



Emergence

Counseling and Education to Stop Domestic Violence

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E-Mail Newsletter

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Previous newsletter articles have discussed aspects of working with abusers and survivors/victims.

This month, Jon Tiplady, a retired police officer, explores what happens when an abuser is a part of the same law enforcement system which plays an important part in holding abusers accountable for their actions.



Domestic Violence & Law Enforcement Related Links

[Restraining Order Violator Study](#)

This PDF link has been posted in prior newsletters, but includes research relevant to Jon Tiplady's article.

When the Batterer Carries a Badge

by Jon Tiplady, Lieutenant, Danvers Police Department (ret.)

In 1829, Sir Robert Peel of the London Metropolitan Police Department issued a set of principals for police officers. One of them stated "The ability of the police to perform their duties is dependent upon public approval of police existence, actions, behavior and the ability of the police to secure and maintain public respect."

One of the big challenges in building trust in a community is to maintain the integrity of a police department when someone from the organization is involved in a domestic violence incident. We have been doing training throughout the state in handling cases where a member of a particular department or an officer from an outside jurisdiction commits an act of domestic violence.



The best way to address this is not to *hire* someone with a past history of violence or protective orders. A thorough background check on potential officers is the most

[**The National Coalition
Against Domestic
Violence: State Coalitions**](#)

At Emerge, when we get phone calls from other states, we will refer to specific state resources when available. If you are looking for resources specific to your state, this link can be very useful.

[**"She hit me, too"
Identifying the Primary
Aggressor: A Prosecutor's
Perspective**](#)

This article, in PDF format, is based on law enforcement in the state of California. It has a number of points that can be important to keep in mind whenever the question of 'primary aggressor' comes up.

[**Protecting Victims of
Domestic Violence: A Law
Enforcement Officer's
Guide to Enforcing Orders
of Protection Nationwide**](#)

This is an online resource guide provided by the [Violence Against Women](#) Office of the Department of Justice.

[**Dealing With Domestic
Violence in Law
Enforcement Relationships**](#)

This article, by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, further describes the problem of abusers who are employed as law enforcement officers.

important aspect in keeping abusers out of policing. Many departments will spend up to 40 hours researching an applicant.

As has been said many times "past incidents of violence are the greatest predictor of future violence." Officers also have to be advised throughout their training and assignments that domestic violence will not be tolerated by the organization.

Because police officers are trained to maintain control of situations, there needs to be a special emphasis on the safety and protection of a victim. Many victims are hesitant to report someone from law enforcement in fear of retaliation from the abuser and their fellow officers.

In order to counter these fears, departments are now addressing the issues with family meetings for employees. When an officer graduates from the academy, family members are invited to a meeting where domestic violence and early intervention policies are discussed. Family member are provided with a single point of contact in the department for victims to call in confidence.

Also discussed at these meetings are the myths that the courts will do nothing because they know the officer, that the victim will be responsible for the loss of a job and that there will be retaliation by other department members

Another component of this proactive model is to inform families about resources outside the department for assistance in dealing with an abusive partner. Partners are given a comprehensive list of community services and contact information. The Boston Police Department has been a frontrunner in this strategy.

A policy also has to be put into place so that a victim can request help from the department without making a formal report. Family members are also educated about the limits of confidentiality that can be maintained when seeking help.

Training is also being done now to have departments select a risk/danger tool to gauge potential for further violence by an accused officer. Departments are training officers to do risk assessment and investigate strangulation incidents.

Many victims will state that they were "choked" by their partner. Strangulation is now being looked at as a precursor to murder and is at the top of the warning scale. Many police officers have been trained in the now illegal "choke hold" that was used for many years with combative suspects.

Police departments are also being urged to work with another jurisdiction when an officer from another department commits domestic violence in their city. There has to be a clear policy for notifying the on-duty commander from another department when an incident occurs. This is accomplished by creating departmental memorandum of understandings (MOU's) and making sure that there is an officer of rank at any incident involving a person from law enforcement.

Departments now require an officer to immediately report to an on-duty superior officer if they are served an order of protection. This is very important because both departmental and personal weapons have to be turned over and secured. It also may result in a change of duty status for the officer. Some small departments do not have administrative positions for an officer who cannot carry a weapon.

When the abuser is a high ranking officer or the chief of police, it is recommended that a person in local government who has direct control over the chief be notified immediately. In addition, the local district attorney's office should be notified of the incident.

Finally, training is being done about how to respond to incidents where both parties are police officers. This presents a very unique and complex problem when both parties are in the same department. There is a need to determine who the dominant aggressor is and who the true victim is. Although the

**Danger Assessment and
Safety Planning Training**

Emerge conducts trainings throughout the United States for law enforcement agencies. These trainings are only open to recipients of **Grants To Encourage Arrest (GTEA)**

standard domestic violence response is required, supervisors and other responding officers must be very thorough in their investigation and decision making.

Further information and a national policy and concept paper are available from the International Association of Chiefs of Police at www.theiacp.org.

Emerge: Counseling and Education to Stop Domestic Violence
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