

Blue Shield Against Violence

Strategic Communications in Local Policy Advocacy

September 10, 2007



Selected Survey Results

- **23% of grantees have developed a clear message for their organization to share with policymakers, the media, and the general public**
- **46% do not have written policies and procedures to guide media work, including an identified spokesperson**
- **Over half do not have a process for monitoring the media and identifying media opportunities**
- **31% of grantees have well established relationships with appropriate legislators**
- **56% have not identified and built relationships with working relationships groups that mobilize and inform voters**



Strategic Communications

For What? So What?

- **Identify Goals**
 - Influencing Policy
 - Accessing Local Resources
 - Building Capacity
- **Identify Target Audiences**
 - Local & State Policymakers
 - Media
 - Funders
 - Allies
 - Judiciary, Law Enforcement



Progress

- **Dramatic shifts in public awareness and understanding**
- **Significant Federal and State Legislation**
- **Education of Law Enforcement, Judiciary and Health Professionals**
- **Increased Resources for Prevention and Protection**



But not enough.....

- **In 2006, 43,911 were arrested for domestic violence -- this is lower than the 2005 arrest data of 45,083**
- **In 2006, there were 176,000 calls, with over half involving weapons, lower than the 181,362 calls in 2005**



Beyond the numbers

- **Children who have been exposed to domestic violence can develop significant problems such as depression, anxiety, and acting violent toward peers**
- **Children exposed to domestic violence are at a higher risk for attempted suicide, drug and alcohol abuse, teenage prostitution, committing sexual assault crimes and running away from home**



Keeping the Promise

AG's Task Force Report of 2005

- **Found Problematic Practice in the Areas of:**
 - **Obtaining and enforcing restraining orders**
 - **Prosecuting misdemeanor offense**
 - **Holding batterers accountable**
 - **Law enforcement response**



DV Issues in the Media

- **Dropping DV rates - progress due to federal legislation and funding for shelters, still serious problem**
- **Need for easier access to restraining orders – barriers to DV Prevention Act**
- **Leniency in the courts**
- **Barriers to assistance for low-income DV victims**
- **Unsafe homes - DV and child abuse, DV in front of children**
- **DV prevention – campaign to respect women, men who are role models**
- **Need to protest positive media portrayal of celebrity batterers**
- **DV in ethnic and immigrant communities**
- **Growth and expansion of DV shelters in communities**
- **Need for the integration of DV services and agencies**
- **Success and need for employer support of DV victims**



Where do we go from here?

Outline Steps to developing communications strategy

- Refining/creating messages to further policy goals**
- Developing materials (data and stories)**
- Identifying messengers and ensuring capacity**
- Tailoring methods**
- Measuring results**



Messaging for Policy Goals

- **Fact-based messaging, the power of data**
- **Public Opinion Polling**
- **Community surveys/focus groups to determine public attitude**
- **Media as a public opinion proxy**
- **Pay attention to what words people are using about an issue and how they define it**



Developing Materials

- **Data Reports**
- **Policymaker Scorecards**
- **Polling Fact Sheets**
- **Online Media (website or webpage, blogs, email alerts, etc.)**
- **Letters to the Editor/Op Eds**



Messengers

- **Identify Agency Spokesperson(s)**
- **Utilize Different Voices (practitioners, victims, volunteers, activists)**



Tailoring Methods

- **Identify Audience (local media, ethnic media, policymakers, etc.)**
- **Use Credible and Appropriate Messengers**
- **Customize Strategies & Materials (local vs. state policymakers, etc.)**



Measure Results

- **Quantify Goals**
- **Monitor Progress**
- **Assess Challenges**
- **Revise and refine tactics and tools**

