



Sacramento District Attorney's Office

ANNE MARIE SCHUBERT
District Attorney

Stephen J. Grippi
Chief Deputy

Michael A. Neves
Assistant District Attorney

SACRAMENTO COUNTY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COORDINATING COUNCIL ANNUAL DVDRT REPORT OCTOBER 2017

INTRODUCTION

The Sacramento County Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (DVCC) is presently chaired by District Attorney (DA) Anne Marie Schubert, represented by Assistant Chief Deputy DA Paul Durenberger.

The DVCC has three active subcommittees: the Community Subcommittee, also known as the Domestic Violence Prevention Collaboration (DVPC); the Law Enforcement Subcommittee; and the Domestic Violence Death Review Team (DVDRT). Each subcommittee is comprised of agency and/or community representatives with expertise in these distinct areas. The subcommittees work independently and are multi-disciplinary in nature.

DVCC SUBCOMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

The DVPC continues to remain very active in addressing the needs of domestic violence victims in Sacramento County and has been a strong supporter of the creation of the Sacramento Regional Family Justice Center (SRFJC).

Phase I of the SRFJC, the Legal Help Center, has been open for just over a year. Located inside the Sacramento Regional Family Courthouse at 3341 Power Inn Road, the “soft” opening occurred on July 11, 2016. Since that time the center has provided services for more than 2,030 clients: 1,187 new clients and over 800 clients returning for additional services. The breakdown of clients served by geographic location of residence and ethnicity are displayed in graphs below.

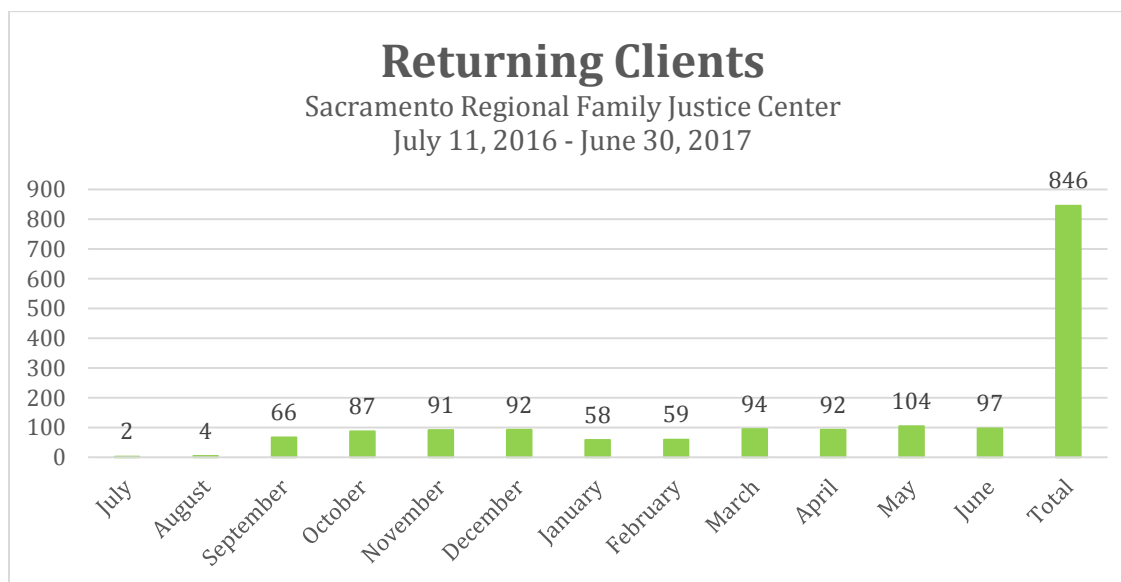
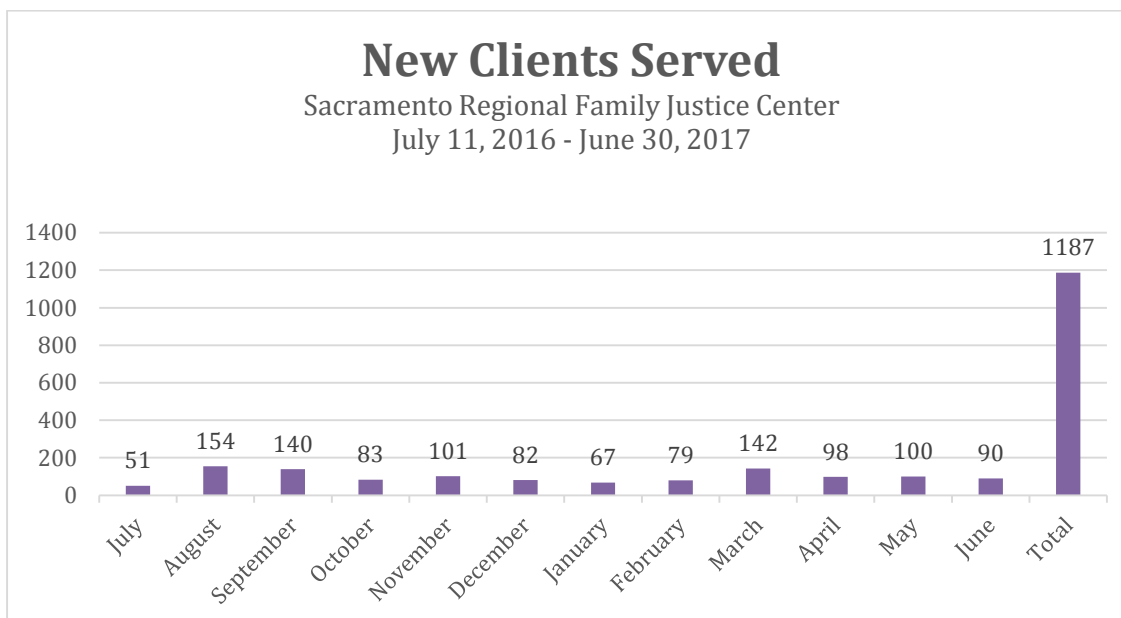
The SRFJC has developed a strategy focused on two primary goals: reducing systemic barriers for victims of interpersonal violence, including family violence, human trafficking, and elder abuse; and creating a collaborative framework to enhance community partners and relationships which will lead to positive social and systemic change. The SRFJC believes this focus is the most effective approach to reach underserved communities.

The mobile team that provides civil legal services and limited transportation and case worker support for victims at SRFJC and partner agency locations is now enhanced by the new Dignity Health sponsored SRFJC Mobile Therapy team. This team now provides group and individual therapy programs and/or Art therapy programs at City of Refuge, C.A.S.H., My Sisters House, A Community for Peace, Chicks in Crisis, The Bridge Network and WEAVE. This will enhance

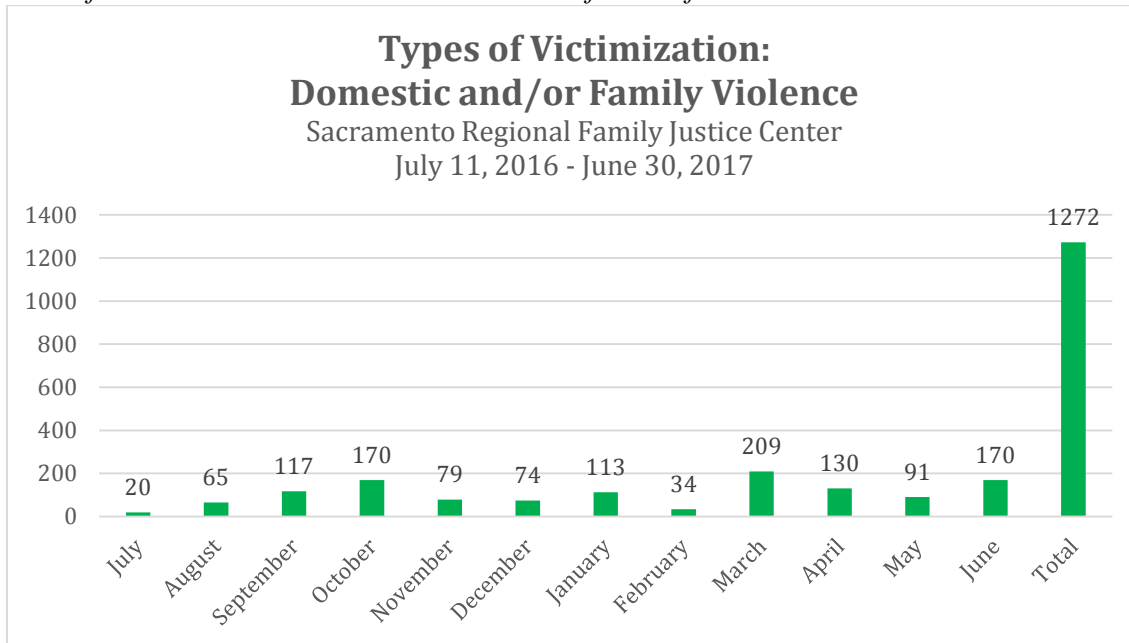
partner agencies, provide more convenient services for victims in underserved communities, promote collaboration and begin positive systemic change for victims in need of services.

Phase II of the SRFJC program will soon be open across the street from the Sacramento Family Courthouse at 3701 Power Inn Road. The location will also include the Child Safety Center which will increase collaborations between Sacramento County DHHS, law enforcement and community groups.

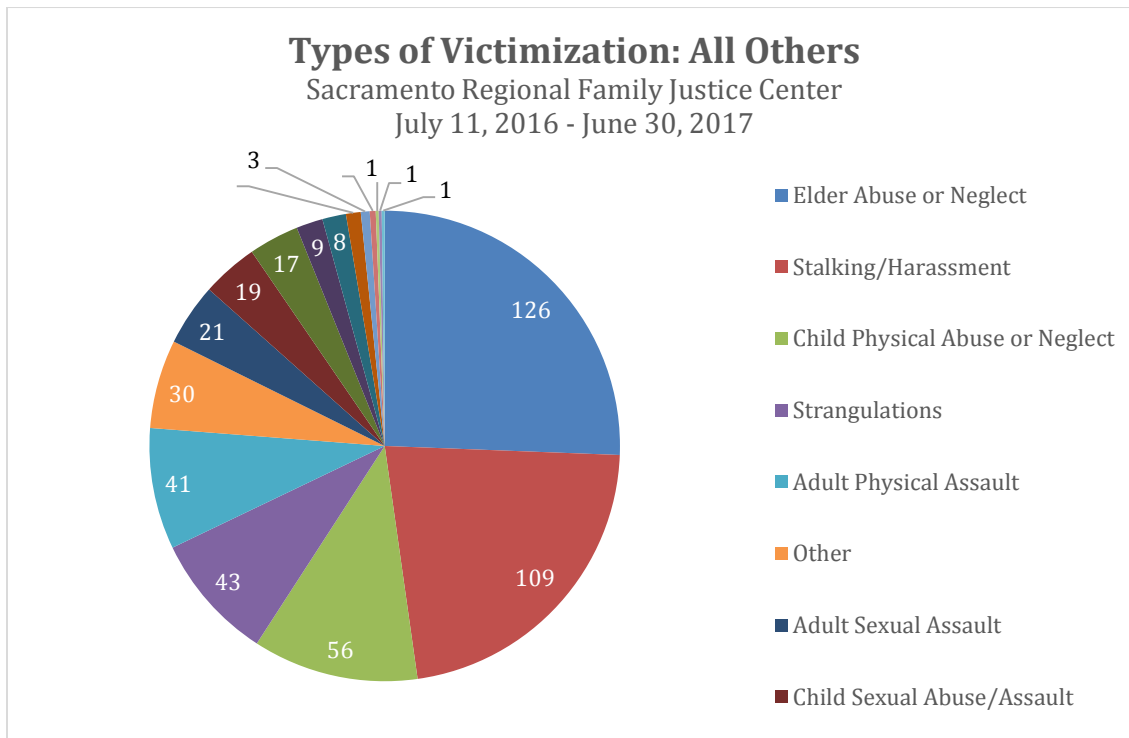
Below is a series of charts and graphs obtained through the SRFJC's client data between July 11, 2016 and June 30, 2017.



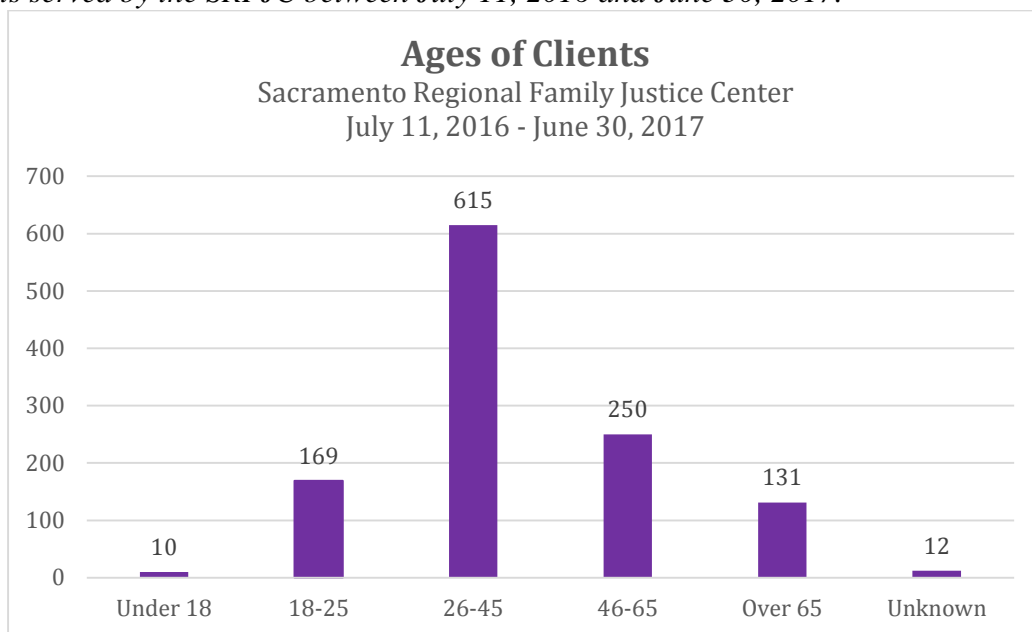
The above two charts show that between July 11, 2016 and June 30, 2017, a total of 1,187 new clients sought services at the Sacramento Regional Family Justice Center (SRFJC). A total of 846 returned at least one more time after the first initial visit.



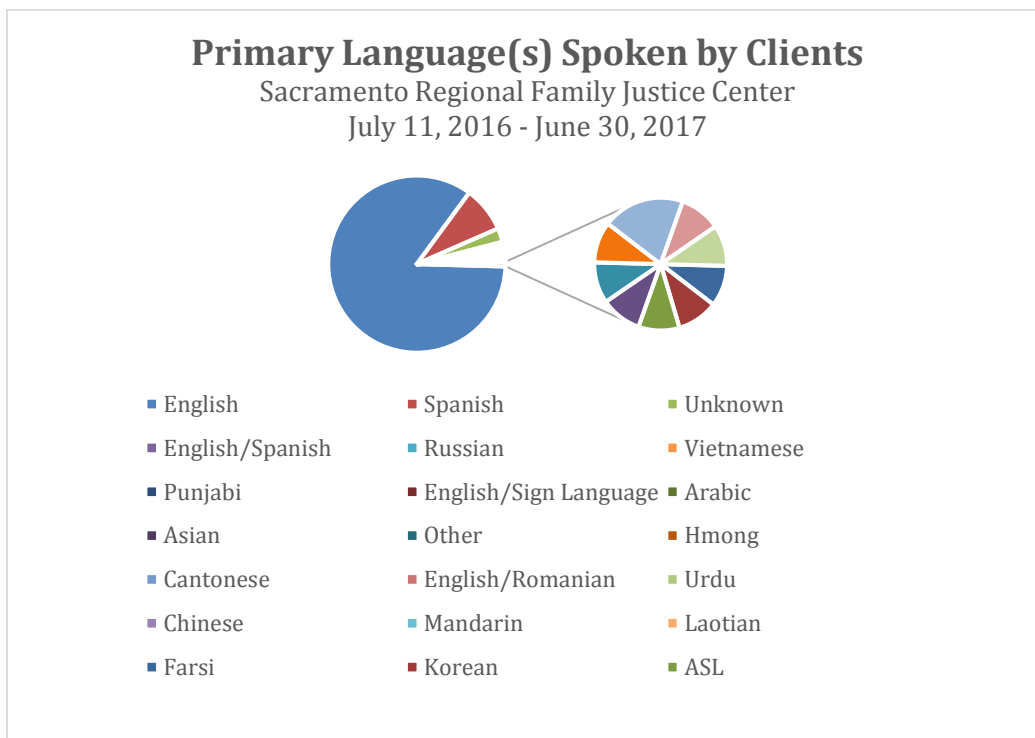
The above chart reflects that between July 11, 2016 and June 30, 2017, a total of 1,272 victimization types classified as domestic and/or family violence were recorded among clients served by the SRFJC. This number includes both new and returning clients. It is important to note that victims often come in to the SRFJC with multiple victimization types, such as domestic violence and child abuse.



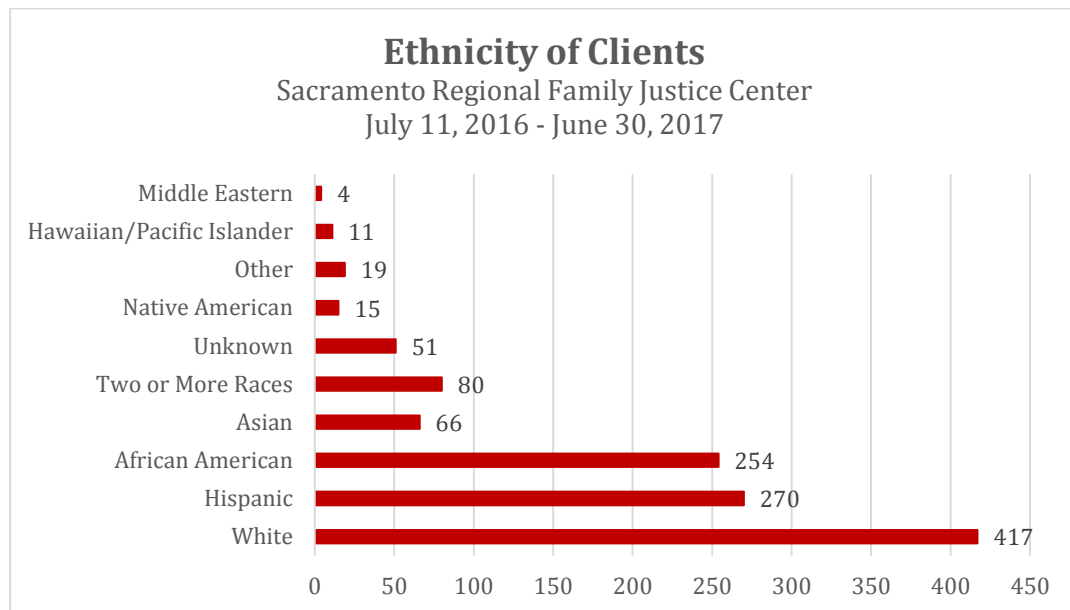
The above chart shows all other victimization types – a total of 492 – recorded among clients served by the SRFJC between July 11, 2016 and June 30, 2017.



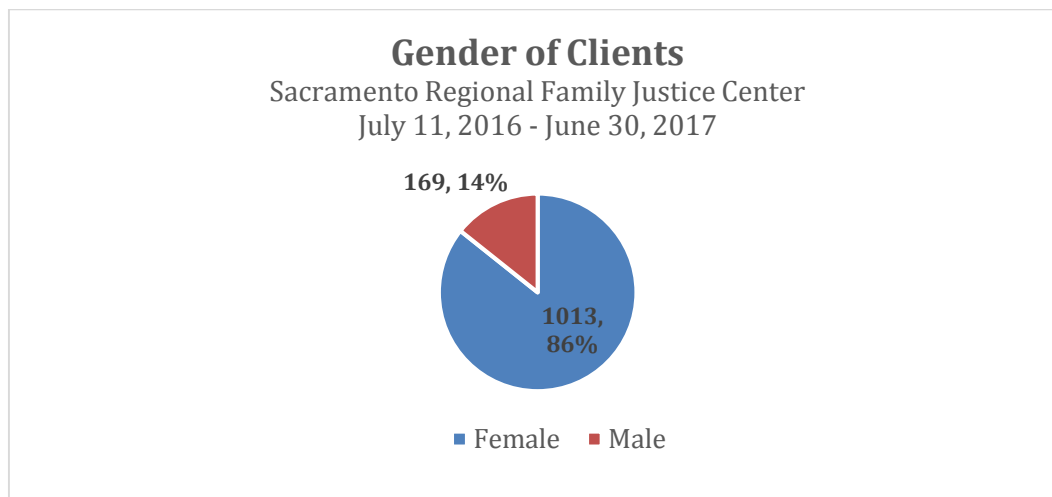
The above chart shows that of the 1,187 clients that the SRFJC served, 10 were under the age of 18, 169 were between the ages of 18 and 25, 615 were between the ages of 26 and 45, 250 were between the ages of 45 and 65, and 131 were over the age of 65. A total of 12 clients' ages were classified as "unknown" or were not disclosed. These findings exhibit a wide age range of clients and demonstrates a need for an emphasis on elder abuse services and specialization.



The above chart shows the primary languages spoken by clients served by the SRFJC. Most clients spoke English or Spanish, though the languages varied to include Russian, Vietnamese, Punjabi, and Arabic, among others. In total, there were 17 different languages spoken by clients. Additionally, several clients' primary spoken language was classified as "unknown" or was not disclosed. The vast diversity among languages spoken shows a need for access to translator services.

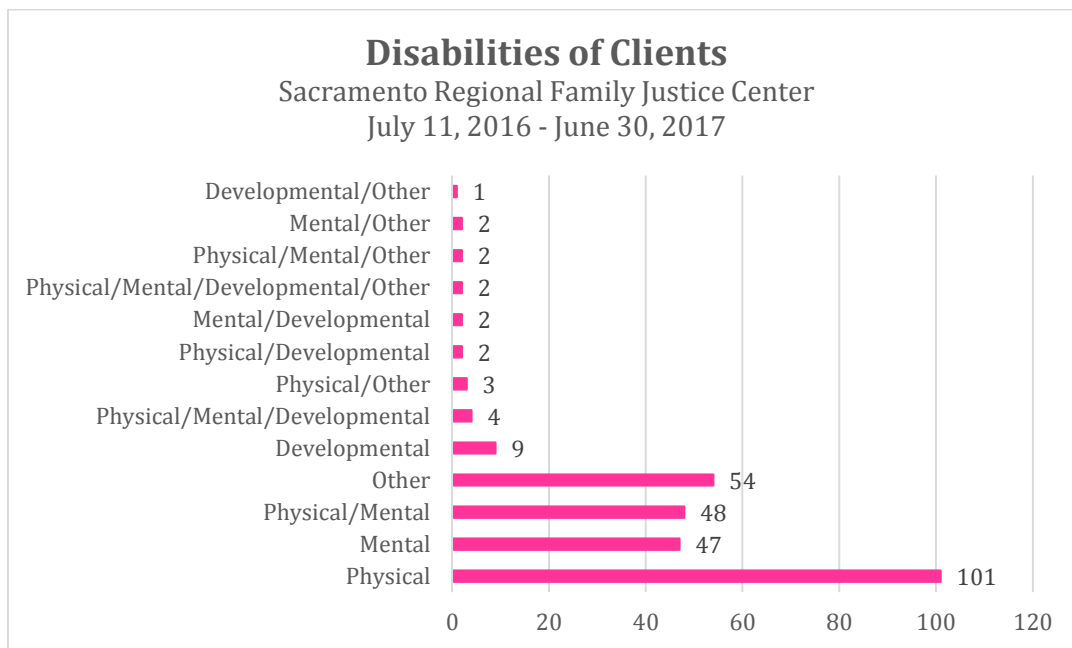


The above chart shows that the clients served by the SRFJC represent a diverse group of clients. Of the 1,187 clients who sought services, 417 were white, 270 were Hispanic, 254 were African American, 66 were Asian, 15 were Native American, 11 were Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and 4 were of Middle Eastern descent. Additionally, 80 clients were comprised of two or more groups, while 19 identified as "other." There were 51 clients whose ethnicity was unknown or not disclosed.

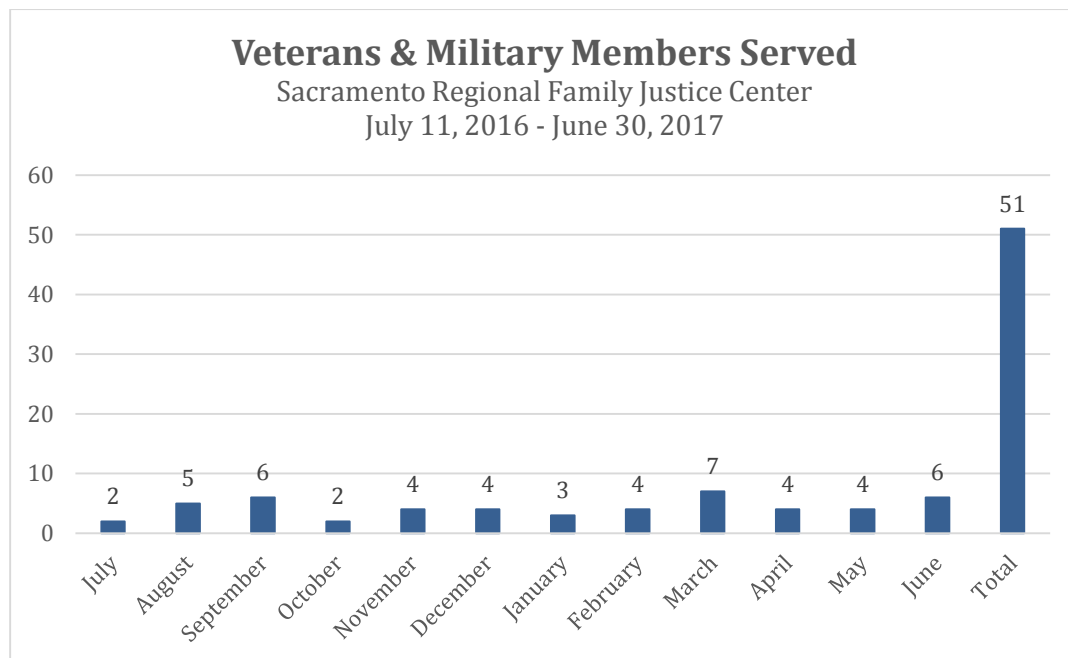


The above chart displays the gender breakdown of the 1,187 clients served by the SRFJC, with 1,013, or 86 percent, identifying as female, and 169, or 14 percent, identifying as

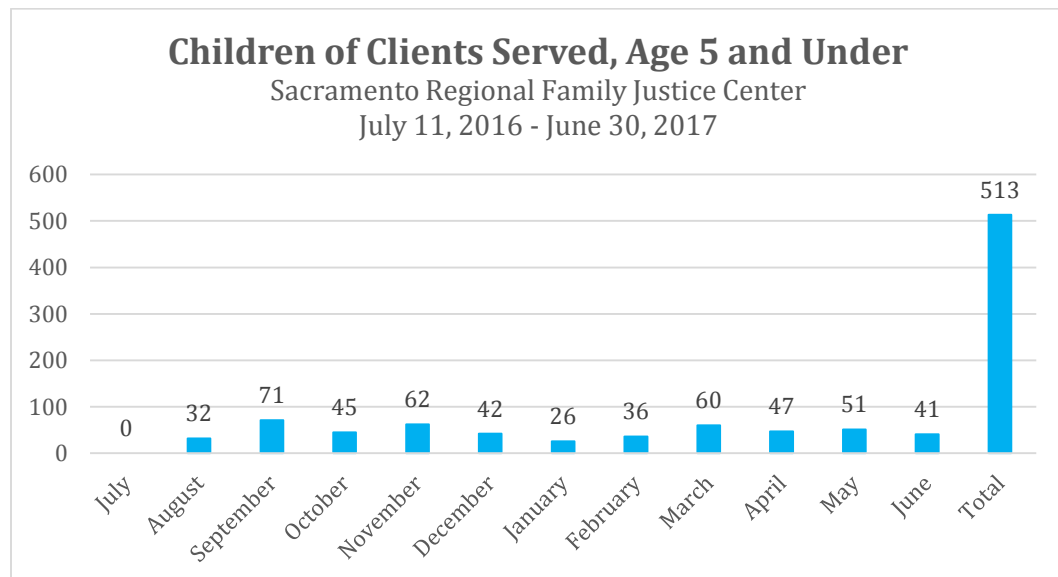
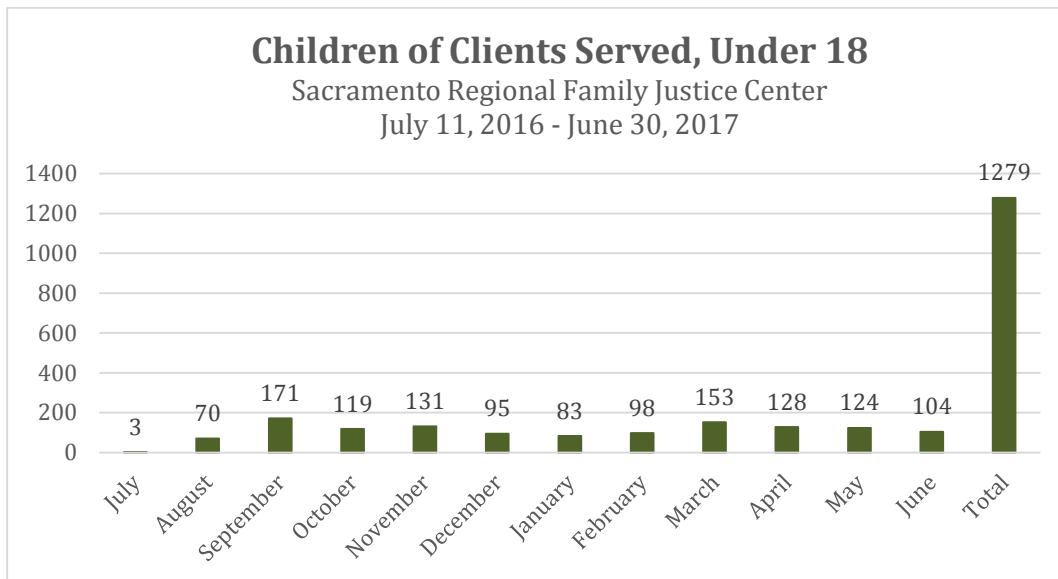
male. There were an additional five clients (not represented on the chart), who's gender was unknown or not disclosed.



Of the 1,187 clients served, 277 reported as having a disability of some kind, as illustrated by the above chart. Most clients reported physical, mental, and developmental disabilities, or a combination of the three. Many clients classified his or her disability or disabilities as “other.”



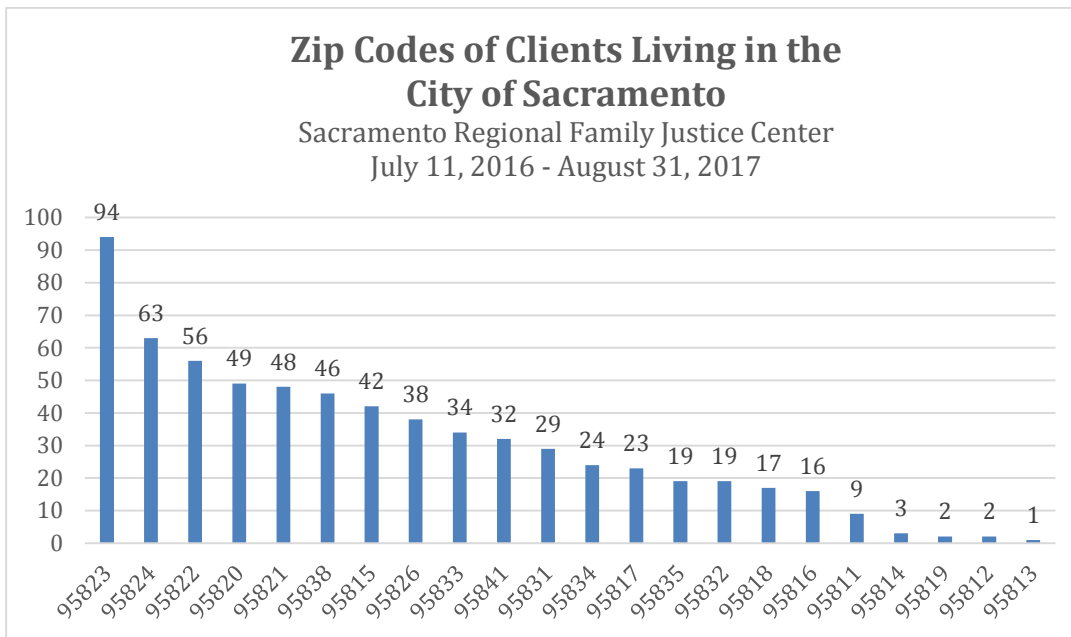
There was a total of 51 veterans or members of the U.S. military who received services at the SRFJC, as reflected by the above chart. The total reflects both veterans and active military members.



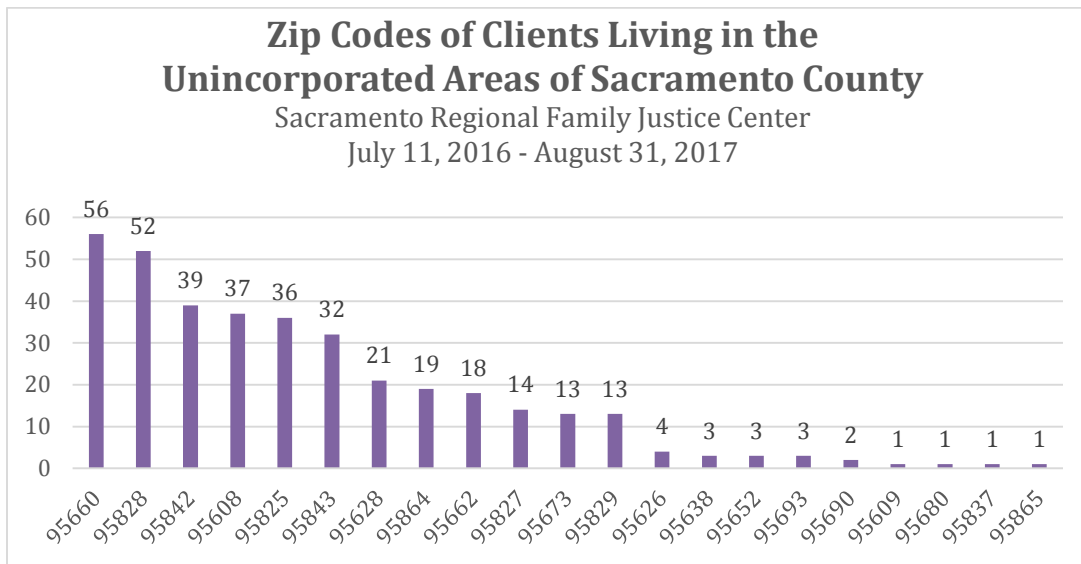
The above two charts show that many SRFJC's clients were parents to young children. Among the clients' children, 1,279 were under the age of 18. Of that total, 513 were age 5 and younger. Additionally, two clients who sought services were pregnant. Of the 1,187 clients who sought services, 764, or 64 percent, had at least one child. This total includes adult children over the age of 18 and is not represented on either of the above charts.



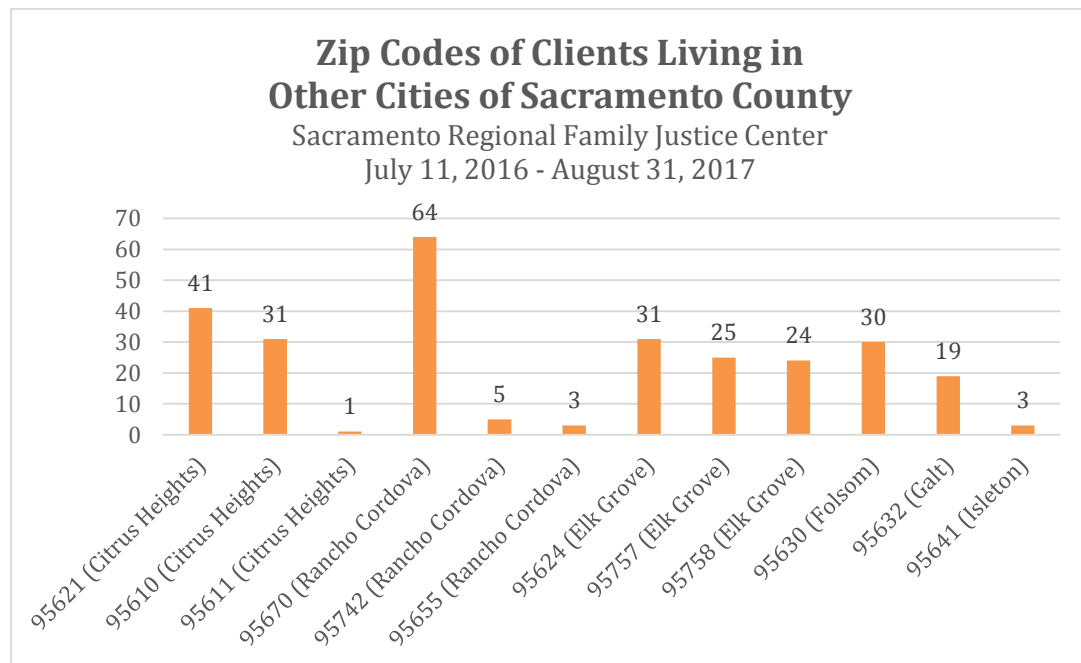
A total of 722 safety plans were completed at the SRFJC between July 11, 2016 and June 30, 2017. As of May 2017, it is standard procedure for every client seeking services at the SRFJC to be given a safety plan.



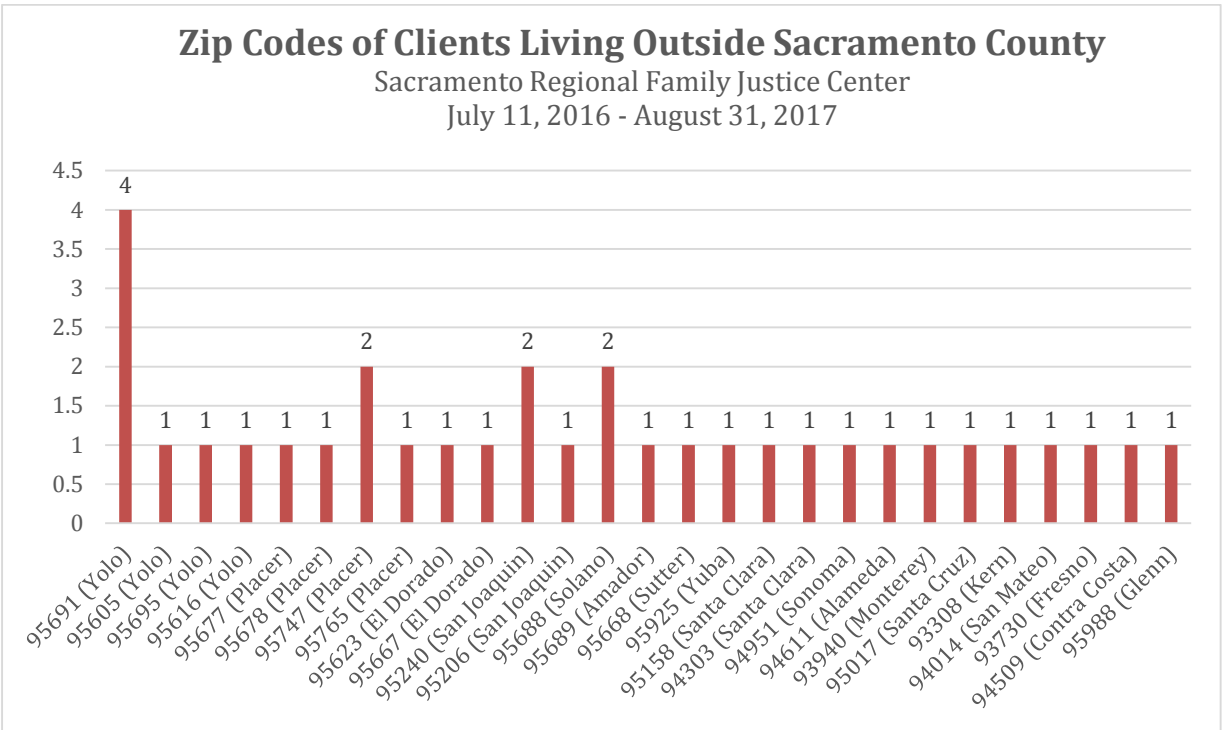
Between July 11, 2016 and August 31, 2017, the SRFJC served a total of 666 clients who reported their addresses as located within an incorporated area of the city of Sacramento, in Sacramento County.



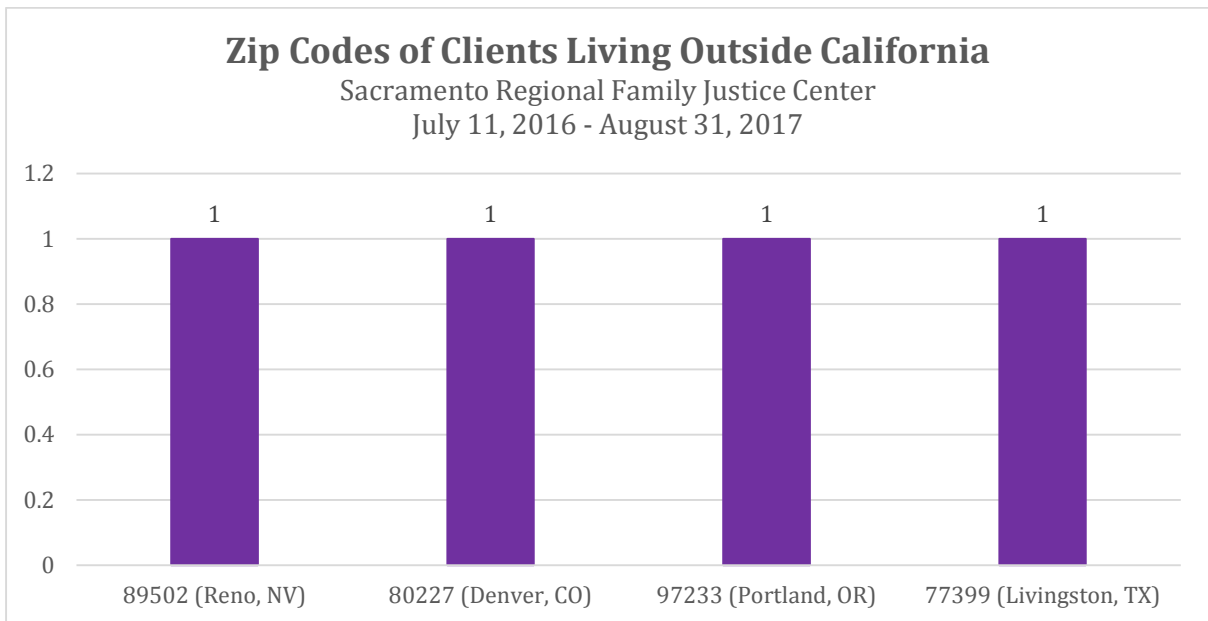
Between July 11, 2016 and August 31, 2017, the SRFJC served a total of 370 clients who reported their addresses as located within an unincorporated area of Sacramento County.



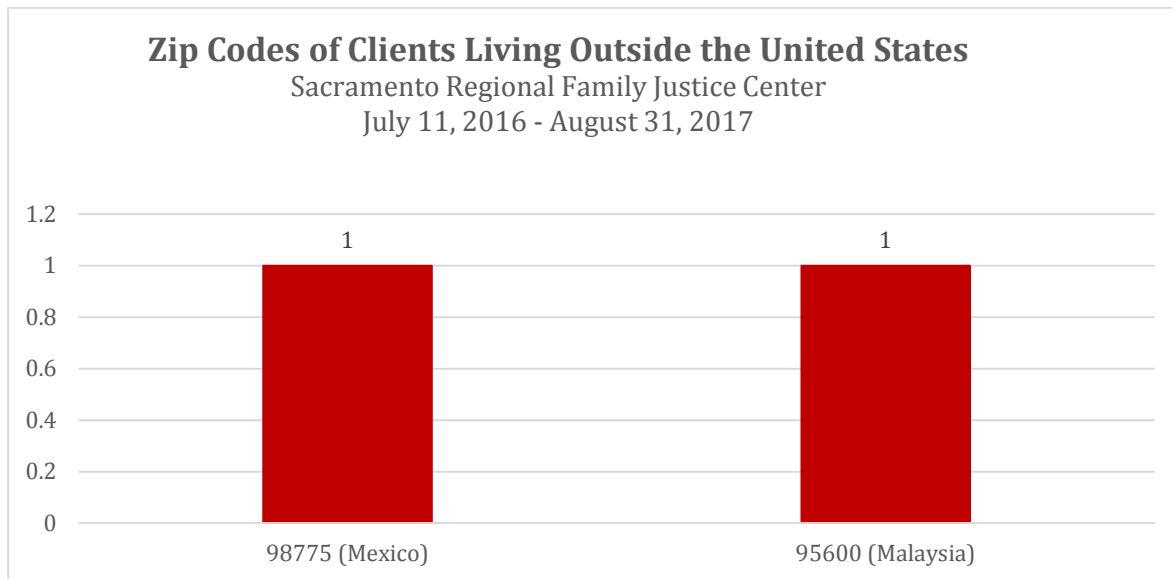
Between July 11, 2016 and August 31, 2017, the SRFJC served a total of 277 clients who reported their addresses as located within an incorporated city in Sacramento County other than Sacramento, including Citrus Heights, Rancho Cordova, Elk Grove, Folsom, Galt, and Isleton.



Between July 11, 2016 and August 31, 2017, the SRFJC served a total of 33 clients who reported their addresses as located in a California county outside of Sacramento County.



Between July 11, 2016 and August 31, 2017, the SRFJC served a total of 4 clients who reported their addresses as located in a U.S. state outside of California.



Between July 11, 2016 and August 31, 2017, the SRFJC served a total of 2 clients who reported their addresses as located outside of the U.S.

The Law Enforcement Subcommittee has met several times during the year to discuss issues they currently face. The DA's Office has updated its domestic violence training; it is available for all local patrol and detective law enforcement personnel. Law enforcement agencies regularly attend the other subcommittee meetings.

The Domestic Violence Death Review Team (DVDRT) is a subcommittee of the Sacramento County Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (DVCC). The DVDRT is authorized to exist pursuant to Penal Code Section 11163.3. Formed in the spring of 1998, the team meets on a monthly basis.

This is the DVDRT's 18th annual report. The first report was released in the fall of 2000. The reports are released in October, to coincide with Domestic Violence Awareness Month. The team is presently chaired by DA Anne Marie Schubert, represented by Keith Hill, supervisor of the DA's Domestic Violence Unit.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the DVDRT is to bring together a multi-disciplinary team to review domestic violence related homicide cases (including homicide-suicide cases) in Sacramento County. The team meets to develop strategies, policies and procedures to improve regional system responses to domestic violence in an effort to reduce and prevent future incidents of domestic violence related homicide-suicides and injuries. Domestic violence continues to be a widespread problem in our county. In the last 12 months, approximately 3,726 fresh arrests were made for domestic violence and 2,147 warrants were requested, for a total of over 5873 cases reported to law enforcement. The DA filed and prosecuted over 2,423 cases in that same time period; 71 percent of those cases were fresh arrests and the other 29 percent were warrant arrests. The principal reason a case was handled by warrant rather than fresh arrest was that the perpetrator fled the

crime scene before law enforcement arrived, preventing immediate arrest. This often requires law enforcement to conduct follow-up investigations.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Pursuant to Penal Code Section 11163.3, the meetings of the DVDRT are confidential. Every representative of a constituent agency or institution who attends DVDRT meetings signs an agreement of confidentiality.

MEMBERSHIP

The DVDRT is a multi-disciplinary, broad based organization which reviews information from law enforcement, public health, social services, coroner, child welfare, public and private medical organizations and domestic violence advocacy organizations. The current participating organizations are:

- Sacramento County District Attorney's Office
- Sacramento County Coroner's Office
- Sacramento County Sheriff's Department
- Sacramento City Police Department
- Sacramento County Probation Department
- Elk Grove Police Department
- Citrus Heights Police Department
- Law Enforcement Chaplaincy- Sacramento
- California Attorney General's Office
- Sacramento County Department of Health and Human Services
- Sacramento County Counsel
- Kaiser Permanente
- University of California, Davis Medical Center
- Sacramento County Child Protection Services
- Sutter Health
- Sutter Medical Center
- Dignity Health
- WEAVE, Inc. (Women Escaping a Violent Environment)
- My Sister's House
- A Community For Peace
- Child Abuse Prevention Council

IMPLEMENTATION

To fulfill its mission, the DVDRT:

- Reviews domestic violence homicides in the county to determine if any systemic improvements should be made;
- Develops and recommends strategies to reduce and prevent domestic violence related homicides and homicide-suicides;

- Develops and recommends strategies to deal with the aftermath of domestic violence and domestic violence deaths;
- Acts as a multi-agency and multi-disciplinary team with regular meetings;
- Operates with the confidentiality principles outlined in Penal Code Section 11163.3 (requiring a signed confidentiality agreement for all team participants).
- Maintains a database of all records reviewed;
- Interacts with agencies and community based organizations to help achieve its goals, using the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council as a point of contact and interaction.

SELECTION AND REVIEW OF CASES

The process by which the DVDRT selects cases for review has evolved over time. Currently, any member who has knowledge of a domestic violence related death in Sacramento County (that is not currently being prosecuted by the DA) may ask for the case to be reviewed. Most cases are referred by either law enforcement or the DA. The DVDRT chair selects which of the referred cases will be reviewed. If a case is being prosecuted by the DA's Office, the team waits until the case is sentenced and the prosecution is completed.

Once a case is selected, the DA's Office provides identifying information to the other members of the team regarding the victim, the perpetrator, and any biological or custodial children that either party had prior to the homicide. Each committee member is responsible for reviewing the records of their agency to identify relevant information regarding the case and/or parties involved. At the time of review, the DA or law enforcement agency describes details of the homicide and each member agency provides any additional information they may have about the case.

In some cases, the DVDRT may extend an invitation to participate in the review to the prosecutor, law enforcement detective or victim advocate assigned to the case. When necessary, a member of the group may be assigned to contact members of the victim's or perpetrator's family to develop a better understanding of the underlying relationship. In some instances, family members and witnesses have been asked to attend DVDRT meetings to give direct input to the team.

With the limitations of the selection process, the time constraint placed on the team to ascertain records and the inability of the DVDRT to gather information from every possible source, the database of cases reviewed cannot be considered exhaustive or statistically representative. Nonetheless, the data collected can reveal significant concerns or insufficiencies which are evaluated by various experts, representatives from local agencies and members of the team, who then make recommendations.

CASES REVIEWED

In 2016-2017, the team reviewed nine different cases. Seven are homicide cases. For the first time this year there were two attempted homicide cases that nearly caused death that the committee felt should be reviewed as the facts presented opportunities for the Team to review a broad range of lethality issues. These two cases are part of the total nine cases reviewed. Two of the cases were murder-suicide victims. Each case required complex scrutiny by the team to

evaluate all of the issues. The murder-suicide cases, where no criminal prosecution was possible, required even more effort to gather essential family history information since police agencies are generally not inclined to conduct an investigation into the background factors of a case when prosecution is not possible. Below is a chart identifying the number of cases reviewed by the DVDRT for the 2017 annual report by supervisorial district. A map is also included depicting the geographical locations of cases reviewed within each district.

DVDRT Cases Reviewed in 2017 by Supervisorial District

	District 1 Serna	District 2 Kennedy	District 3 Peters	District 4 Frost	District 5 Nottoli	Total
2017	2	2	0	4	1	9

CASE SUMMARIES

The review of our nine cases this year reaffirms the DVDRT conclusions from years past. Domestic violence affects all age ranges, races, religions and economic levels of society. The main truism that can be gleaned from these cases is that a domestic violence homicide victim or perpetrator can be either male or female, and abusers come from all walks of life.

Age Ranges:

The victims ranged in age from 27 to 63 years old. The perpetrators ranged in age from 30 to 62.

Education Levels:

Education levels of victims and perpetrators ranged from high school dropout to a doctorate degree.

Employment:

In the cases reviewed this year, employment for victim's ranged from unemployed to a health care worker. Employment for perpetrators ranged from unemployed to a security guard and a chiropractor. The incomes of the victims and perpetrators ranged from high income to low income.

Murder-Suicides and Murders Witnessed by Family:

Six of the nine cases were murder-suicides. In one case, the murder was done while children were present.

Premeditation and Deliberation:

In virtually all of the cases there was evidence of calculated pre-planning by the perpetrator.

Prior Domestic Abuse:

There was evidence of prior abuse, either physical or stalking type behavior in eight of the cases where the DVDRT was able to get detailed histories of the relationships. Although the prior history showed multiple incidents of less severe conduct, there was not a clear progression of escalating violence preceding the murders in all cases.

Alcohol/Drugs or Prescription Medications:

Alcohol and/or illegal drug use was a contributing factor in eight of the cases. Of significance was the predominant involvement of alcohol and marijuana.

Prior Awareness of Abuse by Others:

In several of the cases, the victim had either told someone about prior abuse, or family members knew about prior abuse and/or fear of future abuse. In some of the cases, the victim thought they could control the situation. This incorrect judgment on the part of the victim (i.e. the victim of abuse believing he/she would have time to make a determination about the danger, and take appropriate steps before the violence turned lethal), turned out to be a deadly error.

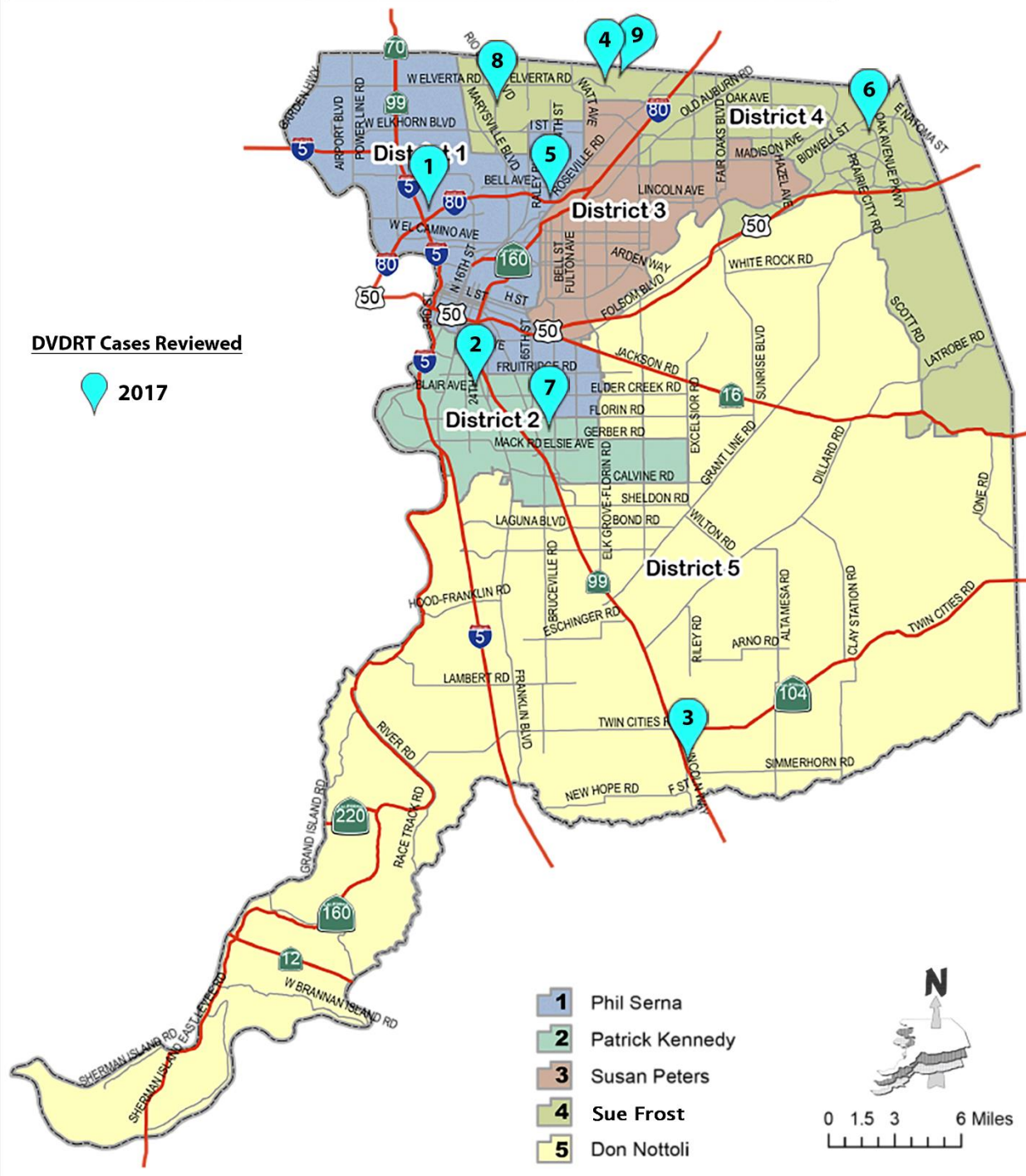
In most of the cases reviewed, the friends or family members who knew or were concerned for the victim's situation failed to realize there was a possibility the violence could end in murder. Repeatedly, friends or family talked about signs of abuse they had witnessed, and in the next breath, expressed shock about the homicide. This insight into the potential lethality of domestic violence was also lacking in many of the victims, who were certain they could control their environment and escape serious injury, as they had in the past.

The following map and table summarize the location in the County and some of the key factors seen repeatedly in domestic violence homicides. The attempted murder cases are numbers five (5) and seven (7) respectively in the table.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS DISTRICTS

DVDRT Cases Reviewed

2017



DVDRT CASES REVIEWED IN 2017

Case	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9
Age of Victim	35	31	63	30	52	27	41	33	35
Age of Perp	49	31	55	37	51	30	62	34	31
Kids Together?	0	No	No	No	No	No	No	3	No
Children - V	3	1	No	No	5	No	2	3	2
Children - P	2	2	1	No	4	No	7	3	0
Kids Witness Violence?	No	No	No	N/A	No	N/A	No	Yes	No
Relationship Status	Divorced	Dating	Dating	Prior Dating	Dating	Married	Prior Dating	Married	Prior Dating
Weapon Used	Gun	Gun	Axe or hammer	Gun	Hands	Knife	Knife	Gun	Gun
Facts	D shot V in the head and then killed himself.	D shot V in the head and then killed himself	D killed V with blunt force trauma and then killed herself.	D just got out of jail for DV. Shot V in the head and 3 days later killed himself.	D beat the victim to the point she suffered a brain hemorrhage	D stabbed victim with a knife and was caught trying to dispose of the body.	D and V in an argument when D stabs V with a knife.	During argument D shot V in the head and then killed himself.	D shot V in her garage on the day of sentencing. D later killed himself.

V = Victim

P = Perpetrator

D = Defendant

BF = Boyfriend

GF = Girlfriend

Unk = Unknown

DVDRT CASES REVIEWED IN 2017 cont.

Case	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9
Prior DV History	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	None
Prior Suicidal Ideation	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	None
Education – V	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Education – P	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	High School	Unknown	High School	Unknown	Doctorate Degree
Mental Health Diagnosis	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Employed? V	Unknown	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Unknown	Yes	Unknown	Yes
Employed? P	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Unknown	Yes	Unknown	Yes
Drugs/ Alcohol	No	Alcohol, Meth	Alcohol, Marijuana	Alcohol, MJ Cocaine	Alcohol	Drugs	Alcohol	Alcohol	Marijuana
Race	White	White	White	Hispanic	White	White	Black	Asian	Black

V = Victim

P = Perpetrator

D = Defendant

BF = Boyfriend

GF = Girlfriend

Unk = Unknown

FINDINGS

A lethality assessment is needed at the earliest stage possible in order to help victims understand the danger they may be in and to better help law enforcement, advocates and community partners create a safety plan to help prevent future violence.

In 8 of the 9 cases reviewed this year, there was a history of some form of domestic violence. Sacramento County does not currently utilize a Lethality Assessment Program to educate victims and assist officers responding to domestic violence calls in assessing the risk of future lethality. In addition, in only limited portions of the county are victim advocates involved in the field to assist victims at the time a crime is reported. Instituting a Lethality Assessment Program would better educate and assist law enforcement, victims, victim advocates, attorneys and judges that subsequently become involved with victims who have reported domestic violence crimes.

Lethality assessment training for judicial officers working in domestic violence and family courts would help them better understand the potential for homicide in domestic violence cases.

In one of the cases reviewed this year, the victim was murdered the day before the defendant was set to be sentenced in an ongoing stalking case. It is important for all parties involved in handling these cases to understand the risks of future violence. Studies done by leading experts in the field such as Dr. Jill Messing, PhD. and Dr. Jacquelyn Campbell, PhD. show that lethality in domestic violence cases is not always obvious. It takes a strong understanding of the unique dynamics of individual relationships and the triggers that frequently lead to future homicide. Training with regard to lethality factors for all judicial officers working in domestic violence and family law courts will assist them in making key decisions that can dramatically impact the ongoing safety of victims. Since all judges are asked to be on call for night service sometime during the year, a training that educates judges on the lethality assessment system our law enforcement will be using may help protect victims from further domestic violence.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The DVDRT recommends that the Board approve the following implementation plan:

Educational Recommendations

The DVDRT believes reducing domestic violence and future homicides requires education, understanding and preventative measures. This includes officers responding to calls for service, victims currently involved in domestic violence relationships and attorneys and judges that handle domestic violence cases as they proceed through the system. As the County leaders, the DVDRT respectfully requests the Board approve the following plans for promoting education on lethality factors in domestic violence.

1. Implement a Lethality Assessment Program

Extensive studies on lethality assessment have been done by leading experts in the field. Their years of research have culminated in the development of a validated 11 question lethality assessment screening tool that has proven to be a reliable predictor of future violence. This lethality screening for first responders is now been utilized in over 30 states across the country. Our recommendation is not only that this Lethality Assessment Screening be used by first responders, but also that a Lethality Assessment Protocol is implemented wherein critical follow up is done by trained victim advocates who can assist victims with safety planning, restraining orders, housing and any other needs that they have to protect themselves and their families.

A. Incorporate Lethality Assessment Training into Current Domestic Violence Training for First Responders Combined with the Use of a Lethality Assessment Screening at All Domestic Violence Calls.

Practitioners working in the field of domestic violence have previously used a 20 question danger assessment tool to help predict the risk of future domestic violence and homicide. That tool can often be too onerous for use by first responders in high volume jurisdictions. In response, the Domestic Violence Lethality Screen for First Responders was developed. This validated simplified screening tool is a series of 11 questions asked by first responders of victims. It also allows for individual and case specific judgments by officers based on the unique facts of the case and their experience and training. The scoring system is designed for ease of use with the results of “high danger” or “not high danger.” Whether or not the victim is at high risk, the officer can use the risk factors listed to educate the victim about the risk of homicide in an intimate relationship. Based on the outcome of the screening, a determination is made whether or not to proceed with the Lethality Assessment Protocol discussed below. The screening questions and responses can then be easily included with the victim’s statement as part of the police report. This will inevitably be of significant value to prosecutors and anyone else subsequently reviewing the report as the case proceeds through the legal system. District Attorney Anne Marie Schubert has already had preliminary discussions of the Lethality Assessment Protocol with our local law enforcement agencies and there was a very positive response.

B. Institute a Lethality Assessment Protocol for All Victims That Score as “high danger” on the Lethality Assessment Screening

If a law enforcement officer utilizing the Lethality Assessment Screening determines that a victim has scored as a “high danger” of future violence he/she will the initiate the Lethality Assessment Protocol. This means that the victim is given the immediate opportunity to speak to an advocate while at the scene of the incident. The intervention is intended to be brief, to educate the victim about risk and risk factors, provide some immediate safety planning information and to encourage the victim to obtain services. Victims are able to refuse to answer any questions on the Lethality Screen and speak to the advocate only if they choose to do so. The way the protocol will work is that the

officer will have available to them a series of phone numbers that will be connected to the currently working hotline numbers of our community partners, such as A Community for Peace, My Sisters House and WEAVE. These hotlines will be staffed 24 hours a day by trained advocates who will be able to assist law enforcement and the victim. The Sacramento Regional Family Justice Center may also be used as a resource for officers during normal business working hours. This immediate connection may also help to build a bridge of trust and connection that will increase the likelihood of the victims obtaining subsequent services. The District Attorney's office has already begun discussing the use of this Lethality Assessment Protocol with our community partners and the response has been very positive.

2. Provide Lethality Assessment Training to Judicial Officers Working in Domestic Violence and Family Courts.

The need for a clear understanding of what types of risk factors have a high correlation with future violence and homicide does not end with law enforcement, victims and attorneys. It is important for those that are making key decisions in domestic violence cases to recognize the risk of future danger. Judges are called upon to make many crucial decisions in domestic violence cases, including emergency criminal protective order rulings, custody decisions, Criminal Protective orders after arraignment, family court restraining order decisions and bail and custody decisions, just to name a few. Their rulings will have a key and lasting impact on the safety of crime victims. As the new Lethality Assessment Program is rolled out to the law enforcement agencies, the DVDRT recommends approaching the presiding judge with the offer of a free training on the issue of lethality assessment in domestic violence cases. This training can be offered every time there are judicial rotations which bring new judges into the domestic violence and family courts. It will be open to all judges as all of the current judges have one week a year night time search warrant duty that often includes requests from law enforcement for emergency protective orders.

CONCLUSION

The DVCC is continuing to actively work with a broad spectrum of domestic violence partners including law enforcement, community organizations, businesses, educators, faith based organizations and local governments in trying to better address the issue of domestic violence in Sacramento County. The SRFJC can now provide a unique opportunity to further advance the successful collaborative efforts it has developed to deal with issues surrounding domestic violence in the community. The DVDRT looks forward to the Board's continued support during the next year as it explores this exciting opportunity.