

**LESSONS ON A HIGH RISK  
DOMESTIC HOMICIDE  
PROGRAM**

Verona Singer, PhD  
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Background   My Study   Themes   Lessons

**AGENDA**

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**SITUATING MYSELF**

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**BACKGROUND OF HIGH RISK DOMESTIC HOMICIDE PROGRAM**

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**DV FRAMEWORK IN NOVA SCOTIA**



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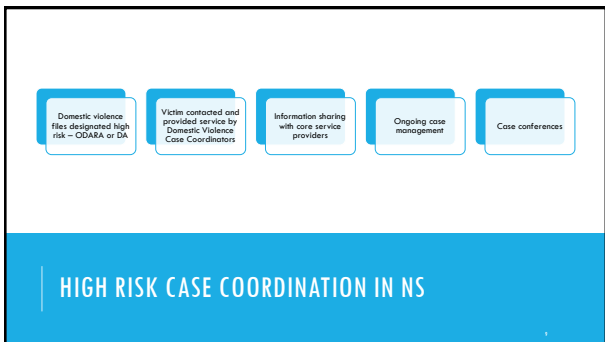
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**MY STUDY**



29 interviews  
2 focus groups  
Halifax & Sydney

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1. Does the high risk program make abused women feel safer?

2. What are the positive and negative consequences of the program?

3. What tensions and contradictions arise when developing appropriate responses to woman abuse?

**MY QUESTIONS**

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**01**  
Experience of the women and expectations of others

**02**  
The abusers

**03**  
One size fits all approach

**THEMES**

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**1. CHARACTERIZATIONS OF WOMEN: COOPERATIVE AND NICE**

*"You have to be very careful, right, because you have to be kind of a good victim, you can't be ungrateful. I mean, that's naturally how I am anyway, like I really believe you need to be polite and grateful, especially when so many people are working so hard. But, it's very easy to not be a good victim and if you have people in a position of power where they can either take your case seriously or not, label you as a bitch, which has a direct correlation to the level of service, and therefore your safety."*

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**EVEN JUDGES AND POLICE**

*"...the last time I went into the courtroom, the judge told me, be nice...I looked over at the judge cause I thought, I'm not hearing this right. You know, we're in here because he's breaching his probation, but you're telling me to be nice..."*

*"I couldn't argue with police because I didn't want them to not be there for me. So, I really had to go along with them, whether I agree or I don't."*

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**PASSIVE VICTIMS OR ACTIVE AGENTS**

*"Take me seriously. When I say that I know, trust my gut. Trust my gut because I've been through it. I think that they (police) need to know that, when women who have lived this, they know their men. And they know what they are capable of and when they're their worst, so I think that's definitely something the police need to believe us."*

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*"..... it's like an alcoholic, if an alcoholic wants help, then this is where the help is. A woman in an abusive situation, the help is there for her and I think we are all willing to do that. It's really tough and it gets frustrating (for those service providers) who are dealing with them and they don't want to buy into the program. And you got to credit the service providers... they keep going back and....don't give up."*

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## 2. THE ABUSER

*"The only thing that I would change is that I think maybe they should meet with the abuser and let him know what's going on, because he was furious (that) I couldn't talk to him according to the restraining order. The abuser tried to contact victim services a number of times to talk to them and I wish they had answered and said, this is what's going on. This is what category we've put her in based on what we know; so he would know just how bad it was. Cause he doesn't believe me and I just wish that someone else had told him."*

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*"I hate having to run. I've had to start over too many times. Too many times. You know, I'm finally starting to collect some good stuff, you know. I'm proud of what I have right now and...And damn, I don't want to have to let it go again."*

*"Always have your cell phone on you, always have it charged, never go anywhere alone, never do this, never do that. And it was just like, it blew my mind. I can't believe that now for the rest of my life, or for a good part of it, I'm going to have to be so much more cautious all the time."*

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### 3. ONE SIZE FITS ALL APPROACH

*"I'm sick of being a victim... I'm moving on with my life... I don't want to have contact and be asked how I am anymore. And I know enough to know that if there is a risk that I know exactly when to call them... So how does one become undesignated? I think that we need to have the right to say that we don't want to be part of this protocol anymore."*

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*"Isn't it always intrusive? If so some women appreciate it and some don't".*

*"The (high risk )protocol represents a social control not a social justice approach so the agency response is controlled by the protocol. An evaluation may show that this is the worst thing".*

*"Ineffective or slow government responses is like "fall[ing] in a black hole".*

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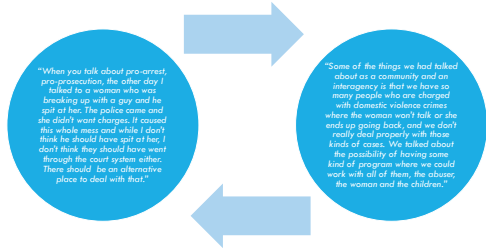
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### ALTERNATIVES TO THE JUSTICE SYSTEM



*"When you talk about pre-arrest, pre-prosecution, the other day I talked to a woman who was breaking up with a guy and he spit at her. The police came and she didn't want charges. It roused this whole mess and while I don't think he should have spit at her, I don't think they should have waded through the court system either. There should be an alternative place to deal with that."*

*"Some of the things we had talked about to a community and an interagency is that we have so many people who are charged with domestic violence crimes, where the woman won't talk or she ends up going back, and we don't really deal properly with those kinds of cases. We talked about the possibility of having some kind of program where we could work with all of them, the abuser, the woman and the children."*

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Re-think the approach to abused women

Re-think approach to abusers

Avoid one size fits all

LESSONS

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RE-THINK THE APPROACH TO WOMEN



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RE-THINK APPROACH TO ABUSER



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AVOID A ONE SIZE  
FITS ALL



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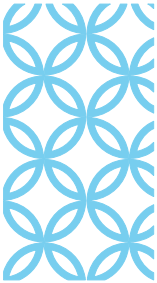
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CONCLUSION

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