intended to provide some insights into the relevance of the FST initiatives and to assess if it was addressing areas that battered women identified as problematic. Using a three-pronged approach was intended to add credibility to any findings.

That there is little evidence of outcomes from the FST in this thesis is not a result of research limitations, but reflective of the FST at the time the evaluation was conducted. The FST project was very new, and also considering the time taken for members to understand the function of the FST and the roles of the FST members, it is understandable that there are only limited outcomes to report on.

There were, however, some limitations with the archival database that was used. The sample of the 2005 files was too small to be able to make accurate comparisons against the 2006 sample. However, this was a finding in itself. The small 2005 sample was, at least in part, a result of poor police record keeping. The 2006 sample contained substantially more family violence files, which raises the possibility that the implementation of the FST may have improved record keeping and improved the ability of police to recognise family violence and code incidents as such. Aside from this finding, because of the small 2005 sample, further comparisons would not be accurate. Nevertheless the archival database is a useful evaluation tool, as it provides an indication of what gaps in police response have been addressed and what gaps still need to be filled. However larger samples need to be used.

Recommendation:
  (m) That future evaluation of the Hamilton FST utilise the archival database method, but take samples from a period greater than one week, to provide more data.

Recommendations for further research

Further evaluation will be needed after the pilot period. By that time, another evaluation could focus more on the outcomes of the FST. Measuring the success of the outcomes needs to be relative to three components: increasing the safety of battered women and their children, increasing the opportunity for battered women to act autonomously away from the batterer, and improving offender accountability. I recommend that future evaluations incorporate the perspectives of battered women, as they provide a valuable insight into what the issues are with each of the agencies' responses. I also recommend using the archival database analysis of police files, although it is necessary to ensure that a larger sample is taken. This method provides a detailed picture of improvements in the police response and where further improvements are needed.

It would also be beneficial for future evaluations to determine the adequacy of the monitoring systems that the FST put in place. For example, a study could look at evaluating the ability of the FST to monitor systems across agencies. It would also be beneficial to investigate whether any of the limitations of the FST model, identified in this evaluation, have created problems within the Hamilton FST, or whether the Hamilton FST has managed to continue to counter the limitations of the model. Therefore future evaluations could essentially be looking at a) the outcomes of the FST as implemented in Hamilton, b) the adequacy of the Hamilton FST monitoring systems, and c) the effect of the FST model limitations on the operation of the FST in Hamilton.

Further research is also needed into the FST model itself. This evaluation has focused on the FST as implemented in Hamilton, but has identified some problems with the FST model. Further investigation is needed to determine what can be done to eliminate those problems.

Recommendation:
   (n) That further evaluation is conducted after the end of the pilot period, with an emphasis on outcomes of the Hamilton FST.

Overall achievements of this thesis

The overwhelming finding of this evaluation was that people were feeling very positive about the Hamilton FST. The FST members are excited to be working on such a project, and they all believe in the benefits of working in an interagency collaboration.

This evaluation has provided some evidence of Hamilton FST outcomes, in particular the improved police responsiveness and attitude. Since the FST has been established there is evidence of an increase in arrests and an increase cases coded as family violence. It is likely that this is a result of improvements in police recording practices and improvements in police recognising family violence and coding it as such.

This evaluation focused primarily on the establishment and processes of the Hamilton FST. In doing so, the evaluation has found some limitations of the FST model. The FST members need to be aware of the model limitations to ensure that they do not become problems for the Hamilton FST in the future. The evaluation has also found that the Hamilton FST is functioning in a genuine collaborative manner. For genuine collaboration to occur, there are a number of important factors that need to be incorporated. A collaborative needs to have extensive discussions to develop a shared set of protocols and policies. It is critical that members in the collaborative are respected for their areas of expertise and that power is equally distributed. This means that the collaborative does not have any one agency leading the group but is a genuine partnership between equals.

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Appendix A: Invitation to Participants

Evaluation of the Hamilton Family Safety Team

Kia Ora,

You are invited to participate in an evaluation of the Hamilton Family Safety Team (FST). The FST is a three-year pilot programme, which employs a multi-disciplinary approach to reduce the high rate of domestic violence in Aotearoa, and to improve the outcomes for the families experiencing domestic violence.

Who is doing the research?

My name is Lisa Gregg, and I will be conducting the research project under the supervision of Dr Neville Robertson and Professor Jane Ritchie. I am a student at the University of Waikato, currently working towards a master of Social Sciences.

What is the project about?

The Hamilton FST has requested this evaluation. It is necessary to determine whether the FST's interagency approach is making a difference to those experiencing domestic violence, and is being effective in reducing the incidence of domestic violence. It is also necessary to identify any areas where improvements can be made, and to help the FST to refine their policies and practices.

The goals of the project are:

- To identify any barriers encountered in establishing the FST model and the factors which have helped to overcome such barriers.
- To assess the strengths and weaknesses of the FST model as implemented in Hamilton.

- To assess the extent to which the implementation of the FST has improved the ability of the Justice System and associated agencies to provide a holistic and wrap around response which:
  - Ensures the safety of women and children victims
  - Enhances the autonomy of women, and
  - Ensures that perpetrators are held accountable for their use of violence.
- To determine the adequacy of the FST structures to deliver an effective systemic response that addresses the needs of battered women and their children.

How will you be involved in the project?

You will be asked to take part in one or two interviews, lasting approximately one and a half hours.

I will be available via phone or email to discuss and issues, questions, or concerns you may have regarding the study. After the interview I may also give you a follow up phone call or email, if further information is needed.

What will the interviews involve?

My aim is to make the interviews as free flowing as possible. I will not be following a prepared script; rather I will have key areas or topics that I wish to cover as the conversation progresses. This will ensure that any areas of interest to you, that are not covered, can be introduced and discussed. The topic areas to be discussed will involve such issues as:

- What do you understand to be the key objectives of the FST?
- What are your roles in relation to the FST?
- What changes have you seen in the response to domestic violence since the FST has been operational?
- How do you see the associated agencies fitting in

with the FST?

- Do any other agencies need to be included or services developed?
- How useful are your FST meetings?
- What are the main challenges you and the FST have faced? And what things have been useful in overcoming these challenges?
- What improvements to the FST would you suggest?

This is not an exhaustive list, rather an idea of the types of things to be discussed.

Right of withdrawal

At any stage in the research, you will have the right to withdraw from participating, and the right to withdraw any information you have previously disclosed. The withdrawal does not have to be accompanied with any reason or explanation.

What will happen to the information?

With your consent I will record the interview to ensure I record the information correctly. I will not be preparing transcripts of the recordings, but will be writing notes both during the interviews and later from the tapes. I will return a summary copy of my notes to you for you to comment on and make any corrections.

This information will then be used in the final report.
The FST will receive a copy of the final report. I will also send you, as a participant, a summary of the final report. Later, we will use the information to publish articles in journals for lawyers, psychologists, social workers, and other domestic violence related practitioners and researchers. The

information you give us will be stored for up to 5 years for the purpose of publishing academic articles.

Anonymity

Care will be taken to protect your identity. Personal information that could identify you will not be used. You will be referred to only by your role. However, it is possible that readers familiar with this work in Hamilton may be able to identify you and/or the FST. Thus, although efforts will be made to protect your identity, complete ananymity can not be garanteed.

Ethical concerns

I am committed to maintain high ethical standards. The Human Research and Ethics Committee of the Psychology department of the University of Waikato have reviewed the study.

Consent

As you have already indicated your willingness to participate, I will simply bring a consent form with me on the day, for you to read and sign.

If you have any further questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisors.

I would appreciate your time and involvement in this study.

Regards,
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Appendix B: Participant's consent form

CONSENT FORM

Research Project: Evaluation of the Hamilton Family Safety Team

Name of researcher: Lisa Gregg

Name of supervisor: Dr Neville Robertson and Professor Jane Ritchie

I have received an information sheet about this project. I have had a chance to ask any questions and discuss my participation with other people. Any questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I allow for the interview to be tape-recorded.

I agree to be referred to by my role, as personally identifying information will not be used. I am aware that, despite care being taken, it is possible that readers familiar with this work in Hamilton may be able to identify me. Thus, although efforts will be made to protect my identity, I am aware that complete anonymity can not be guaranteed.

I agree to participate in this research project and I understand that I may withdraw at any time. If I have any concerns about this project, I may contact the convenor of the Research and Ethic Committee (Dr Robert Isler, phone 838 4466 ext 8401, e-mail r.isler@waikato.ac.nz)

The best way to contact me is by:
(e.g. phone, post, email, through X organization, etc)

…………………………………………………………………………………….
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…………………………………………………………………………………….
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Participants name   ………………………………….

Signature   ………………………………….

Date   ………………………………….

Appendix C: Discussion questions for interviews

Aims of the Evaluation
- To identify any barriers encountered in establishing the FST model and the factors which have helped to overcome such barriers.
- To assess the strengths and weaknesses of the FST model as implemented in Hamilton, including the working relationships between the participating agencies.
- To assess the extent to which the implementation of the FST has improved the ability of the Justice System and associated agencies to provide a holistic and wrap around response which:
  - Ensuring the safety of women and children victims
  - Enhancing the autonomy of women, and
  - Ensuring that perpetrators are held accountable for their use of violence.
- To determine the adequacy of the FST structures to deliver an effective systemic response that addresses the needs of battered women and their children.

FST Members Discussion Questions

Defining and understanding you role with the FST
What is your job title?
    Who are you employed by?
    Where does your salary come from?
    Who do you report to?

Is you job solely an FST role, or do you have other roles as well, e.g. with your parent agency? If so, how do you balance these?

What are your roles in relation to the FST?
    Are your FST roles clearly defined? Do you have a clear understanding of your role?

Did you receive any training for this role?
    What kind of training would you recommend for your role?

There has been extensive discussion about roles and protocols of the FST recently, how useful as this been for you?
        Has it helped to clarify your understanding of your role?
        Has it helped to clarify your understanding of the other FST roles?
        Has it helped to clarify your understanding of the functions of the FST?

Have your views about F.V changed? How?

Relationship between FST role and parent organisation

How did your parent organisation originally become involved with the FST?
    Did your org seek the FST or did the FST seek you? Why?

How does your role as a FST member work in with your parent org?
        Do you feedback to your parent org? How? To who?
        How do they support you in this role?
        Do they understand your role?

Do you feel supported in the FST?
        Do you feel you can adequately represent your parent organisation?
        Do you feel comfortable raising issues within the FST, if you are not satisfied
        with something?
        How would you do this?

Structure of the FST

What do you understand to be the purpose of the FST?

What do you understand to be the key objectives of the FST?

Who are the FST members? And what do you understand to be the roles of each of
the FST members?
        Are there any other roles that you think need to be incorporated into the FST,
        should funding be available? What are they and why?

Does the FST become involved with a case only through the POL400 forms, or are
they involved with cases that come up through other agencies, e.g. refuge?
        What is your opinion about this? Do you view this as a limitation of the FST?
        A possible area for growth? etc

How does the FST fit with the POL400 team?
        What do you understand to be the differences between these two groups/roles?

What meetings does the FST have, and what is the purpose/function of each of these
meetings? (E.g. Daily meeting, Tues & Thurs meeting)
        Who runs/coordinates the FST meetings?
        How useful are each of these FST meetings?
        What are the benefits and problems with each meeting?
        Do you think there is anything missing that is not covered these meetings, but
        should be?

What changes have been made in the FST structure since it was first implemented?
        Why were these changes made?
        Did the change have the effect you were trying to achieve? i.e., did it work?
        What, if any, indirect effects did these changes have?
        How did the FST decide on what needed to be changed, and how it was to be
        changed?

Benefits and problems with each of the changes

Associated agencies

How do you see the associated agencies fitting in with the FST?

Do any other agencies need to be included or services developed?
      What is the process for doing this?
      What checks are in place for new agencies, that they have the same
      understanding about D.V?

A shared understanding of D.V

Does the FST have collective understanding of D.V, and definitions of what
constitutes D.V?
      How was this developed?
      If agencies had different perspectives, how did the FST come up with a shared
      understanding?

Did your org share the same understanding of D.V as the FST?
      Did your org share the same definitions of what constitutes violence, and what
      constitutes a domestic relationship?

Do any of the other orgs in the FST (or associated agencies) not share the same
understanding about D.V or definitions, as the FST?

FST's response to D.V in the community

What changes have you seen in the response to domestic violence since the FST has
been operational?
      Do you think the FST had an effect on this change?

How does the FST:
      Address repeat offenders/victims? Is this measured?
      Monitor/follow up on cases, what were the final outcomes? Please explain
      how the reporting back on cases is organised.

How has the FST improved the ability of the Justice System and associated agencies
to provide a holistic and wrap around response which:
      Ensures the safety of women and children victims?
      Enhances the autonomy of women?
      Ensures that perpetrators are held accountable for their use of violence?

Is there anything that you think the FST should be addressing, that it currently is not?
      What can you do about this? How can you bring up your suggestion?

Group dynamics

How do you communicate with other FST members?

Who/what agency, do you think leads the FST?

How is the FST coordinated?

Do you believe everyone has equal opportunity to have their opinions heard? And have their opinions valued?

Challenges

What are the main challenges you and the FST have faced?
　　　What things have been useful in overcoming these challenges?

What do you think are the benefits of having a coordinated response?

What has been helpful in the development of the FST?

What lessons have you learnt?

What do think are the barriers to effective inter-agency coordination?

What do you think helps to drive effective inter-agency coordination?

What improvements to the FST would you suggest?

Appendix D: Discussion topics for focus group

Introduce myself, explain the project and why their opinions are needed.

Agencies to be discussed: Police, Criminal Court, Family Court, CYF, Parentline and Refuge.
Write chart up on whiteboard and enter in responses, discussing one agency at a time.

Expectations	Helpful	Unhelpful	Barriers	Recommendations	Time differences

Appendix E: Description of FST members' roles

Hamilton FST . (Oct 2006). *Collaborative criminal justice and community response to battered women and their children.* Unpublished paper, Hamilton, author.

The role of the Police Supervisor

- Assists in the provision of a Police service which contributes to the maintenance of a safe, secure and lawful environment for the public by assisting in establishing and maintaining partnership links between the Police and the local community.
- Assists in activities directed at minimising the incidence and effects of family violence crimes and incidents through: crime control strategies, detecting, apprehending and prosecuting suspects, providing support for victims of crime, and activities which minimise the fear of crime among citizens.
- Provides direct supervision for Police members undertaking investigations, prosecutions and case management duties relating to family violence situations.

- Monitors family violence investigations, high risk or repeat family violence situations, prosecutions and effectiveness of other case resolution processes.
- To provide feedback to Police and other organisations or groups about opportunities to effect systemic change.
- Conducts or co-ordinates specific family violence death reviews, as required.
- Implements best practice relating to the Family Safety Team pilot and evaluation.
- Facilitates contractual arrangements for victim and child advocate positions.

- Overviews the assessment of all family violence cases (including repeat and high risk cases) within the Police Area/District.
- Ensures the correct collection, assembly and presentation of information to facilitate the successful intervention and resolution of family violence situations.
- Ensures the accurate and timely completion of reports and administrative documentation in accordance with instructions, regulations and orders.
- Liaises with agencies that provide assistance or support during the course of family violence enquiries.
- Represents and where necessary, co-ordinates inter-agency and non-government family safety team meetings as agreed by partner agencies.
- Ensures Police staff skill levels are constantly appraised and training is undertaken where appropriate.
- Ensures supervision of Police staff in accordance with HR practices, Police policy, procedural and budgetary constraints. Monitors and reviews the assessment, case management and monitoring techniques.

- Assists in the development of National family safety team policy and practice
- Promotes and facilitates a collaborative working environment within the Family Safety Team.
- Provides leadership and direction for members of the Family Safety Team and acts as a role model.
- Develops and maintains a high performing multi-disciplinary team.
- Establishes and/or negotiates goals and standards for the team.
- Ensures strong and effective channels of communication amongst colleagues and external agencies
- Monitors the performances of members of the Family Safety Team, ensuring appropriate career development and training opportunities are available.
- Contributes to a safe and friendly work environment by ensuring EEO and Health and Safety policy and procedures are known and adhered to at all times.

- Ensures the principles of *Te Rito* and the Family Safety Team objectives are incorporated into the Family Safety Team practice and policies.
- Ensures the key concepts of Maori Responsiveness, community orientated policing, partnerships and customer service are adhered to relevant projects and initiatives.
- Acts as a source of expert information and advice in their area of specialisation for internal and external requests for information or enquiries.

- Establishes and maintains effective relationships with agency managers and other stakeholders.

The Role of the FST Adult Advocate employed by HAIP
- Develop tracking and monitoring systems for victims of violence referred to and from the family safety team;
- Monitor and critically analyse systems and services that respond to victims of family violence against the three principles of victim safety, offender accountability and effective collaboration between agencies responding to family violence;
- Work with government and non-government agencies to address barriers and gaps identified;
- Advocate for services needed for victims of violence;
- Advocate for training of victim advocates;
- Develop strategies and plans to engage and inform the POL400 network, and the community about impacts of violence on victims.

The role of the FST Child Advocate employed by Parentline
To be an active member of a multi-disciplinary response team, relating to family violence, with emphasis on more effective interagency co-ordination and collaboration, whilst ensuring the safety of the child or young person is paramount.

- Gathering and collating information about the CYP's situation and needs;
  -
- Identifying risks to a CYP in family violence cases that come to the Family Safety Team;
- Planning for the safety of children by assessing immediate and intermediate needs of children;
- Building sound working collaborative relationships and referral processes between the Family Safety Team and family agencies, community groups, providers of children and family violence programmes and other services; and developing tracking and monitoring systems these referrals;
- Monitoring and critically analysing systems and services that respond to family violence, identify gaps in service provision to children, or issues which impact on child safety and wellbeing;
- Working with government and non-government agencies to address barriers and gaps in service provision to children;
- Identifying and advocating for services needed for CYP;

Advocating for training of child advocates; and developing strategies and plans to engage and inform the Family Safety Team network, and the community about child abuse issues and its effects on child(ren) and children's needs

The role of the Police Investigator

Contributes to the prevention, detection and resolution of family violence-related crime and incidents, and in particular targeting high risk situations, repeat victimisation and repeat offending as a member of the Family Safety Team.

Provides specialist family violence investigation capability as part of a multi-disciplinary team through:

- Review and monitor systems, processes and practices relating to family violence responses
- Identify opportunities for improvements through systemic change
- Monitoring current and potential family violence trends analysing intelligence and taking opportunities to make crime reductions and enhance community safety.
- Targeting high-risk offenders and serious repeat family violence situations.
- Providing specialist investigative support to other Police investigators [and prosecutors] as required
- Maintaining a thorough knowledge of contemporary family violence investigation practices and evidential requirements relating to the prosecution of offenders.
- Providing briefings and specialist family violence training to police staff and community agencies groups as required.

- Provides advice direction, supervision and "on the job" training to District/Area staff. Acts as a positive role model.

- Interacts with a wide range of clients including complainants, informants, suspects, witnesses, community agencies, members of the public and other police personnel.

- Establishes and maintains effective relationships stakeholders

Refuge Representative

The refuge representative primarily acts as a liaison between the refuge workers of HRSS and Te Whakaruruhau, and the FST. But the representative also acts as a battered women's advocate. In this role the refuge representative:

- Removes barriers to women's autonomy from violence. Advocacy within the criminal justice system
- Works alongside women to address social, emotional, physical and economic needs they may have.
- Approaches the reality that women are often bound to dangerous situations through lack of resources and support available when they need assistance to leave.
- Critiques the way communities respond to battered women and children

The role of the FST CYF Social Worker

To be an active member of a multi-disciplinary response team relating to family violence, with emphasis on more effective interagency coordination and collaboration, whilst ensuring the safety of the child or young person (CYP) is paramount.

- Gathering and collating information about the CYP's situation and needs;
- Identifying risks to a CYP in family violence cases that come to the FST;
- Building agreed referral processes from the Family Safety Team to services and agencies relevant to children;
- Building sound working collaborative relationships between the Family Safety Team and family agencies, community groups, providers of children and family violence programmes and other services;
- Developing tracking and monitoring systems for CYP cases referred by the Family Safety Team;
- Assisting Family Safety Team to identify services needed for CYP;
- Developing strategies and plans to engage and inform the Family Safety Team, and Family Safety Team network, and the community about child abuse issues and its effects on child(ren) and children's needs.
- Continuously improving performance in social work practice around family violence;
- Providing leadership and guidance to other social workers around family violence;
- To be the expert in statutory child protection within the multi-disciplinary team;

- Raising awareness and increasing knowledge in the community and with the other members in the FST in relation to child abuse and neglect and Departmental policies and procedures
- To be available for workers for consultation about specific cases
- Keep the supervisor up to date with cases, particularly high risk cases
- Undertake case reviews as required
- Work with SDU supervisor/practice manager and team leader to notify them of emerging trends
- Work with the Family Safety Team National Advisor and project evaluators to provide data, and contribute to information regarding policy and practice issues for CYF contributing to Family Safety teams, prior to these teams being expanded to other areas.
- To be a role model for social work staff in the office in relation to best practice casework and administrative requirements in relation to family violence.
- To be able to assist in setting up the operations of the FST and the development of procedures and policies/practices.
- To provide training at a local or national level as required.

Appendix F: Information collected in archival database

Information on 111 call

File number
Date and time call was made
What the call was coded as
Date and time of attendance
Summary of what happened

Information about the incident

File number
Date
Victim's name
Victim's date of birth
Offender's name
Offender's date of birth
Whether a POL400 form was completed and filed
Whether a POL400b from was completed
Number of children present
Whether there was a protection order recorded
Whether there was a breach of the protection order
What action was taken; for example, arrest, warning, reported, insufficient evidence
Whether Crisisline was called
When Crisisline was called
Additional comments

Information on charges

File number
Number of charges laid
Name of charge
Whether this was the original charge or an added charge
Date
Initial plea
Changed of plea
Date of outcome
What the outcome was; for example, withdrawn, convicted, dismissed
What the sentence was
Additional comments

Appendix G: Letter from Police Family Violence Coordinator

Waikato University Pol 400 research project

This report relates to a research project evaluating the recorded domestic incidents over a one week period in March of 2005 and 2006.

Most of the files for the 2006 week were able to be located relatively easily with the exception of a small number that remain active either as prosecution or enquiry files being held by individual police members. A number of the files from 2005 however were not located as files in current system.

I believe the explanation for this may lie in the previous system for capturing data between the CARD report manager and the LES, Law Enforcement System (previous known as the Wanganui computer system). CARD is the resource dispatch system used by the police Comms Centres to deploy units to jobs.

A CARD event would generate a temporary file number for certain types of incident and offence codes. This file would remain valid for a 30 day period. When the attending officer submitted the paper work (pol400, for domestic related incidents) the event number should have been matched with the temporary file number and a permanent file generated.

However if the CARD event number was not recorded on the pol 400 a new file number would be generated without a link to the temporary file numbers. It would appear that the temporary file numbers remained in the Business Objects database which provided the file numbers for this evaluation.

I believe the list provided for the 2005 files contained a number of temporary file numbers which in reality never existed as a hard copy of a file. Due to the time delay this would now be extremely difficult and time consuming to track.

LES has been upgraded to a more sophisticated system NIA (National Intelligence Application). NIA became fully operational in June of 2005. NIA files are linked to the CARD event number and a temporary file is no longer generated.

The Hamilton Family Safety Team began in April 2005 and since this time there has been consistent monitoring of the event logs to ensure accurate recording of the incidents attended by frontline staff.

I hope this provides some clarity as to the absence of some of the 2005 files

FV Coordinator
Hamilton Family Safety Team
27/09/06