

**HALIFAX POLICE VICTIM SERVICES' MOBILE RESPONSE:
AN EVALUATION**

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FORWARD

This modest evaluation of the mobile unit of Halifax Regional Police's Victim Services was carried out over the period from 1999 to 2001. The generous participation of all respondents is gratefully acknowledged. The author wishes to acknowledge as well the fine work of the two field researchers, Janet Graham and Tracey Pye.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
INTRODUCTION	1
VICTIMS AND THE POLICE SERVICE	1
THE HRPS VICTIM SERVICES' INITIATIVE	4
METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS	7
THE MOBILE SERVICE VOLUNTEERS	10
PHASE ONE: 1999	11
PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR ROLE	14
THE VALUE ADDED BY HAVING THE MOBILE RESPONSE	15
... Integration	15
The Strategic Value for Victim Services	17
Value-Added for Victims and For the Mobile Unit Vol	18
<u>SOME ISSUES AND SUGGESTIONS</u>	19
PHASE TWO: 2001	19
THE ROLE AND MANDATE OF THE VOLUNTEER	20
MANDATES, LIMITS AND BOUNDARIES	24
POLICE-VOLUNTEER INTERACTION & INTEGRATION	27
THE "VALUE-ADDED" OF THE MOBILE SERVICE	29
<u>POLICE OFFICERS' PERSPECTIVES</u>	34
PHASE ONE: 1999	34
PHASE TWO: 2001	37

CONTACT WITH VICTIM SERVICES	38
MANDATE OF THE MOBILE SERVICE	41
THE VALUE ADDED OF THE MOBILE SERVICE	44
STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE MOBILE UNIT	46
CONCERNS, RISKS, AND ISSUES	48
THE POLICE SUBCULTURE	50
SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	52
THE THREE REPEAT INTERVIEWEES	53
VICTIMS' VIEWPOINTS	54
<u>STATISTICAL DATA</u>	57
HRPS AUDIT	57
MOBILE SERVICE ATTENDANCE	57
<u>IMPLICATIONS</u>	60
SOME SUGGESTIONS	61

INTRODUCTION

VICTIMS AND THE POLICE SERVICE

Over the past two decades there has been a profound change in the mandated police response to victims. Urban police departments had traditionally emphasized fast response to calls for service, and keeping the victims regularly informed on the progress of police investigations. These were the two fundamental dimensions of police response to victims and the bases upon which their service to victims was evaluated. The profound change has been manifested in modifications of the police acts in provinces throughout Canada, as well as in directives to police from provincial Departments of Justice or Solicitor General, defining police service to victims as a formal core function of policing and requiring that police departments of a certain size establish a victim-oriented program and unit. Of course, movements in the larger society such as the women's and the victims' movements, and movements in policing such as community-based policing, have been important causal factors in effecting the profound change in formal mandate and actual practice. Most recently the federal government's "victims of crime" legislation has reinforced all of these developments. The upshot of all this change has been higher expectations for the police service vis-à-vis victims and more demanding evaluation criteria for assessing how well a police service is relating to victims within its jurisdiction.

Of course, responding well to the needs of victims is not the exclusive responsibility of police. Programs at the crown and court levels, as well as community services (e.g., shelters) are of great significance. And, to a significant extent, evaluating the police service's relationship to victims increasingly focuses on how effectively police victim services are coordinated with the services of these other agencies. Still, the police have a front-line, immediate salience to victimization that sets them apart; as a publication of the United States Department of Justice states, "programs run by the law enforcement agency, however, have the unique ability to

respond to the victim shortly after the 911 call, day or night, seven days a week" (Promising Practices In The Treatment Of Crime Victims, 1997). Apart from meeting its responsibilities, a police service with an effective, sensitive service to victims may also realize considerable other advantages. These benefits could include: more cooperation from victims regarding the ongoing investigations and court actions; release of the officers and investigators for other calls/work, confident that the victim is being cared for and informed; and improved community relations.

A wide variety of victim service programs and organizational structures have emerged in police services throughout North America in response to the changes and developments noted above. Crisis intervention programs, especially ones focused on domestic violence (in police jargon, "domestics") have been especially common. However, from the evaluation literature it is not clear which kinds have met with the greatest success in effectively and efficiently responding to the new service challenges. The range of police crisis intervention programs for domestics has been from dedicated police units, to strictly civilian volunteer units. And in-between these, there have been a variety of police-social worker/crisis intervention expert collaborations. One recent American study reported that "few police departments currently rely on dedicated police family crisis intervention teams as the primary method of responding to domestic violence calls" (Buzawa, Eve and Buzawa, Carl, Domestic Violence: The Criminal Justice Response. 1996). Certainly, the evidence is overwhelming that dedicated police units have lost favour, but it is ambiguous about the value of alternative ways for police services to mount victim services / crises intervention programs using mostly volunteers or civilian experts. Some experts in the field, for example, consider that evaluation has generated scepticism about having civilian volunteers respond to domestics (Personal communication, 2000). On the other hand, some studies have contended that "best practices" for police services in responding to victims have included those where telephone and mobile responses have been provided by civilian volunteers under the umbrella and oversight of the police service (see for example U.S. Department of Justice, Law Enforcement's Promising Practices In The Treatment Of Crime Victims. Washington: Office of Victims of Crime, Department of Justice, 1997).

In Canada there are a large number of police services which have crisis intervention units, or provide victim services on a "call-out" basis. Typically their focus gives priority to domestics,

but extends to crises in general. Apparently, some utilize credentialized crisis professionals, but most depend upon trained volunteers who are often people with considerable experience in dealing with crises. This practice might be defined as one form of a mobile response in that police officers call-out the personnel to attend the victim. The Halifax and Vancouver police services are quite special, as they have mounted a mobile service which is truly mobile, as the personnel are generally in the field and to that extent are called-in rather than called-out. Surprisingly, little evaluative information is available on how effective and efficient these various systems (not to mention the telephone response approach) are for responding to victims.

The United States Department of Justice report cited above advanced four objectives as central for a police victim services program, namely: provide short-term support for the victims (i.e., show that the system cares); provide appropriate referrals for long-term solutions; provide victims with information regarding how the criminal justice system will operate and what options are available to the victim; and be a resource for the department's police personnel. These objectives could be met presumably with either a telephone call-back or a mobile response program. How does a mobile response add value to the less risky telephone call-back program? One argument would be that the mobile response usually occurs at the time of victimization, so it has the advantages or value-added associated with crisis intervention. In the case of responding to victims in domestics, the timing of the assistance is generally deemed to be quite important. As one practitioner commented,

It is good for the volunteers to be at the scene of the crisis, because the victims are more likely to be open to change at that time - the longer it takes to contact the victims, the less open they become [to using referrals and changing their situation].

There is some evidence suggesting that victims who have been subjected to repeated abuse benefit most when victim services workers attend the scene. Presumably, this is because they relate well to the comforting empathy they receive, and/or because the advice and referrals they receive are more salient to their problems (London Ontario Police Family Consultants). Another crucial advantage of the mobile service is based on the fact that many victims, perhaps the ones with the greatest need, cannot be reached by a telephone-based service. Other ways in which the

mobile response adds value in serving victims, as compared to the telephone call-back system, are through the greater integration of victim services mobile personnel with the patrol officer workers. It is through this integration and teamwork that the impact of victim services on the overall police response to victims can be significantly enhanced.

It is less clear what the advantages or value-added would be for mobile response services such as those employed by Halifax and Vancouver (i.e., where typically the personnel are in the field awaiting a call-in), as compared to the more conventional call-out service. The former approach, which includes wearing the departmental logo and so on, could possibly provide greater integration with the patrol officers who are also in the field, as well as greater work satisfaction for Victim Services personnel. There may also be more risks in this approach, as the activity of the victim services personnel is less directed and channelled by the police officers.

THE HRP VICTIM SERVICES' INITIATIVE

Since the fall of 1996 Victim Services at HRP has been fully operational. Until initiating the mobile response discussed in this report, the service was essentially a telephone call-back where trained volunteers provided assistance (largely a sense of caring and information about the police process for the case and about other helpful services available to the victim). The volunteers were supervised by the sole full-time staff member co-ordinating the program. Officers were requested, when responding to a domestic or related incident, to provide victims with a Victim Services card and to urge them to contact Victim Services for assistance. Also, Victim Services personnel regularly scanned police reports from previous shifts, locating appropriate reports (e.g., domestics) and, where possible, phoning the victims to offer assistance. In 1998 Victim Services, in collaboration with the organization representing all its volunteers, launched the mobile response program to realize the value-added possibilities of this kind of service that are cited above. It wanted to reach the approximately 25% of victims of domestics who could not be contacted by telephone. It also wanted to make up for the shortfall in local crisis intervention cited by Nova Scotia Department of Justice in its report on family violence. In addition, the initiative sought to more effectively assist victims of repeated abuse. Other goals

appear to have been to improve the quality of service for victims; to effect better integration of Victim Services within HRP; to provide desirable work opportunities for the volunteers; to improve the referral process and provide more salient options to victims; and, through feedback, to positively impact on the telephone call-back program. These objectives structured the foci of this evaluation, namely: (1) the value-added of the mobile response initiative for victims, police officers, the volunteers and the Victim Services as a unit within HRP; (2) the perceptions of the initiative held by its various stakeholders; (3) the evolution of the program (e.g., mandate, activities); and (4) the shortfalls and problems encountered.

The HRP Victim Services mobile service has evolved since it began in July 1998. At the time of its inception a single unmarked car (usually the "court car"), without the mobile digital terminal found in patrol cars, was used for at least one and at most two nights a week. The mobile services was on-call on Friday and Saturday evenings, and typically the volunteers were available to respond for approximately eight hours (in contrast to the Vancouver police mobile response program which is more of a 24/7 service). There have always been two volunteers in the car and these persons were equipped with police radios and in ready contact with HRP dispatch. Until June 1999, when this evaluation began, according to Victim Services officials there had been an average of four or five "interventions" or "call-ins" by patrol officers per month. Six of the fourteen Victim Services volunteers during that period were engaged in the mobile service. Victim Services staff acknowledged that the monthly level of "call-ins" was well below the number of eligible cases of family violence occurring during the evenings when the mobile service was available. There was some anticipation that with the hiring of a full-time staff person who was specifically oriented to crisis intervention with funding from the federal Crime prevention program, the service might expand to include three evenings a week. While that never happened, the full-time Victim Service Outreach Worker (later re-named the Early Intervention Outreach Worker) has responded since September 1999, when possible and usually in her own car, to call-ins from officers during the day. She became permanent staff member in fiscal 2000/2001. In her role at Victim Services, she attends victims when called out; develops and delivers training modules for the volunteers; assists in the preparation of policies and procedures (and related manuals) for the mobile service; and liaises with local agencies, providing services especially to victims of domestic violence.

At the time that this evaluation was undertaken, the mobile service volunteers had received a modest supplement (approximately one day) to their general Victim Services training to prepare them for their new role. They were guided in their work by an unwritten protocol, while the Victim Services office was developing a more formal manual based largely on that used in the Vancouver service. The volunteers were also encouraged to attend fall-in with the patrol officers. In the field they wore a special jacket and a protective vest. The mobile response volunteers kept notebooks to record details of incidents to which they were called by patrol officers. They wrote up reports of all such incidents, dictated these Victim Services reports to the appropriate police file, and wrote a longer more personal narrative called a p-text which was filed at Victim Services. Like the notebooks, the p-text could be accessed upon request by police officers investigating the original incident.

METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This evaluation, while quite modest in scope, extended over a two year period with two distinct phases roughly eighteen months apart, namely the late summer of 1999 and the spring/summer of 2001. In both periods there were interviews with Victim Services staff, the volunteers and police officers. A limited amount of secondary data was also examined.

Twenty-three interviews were carried out with HRP police officers for this evaluation. Most of these were telephone interviews, but a handful were done in the first phase in a ride-along format. The officers were selected in the first instance (Phase One) by contacting the staff sergeants and sergeants at fall-in and requesting contacts. Not surprisingly, the majority of the officers interviewed were young male constables, but there were a few females, and a few male officers with more than ten years experience at HRP. In Phase Two an effort was made to contact all officers interviewed a year and a half earlier, and to supplement those persons with officers suggested by Victim Services. Only three of the original officer interviewees could be re-interviewed so the bulk of the Phase Two police interviewees have been officers nominated by Victim Services. Clearly, overall it is a small, unrepresentative sample (young male constables and perhaps skewed in favour of officers from the Dartmouth station and favourable to Victim Services), but adequate for this modest evaluation. In addition, two senior supervisory officers were interviewed and the departmental audit of Victim Services was examined.

The enclosed interview guide indicates the types of issues that were discussed with the officers. It can be readily appreciated that here the focus is on the experiences and perspectives of the officers vis-à-vis the mobile service. A more thorough study would look into the patterns of activity and actual behaviour of the officers vis-à-vis Victim Services and the mobile unit, including their interaction with the volunteers at the scene. It also would compare the characteristics of officers who utilized Victim Services and called-in the mobile service with those who did not, when responding to similar incidents. Certainly the volunteers, and frequently even the victims, suggested that certain types of officers were more supportive of the Victim Services thrusts. It would be interesting to determine the validity of these assertions (e.g. variation by age and gender of the officers).

Interviews were carried out with Victim Services staff and with virtually all the volunteers engaged in the mobile service. In both 1999 and 2001 a researcher went out as a ride-along with mobile unit. There were, in total, eight ride-alongs, and in three cases the mobile unit was called-in to the scene by the patrol officers. The schedule of the ride-along appeared to account for this gap. The ride-alongs ending at midnight produced but one call-in; whereas after midnight the potential and actual requests for the mobile unit were noticeably greater. All the mobile volunteers listed were contacted by the evaluation team and were interviewed during the course of the ride-along. In addition there were two interviews, over the two phases, that were carried out on the telephone. Typically the volunteers were young women in their mid-to-late twenties. In addition to these interviews with the mobile unit volunteers, there were several information sessions with the Victim Services director and outreach worker, and a few informal discussions with small groups of volunteers. Apart from the interviews, some statistics on the mobile service over the two year period were obtained from Victim Services and the report of the outreach worker was perused.

The biggest shortfall was in contacting victims who have used the Victim Services mobile service; only ten were interviewed, all in Phase Two. In some ways this shortfall was predictable. The experience of the Victim Services telephone contact program had indicated that many victims were very hard to reach subsequent to their reported victimization. Indeed, that experience had underlined the need for a mobile unit, since for many victims help had to come at the time of victimization as no contact could be readily maintained with them. Also, the experiences of the outreach worker, who attempted to put together a list of victims agreeable to be interviewed by the evaluation, indicated the problem, as only some twenty names could be advanced. The evaluation team had great difficulty securing interviews with the nominated victims due to disconnected phones, no answer, no phone number, and in a few instances of refusals. Clearly, the victim sample is small and likely unrepresentative, with probably some selection bias in favour of victims well-disposed to Victim Services. All told, of the twenty-three victims on the list, ten were interviewed, three refused and ten were unavailable for one reason or another.

As the enclosed interview guide indicates, the focus in the interviews was on victims' perspective of the Victim Services services provided. A more thorough study would identify the victims attended by the mobile service by age, marital status, race/ethnicity, socio-economic status and previously reported victimization, and would assess how representative this grouping of attended victims is of the population targeted by Victim Services policy. Such data are not readily available either through Victim Services or HRP files so a special research project would have to be undertaken.

In the write-up of the interview material the emphasis has been on capturing the experiences and standpoints of the different stakeholders. It may well be that some of their statements are misleading or even incorrect against some factual criterion. However, it is their standpoint, "warts and all", and one of the evaluation goals has been to faithfully transmit their views. It should also be noted that in the many quotations cited in the text, the goal of the evaluation has been to attempt to be as faithful as possible to the comments uttered, but there was no tape recording so there was a dependence on recall, and sometimes there is a modest reconstruction of conversations. We are confident about the substantive accuracy of the quotations.

THE MOBILE SERVICE VOLUNTEERS

HRP' Victim Services mobile service is provided by a group of about a dozen volunteers and one fulltime, credentialized counsellor labelled the Early Intervention Outreach Worker. As a grouping it is essentially female, young, well-educated, trained, committed and enthusiastic. To become a volunteer with Victim Services, an applicant has to undergo an extensive screening which includes a polygraph exam. All volunteers receive an orientation from Victim Services staff and are encouraged to do some ride-alongs with patrol officers. To become a member of the mobile service, a volunteer has to have two to three months experience performing in-office duties, primarily contacting victims by telephone as soon as possible after their victimization is reported by patrol officers. Also, there is an additional approximately one day training provided to all mobile service volunteers by the Victim Services staff. In the evening mobile service there are always two volunteers, paired for compatibility and to ensure that at least one has extensive experience in the field. Over the two years that the Victim Services mobile service has been researched, more and more training has been made available to volunteers. This training has aimed more at breadth than depth, familiarizing the volunteers with death notification, suicide intervention, critical incidents and cross-cultural considerations. Over that same period there has been more visibility of the Victim Services unit, due to the mobile service volunteers increasingly attending fall-in on those evenings when they were activated. The mobile unit volunteers also inform dispatch when they come on duty and have police radios for immediate two-way contact with dispatch (i.e., the "comm-techs").

The objectives of the mobile response initiative of Victim Services clearly emphasized providing better service to victims of domestic violence and related abuse. As noted, this meant, specifically, reaching the 25% of the victims of domestic violence who could not be contacted via the telephone, providing more timely crisis intervention, developing more effective referrals to local agencies, and appreciating better the circumstances of the victimization through on-site intervention. It was also considered, by both Victim Services staff and by police officers, that the mobile service would be an inducement for volunteers joining and remaining involved with

Victim Services. Responding to the scene, appreciating the circumstances of abuse and violence, and directly responding to victims, could be expected to provide much greater interest and satisfaction than simply relying on telephone conversations. Being called-in by the officers and being involved with them in delivering a more comprehensive service to victims could be expected to generate a greater sense of solidarity and integration for Victim Services personnel within the HRP.

PHASE ONE: 1999

WORKING

Five persons delivering the mobile service for Victim Services HRP were interviewed and three ride-alongs with the mobile unit occurred during Phase One. During these ride-alongs there was only one instance where the mobile unit was called-in by patrol officers; ironically, too, this was a case where a male had phoned in a complaint against his spouse. This circumstance of few call-ins apparently was accounted for by the timing of the ride-alongs (i.e., before midnight) and, in the view of the volunteers, by a decline in police requests during the period in question.

There was some ambiguity expressed by the mobile unit volunteers concerning whether they should go to the scene of a domestic on their own initiative, and also if the patrol police officers exercised a veto on whether the volunteers could attend the victim. The more common view, and one reported to be increasingly the norm, was "whether or not we are called in is up to the police". Still, two volunteers reported that a formal police request was not always a prerequisite, noting

Sometimes we stumble upon domestic situations and we are not going to turn our backs on them. However we do not try to force our way into domestic scenes because they are very unstable situations.

The mobile volunteers did indicate, however, that they could exercise more initiative with respect to follow-up visits, as is evident in the following quotations:

We pop in and see the victim from earlier domestic calls... For safety sake we let the police know where we are... Most of the time the police will drive by to make sure that we are okay... We will not drop in if it is a very bad area or if we are unsure of the circumstances, because it is too dangerous. If the accused is out of jail, it is likely that he will be at the residence and this could be a very dangerous situation to drop in on.

Sometimes we will revisit victims to check, to make sure they are locking their doors and that they are looking to see who is there before they answer the door.

The volunteers emphasized that they exercised caution and kept the dispatchers informed as to their whereabouts. Some indicated that they would only do follow-up drop-ins if requested, while others reported that they might try to contact victims on-site if they could not reach them by phone follow-up. Generally, the office policy was interpreted as allowing the volunteers to arrange a meeting with the victim and some volunteers reported that they had been specifically requested by the Victim Services office to "drop in on a previous victim".

Prior to going out in the car, the mobile unit volunteers typically did follow-up phone-calls and other preparatory work in the Victim Services' office. When they were in the field, they reportedly were sometimes called in to crisis situations other than domestics. Several volunteers reported that they had responded to scenes involving armed robberies, car accidents and suicide attempts. A Victim Services staff member indicated that this expanding mandate was occurring partly at the request of police officers and partly at the initiative of the volunteers themselves:

I know that [some of] the volunteers have changed their MDT message from 'available to respond to domestics' to 'available to respond to domestics or any other crimes'. I also know that the police have given feedback, stating that they would like to have the Victim Services mobile unit available for other crimes. However I am not sure which came first, the volunteers changing the message or the police's feedback.

Not surprisingly, when in the field, the mobile unit volunteers tended to envisage themselves as eyes and ears for the police service, akin to the conventional 'citizen on patrol' program common in many policing jurisdictions. As one volunteer described this work,

We drive around and listen to the calls coming in. If we hear a 1049 (domestic) we stick around that area in case we are needed... We keep our eyes open for any trouble... We try to help the police out as much as we can. It always good to have two extra sets of eyes out there.

It appears that frequently the mobile unit volunteers drive to locations to which patrol has been called for one reason or another, and simply observe the action, thereby learning more about the mechanics of policing. As one volunteer said, "We watch but don't get in the way. This is a good way to see how the police do their job."

The mobile response respondents were of mixed minds about the adequacy of their training, the sufficiency of their operating protocols, and the safety implications of their work. The Victim Services office considered training, protocols and safety to be adequate but also recognized that the training had been modest and that the protocols [in police jargon, the standard operating procedures] at this stage were largely informal and in the process of being more formalized. For example, detailed safety procedures were being put into place and the practices of other police services such as Vancouver were being carefully examined. The volunteers were confident in their own competence and security and, while recognizing the value of and indeed calling for more explicit protocols, suggested that common sense was crucial and the diversity of the situations to which they were called, made it necessary to "play it by ear". As one volunteer commented,

[Upon arrival] we are first debriefed by the officers. They dictate what has happened. We then feel out the situation and decide what tactics to use. Sometimes we have to change tactics midstream because domestics are very unpredictable.

The mobile response personnel recognized possible safety threats such as the return to scene of the abuser and, surprisingly, the driving skills of some of their colleagues. Typically, they reported some concern about the training and safety factors only with respect to a few of the other volunteers, not themselves. One volunteer commented,

I think the term danger needs to be defined. I don't feel in danger

because I can take care of myself - but not all of the volunteers can, which is why it is important that they are trained.

All these respondents acknowledged that they had learned some basic safety strategies (e.g., be aware of exits, if you do not feel safe leave the scene) and that "the officers look out for us. They would never put us in danger".

PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR ROLE

The central thrust of the mobile unit in the eyes of the volunteers was deemed to be helping the victims in the immediate situation. As one volunteer put it,

Helping the victim means being there to listen, give advice, make referrals and drive them anywhere they need to go.

A senior Victim Services person observed that the main features of the service provided to the victims would be immediate face-to-face contact, emotional support and especially just to listen. She stressed that training is important to ensure that the intervention is not too blunt and directive or that the mobile unit responder does not assume a therapist role. A volunteer elaborated on this aspect of the role as follows:

We need to have empathy so that the victim can see, and we cannot be judgmental. The most important thing is for us to be good listeners. We provide information to victims and allow them to make their own decisions. It is not up to us to tell them what to do. Not all volunteers can do this, so they should not be on the mobile shift.

There was not enough contact for the evaluation to assess the interaction patterns of volunteers and victims.

It is clear, too, that another dimension of the role of the mobile response unit focuses on assisting the patrol officers indirectly, by releasing the officer to resume responding to 911 calls, and directly at the scene and in advancing the formal policing duties. One volunteer, for example,

commented:

The mobile unit can be very helpful to the police. Not only can we be called in to help the victim, but in some cases the officers call us in to try and get a statement from the victim. Also when a victim goes back on her statement, the police can use our notes to back them up.

Certainly the volunteers, and indeed the entire Victim Services staff, would posit that the mobile unit program assists officers and compliments their service. As one person reported, "It enhances the police response, while freeing them to respond to other calls - spending just one hour at the scene rather than three or four". At the same time, some Victim Services people expressed concern (backed by a few examples) that, in striving to help the police, the volunteers might overstep and jeopardize themselves by being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

THE VALUE ADDED BY HAVING THE MOBILE RESPONSE

Integration

Clearly, one of the significant impacts of the mobile service could be expected to be the better integration of Victim Services and its personnel in the larger HRP milieu. The mobile unit personnel attend fall-in and are on the scene with the officers. There are many more opportunities for Victim Service people and police officers to get to know one another and to share a sense of teamwork. A Victim Services staffer explained the importance of this interaction as follows:

It is very important to get to know the officers, so they become comfortable with us, which eventually will lead to their trusting us. I think that part of my role here is to improve the relations between the officers and the Victim Services workers, which I have been doing. It is good to be social with the officers ...grab a coffee ...which allows me to chat with them about the Victim Services program. I always tell the officers that if they have any suggestions about the program, to let us know because their input is very important.

One volunteer discussed the informal interactions that frequently occur as follows:

We go and talk to the officers during their quiet time. This gives us a chance to get to know them. I usually ask them about their opinions towards Victim Services; some say it is a waste of time and that is okay because everyone is entitled to their opinion.

The volunteers considered that as a result of the mobile service there has been increased respect for Victim Services and its workers among the rank-and-file police officers. As one volunteer said,

Even though we do not interact with the officers that much during the mobile shift, our relationship has definitely improved as Victim Services has become more integrated into the police department.

For some volunteers, the fact that the mobile workers willingly assist in a wide spectrum of police activities (e.g., watching a stolen vehicle until police backup arrives) and going well beyond helping victims of domestics, underlines their teamwork with the police and facilitates the integration. Certainly all the volunteers acknowledged the need for developing a good rapport with field police and suggested that while significant gains have been achieved, there is still some distance to go in order to achieve a fully satisfactory relationship. These views are evident in the following remarks of two volunteers:

We need to know where the police are coming from or we will run into walls. Victim Services workers are below the police. So they [Victim Service workers] cannot walk on the police's toes or they will not be called to the scene. We need to let them [officers] know that we are not a threat. I think the police officers trust us now but our relationship can always improve.

Many officers think we are against all of the police, but this is not the case. We realize that there is more than one side to a story and we are not here to make judgments. The problem that some officers have is that they think the Victim Service workers want to be more than they are - that they want to be cops. I admit that some volunteers are like this. I have actually been with volunteers with that attitude. They want to increase their role - think they are more important than they are. I think it has to do with their maturity level ...We are not here to be cops (even though I would like to be); we are here to be Victim Services workers.

The Strategic Value for Victim Services

The volunteers all agreed that the mobile service enhances the value of Victim Services for victims and for the HRP' service delivery. While all considered the telephone call-back system to have value and to be an important part of the Victim Services' response to victimization, there was little doubt that the mobile response adds new dimensions to the service - dimensions that are especially appropriate in domestics where the timing of the intervention can be so crucial. One volunteer commented on the significance of the face-to-face contact as follows,

The victim can tell you anything on the phone ...the phone is so impersonal. It's good to see the victim's facial expressions and body language because it tells you much more.

But beyond these perhaps obvious enhancements, the volunteers called attention to the strategic value of the mobile program for Victim Services as a unit. Two volunteers commented (serially),

We may not respond to many calls, but even if we reach just one or two more victims it's worth it.

The mobile service does not allow us to reach all the victims we would like to, but it is a more helpful approach and I think it is really good to have. Even if we reach a couple of victims through this service, it is worth it.

Without explicitly using the concept, the volunteers emphasized that the mobile initiative has strategic value beyond the issue of numbers, since it was a higher quality response to victimization, entailed more teamwork with police, yielded more job satisfaction to the Victim Services volunteers and could impact positively on the quality of the telephone call-back system. In addition it was considered cost effective and indeed as shoring up HRP resources; this latter point was stated by one volunteer as follows:

The mobile service is not much of an expense; in fact, it is really not an expense at all. The car we use is an unused car that the police department already has and the staff are basically volunteers. If we were to look at the number of hours the volunteers put in, we would see that this service saved approximately \$40,000 - approximately 5000 volunteer hours.

Value-added for Victims and for the Mobile Unit Volunteers

The mobile unit volunteers had no doubt that the service was an enhancement of Victim Services for the victims. They were quite aware of the theory of timely intervention in domestic violence, and also considered that victims appreciate the immediate support they received in all respects (e.g., attention, sympathy, referrals, drive to a safe haven). As one volunteer put it,

Definitely [the mobile is seen as] a more helpful approach by domestic violence victims. We are not there to judge anyone; we are there to help. The victims can see this when we are at the scene and they can look us in the eyes. ...Victims appreciate the calls we make, but I think they appreciate us being at the scene even more ...[and then they are] more likely too to take advice on referrals.

Several volunteers emphasized how the mobile service energized them (e.g., "the adrenaline flows"), heightened their impact and gave them a greater satisfaction in their voluntary effort. For example, one volunteer observed that "in person, the victims see us as human beings, making it easier to turn them around". Another one commented:

[It] gives me more satisfaction ... I can see the appreciation on their faces ...because I get the sense they are actually listening to our advice. I think that the mobile service allows us to develop more rapport with the victims... It feels good to leave an impression.

In fact, some volunteers appeared to be making some effort to discount a little their sense of greater efficacy by also emphasizing that "We do not think we are anything more than we are; we do not think we are saviours".

SOME ISSUES AND SUGGESTIONS

The volunteers emphasized that more training would be welcomed and especially they seemed eagerly awaiting the procedures manual that the Victim Services office was developing. A number of them, as well as the office staff, emphasized the need to continually work at realizing a more professional approach to their work and to the policing community. There were changes or enhancement proceeding apace in all these respects during this Phase One. The volunteers also discussed the value of having an MDT in their car since in their words, "otherwise you are out of the loop". They also suggested the value of self-defense training for themselves and, especially, the need for a credentialized full-time co-ordinator/staff person for the mobile program.

Some issues emerged during this Phase One that merited attention. There did appear to be a tendency for role aggrandizement, wherein a volunteer might see their role more as therapist than as supporting the victim in laying out some options and providing accessible referral contacts. And the same tendency appeared occasionally in an over-stepping of the "eyes and ears" function, to that of almost an active investigator, checking out suspicious happenings or people. Another issue centred around the advisability of, and protocol for, making follow-up visits or even initial drop-ins to victims without prior police request or without security arrangements in place. Overall, these issues did not involve commonplace occurrences, but they seem to be almost inevitable boundary-testing activity that one would expect among competent, committed people who want to maximize their assistance to victims and to police officers.

PHASE TWO: 2001

In Phase Two virtually all mobile service volunteers were interviewed over several hours in the field. There were five ride-alongs with pairs of volunteers. There were also two informal discussions involving several volunteers and one telephone interview. The evaluation team was impressed with the quality of the volunteers, their commitment to victims and to the policing effort at HRP, and the confidence they exhibited with respect to the quality of their service. There was a clear sense of pride in their role and their actual work. They typically also expressed a

sense of safety in carrying out their duties. They contended that there was considerable "value-added" associated with the mobile service for all parties - Victim Services, the victims, the police and themselves. Given the quality and personal features of these volunteers, it is not surprising that they were ambitious and generally advocated a larger mandate for Victim Services and the mobile service, and more training and better equipment (e.g., better vehicles, MDTs in their car) for themselves.

THE ROLE AND MANDATE OF THE MOBILE SERVICE VOLUNTEER

Generally the volunteers defined their role along two axis, helping the victims of abuse and assisting the police officers in a variety of ways. One volunteer summed up the role as follows: "My role is to provide information and emotional support to victims and to help the police." A number of volunteers were quite explicit about this dual responsibility and connected it to how they handle information they receive from victims. One volunteer commented,

When I talk with a victim, I make it clear that what they tell me is not confidential ... some things [the victim has said] I will only tell to the police if they ask me ...[but] we feel that we are working as much for the police as for the women.

In elaborating on their role vis-à-vis the victim, the volunteers emphasized the importance of listening. One volunteer described several of her recent "cases" and concluded, "Sometimes all it takes is for there to be someone outside of the situation to take the time to come in and listen to everyone". Another volunteer expressed this approach in words other volunteers commonly used:

I've found that if you prepare yourself too much, you get lost if you go away from the script. So it's better not to do that. Listening is very important. The questions etc will automatically come out. Without being too preachy, you just know why you are there and try to help.

In the few instances where the evaluation team observed the volunteers' interaction with victims, this focus on listening to the victims intently and empathetically, with good eye-contact, was pronounced. Of course, the volunteers do more than just listen. A favourite expression used

by the volunteers was "we provide information about options and resources and give opportunities to be asked for help". All the volunteers, undoubtedly reflecting their training, emphasized "We are not judgmental... we don't force ourselves or our answers on people". At the same time the volunteers expressed strongly the view that abused women were often "in denial" and needed some "encouragement" to appreciate the value of both immediate (e.g., going to a safe place) and long-term (e.g., using the referrals suggested) strategies. An important check on their becoming too directive in most incidents would probably be the strong commitment they expressed to empowering the victims by not themselves aggressively taking control of the situation. As one volunteer put it, "They [victims] don't need someone coming in and taking over their lives, like other people do". Another volunteer discussed this general volunteer perspective in some depth:

We don't decide for the victim. The victim has often been manipulated. Manipulators try to dominate. It's a power thing. They take choices away from the victim. We try to give them back their choices ...and empower them.

Interestingly, this same volunteer later in the evening showed by her actions that this perspective was more than just a statement of the "official morality" for herself and likely for the other volunteers too. Assisting a battered woman, she strongly felt that the latter should go to a safer place, but she did not aggressively push this option to the victim and the victim opted to stay where she was.

In addition to listening, offering options and encouraging the victims to strategize and decide, the volunteers generally pass out brochures, and referral information, especially, it was reported about Family Services, Nova Scotia Department of Justice Victims Services (valuable for understanding court processes) and Bryony House Outreach (servicing battered women), but also on financial management, Gamblers Anonymous and so on. One volunteer discussed this function as follows:

It is so important that we continue to take every opportunity to tell people about other agencies that could help them... We get a lot of alcohol and drug issues ...women and children... It's complicated and messy. But there is a lot of hope and help out there... We can't make people take the help, we can only tell them where to get it.

Frequently, too, they drive the victim to a safe haven, an activity that often provides a significant sense of accomplishment for the volunteers (i.e., rescuing the victim).

Overall, the evaluation team was impressed with how effective the volunteers were in establishing rapport with the victims. Perhaps, as they and some police officers have contended, this success has to do both with their selection and training, and with their role identity, namely that they are not authoritative, investigative police nor people intimate with the affairs of the victims. Some volunteers noted too that the respect shown for them by police officers in the presence of victims also facilitates their obtaining rapport with the victims.

As noted, almost all volunteers emphasized that their role entailed assisting the police officers. This was seen to be effected in a variety of ways. One crucial way is to listen to and comfort the victims, releasing the officers to attend to other 911 calls for assistance. In this manner, presumably, the mobile service contributes to the HRP mandate of serving victims as well as "catching crooks", and enables the department to do so effectively and efficiently. The volunteers also may assist the police officers with respect to the investigative and reporting aspects of their work by creating a milieu where victims may be more likely to follow through on charges and perhaps even add salient details for the investigation. One volunteer noted:

It was a new experience for me [being present at the scene when the officer took the statement]. The officer asked me to be present to make it easier for the victim to give her statement. I was able to calm the victim down and reassure her enough [for her] to give the statement.

Certainly all the volunteers, subsequent to their attending victims, wrote up reports and transmitted information to the officers responding to the incident. One respondent noted that "we send DACTS and enter a p-text (equivalent to the Victim Services narrative report) for the police". Another volunteer explained:

We add to the DACT (report of the police officer on the incident) and send [the information] to the officers' M-Box (police service in-house e-mail) to let them know what has been done... We keep it brief and to the point... We know that DACTS can be used in court so it's important not to reveal anything that would disadvantage the victims or have the case thrown out. We only enter stuff that is pertinent to the case.

Some volunteers considered that they brought to the policing effort something that the patrol officers did not have to the same extent, whether it be a more sensitive appreciation of domestic violence and other forms of victimization, or special skills and training to deal with victimization. In that sense they saw their role as quite different, though supportive of and complementary to the role of the police. One practical manifestation of this complementarity was noted above with respect to assisting police in obtaining victim compliance and perhaps a more detailed statement of the incident from the victim.

A number of volunteers also indicated that while on mobile duty they constitute additional and informed eyes and ears for the police officers. The respondents frequently told the evaluators (and observation attests to the validity of the claim) of incidents where, upon hearing a radio dispatch about a crime or a suspect, they drove to the area in question and acted as "citizens on patrol". For example, one volunteer commented:

By all means, we swing by [an area which has been mentioned over the radio by dispatch]. But we stay out of the way for safety reasons and we let dispatch know where we are. We are an extra four eyes and that can help, but we have to know our place. We don't try to be police officers. We are here to help them, not do their job.

The primary responsibilities on the policing side of the police officer-mobile volunteer equation were deemed by the volunteers to be: to call-in the mobile service where appropriate, to be respectful of them, and to have secured the scene. Generally the volunteers considered that these responsibilities were being met. No one, for example, complained about disrespect at the scene nor about safety; one senior volunteer summed up the consensus view on security in her remarks:

I feel safe generally speaking and I've never run into any incident where I felt unsafe. We are always with partners and have been trained to not lose sight of them ...not to stand in doorways and have an exit in sight and clear. Generally there is always contact with police and they've secured the area before we get there. That's the police officers' job. So I don't know why there would be any danger or risk to us or to the victims.

MANDATES, LIMITS AND BOUNDARIES OF THE MOBILE SERVICE

There are guidelines or protocols that partially determine whether the mobile service volunteers will be "called-in" (or in the case of the full-time Outreach Worker, "called-out") by the officers attending the 911 calls for services. The volunteers noted some of these norms such as, "we do not go to assaults if they are not domestic"; "if we are not called, we do not go to a scene"; "if the victim is inebriated then we aren't called"; "we are supposed to be finished by 2 a.m."; and "we usually do not get called if both parties are charged". All volunteers were quick to cite the four major call types that Victim Services is particularly focused upon, namely 1049, 1043, 1047 and 1091, dealing with assaults, threats and disputes. Of course, such norms are guidelines and there is still much room for manoeuvre. Typically, the volunteers would seem to prefer a generous definition of domestic (i.e., to include virtually all household or familial strife), and the specification of "going to the scene" does not appear to prevent volunteers from gravitating to the area in question in anticipation of a "call-in". Nor does the 2 a.m. end of shift for curfew always cause the dedicated volunteers to truncate their assistance, as sometimes the volunteers have remained with clients hours past that curfew. And based on observations in the field, it seems clear that the mobile service volunteers will respond to virtually any request for assistance from police officers to attend victims or people in need. In some ways, it would appear that police discretion, as much as call type, determines what the mobile service will be called-in for.

Generally, the mobile service respondents emphasized that their mandate was not and certainly should not be limited to intimate partner/spousal assault, and that their training and skills have equipped them to respond effectively to a wide variety of victimization incidents and to interventions across a variety of crisis situations. One volunteer noted "We don't just do domestic disputes ...we really need to educate about that". Another respondent commented:

They [those who set the Victim Services mandate] really need to expand the definition of abuse. It is not just domestic, intimate partner stuff. It can be a relative or a boss at work. It can affect your whole life! Victimization can affect people so differently.

Certainly it was common for the volunteers to include in “domestic violence” elder abuse and parent-child abuse. Several volunteers pointed to the need to take more into consideration the plight of male victims and victims in same-sex relationships. One volunteer summed up this widely-held viewpoint in the following words:

People don't usually think of domestic abuse for these [same sex relations], but they do happen. We need to understand these cases better. For example, males choose not to call in, for many reasons. It may have to do with how they are perceived by society. So they [also] might not want to admit to being assaulted by a woman. There may be stigma coming from the police officers. It could be a male thing.

There seems to have been a clear trend over the two year period of this research for the volunteers and the mobile service to move towards a crisis intervention service. Indeed, during evaluation, many of the actual cases to which the mobile service responded, and others which the volunteers discussed at length, featured crises more than crimes (e.g., an out-of-province youth robbed and beaten, the spouse of an attempted suicide, hospital watch with a victim, helping a young girl suddenly without familial support).

In any role and under almost any mandate there are activities and practices that bring into focus the limits and boundaries of the protocols or norms. There were several issues raised by volunteers or evident in their activities that generated questions concerning the boundaries or limits of their role/mandates. One concerned follow-up visits. There were divergent views on how extensive this practice was and what was appropriate procedure in undertaking follow-ups. One senior volunteer commented that,

We make follow-up visits to victims but we always call before we go... We don't do this very often. If we feel there is a need for someone to follow-up we would [usually] leave a note in the office to call back by telephone.

Another senior volunteer commented that it used to be common to re-visit victims; however, the volunteers would never just drop-in but would call first to determine if it was convenient and wanted. The volunteer added, "I would call them at work maybe. I certainly wouldn't go to her

home as a private citizen. I keep my work with victims very professional." Follow-ups without being called-in by officers who have secured the scene may raise concerns about safety for either or both the victim and the volunteer. It was not clear what protocols guided such actions, though the practice certainly did not seem to be commonplace.

Norms regarding limits and boundaries may become matters for attention. This is also the case with respect to the actions of mobile service volunteers in their "citizen-on-patrol" activity where, while waiting to be called-in, they were on the look-out for suspicious people/actions or gravitated to areas where offenses were reported by dispatch's comm-techs. In carrying out these "eyes and ears" activities, the volunteers may cruise the areas in question and occasionally edge towards a more active involvement in the matter (e.g., tracking a stolen vehicle). It has not been unheard of either that volunteers, aware of a victim's real concerns for safety (e.g., having peace bond on their partners), might cruise the victim's neighbourhood looking out for the abuser. There is nothing especially inappropriate about such behaviour by the volunteers - indeed, it is reasonable that committed persons who want to assist the police effort would try to meaningfully occupy themselves at all times. Moreover, the volunteers' frequently expressed the corrective mantra, as it were, namely "We're not cops and we know our limits" - but the practice does focus attention on boundaries and protocols or norms for this kind of activity.

Two other areas where issues relating to limits and boundaries emerged were the volunteers showing up at domestics and in counselling victims. There does seem to be a practice among some volunteers of driving to the area of the reported "domestic" and hovering about waiting for the possible call-in from the responding patrol officers. While the protocol of waiting for the call-in to enter the residence seems rigorously held to, the hovering is more idiosyncratic. Some volunteers readily reported that "we hover around the area ...if we've seen [sic] a 1049"; while others commented that "we would never just show up on a scene. If we did, that would be stepping on their [police] area and they would get annoyed with us." Concerning counselling, the volunteers all appreciated that they were not licensed counsellors, but several acknowledged the pressure to act like one sometimes in the circumstances. As one volunteer commented:

It's frustrating to hear victims say, 'it's all just fine', 'it's been blown out of proportion' when you know that it's not! We have to get across that we think they are being abused ...that it isn't acceptable and there are things that can be done about it. Otherwise, people just dance around the issue, often making excuses for their abusers and blaming themselves. ...We know we are not a counsellor but it's human nature. You want to fix it.

POLICE-VOLUNTEER INTERACTION AND INTEGRATION IN HRP

Virtually all the volunteers considered that the mobile service has raised the standing of Victim Services, and it has been increasingly accepted as a valued and indeed integral part of the HRP policing effort. The volunteers shared the view that Victim Services is strongly supported by HRP top managers and that, among the field officers, misunderstandings are being ironed-out and trust increasingly achieved. The mobile service reportedly has been invaluable in this evolutionary process. As one volunteer observed, "over an eight hour shift you get to know people. It's an opportunity to explain to officers what Victim Services does." Another volunteer noted as evidence of this progress, "If you look at Victim Services files, they are getting thicker and there are more referrals." Other indicators of growing integration were identified. For example, one volunteer observed that, "The police have really come around. They even tell us why they haven't called us to a scene and give us the reasons... Things have really changed." Another senior volunteer reported that "My experience with fall-ins has been really positive lately. They not only acknowledge us, they ask us questions or for advice. I find this experience very rewarding and [its]getting to be more often than not." One long-serving volunteer explained the evolution as follows:

Many of the officers were staunch critics at first, but are slowly becoming more open. Most officers are positive about us, but there are still some who think we are trying to do their job. They have to find out that we're not. And we're not women wanting just to meet and date a cop. We have been finding that police have been asking our advice more and even asking if we want to have coffee with them. These connections last and they lead to others' understanding what we are

about ...in the end we will probably get more calls.

Another volunteer reported:

Over the [several] years that I have been here there has been a big change in how officers feel about us... Most officers are converting. Each time they call us out to a call, and the more familiar they are with us, the more they understand that we know what we are doing and that we can help! The old way of thinking was that it wouldn't do any good to call us and they would just be going back to the same place again and again. Now there are domestic violence workshops and the officers are taught about it during their training. So things have really improved.

There was much discussion among the mobile volunteers concerning the kinds of officers most willing to collaborate with the mobile service. Male officers reportedly called in the service most often, but then male officers still comprise at least 80% of the patrol officers at HRP so that would be expected. Still, there was a tendency to define male officers as more willing to acknowledge the value of the mobile service, perhaps because the victim and the mobile volunteers are usually female. There was also a widespread perception among the volunteers that the young, better-educated officers were especially "open to using Victim Services and to our approach". One volunteer commented:

The younger, newer officers are really in tune with the domestic violence issue. But most officers are realizing that we can sort of take things off of their hands and release them to go to another call. Even if it's just taking someone to a shelter - we can do that. It's a lot of little things that we can do to be helpful. In the end it saves them [police officers] time and effort.

While celebrating progress, it was common for the volunteers to caution that "there is still a lot more that we can improve on here". One senior volunteer noted:

The police still see us as 'civilians' [her emphasis]. It is important that the police get to know us... to trust us... that's a big word... A lot of officers think we are man-haters. They joke about it. They ask us, 'You are not one of those feminists are you?' Some of the older officers are from the era where there was little idea of victims' needs... I hear all the time that they are frustrated with 'domestics', because they don't seem to get resolved. They say, 'she'll be back with him tomorrow... We'll get another call from them.' - That's what I hear from them [the police].

THE "VALUE-ADDED" OF THE MOBILE SERVICE

The value-added of the mobile service for the victims of abuse rests primarily on the premise that providing immediate on-site service enables the volunteers to provide needed short-term comfort and support; to better tailor the referrals to the victim's situation and so possibly contribute to long-run solutions for victims; and to facilitate victim-police service collaboration throughout the ensuing criminal justice process. The volunteers reported achievements in all these respects. One volunteer observed regarding the mobile service-victim contact:

Victims are more receptive to us and more willing to use the referrals we make if we are right there with them. There's nothing like the one-to-one. It's very important to get there the same day. On the phone you can help, but you can't read their expressions or see how they live. It makes a real difference. You get a much better idea of how to help them.

Another volunteer who also thought the mobile service was "way more personal and effective" than the telephone service, elaborated as follows:

Victims talk more and seem to open up more when we are actually there with them. It's easy to hang up on a telephone. If you are distraught you aren't going to spend time on the phone. When we come to their homes, it's much better. A lot of times they will tell you they didn't want to talk to a police officer. When we say who we are and that we are volunteers, they think 'Hey, wait a minute, I'm not alone and these people can help me.' When I'm on the scene, I feel I can do a much better job [than over the telephone]. It's interesting because when you see someone's body language and expressions, it tells you a lot.

The fact that the mobile service usually attends the victim at the time of victimization was also frequently noted in discussions of its "value-added". For example, one volunteer remarked: "We are right in there - that night - when the incident happens. Studies have shown that this is much more effective." The mobile service volunteers typically displayed familiarity with the literature on wife battering and the processes of victim denial and victims succumbing to a

definition of situation that their abuse was a one-time thing. The volunteers noted too the general findings regarding the cycles of wife battering where the victim, under a lot of different

pressures, cedes to the apparent remorse of her abuser. Accordingly, several volunteers remarked on the importance of being there at the time of victimization, not five days later when the accommodation process may be well in train. As one volunteer aptly put it,

We get them before they get back into the whole honeymoon stage again. The cycle of violence is short and it keeps coming back.

What is the "value-added" for Victim Services volunteers of participating in the mobile service? It was found in earlier A.I.C. research (An Evaluation Of Halifax Regional Police's Victim Services Program, 1998), that volunteers derived significant inherent job satisfaction from the telephone assistance they were able to render to victims of domestic abuse. The volunteers interviewed in this project also reported such feelings. There seems to be no doubt that the mobile service has increased the work satisfaction and commitment of the Victim Services volunteers. Much of this enhancement, as was evident in the cases they discussed, appears to be associated with their being able to help people in difficult situations through comforting and problem-solving. For example, one volunteer remarked:

You find a person in one situation that is very difficult and depressing for them and you can sometimes take them to a place where they can see that there is a way out. That is a really good feeling. When that happens, it is all worthwhile.

The volunteers unanimously reported the mobile service provided greater opportunities for satisfaction and sense of accomplishment. One volunteer expressed this viewpoint as follows:

When you help someone it is the best feeling. Victim Services office work can be discouraging - because you call them and often they aren't home. Or if they are in... but they don't want to talk, they just say 'everything's fine' when you know it's not. If you get just one good call, where you can help the victims it makes it worth while, but it takes a lot of calling to get that one [good call]. I couldn't do just office work. It's

more fun if you get to meet the officers and the victims. You feel like it's more real. There is more you can accomplish and it affects you more.

While sometimes qualifying their enthusiasm with protestations of the limits of their role, most volunteers talked at length about the powerful immediacy and impact of assistance when rendered at the crucial time on site, and also of the profound intimacy of the intervention. One pair of mobile service volunteers expressed this in the following words:

You're like an angel sent to earth. You take people from a horrendous place to another place. In doing so you give them hope. That's what I like. It's not depressing at all ...and it's optimistic and full of hope... There's no more connected that you can be or more entrenched in peoples' lives than in a domestic. HOW CAN YOU GET ANY CLOSER THAN THAT [their emphasis]?

Another volunteer reported:

When I do the mobile unit I find that something we might say or do can effect the rest of someone's life. Sometimes a tiny little thing can make a big difference... It's never boring and it's not a job. With me, I've done it so long that it's a passion for me.

Apart from impacting on intrinsic job satisfaction, the mobile service has significant value-added with respect to "external" satisfaction, such as perceived status within HRP and respect from the police officers. Clearly -and appropriately- the volunteers identify the mobile service as more integral to the policing service than the telephone call-back. They attend fall-in, are out in the field, communicate with officers about incidents etc. All this reportedly has led to more respect from the field officers, a significant consideration - both because the volunteers generally see their work as support for the field officers and appreciate acknowledgement of their contribution, and also because respect from the officers facilitates the interaction the volunteers have with the victims. In both ways, more respect leads to the perception and reality of effective job performance on the part of the volunteers. Additionally, the volunteers discussed the instrumental value of the mobile service for themselves, namely that it has improved their human capital and job prospects. A handful of the volunteers specifically indicated they were seeking employment in the police/justice field. They and others pointed to the valuable training and skills (i.e., human capital) they have garnered through this work. For example, one volunteer noted the orientation she had received through Victim Services in suicide intervention, death

notification and cultural awareness. She commented that, "...[in the job in which I am employed during the day] the skills that I have learned through Victims Services came in very handy." Another volunteer commented that "this [mobile service work] is a 'foot in the door' for almost anything you want."

The mobile service volunteers did not elaborate much on the sources of any intrinsic or extrinsic job dissatisfaction. A few veteran volunteers did refer to the frustration associated with victim denial of abuse and repeated abuse impervious to problem-solving. However, for the most part the volunteers' references to job dissatisfaction focused around extrinsic considerations such as being ignored at fall-in and having low entitlement to HRP resources. For example, there was frequent complaint about the car available to the mobile service, the lack of an MDT in the car which limited the HRP information available to them, and the vests provided (often deemed to be ill-fitting, slash but not bullet-proof etc).

The mobile service volunteers were modestly divided concerning the quality of their training. Some said it was excellent and a few considered it to be poor. All volunteers reportedly wanted more training, recognizing its intrinsic value and perhaps realizing too that their standing in HRP may be proportional to the perceived level of their expertise in dealing with victims and incidents of abuse. Some volunteers saw a need for more training and refresher programs with respect to "domestics", but more frequently they referred to handling general crisis situations and traumatic episodes. These issues were not pursued in depth by the evaluation, but it did appear that at least some volunteers expressed a need to discuss their experiences more in a feed-back type format. One volunteer expressed this general position as follows:

We've been getting more times when we are called to sit with someone ...things are changing and I don't always feel prepared. We have only been getting about two training sessions a year. Maybe once a month would be about right... We've been getting a lot of parent-kid domestics lately. We don't have enough training for these. ...I would like a group team-building session. We only get together as a group maybe once or twice a year.

Overall, it can be reported that in both phases the evaluation team found volunteers who were, typically, competent, committed to Victim Services and HRP, and enthusiastic about their work. In both phases, but more so in Phase Two, there was strong consensus that the mobile service was indeed a value-added initiative in virtually all respects. The major concerns of Phase One, namely role aggrandizement and "risky follow-up visiting" were less obvious in Phase Two, suggesting that what was termed inevitable boundary-testing activity had been resolved. In Phase Two there was more evidence of integration with the patrol police service, more crisis intervention activity supplementing the continuing priority of responding to domestics, and much more confidence on the part of the volunteers in their work and in their sense of contributing to the HRP policing effort.

POLICE OFFICERS' PERSPECTIVES

PHASE ONE: 1999

At this point in time, the summer and fall of 1999, the mobile service was still a new initiative in Victim Services and was active, with volunteers, two nights a week (i.e., Friday and Saturday). A full-time Victim Services staff member was available throughout the week to respond to daytime requests from officers for the mobile service. It was mandated to respond in cases of domestic or family violence once called to the scene by the officers taking the call/complaint. There was some ambiguity and some ambivalence among the officers interviewed as to whether all domestic calls required and could benefit from the presence of the mobile service volunteers. Officers generally were quite firm in the view that whether or not the mobile service intervention happens is subject to their [the officers'] discretion after assessing the situation and perhaps consulting with the victim.

Interviewed in the fall of 1999, ten officers, mostly male constables with under ten years experience in policing, were in agreement that the mobile service of Victims Services was a valuable complement to the policing effort, that it should be expanded to be able to respond on other evenings and perhaps to other circumstances than domestic violence, and that while the service (and Victim Services more generally) was still somewhat apart from everyday policing activity, the mobile service had led to more integration and acceptance from the standpoint of front-line officers.

Most officers had had no direct experience with the mobile service but reported that the "field police" subculture defined it in positive terms. One female officer with five years experience on the job, commented, "No mobile service has ever attended with me [but] from what I heard about the service, it and Victim Services in general is great". She added, in explanation, that "The police do not have time to give the victim support so it is good to have workers there specifically for that reason. They make the victims feel better." Another female officer, having nine years experience, also referred to the positive definition of the mobile service

among field officers, adding "I haven't seen or heard of any problems yet". In her view the mobile service can be especially helpful where the victim is angry - "It's great to have them there to deal with the victim". A male constable with twenty-five years service, though having no direct experience with the mobile unit, considered that "the workers are very professional ... victims are impressed with their services [as] it helps them cope". Another male constable noted that he has made many referrals to Victim Services and sent many "mailboxes" but has yet to have a direct experience with the mobile service. He praised the Victim Services program in general, adding, "It's great to have the mobile service, to have the worker at the scene to talk to the victim, because it is very hard for the police to be there for them". He added, "It is good too to have female volunteers. The victims feel comfortable talking to other females and in most domestic violence cases the victims are women."

All those officers who had direct experience with the mobile service regarded it in a very positive light. A rookie (five months in HRP service) male constable, who witnessed the mobile unit called to a couple of domestic violence situations, observed that the mobile service "is an asset to the police force and very effective in helping domestic violence victims. ...We [police officers] are too busy investigating the situation to effectively help the victims. Victim Services workers put the victims at ease." He stressed, too, the positive spin-offs of dealing well with victims, namely "by talking to Victim Services workers, victims may decide to charge the abuser, and stick with these charges". Another young male constable had been present for several interventions by the mobile service of Victim Services and was also very positive, noting "The mobile unit is very effective and great to have. I notice that the victims really appreciate having them there". A young male constable, who reported that he had referred many cases to Victim Services and had also called in the mobile service on a few occasions, commented

I think it is an incredible resource and I am very supportive of it ... many of the volunteers are experienced in domestic violence so they can sympathize with the victims. [He added,] It is very good for the Victim Services workers to be at the scene of the crime.

There was still a sense among the officers that the relationship between police and the Victim Services volunteers, even the mobile service volunteers, was quite limited, though essentially "good". One female officer observed that "there really is not much of a relationship ... Victim Services is a 'behind the door' service. We know that they are there, but we do not interact with them much." She saw no need to alter the relationship and advanced no recommendations to improve the mobile service. Another female officer, while also not suggesting any particular changes in the service, considered that the mobile service had effected a better relationship between officers and Victim Services volunteers; she noted, "We know who the workers are now; they are not just names". Along the same lines, a veteran male officer contended that "at first officers were intimidated by the service but when we saw the results, we were more supportive".

A few officers raised issues concerning the "mandatory" nature of calling in the mobile unit in all cases of domestic abuse that fitted the protocol (e.g., no drugs or alcohol in use, the abuser accounted for, etc.) and the mobile service volunteers showing up on the scene before they are called in. Officers generally considered that they should retain discretionary powers as to whether the incident required the intervention of the mobile service. As one female constable put it, "Not all domestic calls require the presence of Victim Services. They should come in when the officers call them in." Also, they were critical of the volunteers occasionally simply showing up on the scene. One male officer commented,

[They should come] only after we have gone in and secured the area ...they should not just show up. I first ask the victim if she wants them there, and if she does then I call them in. It should be up to the victim. If the victim does not want the Victim Services workers there, then they should not be there.

Another young male constable commented, "I do not agree with the mobile unit just showing up at every domestic violence call. There are many dangerous situations where it would be better for the Victim Services workers to stay away. ...I don't want an extra person to worry about." Several officers in fact expressed concern that the mobile service volunteers do not stay at the station and wait to be called out. One summarized this view thusly, "[Their patrolling the area] makes me worry about them". He went on to cite an occasion where the Victim Services mobile

unit apparently located a stolen vehicle, raising the question, "Why were they looking for it? ...They should stick with domestic violence, that's why they are here."

There were several other issues raised by the officers. It was widely held by them that different categories of officers might have different views of Victim Services and the mobile service. Generally, these young officers considered that their older peers were more sceptical about such programs and more likely to regard the Victim Services workers as "wanna-bes". Most officers also expressed the view that any problems that emerged in the process of an intervention (i.e., when the mobile unit was called in) should be discussed one-on-one between themselves and the mobile unit volunteers, not first among their supervisors. There was not much discussion, nor awareness, of similar programs in policing services elsewhere. For example, some police services indeed do look favourably upon their recruits having had volunteer experience in such programs so the "wanna-be" label would be appropriate and not pejorative in those contexts. Similarly, programs such as "citizen on patrol" and "car watch" would encourage mobile units to look for stolen vehicles and so on. Overall, then, there was little consideration of the larger context for this new Victim Services intervention nor any particular attention given to its possibilities beyond mere availability.

PHASE TWO: 2001

Over the late spring and summer of 2001 thirteen officers were interviewed about Victim Services' mobile service. As before, all but three were male constables, but there was a wide range of police experience represented. Three of the officers had been interviewed in the first phase reported above. In the interim since phase one, there had been a number of significant developments salient for appreciating police perspectives on the mobile service. First, the mobile service had now been available for another year and a half so one could expect that virtually all officers would have had direct experience with it and also that the police subculture at the field level would have solidified in its depiction of the service. A second important event was the appointment of the co-ordinator of the mobile service to full-time, regular status in the Victim Services unit of the Halifax Regional Police as Early Intervention Outreach Worker. Her

involvement in daytime mobile service intervention, regular presence at the Dartmouth police station, follow-up of cases and co-ordination of training for the volunteers would undoubtedly have enhanced the "value-added" of the mobile service to the overall contribution of Victim Services for the service provided by HRP. A third development has been the greater and more diverse training given to the Victim Services volunteers, such that the mobile service volunteers could be expected to respond to certain crises apart from domestic violence, such as assisting spouses of persons attempting suicide, sudden death situations and the like. Fourthly, there has been more orientation provided HRP officers by Victim Services staff. Finally, concerns and issues raised by officers and highlighted in the previous evaluation reporting would have been considered by Victim Services staff.

CONTACT WITH VICTIM SERVICES

All the police officers interviewed in phase two were very positive about Victim Services and especially the mobile service. They viewed the staff and volunteers as competent, up-to-the-task, and performing their service with effectiveness and efficiency. Almost all the officers noted that they were familiar too with the Victim Services dacted reports and found them quite useful. The majority of these respondents identified themselves as relatively high users of Victim Services compared to their fellow officers. Actual use of Victim Services and the mobile service by the officers however varied greatly, even among this positive-oriented subgrouping of police. The range went from contacting Victim Services and the mobile a few times over the two year period to as many as seventy-to a hundred Victim Services contacts and a few dozen call-ins of the mobile service. Generally, the officers considered that the mobile service was under-utilized at HRP.

The police officers generally reported that they were quite aware of the Victim Services full-time staffers and had an increasing knowledge of the mobile service volunteers. Usually the officers said that they could identify some of the volunteers by sight and a handful of officers reported that they knew the names of at least some of the mobile service volunteers. As might be expected, this was especially true of officers working out of the Dartmouth substation where

Victim Services offices are located. It was common for all officers to note that they had received an orientation provided by the Victim Services unit. One officer who illustrated all these points well, remarked on his usage

I know them [Victim Services volunteers] by sight and by name because their office is right in our building so I see them a fair bit... I probably have used them [the mobile unit] twice or three times per week ... that is a lot of times. I've used them mostly for domestics but also as support groups. For example, there was an industrial accident when a young fella's dad was crushed and the Victim Services people sat with the young fella while the police work was done. It was really helpful. Especially because they were from Ontario and didn't have any family here.

These "well-disposed to Victim Services" officers were asked why they did not use the mobile service even more than they did. One officer who reported much contact with Victim Services via the telephone phone referrals route, noted that the limited availability of the mobile service and the disagreement of victims with the HRP policy of zero tolerance towards "domestics", have limited his use of the mobile service. He noted,

I have used the Victim Services mobile unit about a half dozen times, all for 'domestics'. I've called them even more than that but sometimes they have been busy and have had to respond after the fact. ...Some victims don't appreciate what they have to say. They [victims] can be rather put out that the zero tolerance policy is in place.

I appreciate them [Victim Services mobile service] being there ...called on them many times. I know three-quarters of them by sight and by name. ...I've read their dacted reports. Their feedback is very useful, because of the low [police] manpower and the high volume of calls, police don't have time to get personally involved with victims.

Echoing these views somewhat, one young male constable observed that his work on "the paddy wagon detail" recently has limited his contact with Victim Services and added,

I have indeed used Victim Services. I know that they can be helpful for many different things, not just domestics, but in all honesty I have only called them on a couple of cases. With me it's a decision if the victim will benefit. There have been some cases where I called Victim Services and the victim had a

change of heart or something, and when the Victim Services volunteers have arrived, the victim has not answered the door or the phone. Then Victim Services have notified me and it has not worked out. ...So I've learned from that... Some victims will not speak with Victim Services and I've found that most will not speak with them right away. It takes time.

Sometimes low usage of the mobile unit seemed idiosyncratic and was not explicitly linked to dissatisfaction with the outcome or to even a very restricted mandate for the service. For example, one constable observed, "I've used them [the Victim Services mobile] three or four times total. I haven't used them for quite a while, but the last two times it was for domestics." The officer did not elaborate on why he did not use the service more, but he did allow that the mobile service volunteers "are helpful for a range of files when the victim is under emotional stress and I certainly wouldn't limit it to domestics". Several officers expressed the view that there had been a lot of turnover among the Victim Services volunteers and that had limited their knowledge of and contact with the volunteers.

Overall, the officers clearly acknowledged the significance of the mobile unit to Victim Services and to HRP. An NCO officer reported that he knew some of the Victim Services volunteers by sight and by name and noted, "I have called upon them, mainly for domestics, but also as a support role for other members of the household". In his view the mobile service was a "kind of elite Victim Services service" which delivered valuable assistance to the victims and which is important for volunteers' esprit de corps - "if it were cut off, the number of Victim Services volunteers might dry up".

As noted, the officers usually rated highly both Victim Services and the mobile service. They also reported favourable feedback about the service from victims and from other police officers and indicated they found the dacted reports valuable, at least for informational purposes and for informing them about repeat offenders. The volunteers were seen as trained and professional and the only criticisms uttered were directed at alleged etiquette shortfalls by the volunteers at the station and on the police radio.

MANDATE OF THE MOBILE SERVICE

Most officer respondents perceived the appropriate mandate of the Victim Services mobile unit to extend beyond intimate partner/spousal "domestics" to at least a broad definition of "domestics" which would include virtually all household victimization and crises. Clearly, the core of the official mandate, from the officers' standpoint, is that the volunteers are expected to provide assistance to victims, basically, "emotional support and referrals of [a] short-term [nature] - such as housing in domestics". The officers typically reported that they would utilize a broad definition of "domestics" when considering whether to call-in the mobile unit (e.g., "anything that is involved with relatives") and a large proportion said they would consider a call-in when faced with vulnerable, stressed persons who needed support. One male constable, who claimed to have used the mobile unit service on many occasions, commented,

We have at least three domestics a day in Dartmouth alone and that's not an underestimate ...and we use them [the mobile unit] for other things than domestics. ...Those of us officers who are comfortable with using them are already over-stepping their mandate now ...[but] their mandate is sufficient and it's pretty straightforward.

There was much ambiguity and uncertainty on how far the Victim Services mobile unit's mandate to assist victims and distressed people should be stretched. Some officers had expansive views while others were more restrictive. Death notifications were a case in point. Some officers considered this an appropriate Victim Services activity, while others saw it otherwise. One NCO, for example, observed "I haven't used them for death notifications. We would notify ourselves or call clergy". A young patrol officer, while positive about the mobile unit, had similar reservations. He commented,

My experience with them [Victim Services volunteers] has been very positive ...their mandate is appropriate. If the mandate is widened it would be too much like our work, I mean the police program. I have mixed feeling about the idea of expanding the Victim Services mandate.

As for the Victim Services mandate concerning assistance to police, the common perception of the role of the mobile unit volunteer, was succinctly expressed by an NCO as "they allow our people to deal with policing issues". As indicated in these remarks, it was common for officers to perceive the volunteers' contribution as somewhat segmented from basic police duties, namely that the mobile unit, like Victim Services generally, indirectly facilitates policing by freeing officers to police, and by making it easier for officers to carry out their myriad duties. There was much diversity in the officers' views on whether the Victim Services mobile service directly impacts on police work. This was evident in their discussion of the dacted reports of Victim Services. One officer who felt there was direct value for policing duties commented,

I've read their dacted reports. These messages keep us up to date on a file, both for patrol and for investigation. The reports are extremely helpful.

Other officers indicated that while they read and appreciated the dacted reports, these latter were not especially salient to their police work. This was reflected in one constable's remarks, namely, "The reports are not so much helpful from the investigation point of view, but they give us information about the victim and keep us up-to-date." Another officer's remarks best captured the ambiguity here, namely,

I've seen their dacted reports. Helpful is a relative term, but I know that the dacted reports help us know that Victim Services is being pro-active in supporting the victim. It keeps us all on the same page ...the follow-up of their dacted reports are also helpful for the victims because we can all provide them with better service.

Another area of ambiguity among officers that emerged from the interviews, concerned the mandate and possible value of Victim Services mobile unit volunteers in facilitating officers' obtaining adequate statements from the victims and their commitment to follow through on the charge process. Half the officers did not mention this kind of assistance and implied that they call-in the mobile unit only after they have pretty much completed their investigation, including taking statements. One officer was particularly explicit about this pattern, commenting that:

I don't like to have them come in before I've finished my report with the victim. It's normally the way it works and normally what they do. I don't want to see the look on their faces when they see the victim's situation. It's good that they don't come to the scene unless we've called them.

But several officers considered this function (especially relaxing or easing the victims and assisting in getting statements) quite important in how the Victim Services mandate helps them directly in their policing duties. One officer commented,

When they show up on a scene they make a real difference. ...In some cases if they didn't show up people [victims] wouldn't talk at all and we wouldn't get statements ...and I have never had a refusal [a victim refusing to speak to the mobile unit volunteers].

In a similar vein, another officer cited an incident where the Outreach Worker was involved:

She was familiar with the victim from speaking with her about past problems. The woman [victim] knew her and was less reluctant to speak to her. She didn't cover things up, as often happens ...she spoke freely because she trusted [the outreach worker]. This took the pressure off the police. We got a statement easily and did not have to become involved in counselling.

The ambivalence among patrol officers towards this possible dimension of the Victim Services mobile unit's mandate (i.e., assisting in securing a statement) was indicated in the concern of some that biased evidence could result since the volunteers might encourage blame-transfer. It also was seen by some officers as confusing "support" and "operational" spheres where the latter is reserved for police. This latter concern is reflected in the comments of another officer on the practice:

If some officers have to take a statement from a woman who is upset and not involved in a domestic, doesn't need counselling or a referral, I find it sometimes happens that a male police officer will call Victim Services. They are just using them as a female presence, wanting them to calm the victim down instead of taking the initiative themselves. ...This is not part of the Victim Services' mandate and they are not required in these circumstances.

Clearly the relationship between police and mobile unit volunteers has been evolving. Some police see many possibilities for utilizing the volunteers to enhance their policing effort and sometimes to cope with what in their view are too stringent standard operational procedures and directives (e.g., zero tolerance on domestics). A number of officers pointed to the increased training that the volunteers have received and suggested that they have skills that complement the

typical police skills and so facilitate a more expansive mandate for the mobile unit volunteers informally if not formally. One veteran officer observed

It's one thing to solve their [victim's] crime for them and it's another thing to put them at ease, to make them knowledgeable about the processes and resources available to them. Police don't know how to do that, don't have the resources or the time to do that.

THE VALUE ADDED OF THE MOBILE SERVICE

Most officers considered that the existence of the mobile unit has considerably enhanced the value of Victim Services in HRP and has been very significant for both victims and police officers. Officers asked about the value-added of the service typically answered "without a doubt [there's been value-added]". Others said that they were very satisfied with it and, as one officer put it, "Victims are always grateful. They [the mobile service volunteers] really know how to talk to people." A veteran officer observed,

Out of ten I would give them [the mobile unit] an 8 or 8.5. They are an excellent resource. It's a necessary resource. If there is a problem it is that people [police] still need to be trained to use it. Like 'Crime Stoppers' - it's there, but few people use it. Its efficiency and effectiveness depend on the severity and length of the on-going problem.

Several officers described the service as the elite arm of Victim Services and as its crucial part. For example, one officer commented:

I would give them high marks. ...I've been a police officer for nine years and they have not been around that long. I have seen a real difference. ...Being mobile is the crucial part of Victim Services. The victims are in need and police cannot do it all. It just makes it so much better and fills the needs of victims more fully and promptly, in a timely manner, to have the service mobile.

The value-added of the mobile unit was deemed by the officers largely to flow from the fact that the volunteers were now on the scene, ready to help. As one officer commented,

[Value-added?] ...Absolutely! You are talking to a face and not just to a voice. It is proactive rather than just responsive, if you know what I mean. They are an immediate response in person ...[and] I think that the volunteers are adequate to the task. My experience with them has been very positive.

Another constable pointed to the immediacy, face-to-face contact and skill of the volunteers as the key factors in the mobile service's value for both victims and police. He commented.

They [the volunteers] were very good at coming quickly [in response to my call-in], talking with the victim and calming her down. They have the training to know how to put things in perspective for them [victims]. They really listened to the victim. ...It is the face-to-face contact that drives the point home. The volunteers can look the victim in the eye and see their reactions. This helps them to know what to say to help the victim, to know what is appropriate for the victim. If they see the victim and their children and so on, in their home, it also lets the Victim Services person understand the victim's circumstances better. ...There's nothing that can replace that! I'd certainly prefer to see more of them in the mobile unit and have them on call all the time.

The officers also acknowledged the value-added character of the mobile unit for themselves as well. As noted above, it was generally considered that the mobile unit has contributed to the policing effort indirectly by servicing the victims and the distressed, thereby releasing the officers to pursue other 911 calls, and, directly, by facilitating the taking of statements and informing officers through their dictated reports. Most officers recalled specific incidents where the mobile unit was of significant assistance. Police officers generally are empirically oriented, placing much emphasis on “being there” and the actual experiences in the field, and, relatedly, they appreciate practical training (e.g., the “how to dos”). It is not surprising then that they would see the mobile unit as a major advance over the telephone phone-back system and the mobile unit volunteers as being able to contribute to problem-solving in the field. One officer put it this way,

The Victim Services telephone service alone is not sufficient. You're sometimes in over your head when there is a victim, crying children and some alcohol or drug abuse. ...Then it's nice to have the [mobile unit] volunteers around. They've got the training to deal well in these situations.

A few officers, while positive about the mobile unit, expressed some reservations about its value-addedness. These officers appeared to be especially sensitive to some of the risks involved in having volunteers out on the streets and at the crime scene (see below). One such constable observed,

I think they [Victim Services mobile and Victim Services telephone services] are both equally important. I depend more on the telephone resource. I think I like it more than the mobile unit, but I wish the mobile unit was available more.

Another officer, an NCO, asked about the value-added of the mobile unit, commented

I would say so! It's added the physical or personal contact at the actual time of the situation. That is important and makes it usually more efficient and effective ...[although] there are some cases where I wouldn't call them to the scene ... if it could jeopardize their safety ... the abuser may be coming back [to the residence] ... It's a real catch-22 there and we really don't want to leave Victim Services there alone.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE MOBILE UNIT

Officers were quick to identify various strengths of the mobile service. Typically the officers noted that the mobile service enables Victim Services to respond in person and when they are needed most (i.e., the time of victimization). One officer observed, "It's obviously better to speak to someone in person, especially if it's a domestic"; while another commented,

The strengths are that they are providing a much-needed service and they are mobile, so they can be right there on the scene. They are making themselves available to the community ...I can't think of any weaknesses.

One NCO echoed the common view and added that the mobile service can, as well, act as a watchdog for the police. Along these lines, a few officers suggested that the service increases the sensitivity of the entire police service to domestic violence. One female officer expressed this point as follows:

I think that domestic violence has not been well-understood. There has not been as many cases reported [as there should have been] ... in a way, it has been a hidden crime ... It has been a real advantage for women [victims] to have Victim Services collecting statistics and making reports about it. Otherwise, it would remain on the back burner. ...I have to give them [Victim Services] a lot of credit for that.

A number of officers reported, as a strength of the mobile service, that the volunteers (and especially the Outreach Worker) were very professional in their duties and did a good job; for example, one officer commented, "The strengths are the quality of the people they have working there and the interest they take in their work". In this vein, several officers called attention to the training that the mobile service personnel had received. An NCO noted that the mobile service personnel "can do more than what people think they can do. I think they are also adequately trained for much more." One officer simply stated that they had the training to deal with situations [domestics and crises] while another officer elaborated as follows:

Victim Services mobile personnel are usually very helpful to the police and victims. We just need more of them, more of the time. ...They conduct themselves in a professional, effective and efficient manner and are well-trained. They get more courses than we do sometimes. ...It is important that Victim Services be on the scene with the police so that they can get a clear idea of what is going on.

One officer captured well a common feeling among her colleagues that the mobile service personnel added a complimentary dimension to the effort carried out by HRP police:

It's a good humanist approach to the victim, especially victims of domestic violence. This is something that is difficult to do well. They can stay with the victim, calm her down, give her counselling and suggest agencies that can help her. She won't feel so isolated and alone, and maybe the cycle can be broken. We still have the stigma of being the police and as being there because of something bad. Victim Services can reach the victims better than we can.

The police respondents typically, and explicitly, did not advance many weaknesses with respect to the mobile service. Several simply stated that there were no weaknesses, while two suggested that turnover among the volunteers was a problem. The others identified basically only the limited availability of the mobile service as a weakness. A common viewpoint here was, in

the words of one officer, "It would be nice to see them on the road more than they are now". One officer expressed this viewpoint quite forcefully as follows:

They should be available 24/7 in my opinion. We are police officers providing a service so we should provide the same full service to victims no matter what time of day, day of the week. ...Victim Services can help right away with that [here the officer described a frequent domestic violence scenario].

A number of officers, elaborating on the limited availability criticism, cited cases where the mobile service could have been helpful if it had been available. One officer went on to contend:

The weaknesses are that there are not enough on a night when we are busy or during the day. ...We need more volunteers, especially for nights. Now they are bopping around from one side of the harbour to the other, and sometimes they cannot make it to all of the domestics.

Another officer complained that

The times you need them seem to be the times when they are tied up. ...On Thursday, Friday and Saturday, they should follow each division (i.e., area of the region), not just each watch. ...If there were three cars out [on those nights] that would be better.

CONCERNS, RISKS, AND ISSUES

Almost half the officers interviewed indicated that in their view there were no serious concerns, issues or risks associated with the mobile service. As one such officer said, "I have never experienced Victim Services to have a negative impact on police policy or procedures, and there shouldn't be any risks - once we get there [to the scene] and secure it." It was typically contended that while there are always risks in domestics - the return of the abuser, the victim turning on the police - there was no greater risk to the victims or to the volunteers as a result of the Victim Services mobile unit being in operation, because volunteers were not called in unless the scene was secured. No officers could recall any instance where significant risk had occurred. Nevertheless, a few officers were less sanguine on this matter of risk. One officer expressed concern that

The perpetrator may come back once the Victim Services volunteer has arrived and the police have left. Police usually stay a while, but not always. This is an area that could be addressed more clearly in police policy and procedures.

An NCO explained his concern as follows:

We try to minimize the risks to Victim Services people. We don't normally call them until we have eliminated the risks. But sometimes they come before the suspect has been apprehended and we try to stay on site until Victim Services leave.

This same officer observed that bringing in the volunteers too early could result in their being recognized by the abuser and subsequently harassed in public as had happened several times to himself.

A few officers identified follow-up visits as more likely to generate risks for victims or volunteers since, here, in their view, police might be less involved. One officer commented,

There are inherent risks for the volunteers ...not so much for the victims. The scene is secured when the Victim Services arrives. ...But if they do follow-ups and come back at another time - that could be precarious. The basic training for them, I'm sure, teaches them to be cautious and to know and assess the risks.

A number of officers - roughly one-third of this small sample - expressed concern that the mobile service volunteers might occasionally encourage the victims to have false hopes or to expect an outcome different from that to be pursued by the reporting officers. One officer explained:

If a volunteer speaks with a victim and has only received one side of the story it can be a problem. They may have given false hope to the victim [for example that a charge may be laid], just based on the victim's side of the story. Then if no charges are laid, the victim will wonder. Because Victim Services works with the police department, they have credibility and the victim will tend to believe what they say. Sometimes members get upset with that and feel the Victim Services is undermining them.

Another officer, otherwise very positive, reported:

I've only gotten ticked off once. I consider us both - volunteers and police - as professionals, but even then I am the police officer and sometimes they can over-step their grounds and leave the victims with false hopes. Their [Victim Services volunteers'] false pretences can just cause havoc. Sometimes I need my boss to tell Victim Services volunteers, 'don't make comments about the investigation because it can really do harm'.

Several officers, in advancing the same above concern, cited particular instances where allegedly they had conflicts with Victim Services because they had either charged or not charged contrary to the expectations that the mobile unit volunteers had presumably left with the victims. The officers remained positive about Victim Services and the mobile service and suggested that often the two role players, namely the police and the volunteers, may have had different experiences at the scene (e.g., "two people at the same domestic can see it totally differently") in addition to their different responsibilities. So there should be a premium on exchanging viewpoints and resolving issues without involving their respective superiors.

In a related vein, a few officers worried that the mobile volunteers "might go overboard in the role of therapist or advocate which could cause victims to colour their evidence". No actual instances were cited here, and overall and in general, most police respondents reported no problems of any sort, and contended that the mobile service volunteers understood and abided well by departmental policies and procedures. As one officer commented,

They are very well schooled in how to act at a scene and what the protocols are, what we as police have to follow. They are there as a support kind of role rather than in an operational role. There is a real difference between the two and they understand that. They fall within our policies. I haven't seen anyone step out of line in that regard.

THE POLICE SUBCULTURE

Most officers indicated that their officer colleagues generally regarded the mobile unit service as a positive development at HRP. As one officer put it, "I think for the most part [they see it] as an asset. I don't think I have run across anyone who doesn't think of them like that."

Another officer noted,

My fellow police officers always ask for them in domestics. We don't talk about them and that is probably a good thing - because it is the negative things that are usually brought up with us.

Consistent with the previous sections, several officers indicated that in the police subculture there was concern about the fact that the mobile unit was staffed by volunteers and thereby often unavailable, and concern about how complaints from Victim Services were channelled in the HRP. A few officers suggested that among the police there was "a whole spectrum of views. Some think of them [mobile unit volunteers] as a real benefit. Some see anyone who is not a police officer as a nuisance." Interestingly, while many officers considered that certain types of their colleagues were more or less favourable to Victim Services and the mobile service, there was a real sense of the "eye of the beholder" - as younger officers contended that older officers were less positive, while the older officers contended that the younger officers were the ones who were less positive. For example, two veteran officers reported,

As an older officer, I have more experience with victims and I know my limits. The younger officers don't see the trauma so they don't call Victim Services as much as the older police officers. - They still think they can do it all.

As you get older, you get more realistic ...the young ones think that they can deal with everything and someone else is just in your way. It goes to the whole fraternity thing. They have to have more exposure to it [Victim Services and the mobile unit]. Police officers can be pretty paranoid and think that something will jeopardize a conviction in court. They have to have dealings with Victim Services and develop a level of knowledge, confidence and trust.

Younger officers, as noted, were more likely to emphasize that the veterans may be slow to change their mindset and so less positive to Victim Services and the mobile unit. And while the older officers bemoaned the fact that there would be so many senior officers retiring in the next few years to the possible detriment of Victim Services, the younger officers saw these pending retirements in a more positive light regarding the acceptance and use of Victim Services and the mobile service. These viewpoints are expressed in the following quotations:

Some of the older guys are old-fashioned. They may be old mentally and think that police officers don't need help and that they [Victim Services volunteers] aren't social workers. ...We're increasingly a younger police force and the mentality is swinging [towards more openness to the use of Victim Services].

I would say about 90% [of the officers view Victim Services and the mobile unit] in a very positive manner. The other 10% could be typified as very, very senior [age-wise] people who are not appreciative of them and don't want them around. These are probably the ones who would throw the zero tolerance in their face.

Some of the new people [police] have a better understanding of the Victim Services and domestics. It's changed a lot ...it used to be more about CYA [cover your ass] and police wanted to do it all... [in that way, presumably] they could be sure that they wouldn't get [negative consequences].

SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The most common response, to whether they had suggestions or recommendations for Victim Services and the mobile unit at HRP, was “no” - they are doing a great job and are fine. This was the view advanced by a plurality of the police sample. The more generalized view was that the mandate of Victim Services and the mobile unit was appropriate and flexible enough but that the mobile service should be more available. As one NCO summed up his views:

More hours and days would be a benefit. This may be a problem because I understand they are all volunteers. ...The mandate is not bad. They are willing to assist in any type of situation. But I can't see their mandate being larger. I think it's more a problem of training our own police officers to know what Victim Services can do.

Similarly, another officer commented:

[The mandate] should not be expanded far beyond domestic cases or support for the victim. If it's just warm and fuzzy, I wonder if they will still really be Victim Services any more. They are good at what they do now ...and with more personnel - available most of the time during the week and especially at night - they just get even better at what they do. ...And more training can never hurt.

While the more common position was that "[Victim Services and the mobile] should stick to what they do best and improve on that [rather than expand their mandate]". A few officers did think it necessary for the service to have a much broader mandate - one that would serve all

victims of crime and crises: "Whenever the police are called, there is almost always a victim ...and it should be policy to call Victim Services".

Apart from mandate and availability, which were the issues mostly raised in discussions of suggestions and recommendations, the officers made some specific recommendations. Some noted that if the volunteers had an MDT in their car, they would be better informed about what was happening and able to call up background information on their way to a call-in. It was also suggested that dispatch might notify officers as to the availability of the mobile unit on every domestic call. Some officers thought that there should be as much focus by Victim Services on the other districts as there was on Dartmouth. And many officers suggested that increased training for the volunteers would continue to underline their value-added significance at HRP.

THE THREE REPEAT INTERVIEWEES

One way to gauge the extent of bias or skewness in the officers' assessments in this second phase, where most names were suggested by Victim Services, is to examine the views of those officers initially interviewed on a random selection basis in 1999. There were three such officers re-interviewed in 2001. Their 2001 interviews confirm that the patterns noted above are indeed widespread among field officers. All three officers in 1999 had reported minimal, if any, contact with the mobile response program, and, while positive about the program and Victim Services generally, reported limited though positive contact with the volunteers. They also identified Victim Services and the mobile unit as solely dealing with domestic violence and assisting victims, basically because the officers themselves did not have the time to spend with them. In the 2001 interviews, all three officers reported extensive contact with Victim Services and modest experience with the mobile unit; all indicated that they had called in the unit's volunteers on at least a handful of occasions since 1999. Their assessments of Victim Services and the mobile unit were very positive; their relationships with Victim Services and the mobile unit volunteers were more in-depth (e.g., friends, knowledge of them). The officers were quick to take note of the special skills required and effected by the volunteers, the value of the service for themselves as well as victims (e.g., dacts useful), and talked of the greater presence of the volunteers and the wider mandate practiced.

VICTIMS' VIEWPOINTS

Only five of the ten victims interviewed in Phase Two recalled a visit by the mobile service at the time of the incident. Two reported that the Victim Services mobile personnel visited them several days after the incident, while another two victims claimed only to have had telephone contact with Victim Services several days after the incident, and one woman said she visited Victim Services offices (in this case there was some ambiguity concerning which Victim Services the respondent was referring to - HRP or the provincial agency). All victims visited reported that the Victim Services person(s) remained with them for a relatively long period of time, ranging from about forty-five minutes to four hours.

Generally the Victim Services personnel were alone with the victim, but in several cases the police officers reportedly remained on the scene, and in one instance the "victim" (her partner had threatened suicide but had not directly abused her) had other adult supporters present as well. Only one of the ten female victims reported that she had had assistance with a previous victimization experience from Victim Services personnel. The victims were in complete agreement that the Victim Services personnel were friendly and helpful. One expressed a common view in the following words: "They were great - supportive, emotionally there". Several contrasted Victim Services' style with that of the investigating officers, claiming that the Victim Services people were more caring and understanding, a fair perception perhaps - given the different roles of the police and the Victim Services personnel.

Asked what services the Victim Services personnel provided to them, most victims who were visited emphasized "comfort". One victim commented, "It was comfortable having them there and time passed more quickly with them there. I was stressed and they made it easier". Another victim said, "I just needed someone to talk to. They were great with that, informative and understanding". Still another victim remarked that "They were very helpful, letting me cry and go on for hours". A few victims referred primarily to contacts Victim Services provided (i.e., who to phone) and information they gave about what would happen in the ensuing criminal justice process. Perhaps it is not surprising that in the three cases where the victims reported

having had only telephone contact with Victim Service, information was stressed and little reference was made to the provision of socio-emotional support.

Not surprisingly, when victims were asked "What services did you need at that time when there was Victim Services contact?", most emphasized "having someone to talk to". One victim commented "The whole night was a kind of blur. I guess I was in a state of shock. It was nice to have someone there to kill time with, while we were waiting for the police to find him and tell us what was going on". While there seems to be little doubt that comfort and understanding were necessary components of an effective Victim Services response, they were not sufficient. Most victims also called attention to their need for temporary counselling, and someone with whom they could discuss their options, and from whom they could receive basic information about police and court procedures. Apparently, a successful Victim Services response - and all were deemed successful by the victims interviewed - involved first establishing a caring, supportive connection and then providing information and contacts, if not some modest crisis counselling.

All victims were asked what they liked most about the Victim Services visit and also if anything Victim Services personnel did, bothered or upset them. Concerning the former, the general response was to emphasize that the Victim Services personnel were sympathetic, supportive and non-judgmental. Several victims considered that the Victim Services people seemed very concerned about them and their situation. One victim commented that "It was fine that someone was there to care. I had a chance to calm down. The police can be cold and distant". Another victim noted "They [Victim Services] were concerned about me - didn't care why it happened. They were just there for me". One victim expressed this view as follows: "They made it clear that if I needed anything I could call anytime for further assistance". Another victim reported she liked best "how long they stayed ... long enough for me to relax and be alone". Concerning possible negative impact, only two victims had any comment other than "No, there was nothing bothersome or inappropriate", and both these victims were indirectly laudatory of the Victim Services service. One victim observed "I was shocked at first when Victim Services called, but it turned out nice"; while another victim was upset only that, in her view, the police were condescending and did not want her to talk to Victim Services.

Most victims expressed the view that Victim Services did provide a service that the police officers either could not or would not provide. One victim noted "The police wanted details, but Victim Services was just there for me and didn't care about the details". Several respondents considered that Victim Services picked up where the police left off, basically the police obtaining the details and evidence and then Victim Services personnel providing the emotional support. There was a widespread sense among victims that police did not have the time to just listen, talk and comfort, and that therefore the police-Victim Services tandem was quite appropriate.

All victims were asked about any subsequent follow-up contacts with Victim Services and also whether they had experienced similar incidents of victimization since the Victim Services visit or contact in question. Only one victim reported a follow-up visit from Victim Services personnel, while two others claimed to have had a few telephone conversations. More victims reported that they had had contact subsequently with the provincial Victim Services in relation to their court experience. None of the victims reported having experienced subsequently any similar incident of victimization.

In concluding the brief interview, the victims were asked if it would have mattered for them if, instead of a visit by mobile service volunteers, Victim Services personnel had simply phoned them within three days of the incident. Two victims, neither of whom had actually been visited by Victim Services personnel, discounted the value of or need for a visit. All other victims emphasized the importance of Victim Services personnel attending the incident. One victim noted that in prior incidents she experienced of intimate partner abuse, Victim Services persons had telephoned a few days later but she needed support "at the time of the incident, not a week later ...[support] is needed to keep the women intact". Another victim explained that she was glad that Victim Services came to her home since she was in no position to go anywhere after her experience. The victims who received visits several days after their victimization both contended that it would have been better for the visit to have occurred in a time frame closer to the incident. One respondent perhaps articulated best the general view of the victims,

I don't think a phone call would have been as good. If some person you've never met calls you and tries to get you to talk about your feelings, you're just not going to do it. But if you have someone who is sitting, waiting with you in the house, it makes a difference.

STATISTICAL DATA

HRP AUDIT

An HRP audit was completed of Victim Services in December 2000. The responsible officer took a small sample of twenty-eight 10-49 (domestic violence) files generated by Rapid, the in-house computerized system for recording calls for service. All files had been generated in the period August to October 2000. According to the audit, Victim Services made an effort to contact the victim in approximately 75% of these incidents but was successful in doing so, whether in person via the mobile service or by telephone, in only 35% of the cases. The shortfall was largely seen as the result of Victim Services having to depend on the telephone for making contact (e.g., no phone, phone disconnected, transiency). The audit did not examine whether the mobile service was making a difference, or whether the contact numbers increased significantly in those periods where both day and night mobile services were available. Nor did it examine the numbers and factors associated with officers having an opportunity to call-in Victim Services personnel and not doing so. The audit's author did emphasize that the "self-imposed" Victim Services policy goal of responding to victims within five days of the incidence should be revisited and replaced by a less rigid commitment to respond as soon as possible. It was found that the average time for a Victim Services response was fifteen days from the date of the offence, and that this response time was understandable given the staff resources available to Victim Services and the shift schedule of the patrol officers. The audit also recommended that police officers be reminded of the importance of getting a second contact phone number for victims, thereby increasing the prospects of Victim Services making contact. Clearly, it is possible to conclude also that the mobile service might be expanded, since contact with victims after the incidence is so problematic.

MOBILE SERVICE ATTENDANCE

Table One provides a summary overview of the mobile service for the two year period from July 1999 to the end of June 2001. The data are presented in six month intervals in order to

determine whether any identifiable pattern has been evolving concerning its utilization at HRP. As indicated in the table, there are two dimensions to the mobile service, defined here as bringing victims services to the victim, in contrast to the conventional provision of telephone and in-house services. The two forms are the evening mobile service provided by volunteers, on the road and waiting to be called-in by police officers responding to calls, and the services provided during the daytime hours by a special full-time staff person (i.e., Early Intervention Outreach Worker) when called-out by the patrol officers. The table also indicates the number and proportion of cases responded to by the mobile service (both dimensions included) which involved domestic violence, the basic raison d'être of the Victim Services unit at HRP. Also, the table reports the number of the cases responded to, for which there was a follow-up contact.

Table One indicates that, over the two year period, the mobile service provided on Friday and Saturday evenings by the volunteers accounted for roughly between 60% and 70% of all incidents attended by the Victim Services mobile service. The Early Intervention Outreach Worker staff person, responding during the day, accounted for between 30% and 40% of all such attendances. No other particular pattern could be discerned across the four time periods. It can be noted that the six month period, January 2000 to the end of June 2000, yielded the largest number of mobile service attendances for both the volunteers and the staff specialist. The total number of 92 attendances far surpassed the totals over the two subsequent six month periods (i.e., 42 and 58 respectively) which suggests that the mobile service has not expanded as one might have anticipated in terms of being called-in by the patrol officers. Assuming that the mobile service was available two nights a week during this two year period, there would have been approximately fifty eight-hour blocks per six month periods where the volunteers could have been called-in by officers. Arguably then, the table indicates an under-utilization of the mobile service volunteers, especially in the past year. It is, however, impossible to calculate a firm penetration rate (i.e., the frequency of the mobile service response in relation to the number of incidents where the call-in would have been appropriate), since no data were available on the number of protocol-fitting incidents (e.g., type of incident, sobriety and wishes of victim, etc.) that occurred during the time periods when the mobile service was activated.

Turning to the type of incidents that officers have called the mobile service to respond to, it is clear that domestic violence remains the core Victim Services' focus. Overall, in the two year period, responding to "intimate partner/spouse" incidents accounted for 80% of all mobile service attendances. In the last six month period, January 2001 to end of June 2001, this proportion dropped to 65%, a harbinger perhaps of change. The incidents that made up the "other" category, in all four time periods, have largely concerned family situations whether of a conflictual sort (e.g., parent-child violence) or involving personal crises (e.g., the suicide or death of a loved one), but there also have been a few property crime incidents to which the volunteers responded during the past year. As noted above, some Victim Services mobile service volunteers - as well as the full-time credentialized counsellor - have received additional training in responding to personal crises, so perhaps one could expect this type of incident to become a larger part of their workload as officers increasingly appreciate the Victim Services capacity to provide quality services in these areas.

Table One also indicates that there is significant variation, by time period, in the number of attendances where Victim Services made a follow-up contact. Assuming that a follow-up contact would have been desirable in virtually all instances, it is undoubtedly disappointing to Victim Services that such re-contact has been effected in only roughly 40% of the attendances and only 22% in the last time period (the latter is doubly surprising, given the relatively modest number of attendances during this period). Perhaps the modest proportion of follow-up contacts reflects the major problems of disconnected phones, no answers and transiency that the evaluation team also experienced in attempting to contact the users of the mobile service. Certainly, and ironically, the low percentages would appear to underscore the value of the mobile service in that, for some victims, the police service may have only one real opportunity to intervene helpfully, namely at the time when they are responding to the incident.

IMPLICATIONS

The mobile response program at Victim Services, has met its essential objectives of adding value to the service for all the stakeholders, namely victims, volunteers, police officers and for Victim Services itself as an entity within the HRP. It has also led to the greater integration of the Victim Services unit and its personnel in the overall policing effort at HRP. There has been a significant increase in work satisfaction on the part of the volunteers who have become involved in the mobile response. Clearly, as the interview data reveals, over time the mobile service has become increasingly positive for both police officers and volunteers. While the mobile response program has not reached the number of victims it might have expected and hoped for, the victims themselves have attested to the benefits it has yielded where its personnel were able to attend the scene and directly, face-to-face, assist the victims. The strategic value of the mobile initiative for Victim Services appears to have been more significant than might be suggested by the number of victims attended to.

Some objectives of the program could not be examined. It has not been possible in this modest study to determine whether the mobile response has helped to reduce instances of repeated abuse, nor has it been possible to determine whether it has resulted in more salient referrals and greater use of such referral information by the victims. The objective of "a positive impact on the basic telephone call-back service" has not been explored. Some other interesting issues also could not be adequately researched. For example, it is puzzling why the number of call-ins by police officers has declined over the past year, even while the program has been increasingly well-received by patrol officers and the increasingly well-trained mobile response personnel have demonstrated a willingness to respond to a wide variety of officers' requests for their service. It seems quite important to examine in greater depth the factors associated with officers' exercise of their discretion concerning the utilization of the mobile response. It would be valuable as well to examine further the trends in the proportion of cases where there has been follow-up contact by phone and the information yielded thereby about the impact of the mobile service on victims.

Victims of domestic and related abuse have been found to be difficult to contact, as is evidenced in the HRP audit of Victim Services, and the experiences of the Victim Services' staff and the evaluation team in this research. This fact makes it especially important to understand what circumstances and types of victims the mobile response unit is being called in for. As well, it makes it crucial to obtain more comprehensive data about victims when they are attended to by mobile response personnel. It is crucial to know more about the victims being served and not being served, especially in the absence of good feedback data.

The mobile response program has changed significantly in its brief life span. Some problems identified by this evaluation in Phase One, namely role aggrandizement on the part of the volunteers; potentially risky initial and follow-up visits to victims' homes in the absence of police safety clearance; and distrust on the part of police appear to have been resolved. Others, such as comprehensive protocols or guidelines for the volunteers, have been at least partially dealt with. The mandate of the mobile response program appears to have evolved towards more crisis intervention, even while retaining the priority of responding to domestics. This latter evolution raises questions concerning the adequacy of the training Victim Services personnel receive to respond effectively in instances of significant trauma. The mobile response program has been increasingly institutionalized and the normal boundary-testing phase may be at an end.

SOME SUGGESTIONS

1. There should be periodic de-briefing and round-table discussions among Victim Services personnel in order to share experiences, learn from one another, and ensure the enhancement of both dimensions of Victim Services, namely the telephone call-back program and the mobile response program.
2. There definitely needs to be more research on who (i.e., the kind of victim) the programs are reaching or not reaching, and what impact they are having on the victim. Current Victim Services forms do not catch much information on the characteristics of victims. Also, which referrals are being acted upon by the victims and what is their impact? What is different about repeat victims that would be relevant for the delivery of HRP victim services?

3. Officer discretion is crucial for Victim Services and especially the mobile program. As noted in the text, the incidents to which the mobile service volunteers respond seem to be as much a function of officer discretion as of any formal protocol. What circumstances are considered by what officers in their decisions about whether to use the mobile service? It would be valuable, in appreciating this discretion, to have officers complete a short form (no more than one page) wherein they provide their reasoning for calling in or not calling in the mobile volunteers in domestics and in other crisis situation. Clearly, more paper requirements would be most unpopular among patrol officers but, if carried out on a short-term basis and varied by sub-station, the burden would not be onerous.
4. More readily "do-able" would be research on the penetration rate of the mobile service, and Victim Service generally, concerning domestics and crisis situations to which patrol officers respond. Such study would compare downloaded information from police reports with comparable information from Victim Services reports. It could also yield valuable information on the characteristics of victims and features of the victimization incident that are under-served by Victim Services programs.
5. There could be more discussion of, and perhaps protocols (and training) developed for, two activities carried on by the mobile service volunteers, namely responding to crises apart from domestics, and acting as eyes and ears for the police service when in the field. These activities appear to consume a great deal of the volunteers' time, so perhaps they should be formally acknowledged.
6. The mobile response volunteers seem to be a very competent and committed group of people. It is sensible to utilize their talent and commitment more fully and have them respond to a variety of incidents. There should be a review of the mandate under which they are operating, as well as more effort expended on having the officers use the service for the protocol-appropriate incidents. As it is, there appears to be significant "down-time", where, in the field, the volunteers are trying to make a contribution to the policing effort, however they can, while waiting for a call-in from the officers.