

Focus Group Discussion: Connecticut Violent Death Reporting System (CTVDRS)

The team invited 10 advisory board members to participate in this Focus Group Discussion (FGD). However, nine members indicated interest in participating while one member abstained.

1) Discuss the overall first year experience of the Connecticut Violent Death Reporting system project?

- a. What do you think about the timeliness of the data provided by the project team?

Eight participants gave a response of “very good, very timely and appropriate.” One participant abstained. Other comments about timeliness: one member expressed disappointment with the lack of cooperation from law enforcement in providing data to the project. Another comment from a board member acknowledged the project team for forging a key partnership with OCME.

- b. Do you think that the preliminary data provided by the team is sufficiently detailed and will be useful to stakeholders?

One participant abstained. There was a sentiment among the other eight participants that the preliminary data was just that “preliminary data” and good enough considering the lag time involved. One board member commented that the project team should establish a quality assurance process if not in place yet to examine the completeness of the data collected and determine if there are gaps in the data, and where they may exist. Another participant requested that the team perform an in depth analysis on the available data to compare trends among cities, communities and regions. A member echoed the disappointment in the lack of comprehensive law enforcement data. One board member suggested that the project team try to collect more detailed information about the mental health status of the victims.

- c. What do you think about the structure and make-up of the CTVDRS advisory board? (prompts: Is it worth your time to attend)

There was consensus about pushing for improved attendance of members, a “full- board” present at meetings. Participants suggested that the CTVDRS team add more law enforcement officials to the board, especially from the three most populous cities. It was also suggested that the team should add some expertise in the area of addiction, mental health or psychiatry. In addition, participants observed that the board is “too professional heavy” and that the board should add community members.(feet on the street). One suggestion was to seek information from veteran NVDRS states as to the composition of their advisory boards and perhaps sit in via Skype or a live board meeting from one of those states.

2) Identify strengths and weakness

- a. What are some of the positive aspects of this reporting system and the project team?

One member abstained. The consensus from the remaining participants was that the project team was accessible and willing to share available data. In addition, the turn -around time for the input and dissemination of the data was very timely.

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- b. What are some things that aren't so good about this system and the project team?

The consensus from all the participants was nothing. The participants expressed their satisfaction with the project team.

- c. What would you change about the functions of the team if you could?

There was consensus from the participants that the project team could use more money and resources to help expand the reach of the project in terms of data collections from law enforcement agencies.

3) Identify and/or propose opportunities for improvement going forward

- a. What suggestions do you have to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the system/team?

The consensus from the participants was to try to get law enforcement more involved in the project. (have law enforcement submit their data). One participant suggested that in order to facilitate better discussion at the meetings, it would be helpful for the project team to distribute meeting information and handouts to the board members in advance of the meeting. Another suggested that the project team use the advisory board members to help facilitate relationships with other stakeholders.

- b. Do you have any additional suggestions? Consensus was no.