

**AG-DVFRST**  
**Case Review Report**  
Ely, Nevada  
12.8.15 to 12.9.15

**Summary of Review:**

On December 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> 2015 the Attorney General’s Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team (AG-DVFRST) met in Ely, Nevada to conduct a case review. The purpose of the review was to gather information about a local fatality related to domestic violence and understand the circumstances leading up to the fatality to identify any “red flags” or opportunities for intervention. In addition to this case-specific review, the team also worked to generate discussion about the local community and/or state response to domestic violence, prevention and intervention efforts. The multidisciplinary team then works to identify opportunities and make recommendations for prevention of future deaths due to domestic violence.

While the focus of the team was on one specific case review, after meeting with community members the team also discussed general community concerns related to domestic violence.

Below we have compiled a list of identified opportunities for improvement in the community as well as resources and suggested strategies for implementation.

**Opportunities Identified by the Review**

**Issue #1:** *Throughout the review the team continued to discuss the availability of mental health/counseling services in the community. Ely is a geographically isolated community with limited access to mental health professionals. Despite efforts to ensure access through a state rural mental health clinic, residents may be hesitant to access those services due to the inability to remain anonymous. Mental health treatment and services still carry a stigma, and in a small community people may not want their friends and neighbors to know they are seeking treatment or counseling. Another potential concern was that residents of a small community would not want to share personal details of their lives with a counselor that they may also know in another capacity in the community. Finally, because of limited access to mental health services in the small community, people may seek assistance from faith leaders when they need counseling. These faith leaders may not be adequately prepared to provide counseling services or know where to refer people to for additional services.*

**Proposed Response:** The Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health (DPBH) operates rural mental health clinics and recognizes the limited ability for clients to remain anonymous because people could see them coming in and out of their offices. In response, DPBH is looking into several options to improve access to mental health services in rural communities, including Ely. Some of the possible improvements include:

- Offer in-home counseling services through Skype or other online video messaging software.
- Have a therapist from another community regularly commute to Ely to provide services
- Staff a 24/7 “warm line” for people in crisis to call and speak to a therapist
- Create a private location at a primary care facility or the local hospital where an individual can log in and visit a tele-therapist if they do not have internet access in their home.
- Provide faith leaders and local chaplains with additional training in mental health first aid, suicide prevention training, and a list of available \_\_\_\_\_ in the community and crisis lines.

**Issue #2:** *During conversations with local community members about available resources for victims of domestic violence, the team noted only limited available resources. Specifically the team identified the following:*

- There is no domestic violence shelter available in town. If a victim needs someplace to stay in order to exit the abusive relationship, their closest option is to go to Elko, about 180 miles away. Transitional housing (i.e. a hotel room for a night) may be a better option for victims but this is also limited in the area.
- There is no animal shelter in town. Victims with pets must therefore rely on local groups that may agree to foster pets.
- There are no support groups for children and victims of domestic violence.
- There are no local non-profit organizations which provide victim services. The existing victim services staff are affiliated with law enforcement, which may cause a barrier to victim participation when they know their information can be shared with law enforcement.

**Proposed Response:** Community leaders and other stakeholders could convene a meeting to discuss the issues related to domestic violence in the community. The members of this group could discuss the necessity of shelter services versus transitional housing as well as how to increase/improve resources for victims.

This meeting would need to identify the current need for these services, current available funding sources, as well as additional resources necessary to support a non-profit organization that could provide these services to the community.

## **Proposed Action Plan**

The team held a follow up meeting on January 11, 2016 to review and discuss these findings as well as to develop a plan of action to move forward with continuing discussions around implementing recommendations generated during the review. At that meeting, team members from Ely noted that they had already begun having preliminary conversations with local stakeholders about the findings and how they could be implemented in the community. Moving forward, these local team members will continue to set individual meetings and discuss the team review findings and try to develop a concrete plan for addressing the issues identified during the review. The larger team will reconvene at a later date to hear an update from the local outreach and offer additional resources and expertise to help move forward.

Through this iterative process, the team will identify those recommendations that resonate most with the community and utilize the expertise and resources on the statewide team to help implement those recommendations and improve the community response to domestic violence in Ely and White Pine County.