

Utilizing Volunteers in a Rural Community

Praxis International audio conference training

October 7, 2010

Trainer bio:

Melissa Scaia

Praxis International Technical Assistance Partner

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Melissa Scaia is the executive director of Advocates for Family Peace, a six-program agency that provides services to families experiencing domestic violence and child abuse in Itasca County, Minnesota. She provides training and technical assistance as a consultant for Praxis International. She wrote her Master's thesis on the effects of domestic violence on children. She is also a faculty member for the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) for their educational courses for judges about domestic violence. She is currently co-writing a curriculum on working with men who batter in their role as fathers. She also co-facilitates a Batterer's Intervention Program (BIP) group that focuses on fatherhood.

Allison Smith-Estelle

Domestic and Sexual Violence Services

Red Lodge, MT

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Allison Smith-Estelle serves as Executive Director of Domestic and Sexual Violence Services of Carbon County in Montana. She holds a doctorate in public health with an emphasis on women's health and human rights, and has nineteen years of advocacy and training experience in the field of domestic, sexual and teen dating violence intervention and prevention, both domestically as well as in South Asia. Allison's focus has included phone, hospital, police and court advocacy for survivors of violence; designing and conducting training in schools, for domestic violence advocates and for the medical and law enforcement communities; public speaking; and developing teen dating violence curriculum. She also serves on the faculty at Montana State University.

Mitzi Vorachek

Domestic and Sexual Violence Services

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Mitzi Vorachek founded DSVS and served as Executive Director from 1999-2006. She returned as Program Director in 2009. Mitzi has 25 years of leadership and training experience in domestic violence prevention and intervention. Her work has included developing curriculum and conducting training for law enforcement, school and medical communities; conducting training for domestic violence advocates; designing and producing TV programming; public speaking; and conducting domestic violence research in general, healthcare and student populations. Additionally, she has managed a domestic violence and rape crisis hotline (50,000 calls per year) in a major U.S. city.

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Melissa Scaia, Praxis Technical Assistance Partner
Allison Smith-Estelle and Mitzi Vorachek, Domestic and Sexual Violence Services of Carbon County, MT

Importance of volunteers to domestic violence programs

- Support mission of organization
- Save organizational resources
- Build community support
- Find potential donors

Organizational assessment

- Assess the “public image” of your agency
 - How is your agency perceived in your community?
 - What is the program feedback of current volunteers?
 - Are there changes that need to be made?
- How to find volunteers?

Volunteer recruitment; Match type of recruitment to purpose

1. Community-wide recruitment:

- Distribution of brochures
- Posters
- Speaking to groups
- Notices in appropriate media
- Word of mouth

Volunteer recruitment continued;

2. Targeted recruitment:

- Carefully planned approach to small, identified audience
- Use when recruiting for specific skills
- Take your message directly to them
- Answer questions:
 1. What do we need?
 2. Who could provide this?

Volunteer recruitment continued;

3. "Concentric circles" recruitment

- Identify groups of people or organizations who are in direct or indirect contact with your program
 - Innermost ring
 - Second ring
 - Third ring

Screening volunteers

- State law guidelines
- Grant guidelines
- Agency policies (ex previous clients excluded with a timeframe? Board of directors?)
- Volunteer application
- Volunteer interview and selection
- Who is the ideal volunteer?

Training volunteers

- Supervision
- Job description
- On-going communication—phone, e-mail, fax, in-person
- Volunteer resource manual

Sustaining volunteers

- Key to retention;
 - Connectedness
 - Uniqueness
 - Power and effectiveness
- Newsletter focused only on volunteers
- Option for transportation and phone expenditures
- Innovative on-going training—ex. Web based, articles, on-line list serve, one-on-one, small groups, opportunities for professional development

Volunteer recognition

- Gathering with food and awards for your agency's volunteers
- Partnering with a large community event to increase recognition
- Community-wide volunteer-of-the-year award
- Personal gifts
