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High-Risk Domestic Violence Initiative

Detective Sgt. Chris Kiriakopoulos

Victims of Crime Branch

**Detectives Dave Dunbar & Phil
Fleming**

Family Violence Resource Unit



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Hamilton Statistics:

- 1. Population 500,000**
- 2. Over 6000 domestic related calls for service annually**
- 3. 1,600 domestic violence criminal investigations**
- 4. 95% of offenders are male**
- 5. 50% of offenders are repeat offenders**



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- **30 domestic related homicides in Hamilton over the last 15 years**



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Evaluation of Hamilton Police Service

- In 2003 the Family Violence Resource Unit/Victim Services Branch commenced a review of the Service's overall domestic violence policy and practice
- HPS had received excellent evaluations from the Ministry of Public Safety and Security/Policing Services Division
- Began the process of identifying areas to improve police service's effectiveness



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- Reviewed cases involving repeat offenders
- Identified the need to focus on the worst offenders that posed the highest risk to victims
- The Policing Standards Manual (2000) identified adequacy standards specifically for “high-risk” and “repeat” domestic offenders
- The Domestic Violence Death Review Committee recommended to the Ontario Chief Coroner that police put processes into practice to identify, monitor and manage “high-risk” cases



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Analysis and Review Findings:

- **Identify offenders that are high-risk**
- **Establish a specialized and co-ordinated police response**
- **Incorporate into the current police service a High-Risk Domestic Violence Operational Team**



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High-Risk Domestic Violence Operational Team

**Composition: Family Violence Resource Unit and
the Victim Services Branch**

High Risk Operational Team Mandate:
Responsible for assessing, identifying and
classifying cases as “high-risk”



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Identifying **High Risk!**

- The Team relies on the joint expertise of the members to conduct an analysis of the history and significant elements of a case
- The Team assesses cases that are identified internally and from community referrals
- Risk Factors Checklist
- Behavioural Sciences Threat Assessment



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Risk Indicators

- **Prior history**
- **Prior criminal history**
- **History of mental illness**
- **Morbid/unhealthy beliefs by accused**
- **Threatens to kill**



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- **Victim attempts to separate from support networks**
- **Drug/alcohol abuse**
- **Violation of court orders**
- **Level of education**
- **Employment history**
- **History of cruelty to animals**



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Operational Team Case Management:

- Enhanced victim safety planning
- Co-ordinate with the Crown
- Co-ordinate with Bail Support Program
- Establish monitoring of offender
- Establish plan for offenders release
- Consultation with HPS Intelligence Branch and High-Risk Offenders Program
- Consultation with **Community Advisory Team**
- Co-ordinate with Probation and Parole
- Consult with CCAS/CAS



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Community High Risk Advisory Team

- The Team addresses victims' support and offender management in the same context
- The Team assesses needs on a case by case basis
- Meet monthly with (2) cases discussed & reviewed
- The Team includes: Probations and Parole, Women's Shelters, Sexual Assault Centres, Corrections, Children's Aid Agencies, Corrections, Mental Health, Victim Witness Assistance Program, Community Citizen Representation, Victim Services and Police



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- **Case management continues during and beyond:**
 - *arrest and criminal charges*
 - *conviction*
 - *incarceration*
 - *custodial release and probation*



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Benefits of the Community Advisory Team

- All services and agencies are on the “same page”
- Agencies and services are not working in silos
- Coordinated communications with the victim
- Better inter-agency understanding and working relationships

New initiatives:

- Team has developed a document supported by all agencies that identifies specific recommendations to agencies and services for offender and or victim management
- Team works collaboratively on “grant” applications/proposals



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Hamilton Police Service
Domestic Violence High Risk Team
Family Violence Resource Unit
Victim Services Branch

Thank You