

“Contributing to the personal safety and security of those that need it, and holding accountable those that deserve it”

The Capital Regional District Domestic Violence Unit: An Evaluation Framework

A 598 Report

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Executive Summary

This report presents an evaluation framework for the Capital Regional District Domestic Violence Unit (RDVU, or Unit). The RDVU was established in response to a case of domestic violence that culminated in a murder-suicide in Oak Bay in which five family members were killed. The Unit, operational since July 2010, is a collaborative and interdisciplinary initiative where police, child protection, and community-based victim services are co-located to provide a coordinated response to the most serious cases of domestic violence across the Greater Victoria region.

The evaluation framework is composed of two core components:

1. A proposed performance measurement strategy that guides the ongoing measurement of specific operational dimensions of the Unit's performance; and
2. A proposed evaluation strategy that frames a two-stage future evaluation of the Unit.

The performance measurement and evaluation strategies are complementary, structured management tools to be used by the RDVU managers and its partnering agencies to provide “formative” information and feedback to support collective learning and assessment of what the Unit does. In doing so, the performance measurement and evaluation strategies are intended to support and guide shared decision-making aimed at continuous improvement of the Unit's operations and achievement of the goals and expected outcomes upon which the partnering agencies established the RDVU.

This report provides a considerable amount of supporting information used to develop the performance measurement and evaluation strategies:

- The dynamics of domestic violence and the persistent challenges communities experience when responding to it are presented to provide a contextual setting to the establishment of the RDVU and considerations for assessing its performance.

- A literature review and critique of evaluations of domestic violence units and similar interventions is also presented to illustrate considerations the researchers applied to developing this evaluation framework, particularly studies conducted under time and budget constraints and hampered by lack of readily available program data.
- A profile of the RDVU—its governance, funding and operational elements—is also described, followed by an RDVU logic model, which visually depicts how the Unit is intended to work and what it is intended to accomplish—an important reference tool for the RDVU and its partnering agencies and an essential building block of the performance measurement and evaluation strategies presented in this report.
- A series of 25 performance measures are presented, the bulk of which focus on the “bridging variables”: the interim markers of success and necessary accomplishments required for the RDVU to achieve its short- and medium-term outcomes.
- An RDVU client survey and two community agency surveys are proposed as primary data sources to sustain ongoing collection of data necessary to calculate many of the proposed performance measures.
- A plan for a two-stage future evaluation is also proposed—the first stage focusing on the extent to which the implementation of the RDVU conforms with its program logic and theory of change presented in this report; and the second stage aiming to assess the effectiveness of the RDVU in achieving short- and medium-term outcomes.
- Research designs for the future evaluation are presented to aid in the gathering of multiple lines of evidence, as well as a series of evaluation tools (interview and observation guides) to assist the future evaluator in executing the evaluation plan proposed in this report.

Recommendations for the RDVU and its partnering agencies are provided throughout the discussions on the proposed performance measurement and evaluation strategies and accompanying appendices. However, this report has but two overarching recommendations from which all other instructions and suggestions in this report flow:

- 1. The Unit's management team should implement the performance measurement strategy described herein as soon as practicable in order to start accumulating data that will be that will be used in the later evaluation. In doing so, the managers will need to implement the administration of the RDVU Client Survey, the Community Agency Survey A, and Community Agency Survey B.**
- 2. The evaluation strategy described herein should be implemented no sooner than a year after the performance measurement strategy is implemented. The evaluation will require an external evaluator for neutrality reasons and before commencing the evaluation the evaluator should check over the performance measurement system data set and take account of any gaps and reliability issues.**

1 INTRODUCTION

Early on the morning of September 4, 2007, Peter Lee, who was under court order to have no contact with his wife, Sunny Park, entered the Oak Bay home where Sunny, their son Christian, and Sunny's parents were sleeping. He murdered everyone in the home and then, kneeling over the bodies of Sunny and Christian, killed himself. The tragedy occurred on the day Peter Lee was scheduled to appear in a Victoria court on charges stemming from a car crash five weeks earlier in which his wife accused him of intentionally crashing their vehicle into a tree in an attempt to cause her serious bodily harm. It was also the day Christian Lee was to begin Grade 1.

Two public reviews of the tragedy sought answers to this central question: why had criminal justice and other responders collectively failed to prevent the murders given the information they had regarding the high risk Peter Lee posed to the safety of Sunny Park and the rest of her family? The following is a list of some of the evidence that was available to authorities leading up to the tragedy:

- Oak Bay police were called to the couple's home on several occasions between 2003 and 2007 to respond to domestic violence, though no charges were ever laid;
- Peter Lee had a history of arrest for assault and, at the time of the car crash, was on bail for a 2006 incident in which he was charged with unlawful confinement and uttering threats against a young man and his girlfriend;
- Statements to Police and Crown from Sunny Park detailing emotional, psychological, and violent abuse during their marriage, including threats by Peter Lee that he would kill her and himself if she pursued a divorce;
- A sworn affidavit in which Sunny Park stated concern for Christian's safety, as she felt Peter Lee might harm him in order to cause her harm; and

- Reports to Crown, Corrections, and Police that Peter Lee was engaged in stalking behavior and had breached the no-contact provisions of his bail conditions on several occasions leading up to the September 4th tragedy.

(Representative for Children and Youth, 2009)

A report by the province’s Representative for Children and Youth (RCY) recommended that the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General (MPSSG) take the lead in an initiative to standardize responses to and share information about domestic violence cases, particularly those which pose a high risk of harm to victims (RCY, 2009). A Coroner’s Inquest also called upon MPSSG to develop “special domestic violence units” to coordinate system responses to domestic violence cases across regions (BC Coroner, 2009, p. 1).

In response, the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General announced in January 2010 that the government would support the establishment of a domestic violence unit (DVU) to serve the Capital Regional District (CRD)¹ (MPSSG, 2010). The Unit, which has been operational since July 2010, co-locates police officers from the Victoria and Saanich municipal police departments, along with an officer from West Shore RCMP, two victim services workers, and a Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) child welfare worker. The purpose of the Unit is to “increase victim safety and offender accountability by providing a cross jurisdictional response that is uniform in approach in domestic violence cases across the Capital Regional District” (RDVU document, unpublished—see Appendix A).

1.1 Purpose

This report presents an evaluation framework for the Capital Regional District domestic violence unit (RDVU, or the Unit), the purpose of which is to provide the RDVU’s

¹ The Capital Regional District, or CRD, consists of 13 municipalities and 3 electoral areas. The municipalities are: Central Saanich, Colwood, Esquimalt, Highlands, Langford, Metchosin, North Saanich, Oak Bay, Saanich, Sidney, Sooke, Victoria, and View Royal. The three electoral areas are Juan de Fuca, Southern Gulf Islands, and Salt Spring Island. The RDVU does not currently accept any case files for the following areas in the Capital Regional District: Gulf Islands, Salt Spring and Shawnigan Lake.

partnering organizations with a management tool to: 1) guide the ongoing measurement of the Unit's performance; and 2) frame a future, formative evaluation of the Unit.

While the RDVU is a collaborative initiative built upon shared goals, each partnering organization has a stake in and expectations of the Unit's implementation, performance and effectiveness in achieving those goals. The Unit's partners therefore require a plan for collectively pursuing systematic inquiry into these critical areas of the partnership. This evaluation framework attempts to provide a road map to a structured process for the Unit's partners to collectively engage in informed decision-making, judgments, and learning about the efficiency and effectiveness of the Unit.

1.2 Client

The client for this report is the Capital Regional District domestic violence unit (RDVU). The RDVU and its partnering agencies seek practical and useful strategies for the Unit to collect, analyze and interpret data respecting their collective efforts to intervene in high-risk domestic violence cases. The researchers have therefore developed this report for all of the RDVU members and partnering agencies to use as they see fit.

While the researchers have interviewed and consulted all of the RDVU members during the development of this report, the principal point of contact has been the Unit's officer in charge (OIC), a sergeant with Victoria police. The Unit's OIC maintains day-to-day managerial responsibility for the Unit and its police and non-police members. Moreover, the OIC also presents regularly to the RDVU Steering Committee on the Unit's police and non-police operational matters. Accordingly, the Unit's OIC is the appropriate functional representative of the RDVU in so far as client input and direction for this report are concerned.

1.3 Definition of "Evaluation"

Evaluation is an ongoing, structured process that "creates and synthesizes information intended to reduce the level of uncertainty for decision makers and stakeholders about a given program..." (McDavid et al., 2013, p. 3). This definition demonstrates that evaluation is more than a single event conducted to determine whether or not a program

worked—it is also a fundamental tool to understanding and improving the way a program works (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004, p. 3).

Defining evaluation as an ongoing process reflects the growing movement among Canadian and American governments toward cyclical assessments of programs often referred to as the performance management cycle: “...an iterative planning—implementation—evaluation—program adjustments sequence in which program evaluation and performance measurement play important roles as ways of providing information to decision makers who are engaged in leading and managing organizations to achieve results” (McDavid et al., 2013, p. 7). In the performance management cycle performance measurement and evaluation are integrated tools to assessing program processes and effectiveness.

1.3.1 Performance Measurement and Evaluation

This report adopts the theoretical approach of the performance management cycle by presenting performance measurement and evaluation as complementary tools to assessing program processes and effectiveness. The core components of this approach—and the two key deliverables of this report—are as follows:

1. A performance measurement strategy—a set of indicators intended to monitor and gauge program performance; and
2. An evaluation strategy—a plan for the collection and analysis of evidence on program processes and effectiveness.

This evaluation framework presents a proposed performance measurement strategy and evaluation strategy for the RDVU. These strategies are intended to serve a formative purpose: to assist the RDVU and its partnering agencies in continuous learning about and improving the Unit’s operations.

If implemented, the performance measurement strategy will allow the Unit’s managers to monitor and assess what is happening with Unit operations and to make informed decisions and take timely action with respect to program operations. The evaluation

strategy provides the RDVU and its partnering agencies with a plan for a future evaluation to assess the degree to which the Unit is operating as implemented and to provide evidence on the Unit's effectiveness and achievement of intended results.

1.4 Context for the evaluation framework

The RDVU has a number of unique characteristics that require a carefully considered evaluation framework.

First, the RDVU is a collaborative. Its partnering organizations have come together with a mandate to reconnect fragmented systems and to develop new approaches to solving a complex problem. Such circumstances require a common lens through which the partners view and understand what it is they aim to achieve; how they plan to work together; and how they will measure, report, and ultimately assess their collective efforts.

The RDVU operates across a complex jurisdictional landscape: the Unit provides services to the 13 municipalities and 3 provincial electoral areas of the Capital Regional District. The region is policed by four independent municipal police services and three RCMP detachments. This jurisdictional breadth is one of the significant differences between the RDVU and its provincial predecessors in New Westminster, Vancouver, and Abbotsford.

The Units' child protection component is another unique aspect informing the development of this evaluation framework. The presence of a child welfare worker represents an addition to the co-location, partnership model between police and victim support workers found in New Westminster and Vancouver and throughout the literature on domestic violence units.

Finally, the RDVU was borne out of very high profile tragedy receiving local and national media attention and subject to multiple public reviews. The Unit's efforts to intervene in high-risk domestic violence cases will require its performance reporting and any future evaluation meet the test of reasonable scrutiny and produce credible

conclusions. An evaluation framework provides promise that future decisions the Unit and its partnering agencies make respecting RDVU operations are defensible.

1.5 Research Questions

We developed the following key questions to guide the development of the RDVU evaluation framework:

1. What evaluations of RDVU-like interventions exist and what evaluative approaches and issues are relevant to developing an evaluation framework for the RDVU?
2. What is the RDVU's program profile (i.e. what is the key background information required to understand the Unit and the context in which it operates)?
3. What is the RDVU's program theory or logic (i.e. what is it intended to do and how will it do it?)
4. What are the key measures to indicate how the Unit is performing over time and how can such information be collected and monitored?
5. What research design(s) and instruments are appropriate to assess the RDVU's operations and results?

We sought answers to these questions through an iterative process combining examination of domestic violence research and evaluation theory, as well as numerous interviews with a wide range of RDVU stakeholders.

1.6 Methodology

The methodology for this report consists of two streams of work: 1) a review of relevant literature; and 2) interviews with members of the RDVU's partnering agencies and key stakeholders. The researchers applied an iterative approach of inquiry to both. The literature review occurred simultaneously with the interviews to allow for the application of knowledge gained through one area of work to be applied to another and vice versa.

The literature review consisted of three phases. The first phase included reviewing the problem of domestic violence and examining models and best practices of coordinated community responses to it, including DVUs. In the second phase available evaluations of coordinated community responses and DVUs were examined to identify approaches and instruments used to assess both implementation and effectiveness. This research formed the basis of the report's literature review. The third phase comprised an examination of program evaluation and performance measurement literature and methodologies.

The researchers conducted an initial set of individual interviews with each of the nine members of the RDVU's operational and management team. The purpose of these interviews was to understand and document what it is the RDVU does; what staff and management expect as a result of the Unit's activities; and their insights into how to examine and assess the Unit's performance and evaluate its effectiveness.

The information gathered in the individual interviews with staff and management was used to construct a draft program logic model of the RDVU. A series of follow-up interviews were used to validate the accuracy of the logic model, which included three interviews with individual Unit members; two interviews with all the three members of the Unit's management team; and one meeting with the RDVU Steering Committee. Through this process the logic model was amended, finalized, and presented in chapter 4.

Interviews were also conducted with four members of the Vancouver DVU—2 police officers and two victim services workers—to gain their insights into how to evaluate a DVU's success and to learn about current practices used to measure that unit's performance. Interviews were also conducted with the CRD's Spousal Assault program victim services worker; two Crown counsel; and two members of Community Corrections in the CRD. Representatives from these three community agencies were asked to frame the insights and expectations of members of community agencies who routinely interact with the Unit. Neither Crown counsel nor Community Corrections are formally partnered with the RDVU; however, they have special knowledge and

perspectives about a future evaluation of the RDVU as a result of interactions with the Unit to date.

A list of all individuals interviewed for this report is provided in Appendix B. Both researchers participated in the interviews and took handwritten notes. At the start of each interview the researchers explained the purpose of the research; why they were seeking the interview; and the process for protecting their anonymity and maintaining confidentiality. Each interviewee was then asked to review and sign an interview consent form. After each interview both researchers reviewed and compared handwritten notes for accuracy. None of the comments from the interviews documented in this report are attributed by name to any of the individuals interviewed.

To supplement the interviews the researchers also undertook an online survey of a wide range of stakeholders. The survey was sent to all interviewees as well as other individuals identified using a snowball sampling technique during interviews. The website Survey Monkey was used to design and distribute the online questionnaire. Survey recipients were asked to respond to the following two questions:

1. What would you like to know about the RDVU?
2. What should evaluators examine in order to learn about the effectiveness of the RDVU?

The survey was sent to a total of 32 individuals associated with RDVU partnering and non-partnering agencies. A total of 15 completed survey responses were received (see Appendix C for a copy of the survey responses). The survey responses provided a supplementary source of information to the interviews and afforded the primary intended users of this evaluation framework—the Unit’s staff, management team, Steering Committee, and other stakeholders—with an additional opportunity to provide anonymous input into evaluation criteria and to identify their respective information needs. Moreover, by capturing additional stakeholders, such as identified police personnel from all of the region’s police departments and staff from non-partnering

organizations in the criminal justice system, the responses to the online survey offer a wider spectrum of considerations for this evaluation framework.

The invitation to participate in the online survey was sent from one of the researcher's email accounts to each recipient. The destination email addresses were hidden so that recipients were unable to see who else received invitations to participate. Moreover, the survey did not require respondents to identify themselves nor was there any method for the researchers to obtain information on who submitted responses.

1.7 Research Limitations

The researchers chose not to interview any past or current clients of the RDVU during the process of researching and writing this report. This decision means that one significant stakeholder group—victims of domestic violence—was not consulted on the development of this evaluation framework. The decision not to interview clients of the RDVU was made for the following reasons:

- The challenges with respect to safety and confidentiality of victims of domestic violence are significant; and
- Due to these sensitivities the resources required to plan and conduct interviews with victims should be applied during the evaluation itself as opposed to the evaluation-planning phase.

An additional limitation is the scope applied in deciding whom to interview. Apart from interviewing individuals with the Greater Victoria Spousal Assault Program, Crown counsel, and Community Corrections, the researchers decided not to interview other peripheral community agencies or organizations that, at the time of writing this report, have no formal partnership with the DVU. There is no doubt that a number of community agencies and organizations would have much to say about their expectations of the RDVU and the focus of an evaluation. As with the decision to forego interviews with clients of the Unit, the researchers believe interviews with a wider range of community organizations would be better suited to the evaluation itself. To that end the researchers

have identified a range of peripheral, non-partnering organizations to be consulted during a future formative evaluation of the RDVU (see chapter 5).

1.8 Report Structure

The report is structured as follows:

Chapter 2 | Literature review provides the contextual details for this report, which includes an overview of the dynamics of and system responses to domestic violence. The chapter then reviews and critiques some of the available evaluations of domestic violence units. A discussion outlines key approaches evaluators have taken to assess the implementation and effectiveness of domestic violence units, as well as some issues to consider when applying particular evaluation designs and instruments.

Chapter 3 | RDVU Program Description and Logic Model discusses what the RDVU seeks to achieve and how it plans to do so. Details are provided on the formation of the RDVU; its governance and funding structure; how the Unit receives cases and decides whether or not to intervene; and the roles and activities of its members. An RDVU logic model is also presented to highlight the linkages between the Unit's resources, activities and outcomes.

Chapter 4 | RDVU Performance Measurement Strategy presents a plan for monitoring and assessing dimensions of the RDVU's performance. The chapter discusses the purpose of the RDVU's performance measurement strategy; identifies measures for which data is to be collected and tracked over time; presents sample instruments for performance data collection; and recommendations respecting the implementation of the performance measurement strategy.

Chapter 5 | RDVU Evaluation Strategy presents a plan for a two-stage evaluation of the RDVU. The first stage presents a plan for a mixed-methods evaluation design to monitor and document the Unit's implementation. The second stage presents a research design to assess the Unit's achievement of its short- and medium-term outcomes as

identified in the RDVU logic model. Recommendations for the implementation of the evaluation strategy are also discussed.

Chapter 6 | Conclusion and Recommendations and Next Steps provides a summary of the report and sets out the next steps to take in order to proceed with report's recommendations.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is to provide readers with knowledge and contextual details critical to understanding the issues behind this report and the evaluation framework it presents. The chapter begins with a discussion on the definition, prevalence and dynamics of domestic violence. This is followed by a discussion on the challenges of responding to domestic violence and the models established by system responders to address these challenges, including interdisciplinary domestic violence units.

Building a strong evaluation framework for a program also calls for the review and analysis of similar prior evaluation work. The second half of this chapter therefore provides an overview of other evaluative studies of RDVU-like interventions, the purpose of which is to identify potential evaluation approaches, challenges, issues, opportunities, and tools, as well as help to identify common measures of process and outcomes of these interventions that the researchers considered in their development of both the performance measurement and evaluation strategies presented in Chapters 4 and 5 of this report.

2.1 Domestic Violence

2.1.1 Definition

The definition of domestic violence used in this report is consistent with the Province of British Columbia's Violence Against Women In Relationships (VAWIR) Policy. The VAWIR policy defines domestic violence as the physical or sexual assault, or threat of physical or sexual assault, by one adult partner against the other adult partner with whom they have or have had an intimate relationship, regardless of whether or not they are legally married or living together at the time of the assault or threat (Province of BC, 2010, pp. 1-2). While the VAWIR policy's definition of domestic violence is gender neutral, it recognizes that the overwhelming majority of victims of domestic violence are women.²

² The term "domestic violence" as used in this report also describes violence against males in homosexual relationships, against vulnerable males in heterosexual relationships, and against females in lesbian relationships. The report's definition

2.1.2 The Victims of Domestic Violence

In 2007, women comprised 83 percent of spousal violence victims in Canada as measured by incidents reported to police (Statistics Canada, 2009, p. 7). Female victims on average suffer a substantially higher incidence of severe consequences of abuse in comparison to male victims. According to a 2004 survey on victimization (Johnson, 2006, p. 33), women are twice as likely as men to report being beaten and three times as likely to report having been choked by an intimate partner.

This trend extends to spousal homicide statistics where, in 2007, nearly four times as many women as men were killed in Canada by a current or former spouse (Statistics Canada, 2009, p. 6). In BC, between January 2003 and August 2008, there were 73 domestic violence homicides, representing about 12 per cent of all homicides in the province during the period (BC Coroner's Service, 2010, p. 3). Seventy-five per cent (55 of the 73) of the domestic violence homicides for the five-year period were female victims (BC Coroner's Service, 2010, p. 3).

Some groups of women are more vulnerable than others. For instance, the rates of reported severe and potentially life-threatening forms of violence are elevated for pregnant women (Martin et al., 2004, p. 202). Research also shows that the spousal homicide rate for Aboriginal women is eight times the rate for non-Aboriginal women in Canada (Johnson, 2006, pp. 64-65). While it has been well established that across the whole population domestic violence is significantly underreported, with only approximately one third of women who are victims actually reporting domestic violence to the police (Johnson, 2006, pp. 16-30), immigrant and visible minority women who experience domestic violence are even less likely to report it to police and more likely to be unaware of or reluctant to use available support services (Canadian Council on Social Development, 2004, p. 34).

Another category of victims of domestic violence is the children who are exposed to it.

also recognizes that there are many other terms used to describe domestic violence, such as spousal assault, intimate partner violence, family violence, relationship violence, and wife assault. For consistency, this report uses the terms domestic violence or spousal assault throughout.

Between 1999 and 2004 approximately forty percent of domestic violence victims reported that their children witnessed their abuse (Johnson, 2006, p. 13). Research reveals that domestic violence is a common factor in cases of child abuse. The *Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect* found that child protection workers reported that the most common risk factor affecting mothers and/or other female caregivers in cases of substantiated cases of child maltreatment was domestic violence (Trocme et al., 2005, p. 3). The study reveals (p. 82) that in just over half of all child maltreatment cases in Canada (excluding Quebec), the mother or female caregiver was a domestic violence victim. Another study of domestic violence between married couples found that each additional act of husband-to-wife violence increased the odds that the husband will physically abuse a child by an average of 12 percent (Ross, 1996, p. 590).

2.1.3 Prevalence of Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is as pervasive in British Columbia as elsewhere in Canada. Based on self-reported data from the General Social Survey, there were approximately 183,000 incidents of spousal assault in BC in 2004 (Johnson, 2006, p. 19). While the number of domestic violence incidents that are reported and dealt with by the province's criminal justice system is smaller, domestic violence cases are BC Crown counsel's most common case type. BC Crown counsel received just over 10,000 domestic violence cases in 2008/09, which made up 14 percent of all received cases in that year (Province of BC, 2010, p. 4). These statistics illustrate that although the majority of domestic violence cases go unreported, those incidents that do wind their way through the criminal justice system constitute a significant proportion of the caseload.

A Statistics Canada study on intimate partner violence reported to police estimated a rate of 333 police-reported incidents per 100,000 population in Victoria and neighboring municipalities in 2010 (Sinha, 2012, p. 54).³ This rate for the capital region is lower than the average rate of 363 incidents per 100,000 population across Canada and lower than

³ The study measured police-reported incidents of intimate partner violence in Census metropolitan areas (CMAs), which consist of one or more neighboring municipalities situated around a major urban core. A CMA must have a total population of 100,000 of which 50,000 or more live in the urban core. A CMA typically comprises more than one police service.

other CMAs in British Columbia, most notably Abbotsford-Mission (471 incidents per 100,000 pop.) and Kelowna (497 per 100,000 pop.), which had the highest rate for any CMA in the province and the fourth highest in the country in 2010 (Ibid, p. 54).

The Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) information system used by all municipal police and RCMP in the Capital Regional District provides the best data resource for reported domestic violence incidents in the region. CAD records the number of dispatches in which responding police officers took and filed a report as a “domestic incident.”⁴ Table 1 below shows the number of CAD responses for domestic incidents by police jurisdiction in the CRD in 2009 and 2010.

Table 1—Total domestic incidents police in the CRD responded to in 2009 & 2010

Jurisdiction by CAD	2009	2010
Central Saanich	59	46
Oak Bay	38	47
Saanich	537	589
Sidney / N. Saanich	104	106
Sooke	97	108
Victoria / Esquimalt	1460	1483
West Shore	333	361
Total	2569	2740

(Statistics courtesy of the RDVU, 2011)

The CAD figures for domestic violence incidents do not reflect the number of arrests or criminal charges. However, according to representatives of the region’s Crown counsel office, spousal assault files (otherwise known by their file designation as “K” files) form the most common case type dealt with by prosecutors in any given year in the CRD, representing anywhere from 15 to 25 percent of all charge assessments they receive from police (Interview, 2011).

2.1.4 Dynamics of Domestic Violence

The starting point for understanding the dynamics of domestic violence is the intimate context in which it occurs: unlike violence between strangers, the perpetrator and the victim in domestic violence situations know one another and have ties—emotional to

⁴ All police in British Columbia are expected to follow the definition of domestic violence as prescribed in the province’s VAWIR Policy; however the reference in CAD to “domestic incident” may include incidents of elder abuse and other incidents of family violence that do not accord with the definition of domestic violence in the VAWIR policy.

financial—that will shape how they relate to and are affected by the violence. Domestic violence perpetrators possess familiarity with their victims’ vulnerabilities and routines, occupy positions of ongoing access to and influence over their victims’ lives, and are connected to their victims in all the various entanglements of an intimate relationship (Ganley, 1995, p. 17)

Violently abusive partners typically seek to maintain a constant state of power and “coercive control” over their partners through the deliberate use of oppressive tactics (Kimmel, 2002, p. 1335; Stark, 2007). While initial violent acts may parallel a quarrel in a relationship, domestic violence is more than an isolated, individual violent assault: it is an established cycle or pattern of abusive behaviors and violence that can include threats, intimidation, manipulation, and physical assaults that abusers use to establish fear in and dominance over their partners (Ganley, 1995, p. 18).

Abusers commonly seek to isolate their victims from friends, employment, and family ties, thereby limiting a victim’s system of support and creating dependency on the abuser (Ganley, 1995, pp. 20-21). The result is that domestic violence often remains a hidden, unreported crime that leaves victims to suffer in silence and isolation. There can be many factors that make it difficult to report the abuse, pursue legal action, or end the relationship: a woman may be economically dependent on the abuser; she may fear for her safety or that of her children; there may be cultural or religious values at play, or the influence of her extended family; she might be in denial of abuse; or she might fear a negative response from the police or courts (Johnson, 2008, p. 2).

The physical, emotional and psychological abuse that commonly characterizes domestic violence frequently occurs as part of a repetitive pattern of abuse. Research indicates that more than two thirds of women who are victims of domestic violence have been assaulted more than once and approximately one in five report experiencing 10 or more assaults (Johnson, 2006, p. 33).

Domestic violence situations are also often characterized by a pattern of escalation in the

frequency or severity of the violence. An abuser may engage in a pattern of escalating violence due to the perceived need to maintain control of the partner; the desensitization to using violence over time; or the onset or recurrence of mental illness (Ganley, 1995, p. 23).

2.1.5 Impact of Domestic Violence

The constant, repeated exposure to violence has profound effects on all aspects of a victim's life. Due to the chronic nature of the violence some victims may suffer from Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), which can further compound a victim's response to the violence and to the system of response to their situation (Haskell, 2003). Domestic violence also has a negative and damaging influence on children who witness it. Several studies demonstrate that exposure to adult domestic violence correlates to significantly elevated rates of a range of emotional, cognitive functioning and behavioral problems, including anxiety, depression, trauma and physical aggression (Kitzmann, 2003; Wolfe, 2003; Evans et al., 2008). Research also suggests childhood exposure to domestic violence can contribute to adjustment problems and greater incidence of victimization in personal relationships in adulthood (Carlson, 2000).

The impact of domestic violence extends beyond the individual family members perpetrating, suffering, and witnessing the violence and abuse. Entire communities are affected in numerous ways. There is the obvious raw cost to communities in terms of human life from homicides and suicides. However, there are other effects such as impact of the physical, psychological, and emotional abuse on a victim's ability to be a contributing, productive member of the community in which she lives. Similarly, children exposed to domestic violence may develop academic problems that reduce their school success rates, thereby creating additional long-term problems for communities beyond the likelihood that these children will enter into their own abusive relationships as adults.

Studies have attempted to frame the impact of domestic violence and spousal assault in terms of financial cost. A 2011 Canadian Public Policy study estimated that the

associated private and public sector costs incurred *after* women leave abusive relationships at \$6.9 billion a year across Canada (Varcoe et al, 2011). While the methodologies of such financial impact studies remain open for debate, it is clear that the long list of severe and negative short and long-term consequences of domestic violence to Canadian society must also include significant financial costs.

2.1.6 Responding to Domestic Violence

The social and political movements of the 1960s helped to kick-start a significant transformation in the way democratic societies responded to domestic violence. The civil rights and feminist movements brought attention to and spoke out against the prevailing paradigm at the time that violence in the home was not a crime, but rather a private matter between a man and his wife (Whetstone, 2001, pp. 374-375). The shift challenged governments to address the cultural and systemic barriers supporting policies of noninterference in family and spousal violence and brought about reforms aimed at placing responsibility for holding domestic violence offenders accountable on the community rather than the victim (Shepard, 1999, p. 1).

By 1995, the governments of every province and territory in Canada had created and introduced pro-arrest and pro-charging policy initiatives intended to increase safety for abused wives and bring stronger measures against abusive partners (Light & Rivkin, 1996, p. 175). In BC, the Wife Assault Policy was introduced in 1984 to establish detailed procedures and guidelines for criminal justice agencies and institutions to apply to the handling of domestic violence cases. The original policy, which has been revised a number of times, is today known as the *Violence Against Women in Relationships (VAWIR) Policy*.

2.1.7 Current Challenges to Responding to Domestic Violence

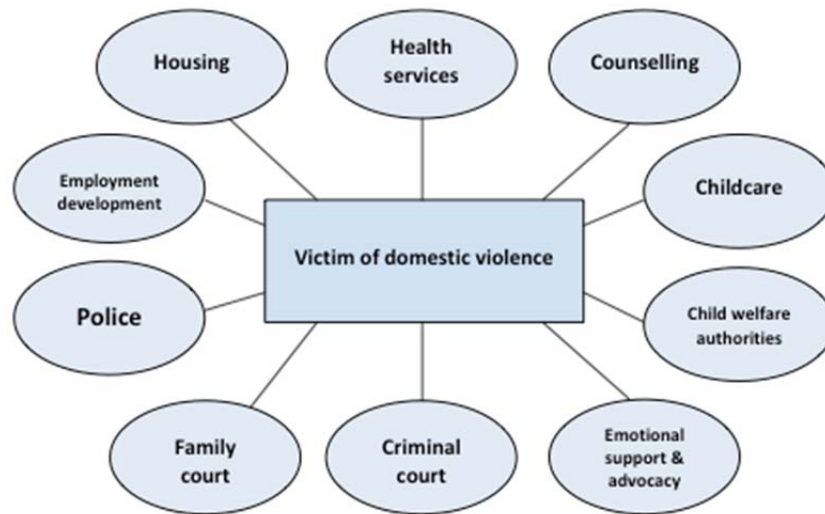
Despite efforts to develop policies and target resources to address domestic violence, persistent challenges remain within the realm of developing effective responses.

One challenge can be found in the approach of the criminal justice system and its overriding objective to sanction domestic violence offenders. Criminal justice agencies respond to individual incidents that are brought to their attention. This focus creates a systemic bias toward viewing domestic violence through the same lens as other crimes between strangers, which creates barriers to responding to key dynamics of domestic violence: the violence typically involves multiple incidents and the victim may not share the same interest as the Crown in conviction, punishment, and rehabilitation (Ursel et al, 2008, pp. 8-9).

Another challenge to effective responses results from fragmented, uncoordinated approaches among respondent agencies. All too often agencies are predisposed to respond to social problems according to their respective organizational mandates. Domestic violence is no different: existing services are challenged to work together to respond effectively to individual cases. Countless public reviews across Canada and elsewhere have established that fractured or “siloed” responses to domestic violence are a contributing factor to profound negative outcomes for victims and their children (Representative for Children and Youth, 2009 & 2012).

One facet of the fragmented, siloed response can be found in the situation all too often faced by victims and their children in the aftermath of a domestic violence incident. As Figure 1 below shows, a victim who has activated the system of response in their community may be simultaneously engaged with a broad range of agencies. Whether it be police, courts, prosecutors, corrections, social workers, transition houses, or other community providers, each have separate mandates and operational priorities: every agency has a different role and function to play and no single responder follows a case from initial report to authorities through to trial and beyond (Holder, 2001, p. 19).

Figure 1—Overview of system of response for victims of domestic violence



The result is a fractured and uncoordinated system of response that can pose significant challenges to victims of domestic violence:

- A victim may not know which agency or person to contact to convey or receive information;
- Service providers may provide inconsistent responses that discourage a victim from continuing to engage the system of responders; and
- Agencies may fail to share important information with one another that could affect the safety of a victim and her children and, ultimately, the outcome of a case.

Such challenges have resulted in a reform movement calling for more holistic responses to domestic violence whereby responders collectively understand the dynamics of abuse and work together across organizational boundaries to share information, resources, and undertake coordinated approaches to managing risk and safety for victims and their children.

2.1.8 Oak Bay murder-suicide: Findings & Recommendations of the Representative for Children and Youth

The province's Representative for Children and Youth (RCY) highlighted the challenges of fractured, uncoordinated responses to domestic violence in a report on the 2007 Oak Bay murder-suicide highlighted in the introduction to this report. In assessing the responses of police and child protection authorities, the Representative concluded "silos of activity and multiple accountabilities" hampered responses and there was "...generally no communication or coordination between child welfare and criminal justice systems. Police and the MCFD social worker assigned to the case never talked" (RCY, 2009, p. 2).

In the six weeks leading up to the tragedy, a wide range of public service providers had contact with the family: medical staff at the hospital, officers with two municipal police departments and one RCMP detachment, staff from MCFD, staff from PSSG, Crown counsel, lawyers, and therapists. Each service provider had information pertaining to the case, but no agency took the lead in building a composite picture of the risk Peter Lee posed to Sunny Park and the rest of her family. For example, Sunny Park reported three incidents of possible breaches by Peter Lee of his bail conditions—information indicating an elevation of risk—but police, Crown, and the bail supervisor never shared this information with the MCFD child protection worker (RCY, 2009, p. 54). Another example involves police and MCFD both engaging Sunny Park in safety planning independent of one another. "Each was unaware that the other had done so. Consequently, there was no coordination with Sunny to develop immediate or long term safety plans, even between the two agencies directly in contact with her" (RCY, 2009, p. 55).

As a result of the disorganized manner in which multiple agencies handled the Lee/Park case, the Representative for Children and Youth recommended that the Province initiate a coordinated and effective response system for domestic violence cases in Greater Victoria. The Representative provided the following description of what such a system would look like:

“A coordinated inter-sectoral approach requires that one agency lead the planning, not only to work directly with the mother and children but also to advise and update other service providers, to identify the role of each agency, and to inform individuals of developments in the case and adjustments to the plan as circumstances change or the risk level shifts.” (RCY, 2009, p. 52)

2.1.9 Coordinated Community Responses to Domestic Violence

In recent decades, communities and jurisdictions across North America and elsewhere identified a need for increased cross-system coordination in responding to domestic violence. Community-based, multi-agency initiatives designed to coordinate resources, activities, and/or leadership emerged from concern over fragmented responses. The Coordinated Community Responses (CCRs) became the mechanisms to create a shared vision for identifying solutions to problems across different components of the justice and social sector and to move the “recalcitrant components” to establish the necessary communication and coordination interface between sectors responding to domestic violence (Hart, 1995, p. 2).

It was the Duluth Domestic Abuse Intervention Project (DAIP) implemented in Duluth, Minnesota in the early 1980s that set the basic CCR template. The DAIP negotiated agreements with key legal and non-legal intervening agencies “to coordinate their interactions through a series of written policies and protocols that limited individual discretion on the handling of cases and subjected practitioners to minimum standards of response” (Shepard & Pence, 1999, p. 6). Representatives of that city’s criminal justice agencies, social service programs, and shelter movement came together to develop key CCR activities such as:

- Developing a common philosophical framework to guide the intervention process;
- Creating consistent policies and procedures which coordinate intervention responses across agencies;
- Monitoring/tracking cases from initial contact to case disposition;

- Coordinating the exchange of information with respect to individual cases;
 - Providing resources and services to victims to protect them from further abuse;
 - Providing a combination of sanctions, restrictions, and rehabilitation services to hold offenders accountable; and
 - Preventing harm to children.
- (Shepard & Pence, 1999, pp. 6-7)

2.1.10 Models of Coordinated Community Response

Communities devise and implement a variety of mechanisms and structures to bring together and unite the different domestic violence responders and service providers for the purpose of creating more consistent and standardized responses with improved human outcomes.

The literature generally categorizes coordinated community responses as providing strategic or operational focuses to the problem of domestic violence. CCR initiatives that apply a strategic focus to address domestic violence seek partnerships aimed at building shared visions across government and non-profit sectors. Activities might include sponsorship of conferences; community organizing aimed at raising awareness about domestic violence; and the development of protocols and policies aimed at addressing broad systemic issues in relation to domestic violence (Shepard, 1999, pp. 3-4; Hart, 1995, p. 5).

Coordinated community responses with an operational focus generally involve partnerships between agencies that respond to individual cases. Melanie Shepard labels such responses as community intervention or criminal justice reform-based projects in which partnering agencies focus on front-line responses by applying standards for case management and training, as well as indentifying gaps in the response to individual cases (Shepard, 1999, pp. 1-2). Interdisciplinary domestic violence units are one example of a

coordinated community response focused on providing an operational, front-line response.

2.1.10.1 The interdisciplinary DVU: A coordinated response partnership

The term “domestic violence unit” has long been part of policing vernacular. As early as the late 1960s in the United States a handful of departments created police-only units whose members were trained in mediation and crisis intervention to respond to domestic violence incidents (Corcoran & Allen, 2005, p. 40). These early units practiced crisis intervention but did little to stem criticisms of police when it came to the handling of domestic violence cases. Critics have long accused police organizational culture as being generally devoid of incentives for officers to intervene in domestic violence as well as failing to provide sufficient training to members so that they may fully understand the dynamics of domestic violence (Buzawa & Buzawa, 1996, p. 31).

Interdisciplinary domestic violence units result from the parallel development of two strategic approaches that have influenced community and criminal justice responses to domestic violence in recent decades: the development of coordinated community responses and the entrenchment of the community policing philosophy, which promotes partnerships and collaborative problem solving between law enforcement agencies and the individuals and organizations in the communities they serve (Edmonton Police Service, 1994, p. 3; Community Policing Consortium, 1994, p. 15).

The interdisciplinary model is a response partnership consisting of personnel from police and one or more government or non-government community agencies. These units operate as cooperative teams where police join with civilian responders to perform either primary response to or follow up work on domestic violence cases in an integrated way. Members of these specialized units collectively apply a case management approach to domestic violence files to ensure information is shared and the appropriate actions are taken in light of information pertaining to both the offender and the victim.

The CRD DVU (RDVU) is an example of an interdisciplinary domestic violence unit. The Unit's partners—police, community-based victim services, and a provincial child protection authority—work together as a team to provide a coordinated, cross-jurisdictional response uniform in approach to domestic violence cases across the Capital Regional District.

2.2 Types of Evaluation

There are many different kinds of evaluations. The appropriate evaluation type for use in a particular case will depend on the questions evaluators seek to answer (Rossi, Lipsey, and Freeman, 2004, p. 54).

In the literature specifically devoted to evaluations of domestic violence units, two main loci of inquiry dominate. Firstly, is the program operating and producing outputs in the way in which its designers expected? This requires an evaluation of implementation. Process evaluation is the type of evaluation widely associated with this line of inquiry. Process evaluations center on what a program does or needs to do by answering questions about what is being provided to whom, how well and how often (Riger et al., 2002, p. 55).

Secondly, is the program creating its intended changes to the world? This sort of effectiveness assessment is chiefly connected with outcome evaluation. Outcome evaluation deals with the results a program is producing for its target population (Weiss, 1998, p. 8). Both expected and unanticipated results should receive attention and study (Suchman, 1969, p. 126).

Evaluations of different types have linkages and can be performed independently or in combination with each other (Chen, 1996, p. 128). Domestic violence unit implementation evaluations often are designed as the first phase of an overarching evaluation plan that includes an effectiveness evaluation or else as a study that is

independent but still anticipates and aims to lay groundwork for an eventual effectiveness evaluation.

Methodology and measurement tend to be relatively straightforward in the case of implementation evaluations. In contrast, effectiveness evaluations tend to involve more significant problems, concepts that are complex to operationalize, and debate. This is in no small part due to the fact that effectiveness evaluations, unlike implementation ones, must grapple with the issue of attribution.

2.2.1 Implementation

Implementation research that investigates the actual operation of a program is a necessary foundation for a meaningful evaluation of program effectiveness (Rossi, Lipsey, and Freeman, 2004, p. 79). This is because accurately understanding the meaning of program results depends on knowing whether the program is a genuine realization of the plans of its designers. Programs represent an attempt to attain goals by setting off the causal chains that form the basis of the program's logic. As Weiss (1998, p. 128) articulates, responsibility for unsuccessful program results fall into two main categories: program failure and theory failure. Program failure occurs when implementation is not carried out according to plan, and thus does not activate the expected causal chain in the logic theory that is behind the program. Theory failure occurs when the program is operating properly to activate the expected causal chain, but the desired results are not achieved due to fault in the program's cause and effect theory. Assigning unsuccessful results to the appropriate category thus requires knowledge of how well the program has been implemented.

It is a weakness in the existing literature that few available evaluation reports on domestic violence units address implementation directly and explicitly. Even in the case of relatively new programs, the matter of implementation is frequently not dealt with in a report. It is unclear whether a successful investigation of implementation is going unmentioned or if researchers simply made the assumption that implementation went

according to plan and the program continued to stay on its intended track. In some effectiveness evaluations it could be argued implementation concerns could be covered indirectly at least to some extent because some of the methods used to assess effectiveness, such as interviews with DVU members and stakeholders, could raise red flags where implementation has gone astray even though the researchers are not making that a target of inquiry. Indeed, Jolin and Moose (1997) became aware in the course of attempting an outcome evaluation that a DVU they had previously studied had veered far from its intended operation, exchanging “Volkswagen” victim service for the original, intended “Cadillac” service in the description of one officer they spoke to. That kind of alert depends on researchers noticing red flags, though, and the information about implementation failures being volunteered even if it has not been specifically sought. Many of the outcome evaluations in the literature do not obviously offer such opportunities for red flags in their methodology to assess programs effects.

Nearly all of the reports that do address implementation directly and explicitly characterize themselves as process evaluations. Unfortunately, a number of these reports on DVUs provide only a description of findings regarding implementation with very little or no indication of the methodological means, research tools and analysis used to arrive at those findings (DuPree, 2000a, 2000b; Edmonton Police Service, 1994; Friday, Lord, Exum, and Hartman, 2006).

One of the most comprehensive methodological accounts of process evaluation of a DVU is found in Pennell and Burke’s (2002) evaluation study of the San Diego County Sheriff’s Department DVU. The San Diego County Sheriff’s Department DVU is a police-only unit that pairs detectives who have received domestic violence training to monitor the department’s frontline officer responses to domestic violence incidents and to conduct follow-up investigations. The study was originally planned to examine the activities of the DVU members and perform basic monitoring of their work. Although the evaluation was expanded beyond those initial plans to include further process evaluation and some outcome evaluation, in the report the evaluators inaccurately characterize their research as purely a process evaluation.

Pennell and Burke's main process oriented research questions are: (1) was the DVU implemented in accordance with its design?, and (2) what is the nature and scope of the DVU's coordination and collaboration with other domestic violence service agencies?

Formal measures or conceptual constructs were not articulated for the question of conformance to intended design. Nature and scope of collaboration and coordination was measured in terms of participation of leaders and members of DVU in domestic violence related community groups, councils and committees as well as attendance of training or informational community domestic violence seminars.

Data collection included interviews with DVU supervisors, review of the DVU's monthly status reports, informal talk with members of the county's domestic violence community, and victim interviews. The researchers tracked a sample of the cases handled by the DVU as well, but that was done to help answer their questions regarding effectiveness. The victim interviews were conducted by researchers over the telephone. Victims were contacted two weeks after the incident that instigated the case in order to allow time for the DVU to have performed follow up. Researchers were able to complete interviews with 46 of the 71 victims that unit staff were successful in contacting. The researchers sought the victim's perspective of police handling of cases, including victim reports of first response officer and DVU officer activity and victim satisfaction. Responses were generally favourable. For instance, more than three-quarters of the victims interviewed had an overall feeling of comfort with how DVU detectives had dealt with their case. The report provided a number of examples of both positive and negative comments made by victims. Notably, many of the negative comments provided expressed unhappiness about police pursuing investigation and/or arrest against victim wishes rather than police performing their work poorly.

Another fairly thorough methodological description is furnished in a report on a process evaluation of the Colorado Springs Police Department's Domestic Violence Enhanced Response Team (DVERT) (Uchida, Putnam, Mastrofski, Solomon, and Dawson, 2001).

DVERT is a police-led unit that is a partnership between the police and over 25 local agencies including a non-profit, privately owned victim advocacy organization. Most members of the unit are non-police officers, and the unit is not housed in a police station or with any of the other agency partners.

This process evaluation was carried out for the purpose of setting the stage for a future effectiveness evaluation and producing and compiling baseline data for use in that evaluation. The researcher questions targeted the inquiry on sources of case referrals, the unit's data on accepted/declined cases and its handling of accepted cases, general victim/suspect background information such as demographics, and historical context of the case regarding abuse and previous police contact. The researchers relied on case file data, interviews with 19 victims selected by DVERT members on the basis of availability and 19 staff from DVERT and its partner agencies, and researcher observation of unit activities. They tracked DVERT cases through the entire DVERT process, from opening to closure. Researcher observation was used to gather information about the collaborative process among unit members, and augmented with collaboration questions in DVERT staff interviews. Victim interviews were conducted by researchers in person or over the phone with clients. Although researchers were conducting a process evaluation, all interviewees were asked about their perception of DVERT's impact.

The literature does not point to significant methodological issues in implementation evaluations. Fairly clear, practical indications of program activities are available to researchers who then assess whether they are as they were designed to be. However, the studies reviewed would be clearer if they included a conceptual framework and studies tended to include outcome indicators into purported pure process evaluations without acknowledgement.

Outside of the DVU literature, conceptual frameworks for systematic and comprehensive process evaluation were often included in reports. Conceptual frameworks tend to concentrate on the concepts of fidelity (match of implementation to program theory), service to clients, client response (satisfaction), reach (participation rate), recruitment and

context (environmental facts that may influence program implementation or outcomes) (Rosecrans et al., 2007; Saunders, Evans, and Joshi, 2005; Weiss, 1998, p. 75).

2.2.2 Effectiveness

Effectiveness evaluations are by nature more complicated and fraught with challenges and threats to validity than implementation evaluations. For that reason, planning process and methodological decisions involved in effectiveness evaluations receive more discussion in the literature and in this report.

The literature is dominated by formative effectiveness evaluations. Such evaluations examine programs with a view to gaining insight that can be applied in program improvement efforts.

Evaluations of effectiveness concentrate on program results. The fundamental questions of program effectiveness evaluations have been stated as “Was the program responsible for or the cause of the observed outcomes?” and “Were the outcomes consistent with expected outcomes?” (McDavid and Hawthorn, 2006, p. 82). The first question is one of attribution. The second question involves comparing the expected outcomes from a program’s logic model to what the evaluation’s data indicates regarding real outcomes.

There are a variety of outcomes that feature in the literature on evaluations of DVUs and similar programs. The primary ones are: renewed violence (re-offending and/or re-victimization), victim behavior (e.g. accessing services or choosing to report violence), victim response to the program (e.g. description of personal psychological or emotional reactions to the program experience), prosecutions, court outcomes (e.g. convictions), and stakeholder response. Some outcomes are more readily measured and analysed than others. Renewed violence is the outcome many researchers have struggled with in regards to capturing it credibly, interpreting their own results and reconciling conflicting results between studies. Although prosecution and conviction may at first appear to be out of the hands of police and their program partners, interviews with prosecutors have indicated

DVU work can have a strong effect in this area (Whetstone, 2001). It is interesting to note that offender response to these programs has been neglected in research.

Researchers employ diverse evaluation strategies in the literature. An evaluation strategy includes the research design and the techniques and methods to be used for design implementation (Treasury Board, 1998, p. 20-21). Design plays a crucial role in research. Research designs are tools that researchers use to try to investigate causal relationships (McDavid and Hawthorn, 2006, p. 114). Design allows researchers to test for evidence of expected causal connections. Careful design decisions are needed in order to guard against plausible threats to the validity of conclusions and produce credible research (Weiss, 1998, p. 184).

Experimental, quasi-experimental and implicit research designs are all found in the literature (see Appendix D). Each design type offers benefits and drawbacks, providing different opportunities in the matter of balancing scientific rigour, ethical concerns, cost in resources, and practical demands. Suitable design depends on the research context and circumstances.

Two main methodological issues afflict effectiveness evaluations: those of attribution and those of measurement (Treasury Board, 1998, p. 6). Attribution refers to the causation question—the extent to which a program contributes to observed outcomes. Careful, particularized research design and clear acknowledgement of study limitations are necessary to deal with the issue of attribution. Measurement refers to the procedures used to translate conceptual constructs into data that is observable (McDavid and Hawthorn, 2006, p. 443). What practical measures will provide the best evidence of program outcomes and how should measurement be accomplished?

Devising measures, a difficult task, is aided by program objectives that are defined in clear, operational terms (Riecken, 1972, p. 94). For programs with goals that will take a long time to accomplish by practical necessity it is common practice to evaluate by measuring effectiveness at meeting shorter term, intermediate goals that will lead to the

ultimate long term goals according to the program logic (Weiss, 1998, p. 127). Measures should be reliable and valid. Triangulation by using multiple measures to see if they confirm each other's results strengthens confidence in measurement and findings (McDavid and Hawthorn, 2006, p.109).

2.3 Research Strategies in the Program Effectiveness Literature

2.3.1 Experimental Design

Experimental design has traditionally been held up as an ideal in evaluation and a hallmark of a superior study. This principally due to the employment of randomization and control groups, which offers the strongest protections to internal validity, allowing greater confidence that the program rather than something else is responsible for observed changes (Campbell, 1969, p. 411). However, examples of experimental designs are rare in the literature because circumstances rarely fit this design. Evaluators are frequently studying programs that are already in operation. Implementing an experimental design requires considerable resources and resources are usually limited. Evaluators rarely have the kind of control over the environment that would allow them to hold all variables other than the experimental ones constant. They do not normally have the control to determine how parties to a domestic violence incident are assigned to receive a particular intervention or not, and making that determination by randomization as experimental design is ethically dubious since it could put human safety and even lives at risk.

Jolin and Moose (1997) planned and tried to carry out an experimental study on a DVU but instead of results they report dire program implementation problems as well as significant problems encountered while trying to implement the research plan. The Portland Domestic Violence Reduction Unit (DVRU) has police-only membership. It was designed to employ a community policing model. The researchers intended to examine effect of the empowerment and investigation strategies practiced by the DVRU on recidivism. The outcomes that were the focus of research were frequency of assaultive behavior, victimization and prevalence of chronic domestic violence households. All of

the cases during the study were to be randomly assigned to be in the DVRU treatment group or the control group which receives no intervention. Planned data sources were two stage victim interviews (one at beginning of a case and another 6 months later), police records, court records, coroner's office, jail, corrections and the prosecutor's office. Recidivism measures in the research design were: reoffending (incidence and prevalence or re-arrests, re-reports and reconvictions in addition to length of time before re-report and/or re-arrest); re-victimization (incidence and prevalence of rereports of violence); and repeat calls reporting violence at the initial incident's address.

Problems abounded for the researchers. They discovered that some time after a favorable process evaluation carried out shortly after the unit's creation in 1993, the unit had ceased to operate according to intended plans. It appeared the unit's captain had made a unilateral decision to change unit policy and procedures that was strategically designed to improve the unit's productivity statistics. When the unit had operated according to original plans it was unable to handle more than 12% of the cases sent to it. The new policy made it possible for the unit to work all the cases it received by greatly reducing and stripping down the services provided. Circumstances seem to have abetted the unit's deviation. The police-only membership of the unit gave no presence of voices from other fields that might have brought alternative, less quantitatively-oriented institutional values, priorities and systems of accountability into consideration in decision-making. No mention is made of the unit reporting to or taking part in an interdisciplinary domestic violence council or steering body that might have noticed and objected to the change in the DVU. According to the researchers, the citizens of the community preferred to maintain without question the assumption that the unit was effective in addressing the concerns it was set up to meet. Furthermore, the researchers' interaction with the unit suggested a resentment of power sharing, which is part of the community policing model the unit was intended to be based upon.

The researchers' methodology had been developed for the original unit and did not fit its new incarnation. The captain agreed to go back to the old way of working for the duration of the study, but the research was plagued by further troubles, which appear to

have their source largely in the demands of the experimental model. They report encountering “a seemingly endless series of issues that emanated from the double blind design” and “clashes over service versus research needs in the daily operations of the unit” (Jolin and Moose, 1997, p.290).

Davis and Taylor (1997) provide a contrasting example of a successfully implemented experimental design. The subject of Davis and Taylor’s research is not a DVU, however, and their definition of domestic violence includes all kinds of family violence, not just intimate partner violence. Nonetheless, the intervention does involve some limited police and social service team cooperation and interaction in case work. The main goal of the intervention was to reduce re-victimization which is a common goal among DVUs.

Households that reported domestic violence incidents taking place in either of two New York public housing police service areas were randomly assigned to the study treatment and control groups. Both groups received an initial police patrol response, but only the treatment group received a follow-up. The follow-up was a joint visit by a social worker and a police officer. The research also tested the effects of public education material with the random assignment of housing projects in the same areas to receive or not receive public education materials regarding domestic violence. The researchers sought to learn the effects of joint home follow-up visits and public education on reoccurrence of violence, reporting of violence to police and victim’s awareness and use of services. The measure they devised for level of renewed violence was the incidence and severity of new violence as self-reported by the victim in interview six months after the original incident. Reporting of violence to police was measured by police data on the number of calls to report domestic violence in the households within six months after initial violence. Awareness and use of services was assessed by quizzing victims against a list of services and inquiring about usage.

A reduction of violence was not detected, but this project did not involve the intensive ongoing services of a project like a DVU and the six-month window would not reflect long term changes. Research indicates escaping the cycle of domestic violence is a

process that is commonly lengthy and may take many months or years to complete (Burkitt and Larkin, 2008; Horton and Johnson, 1993). Households that received the follow up visit intervention or the public education intervention did display more willingness to report new abuse than those that did not receive one of the interventions. Including both victim self-reports of violence and calls to police in the study stands out as a strength of this study. Most studies of re-victimization and re-offending have no measure of violence other than calls to police to report violence, so it is never certain whether it is level of violence or level of effort to contact the police for help about violence that has changed if change is observed.

2.3.2 Quasi-experimental Design

There are many quasi-experimental design studies in the literature (Corcoran and Allen, 2005; Farrell and Buckley, 1999; Friday, Lord, Exum and Hartman, 2006, 2010; Hovell, Seid and Liles, 2006; Light, 2009; Pratt, 1999; Whetstone, 2001). Unlike implicit designs (see 3.4.3 below), this design type allows for possible determinations of attribution even if they will not be as airtight as experimental design conclusions about attribution would be. The quasi-experimental design is more flexible and better suited to the practical considerations of many studies than the experimental design. Many DVU evaluations focus on re-occurrence of violence. Various kinds of quasi-experimental design are employed by researchers, some weaker than others. All of the quasi-experimental designs in the available literature use only quantitative data, but some of the studies buttress that evidence with qualitative data gathered in an implicit design and so attempt to triangulate their findings.

This section reviews two highly relevant evaluations of BC DVUs that acted as early models and inspirations for the CRD DVU and share the same provincial environment. A review of six evaluations from other jurisdictions follows. These studies illustrate a range of approaches brought to quasi-experimental design evaluations and to addressing the related issues and challenges.

2.3.3 Quasi-Experimental Designs: B.C. Evaluations

Two quasi-experimental evaluations deserve first mention due to their subjects' physical proximity and similarity to the CRD DVU: Pratt's (1999) evaluation of the Vancouver DVU and Light's (2009) evaluation report on the Richmond Family Violence Unit (FVU).⁵ They both use quantitative data drawn from police and court databases that was collected before and after the intervention.

The Vancouver DVU is one of four interdisciplinary domestic violence units currently operating in the province.⁶ The unit was an inspiration for the CRD DVU. The evaluator for this DVU compared the results of legal proceedings in cases with DVU involvement during one year of operation against the results of legal proceedings for all domestic violence cases in Vancouver—DVU and non-DVU cases—during two sample months in a previous year. Focusing on convictions, acquittals, and stay of proceedings numbers in the data sets, Pratt concluded the “DVU has been highly effective in increasing conviction rates and decreasing stay of proceedings” when compared against the average rates of these measures for all domestic violence cases.

Table 1—Comparison of Court Dispositions in DVU Cases and all VAWIR Cases⁷

	% convictions (including peace bonds)	% acquittals	% stay of proceedings
DVU cases (1999)	67%	7%	25%
All VAWIR cases (1998)	33%	7%	60%

In the Richmond study, the evaluator compared the same measures—convictions, acquittals, and stay of proceedings—from the following three sets of court case data:

1. All domestic violence cases in the year preceding the establishment of the Richmond unit;

⁵ The Richmond Family Violence Unit ceased operation in 2010. Richmond RCMP made a decision to work domestic violence cases with victim counsellors from within their organization instead of ones from an outside agency.

⁶ The other three are the RDVU, New Westminster DVU, and Abbotsford DVU.

⁷ From “Vancouver’s Domestic Violence Unit: A Case Study,” by J. Pratt, 1999, Family Services of Greater Vancouver, Vancouver Police Department, p.12. Unpublished paper.

2. All domestic violence cases for a nine month period after the establishment of the FVU;
3. Domestic violence cases served by the FVU for a one-year period.

Based on this pre- and post-implementation before and after comparison the evaluator, while pointing out that the results are “exploratory in nature,” concluded that the Richmond unit “has had a highly positive effect” on court case outcomes (Light, 2009). In the year before the FVU partnership was established, the percentage of cases that were forwarded for charge but did not proceed to court (returned to police or stayed) was more than double that for all domestic violence cases in the period after the partnership was established. Moreover, when comparing court outcomes for all domestic violence cases with those cases handled by the FVU during the same period, “the percentage of findings of guilt is higher for those cases where the victims has been served by a FVU victim support worker” (Light, 2009).

Both Pratt and Light interviewed a range of stakeholders to assess program relevance; to measure outcomes; and to identify operational strengths, challenges, lessons learned, and suggestions for improvement. The same four categories of stakeholders were interviewed for both evaluations: 1) a sample of DVU clients (victims of domestic violence); 2) DVU staff and management; 3) a sample of general duty police officers; and 4) members of key external agencies. Pratt provides interviewee numbers only for clients (11 respondents), not for the other categories. Light conducted interviews with 8 clients, 6 members of the Richmond DVU staff and management, 2 RCMP watch commanders and 6 members of external agencies. The interview results from both studies were positive, but the recruitment procedure was not described, which create concerns about bias.

The BC evaluations present examples of evaluative approaches to be considered under the pressures of time, budget, and data constraints. However, methodological shortcomings in the literature must be addressed in this review.

The greatest weaknesses lay in the lack of “apples to apples” comparisons in court case outcomes data. The pre-intervention group in the Vancouver study is all domestic

violence cases, whereas the post-intervention group is DVU cases. Since the DVU cases are selected on the basis of high risk, it entirely possible that the observed difference in legal outcomes is a result of higher risk cases receiving on average more severe legal outcomes. Likewise, the Richmond pre-implementation court case disposition data included assault offences only, while the post-implementation court case disposition data included other offences beyond assault, such as criminal harassment, kidnapping, extortion, etc.

2.3.3.1 Quasi-Experimental Evaluations in Other Jurisdictions

Evaluators of DVU type programs in other jurisdictions struggle with many of the same kinds of issues as the British Columbian evaluators while designing and carrying out quasi-experimental evaluations. A variety of approaches have been exercised. Methodological decisions are influenced and constrained by the particular resources and the level of information access each jurisdiction offers.

A selection bias problem similar to the one seen in the B.C. evaluations afflicts Corcoran and Allen's (2005) examination of the effects of a Virginia police-victim services partnership team on victim cooperation and perpetrator/offender arrest. The crisis team that was studied is made up of a police detective from the local police department's family violence unit and volunteer victim service helpers. The team was available to assist with immediate on site services (police investigation, victim counselling and offered transportation to a women's shelter) upon patrol officer request. The team was created for the main purposes of reducing domestic violence and increasing victim services. The expected outcomes were that victims who receive crisis team services will be more likely to cooperate with police, there will be an increase in the number of victims transported to the shelter following a crisis team response, and the police department will be more likely to file charges on a case to which the crisis team has responded. Purely quantitative data was used. Researchers used police records on family violence calls from a six month period to compare cases served by the crisis team to randomly selected family violence non-crisis team cases from the same high crime area. Arrests increased and cooperation decreased in the treatment cases, but the researchers indicated strong suspicion the validity of findings were compromised by selection bias. There was good

reason to believe the crisis team was more likely to be called in on cases where arrest was possible and victim less disposed to be cooperative.

The study could have benefited from supplementary data that would help diminish the damage of selection bias to the credibility of its conclusions and fill in details of the picture that the quantitative data leaves to speculation. For example, it would be helpful to have interviews or surveys with police regarding DVU's effect on arrest decisions or, if possible, to create control data on cooperativeness by arranging at that outset of the study for patrol officers to rate cooperativeness of all victims in domestic cases according to a standard criteria on worksheets provided by researchers.

Corcoran and Allen explored outcomes that were of high priority to the police (arrest numbers and level of victim cooperation). Arrest is rarely seen as an outcome, probably because it is not generally viewed as an end to itself, offender behavioral response to arrest (positive or negative) has been found to be associated with many situational factors and personal characteristics, and pro-arrest and mandatory arrest policies in many jurisdictions tend to have a standardizing effect on arrest by reducing officer discretion.

Re-occurrence of violence is a far more common outcome than arrest in DVU evaluations. Alone or in combination with other outcomes, it is found in many studies despite the manifold issues associated with it.

Farrell and Buckley (1999) performed one of the early such evaluations. They evaluated the first year's operation of a UK police-only DVU using repeat victimization as an outcome. The DVU was made up of two police officers tasked with handling their division's domestic violence cases. The evaluation has a pre and post quasi-experimental design that uses the six other local police divisions as control groups. Only quantitative data was used: police records of call data for the year before implementation and the year after implementation. Repeat victimization was measured as change in the amount of repeat calls as a percentage of total calls. Repeat calls in the treatment district were found to be reduced after implementation of the DVU while during that same period repeat calls

increased in all the control divisions. The DVU effect was not seen in total domestic violence calls, just repeat calls.

This study leaves open the possibility that violence is re-occurring but not being reported. Supplementary data would be helpful to analysis, such as inquiries with victims about repeat violence and/or willingness to contact the DVU. That kind of data is more difficult to gather, yet valuable. It could be that considerations like increased concern about the offender being sent to jail would make victims reluctant engage with the DVU or increased fear of their violent partner who is upset about the DVU would inhibit calling.

Re-occurrence of violence and comparison to a non-DVU jurisdiction were also combined by Whetstone (2001), but in a distinctly different and more complex study. Whetstone utilized a comparatively wide breadth of measurement techniques, gathering both qualitative and quantitative data from a variety of sources. The evaluation is of a pilot project DVU. The pilot unit was composed of police officers and victim advocates who acted as first responders and did follow up investigation/visits together as well as a probation/parole officer and a correctional officer who both concentrated on offender surveillance and supervision. The DVU handled all of the district's domestic violence cases.

The outcomes of interest are improved response and reduced repeat violence. Quantitative data was gathered from police records (including all intimate partner violence incidents reported by phone for a year preceding the pilot project and for the 18 month project), DVU records and court records. A pre-test, post-test design was employed with an experimental jurisdiction and a control jurisdiction that was similar but had no DVU. The researchers undertook a statistical study of the differences between the jurisdictions before the implementation of the DVU and the differences afterwards. The variables used as post-implementation comparison points between the districts were arrest and prosecution; conviction; medical attention for victims; domestic violence reports; and domestic violence arrest reports. Researchers made field observations and carried on informal interviews while the pilot was going on. Formal interviews were

conducted with DVU members and stakeholders on a one-on-one basis when the pilot had come to an end. They attempted to interview clients but the attempt was given up due to a low participation rate. Exit surveys were relied on instead for client response. Surveys showed a strong favorable client response to the DVU and the service they received from it. The arrest rate and conviction rate increased to higher than the control district's while the DVU was in operation. More victims were accessing medical assistance in the post-test DVU district with indications being that the amount and severity of injuries were not worse for those victims than for the others. Stakeholders were also positive.

Qualitative research, absent in many studies, provides valuable insights to help researchers better interpret their own results and an opportunity to confirm with local prosecutors the validity of using prosecution as a measure. Although the researchers are far from alone in their poor experience with victim interviews, it should be mentioned that researchers who pay interviewees a participation fee have enjoyed better rates of response and completed interviews (Davis and Taylor, 1997; Willson, McFarlane, and Malecha, 2001).

A lack of rich information from qualitative research can compromise one's ability to interpret Friday, Lord, Exum, and Hartman's findings regarding re-occurrence of violence. That is particularly unfortunate because their work stands out so much in the literature for their wealth of resources, level of access to official information, multiple controls and complexity of analysis. Friday, Lord, Exum, and Hartman contributed two evaluations of DVUs with re-occurrence of violence as an outcome. Both studies evaluate the same North Carolina DVU. The DVU is made up of a sergeant, an administrative assistant, four counsellors, and five police detectives. Victim service volunteers also provide assistance to the DVU's clients at the request of team members. The DVU sergeant reviews all county domestic violence cases and makes the determination of which cases should be worked by the DVU rather than standard patrol. The unit's purpose is to deal with the domestic violence cases that are most dire in terms of incident

lethality in order to decrease future offending by means of victim assistance and intensive investigating.

The researchers used the same sampling procedure in their 2006 study and their 2010 study. They took a randomized sample (stratified by month) of 2003 domestic violence cases in the police database. DVU cases were oversampled because they only accounted for 8% of the population. A search for offenders from sample by name was then conducted to gather all reports of domestic violence perpetrated by that individual in the period between the 2003 incident selected in the initial sample and a point in 2005. This is an exceptional capability; most researchers if they are able to search for offenders at all in police databases are only able to do so by address which is problematic since the researcher does not know whether the offender has remained resident at the address. The length of the time window (18 to 30 months from the offender's 2003 triggering offense) is also considerably longer than ones seen in the rest of the literature. The relationships between re-occurrence of violence (re-offending and re-victimization, separately) and a host of variables were tested while controlling for offender and victim demographic characteristics, arrest, jail time and a variety of variables connected to risk of future harm such as victim injury, weapon usage, category of offense, and offender's criminal history.

Controlling for many risk factors provides the validity of their conclusion with some protection against the selection bias in DVU cases, something researchers like Pratt (1999) and Corcoran and Allen (2005) did not achieve in their studies. The risk controls are made possible by the researchers' record resources and their level of access to those records. Their case specific information about victims, offenders and offenses were drawn from the National Incidents-Based Reporting System and police reports. The researchers used incidence, prevalence and severity of violence as measures to assess the effect of a case being processed by the DVU with the aid of regression analysis and propensity score weighing technique. They found the DVU to lower re-offending rates but not significantly reduce the rate of re-victimization as reflected in police reports. In light of an absence of causal theory and qualitative data, the researchers were only able to offer speculation as to the explanations for their findings. For instance, victims in DVU

cases and non-DVU cases may have actually been re-victimized at the same rate after controls or DVU clients may have been re-victimized less but appeared in as many police records due to a greater motivated to report. Interviews with DVU members and stakeholders to receive their opinions could help guide speculation. In terms of recommending this research strategy, it would require skilled statisticians to perform the work and interpret results and in many jurisdictions (including British Columbia) laws and policies would not permit researchers to access the kind of detailed criminal justice record data used here.

Hovell, Seid, and Liles (2006) provide a thorough consideration of the difficulties of dealing with recidivism as an outcome in an evaluation of the San Diego Family Violence Response Team (FVRT). The FVRT is a police-social service partnership program that provides support services to victims of domestic violence who have children. A team member joins the responding officer at the scene to offer services like safety planning, and a case manager completes follow up support services such as court accompaniment. The researchers used a before and after intervention quasi-experimental design. Researchers compared police records regarding FVRT cases to control case police records from the year before the FVRT was implemented. Cases in the control group were identified by residence of the family where police responded to a domestic violence report, and included only cases where children were recorded as present at the scene. Recidivism is measured by number of calls to police reporting violence (repeat violence at same address – searching the law enforcement database by type of crime to obtain a list of victim or perpetrator names was not possible due to security restrictions), expecting to see less calls from treatment cases. FVRT clients made more calls than controls, but it is possible there was the same level of violence and FVRT clients were just more willing to report violence.

Hovell et al. (2006) note the challenges to finding valid measures of recidivism. Measurements typically neglect to take account of the impact of “downstream” factors, such as sentencing and protective orders. Re-victimization measures often do not incorporate awareness of the possibility violence is being temporarily displaced from the

victim to be returned later. The researchers made a case that recidivism may not be an adequate indication of success, despite a number of studies in the literature including this one assessing it (or re-victimization, which has similar challenges) as their sole outcome. It is also true that the time windows in evaluation are usually quite short in relation to the lengthy, gradual nature of the process victims typically go through when they move beyond violence.

Hovell et al. suggest attention be paid to possible cumulative effects, and that researchers might try to follow up to detect delayed effects. Of course, this is easier said than done. It would be difficult to track victims or offenders over such a long time, particular if they are being identified and searched for by address instead of name. Even Friday, Lord, Exum, and Hartman who were able to track by name could not be sure of fully capturing reports of re-offending because they were unable to search the police records of other jurisdictions. Furthermore, accounting for all the potential intervening variables over the years would be well nigh impossible. Securing victim participation would be another obstacle when it comes to interviews and surveys. Researchers are strained to get decent participation rates within a short period of months after initial contact or case closure.

Pennell and Burke (2002) suggest some additional ways of determining how well a DVU is responding to domestic violence reports for use in future effectiveness evaluations. They mention that change in the number of restraining and protective orders granted versus the number that are requested and in the number of times prosecutors file charges in cases versus the number of arrests could be used as indications of the results of DVU practices like providing advice and court support to victims and performing more extensive documentation and evidence collection. Conclusions would be strengthened if researchers inquire with stakeholders such as prosecutors about the reasons behind the decisions.

2.3.4 Implicit Design

The implicit model is a post program only design that lacks a control group. The magnitude and definitive cause of an effect cannot be known with implicit design (Treasury Board, 1998, p. 57). It does not offer as much credibility or command as much respect as the other designs. The two studies we review that use this design use only qualitative data on outcomes.

The only evaluation of British Columbia's New Westminster DVU has an implicit design (Pratt, 2000). The unit pairs victim service worker with a police detective constable to review New Westminster police domestic violence reports and select pressing cases that will receive follow up services from the unit. Client services include victim support and assistance, follow up investigations, enforcing legal conditions and liaising with Crown Counsel and probation services. System level work includes providing case consultation and training and participating in service coordination through local interagency bodies.

Pratt identified four categories of client outcomes: increased access to needed services; increased ability to proceed with legal action; cessation of abuse; and decreased fear. He relied upon interviews to measure those outcomes. The interviews were conducted in person or by telephone with DVU management and staff, 13 general duty New Westminster police officers, 16 members of key external stakeholder agencies, and 7 DVU clients (victims of domestic violence). The general duty police officer respondents, selected by DVU staff, were a mix of senior and junior officers from across the various platoons. Clients were selected on the basis of availability and willingness to participate. Although those means of selection were convenient, it raises bias concerns to allow DVU members to pick the officers who will rate the DVU's accomplishments and to limit victim response to those most available and willing to take part in an interview. Overall interviewees strongly supported the DVU's client and system level work as relevant, important and achieving improved results.

Asked about the differences and impact made by the DVU, respondents answered by drawing comparisons between their experiences with the DVU and their memories of the

situation before the implementation of the DVU, and how they believe events would have unfolded without the DVU's involvement or what they have observed regarding cases not handled by DVU. Such comparisons are weak, subjective and vulnerable to recollection error, but they are better than no comparison at all.

AU.S. implicit design study provides an alternative interview approach. In their evaluation of Houston Family Violence Unit, a victim service and police partnership unit, Willson, McFarlane, and Malecha (2001) used follow up interviews but limited participants to victims served by the unit. It was a two stage interview process. In the first round investigators administered demographic questions and questionnaires designed to determine the level of intimate partner violence and similar activity the victim had experienced over the past three months. The second stage was a phone interview conducted three months later. It asked victims about their activities, their effectiveness rating for the FVU and suggestions for additional helpful services to add to the FVU. The researchers used a consecutive sample of all women attempting to file assault charges in the police jurisdiction. There was a good response rate considering the challenges associated with interviewing domestic violence victims. The researchers successfully interviewed 90 victims in the first stage of the study. Three of the 90 first stage interviewees declined to participate in the second stage follow up interviews due to safety concerns. Six of the victims invited to take part in the research entirely declined to participate. The victims were paid \$20 for each interview, and the strong response rate in this study is consistent with the previously noted association between payment and victim cooperation with interviews.

The first stage found a rather high level of violence, threats and dangerous behaviour. According to the women's reports, over the past three months the offender behaviour endured among the victims included: 77% of victims threatened with death; 43% threatened with a knife or gun; over 50% kicked, slapped or choked; 24% had a knife or gun used on them; and 52% were sexually assaulted.

During the second stage, interview data indicated that three months after the FVU taking their cases 86% of the women described the counseling and police services provided by the FVU as helpful or very helpful, 51% had used resources given by the unit and 47% reported cessation or decline in abuse. During the three months after initial filing, 1 out of 5 participants called on the police again, which the researchers suggest may be taken as further support that the women in the sample perceived police intervention as helpful.

The study has some significant limitations. The researchers relied completely on the self reports of victims and did no cross-checks with official records or qualitative data from other sources. Only victims who spoke English and were seeking to file charges were included in sample. It is probable that victims who wish to file charges are predisposed to regard police involvement more favorably than those who do not and will be more interested in accessing victim assistance and support resources. That said, due to the total lack of any attempt to create comparison data with non-FVU cases, there is no evidence as to how different if at all the victim's situations and perceptions would have been without the FVU.

3 RDVU Program Description and Logic Model

The RDVU commenced operations and accepted its first cases of high-risk domestic violence in July 2010. The objective of this chapter is to describe the key elements of the RDVU program as it has operated in its first two years: its organizational membership; the intended client group; the program’s design principles; the process for receiving and accepting cases; and the roles and activities of the Unit’s members.

A program logic model is presented for the RDVU—a key deliverable of this evaluation framework. The RDVU logic model highlights the linkages between the Unit’s resources, activities and outcomes and is an essential building block of the performance measurement and evaluation strategies, two other key deliverables of this report presented in Chapters 4 and 5, respectively.

3.1 The RDVU—Program Profile

The RDVU is best characterized as a collaborative program. Its structure—from its membership to activities to expected outcomes—is intended to integrate and apply the shared vision and goals of its partnering agencies to communicate, plan, and share resources so as to collectively respond to high-risk domestic violence cases.

The following sections highlight the background to the formation of the RDVU; its resourcing and financial support; its membership; intended client group; program design principles; the process by which the Unit takes on cases; its operational approach to managing cases; the roles, responsibilities, and activities of the Unit’s members; and the intended outcomes of the Unit’s intervention efforts.

3.1.1 Establishment of the RDVU: Background

The formation of the RDVU resulted from discussions between representatives of the provincial government and police in the region in response to the 2007 Oak Bay tragedy and recommendations of subsequent public reviews of the incident by the Office of the BC Coroner and the Representative for Children and Youth made in 2009. The Unit commenced operations and began accepting case referrals from other community agencies on July 19, 2010.

The Oak Bay tragedy rekindled the debate concerning integrated policing versus the establishment of a regional or amalgamated police force for the CRD. Jury recommendations from the BC Coroner's inquest into the tragedy called on the provincial government to "continue unification efforts for various police departments" (BC Coroner's Service, 2009, p. 2). The region's Times Colonist newspaper ran a series of stories about "B.C.'s fractured police system" to explore the question of whether a regional police force should operate across the thirteen municipalities in the capital region (Times Colonist, September 23, 2010).

The RDVU continues the trend of integrated policing in the Capital Regional District specifically and in British Columbia generally. There are more than a dozen integrated policing units currently operating across the CRD, some of which include partnerships between police and non-police personnel similar to the RDVU, such as the Integrated Mobile Response Team, which serves families dealing with concerns related to mental health and addiction issues (Times Colonist, September 23, 2010).

While the debate of integrating police services versus amalgamation of police departments is beyond the scope of this report, it is important to recognize its presence within the political context in which the RDVU operates. The BC *Police Act* requires municipalities with populations greater than 5,000 to provide police services in their communities and includes provisions to allow these municipalities to voluntarily amalgamate their police departments. In the absence of an agreement among some or all of the CRD municipalities to establish a regional police force, the integration of existing

police services remains the approach of choice for these municipalities to provide a consistent, yet specialized policing response across the CRD to specific issues of shared concern such as domestic violence. Accordingly, the perceived success of integrated units operating in the CRD will undoubtedly remain an important consideration in any decisions made by the political leaders of the region’s municipalities respecting the provision of policing services.

3.1.2 RDVU Resourcing and Financial Support

At the time the RDVU was established, the Province deployed one existing community-based victim service worker, a provincially funded position with the Victoria Women’s Transition House Society’s (VWTHS) Spousal Assault program, to the Unit. The provincial government provided additional funding to the VWTHS to hire a second victim service worker for the Unit. Additionally, government directed one Ministry of Children and Family (MCFD) child protection worker in the south Vancouver Island region to be seconded to the Unit.

The three largest police departments in the region—Victoria, Saanich, and West Shore RCMP—each have one officer seconded to the Unit. The smaller police departments in the region do not provide any members, but contribute funding to cover the Unit’s annual operating costs related to the maintenance, insurance, and fuel for two vehicles; half-time administrative support; administrative supplies; and investigation overtime for the Unit’s police officers. The smaller departments share the operational costs of the Unit in accordance with the formula outlined in Table 1 below:

Table 1—2011 Operational Cost sharing formula for RDVU police partners

Police Service	Members	% of Contribution	Approximate Contribution
Oak Bay police	23	28.4%	\$25,000
Central Saanich police	23	28.4%	\$25,000
Sidney/North Saanich RCMP	25	30.86%	\$27,160
Sooke RCMP	10	12.34%	\$10,840
Total	81	100%	\$88,000

(See Appendix E)

3.1.3 Operational Unit: Members

The RDVU members are co-located in and work from a centralized office space in the Saanich police department. The Unit’s operational staff consists of six members, all of whom are seconded full-time from their “home” agencies to work on the Unit. Table 2 below provides an overview of the Unit’s seven operational staff.

Table 2—Operational staff of the RDVU team

Police	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• One officer in charge (OIC) from the Victoria police department• One detective from Saanich police department• One detective from Westshore RCMP
Victim Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two victim service workers from Victoria Women’s Transition House Society (VWTHS)
Child Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• One child protection worker from Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD)

When the RDVU commenced operations in July 2010 an additional member of the Victoria police department was seconded to the Unit, putting the Victoria department contribution of staff at two members: the Unit’s OIC and one detective. However, on September 13, 2012 the Chief Constable of Victoria police announced the department’s seconded detective would be redeployed to perform other duties within the department’s detective division, which he reported was suffering form an “absolute crisis” requiring additional resources focused on issues such as internet fraud, child exploitation, and sexual predation (Times Colonist, September 15, 2012). The Chief also stated that, “...a full-time regional domestic violence unit is simply a luxury that I cannot afford” (Times Colonist, September 15, 2012).

The Chief Constable of the Oak Bay police department, who currently chairs the RDVU Steering Committee (see below), responded to the decision of Victoria police by stating that it was “disappointing for all agencies involved,” and as a result the Unit would “take on less cases” (Times Colonist, September 15, 2012). While it is not the intent of this report to comment on or document the specific concerns expressed by representatives of the RDVU partnering agencies respecting the redeployment of the Victoria police detective, the situation highlights an ongoing issue of concern for the RDVU and its

partners: is the Unit adequately resourced to exercise its mandate to respond to and intervene in high-risk domestic violence cases across the region?

3.1.4 Operational Unit: Management & Governance

Operational management of the Unit's staff is provided as follows:

- The officer in charge (OIC) supervises the other two police team members on matters related to the policing aspects of the Unit's work;
- A program director with the Victoria Women's Transition House Society (VWTHS) supervises the two victim service workers on matters related to the provision of victim support and advocacy; and
- A clinical supervisor with the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) supervises the Unit's child protection worker on matters relating to the protection of children in any of the high risk domestic violence cases taken on by the Unit.

Both the VWTHS program director and the MCFD clinical supervisor provide remote supervision and direction to their respective staff, as they are not seconded to the Unit and do not maintain offices at the Saanich police department. As a result, according to the RDVU Memorandum of Understanding (see Appendix E), the officer in charge of the Unit is to provide day-to-day direction and support to the victim service workers and the child protection worker in matters related to the management of RDVU cases.

The operational managers meet approximately once every two weeks to collaborate on decisions respecting administrative matters impacting the operations of the Unit. The matters addressed include case file reviews, the development of best practices, training, and possible administrative challenges.

The RDVU has a Steering Committee composed of senior level representatives from partnering organizations: the chief constable of the Oak Bay Police Department; the

executive director of the VVTHS; an inspector from the Saanich Police Department, Victoria Police Department, and West Shore RCMP; and a director with MCFD. The chief constable of Oak Bay police department currently chairs the Steering Committee.

The Committee provides guidance on the overall strategic direction of the Unit, including oversight on matters pertaining to strategic policy and planning and any systemic issues affecting the operations of the Unit. According to the RDVU MOU, any disputes related to the day-to-day operations of the Unit are to be referred to the Steering Committee for resolution (Appendix E).

3.1.5 RDVU Client Group

The primary client group for the RDVU is composed of people affected by domestic violence within the CRD who the Unit deems to be living in high-risk situations where there is an elevated risk of injury or death. The Unit provides services to all victims involved in high-risk cases it takes on, whether they are female or male. The RDVU also provides services to all children involved in these cases and must therefore take their needs into account when developing and implementing service responses as part of the Unit's case management model.

It is important to recognize that RDVU clients include members of some especially vulnerable populations. The Unit's service response and case management practices are to consider specific strategies to provide support and enhance protective factors for vulnerable groups including, but not limited to:

- People of Aboriginal descent;
- People from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds;
- People living with addictions or mental health issues; and
- People living with disabilities or special needs.

3.1.6 RDVU Case Files

“We quarterback the handling of high-risk domestic violence cases identified and referred to us by the partnering police forces and community agencies in the Capital Regional District.” (Interview with RDVU member, 2010)

As police are typically the first to respond to reported incidents of domestic violence, most case file referrals to the RDVU come from the police departments; however, other community agencies, including the Ministry of Children and Families, the Victoria Women’s Transition House Society, and Crown counsel also refer cases (see Table 3 below for an overview of case referrals to the RDVU between July 2010 and September 2012).

The RDVU’s mandate requires it to be selective in the cases that it handles. The Unit only intervenes in domestic violence cases referred to it by police or other community agencies in the CRD that are deemed high-risk—cases in which there is significant potential for serious bodily harm or death (Interview, 2010).

The RDVU does not have ability to review and select domestic violence cases handled by other agencies in the region—the Unit relies on other agencies recognizing signs of high-risk domestic violence and bringing these cases forward to the attention of the RDVU. The Unit then collectively determines whether or not to accept and intervene in a given case.

The reliance of the RDVU on timely and effective referrals from other agencies, specifically from other police departments in the CRD, represents a significant difference with other interdisciplinary DVUs operating in Vancouver, New Westminister, and Abbotsford. In these other jurisdictions the DVUs operate within a single policing jurisdiction and police members of these units are thus able to review each domestic violence case reported to and handled by their respective police department and assess whether or not presenting factors suggest a potential high-risk domestic violence situation.

In an effort to facilitate timely and effective referrals, the RDVU has developed the following list of risk factors it communicates to police and other justice and child welfare system partners to assist them in referring cases to the Unit:

- Serious violence has occurred;
- Sexual deviance or sexual violence occurred (i.e. forced sex, use of weapons);
- Suspect/Offender engages in obsessive controlling or stalking behavior;
- Escalation in violent threats;
- Suspect/Offender has attempted or threatened suicide;
- History of violence toward victim and/or children and separation is occurring;
- Suspect/Offender’s behavior (or official diagnosis) indicates presence of mental illness;
- Suspect/Offender has a serious criminal records for violence; and
- Victim lives in extreme fear of future violence.

(RDVU, unpublished, see Appendix F)

3.1.7 Case Conferencing

“The partners on the Unit share responsibility for these high-risk cases. This reduces the stress level associated with these files because before I would be working on my own and I would have sole responsibility for a high-risk file.” (Interview with RDVU member, 2011)

When files are referred to the RDVU, the Unit’s members collectively review and assess the level of risk involved. This process involves consideration and discussion of the information contained in the incoming case file as well as the use of available databases the respective members of the Unit have access to so as to acquire any additional information on the individuals involved in a given case. Unit members then conduct a case conference to collectively decide on one of four possible courses of action, as outlined in Table 3 below.

Table 3—RDVU Case Conferencing Decisions

Action	Description
1. <i>Take over the case</i>	The referring agency releases the file to the RDVU, whose members take on the responsibility for providing a full range of services to protect the safety of the victim and her children, including interventions targeted at the offender in order to reduce presenting risk factors.
2. <i>Assist on the case</i>	The RDVU provides—to the extent requested or resources allow—specific services to protect the safety of the victim and her children or to reduce the risk posed by an offender.
3. <i>Consult on the case</i>	RDVU members provide advice to the referring agency concerning actions/steps that should be taken to secure the safety of the victim and her children or to manage or hold an offender accountable.
4. <i>Decline the case</i>	RDVU declines involvement in a domestic violence file and provides reasons for declining along with an invitation to re-submit the file if new developments alter relevant circumstances of the case.

(Interviews with RDVU members, 2010 & 2011)

Throughout the case conferencing process, the RDVU members are expected to use their specialized knowledge and training to assess risk, which may include use of formal risk assessment tools such as B-SAFER. However, risk assessment is not a one-off activity to be conducted only when the RDVU engages in case conferencing: risk can elevate suddenly. The Unit therefore continuously monitors and assesses the level of risk involved in a given case through to closure of the file, which is defined as the point when the RDVU ceases activity on a case file and returns it to the referring agency.

Table 4 below provides an overview of the number of case files referred to the RDVU and the action taken by the Unit in its first year of operations, July 2010 to September 2012.

Table 4—RDVU Cases referred to the RDVU from July 19, 2010 to September 6, 2012

Referring Agency	Total Referrals	Files Accepted ⁸	Files Declined	Files Consulted	Lack of Resources ⁹
Central Saanich police	0	0	0	0	0
North Saanich/Sydney RCMP	7	6	0	1	0
Saanich police	42	31	9	1	1
Oak Bay police	1	1	0	0	0
West Shore RCMP	19	13	2	3	1
Sooke RCMP	12	6	3	3	0
Victoria police	85	56	22	6	1
RDVU ¹⁰	10	9	0	1	0

⁸ “Files Accepted” refers to the RDVU taking over a case and commencing intervention action.

⁹ RDVU declines to accept a case they deem to be within their mandate due to lack of resources.

VWTHS/Cridge Centre	4	3	1	0	0
MCFD	38	14	19	5	0
Crown counsel	12	6	4	2	0
Community Corrections	13	9	2	2	0
Other agencies	3	3	0	0	0
Total	246	157	62	24	3

(See Appendix G)

3.1.8 Operational Approach: Applied Case Management

“We share information with one another about circumstances involved in a case so as to better understand the factors at play in a particular situation...this helps us plan out how to proceed.” (Interview with RDVU member, 2010)

The RDVU seeks to apply a “case management” approach to the files it takes on. Many conceptions and definitions of case management exist, but for the Unit, case management is the process of “collaborative assessment, planning, and action” by the RDVU that incorporates the perspectives of all its members with the goal of providing a “specialized and uniform” response to cases of high-risk domestic violence (Interview, 2011).

The RDVU’s case management practices establish the Unit as the case manager for each file, as opposed to any one member. The Unit collectively engages in risk assessment and safety planning for each case. A fundamental requirement for this work is the sharing of information between members so at any point in time the Unit can obtain a composite picture to answer important questions such as:

- Where is the offender? Is he abiding by the conditions of his release?
- What are the needs of the victim and her children? What services have they accessed?
- How is child access/custody being managed?
- What other information is required to assess the risk and safety of the situation?

10 RDVU has referred files to itself. For example, the Unit is aware of the pending release of an offender from jail who was previously involved in a high-risk case handled by the Unit. They therefore become re-involved out of concern for the safety of the victim and her children.

Answers to such questions are necessary for the Unit to provide a response driven by the collective and comprehensive assessment of the needs of a given situation as opposed to the singular priorities of any single partnering organization. Unit members must therefore engage in conversations about case files so as to jointly prioritize and coordinate activities deemed necessary to mitigate risks and enhance safety. This aspect of the RDVU model of case management means that while individual members have roles, responsibilities, and activities relative to each specific case (see below), it is paramount any action taken by one be synchronized with and aligned to the actions of the other members.

3.1.9 RDVU Intervention—Roles, Responsibilities, & Activities

“Our work is proactive. We engage with both the victims and the offenders in order to manage the risks effectively.” (Interview with RDVU member, 2010)

When the Unit takes over or assists on a file it goes to work protecting the safety of victims and children, performing work needed to secure offender charge approval and conviction, and “quarterbacking” the case through the system in a facilitator role (Interview, 2010). This process involves Unit members, depending on their role and responsibilities with the Unit, undertaking the following activities:

- Measuring/assessing the safety of victims and their children
- Assisting victims with safety plans and safety tools for risk prevention and management
- Supporting the victim and children with information, referrals, advocacy, and accompaniment
- Conducting and/or overseeing investigative work in support of criminal charges
- Conducting investigative work to assess child safety
- Interviewing and monitoring the offender
- Communicating and working with other community agencies

Table 5 below outlines the main roles and activities of the RDVU members when the Unit takes on a high-risk domestic violence case file.

Table 5—Main Activities of RDVU Members

Members	Mandate	Activities
Police officers	To manage perpetrators to reduce risk and to hold them accountable by pursuing criminal charges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform any required investigatory work for a case file • Interview the victim and accused/offender • Establish and maintain contact with an accused/offender and attempt to establish rapport • Monitor accused or offender activity and, if necessary, conduct surveillance • Coordinate with other RDVU members to collectively assess risk and conduct safety planning • Review victim’s physical premises to provide safety advice • Liaise and coordinate with other community agencies (Police departments, bail supervisor, Crown, etc.)
Victim service workers	To engage victims to access services and supports in the community to reduce barriers to ending exposure to violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain contact with the victim and provide emotional support • Help victims to understand the process that they are going through • Coordinate with other RDVU members to collectively assess risk, conduct safety planning, and undertake other case management activities • Provide court support to victim, including help accessing information, assistance with court preparation and court accompaniment • Explain the services that are available and provide referrals to community resources • Liaise and coordinate with other community agencies (Counseling, housing, Crown etc.)
Child protection worker	To intervene in high-risk domestic violence situations to ensure safety of children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise delegated authority to make child protection decisions for any case files involving children • Coordinate with other RDVU members to collectively assess risk, conduct safety planning, and undertake other case management activities • Interview victim, accused/offender, and (possibly) children • Develop plans for family support services and provide referrals to support services • Investigatory work related to child protection • Supervise visitation/access to children • Liaise and coordinate with other child protection workers and community agencies (police, bail supervisor, Crown, etc.)

While Table 5 above outlines many of the activities that are unique and related to individual RDVU members’ specialized knowledge or statutory authority, the interdisciplinary nature of the Unit and its case management approach also requires that its members collaborate and coordinate with one another on a range of activities. As mentioned, all members are to collectively assess risk and conduct safety planning. In order to preserve the balance between individual roles and responsibilities and the

collective work and goals of the Unit, Unit members are expected to share information and work across their respective disciplines so that activities are coordinated throughout the case management process.

3.1.9.1 Police Officers

The principal focus of police members of the Unit is to manage offenders so as to reduce the risk they pose to victims and their children. This work includes interviewing offenders and monitoring and checking in with them to “get a sense of where their heads are and to make sure they are not breaching the conditions of their release” (Interview, 2010). Police members also bring specialized expertise to bear on investigations, which includes evidence collection and interviewing victims and witnesses. The amount of investigative work the Unit’s police members undertake is dependent upon the extent of any previous investigation(s) by police. The investigative work feeds the process whereby the Unit’s officers prepare or assist other police in preparing reports to crown counsel (RCC) to obtain charge approval.

While their primary focus is on offenders, this work does not negate the role of police in supporting victims. The Unit’s police members do participate with the rest of the Unit in the safety planning process and providing necessary safety tips as required. They also work to establish rapport with victims. The police members of the Unit are aware that victims are more likely to contact police in the future if they understand the role of police and have positive experiences or impressions of the police members on the Unit (Interview, 2010).

3.1.9.2 Victim Service Worker

The dynamics of domestic violence are such that many victims feel isolated and reluctant or even fearful to discuss the violence with anyone, let alone engage the system of services and support available in the community. The Unit’s victim services members focus on reducing or eliminating such barriers by establishing trust with victims and responding to their needs. In providing information to victims and assisting them with access to resources the intention is to promote positive change and to shift the balance of power and control in abusive relationships in favour of the victims, which in turn may

increase the likelihood that victims will take steps to hold offenders to account by participating in the systems that formally sanction the violence and abuse (Interview, 2010 & 2011).

One asset in building a relationship with victims is client confidentiality. As the victim services providers are employees of a non-statutory agency (the Victoria Women's Transition House Society), any discussions with clients are privileged and the VS workers provide assurances that they will not disclose information to any of the Unit's other partners without the victim's permission. The maintenance of client confidentiality provides victims with some certainty and control around their experience with the Unit and contrasts with the disempowerment and loss of autonomy they experienced at the hands of their abuser (Interview, 2011).

3.1.9.3 Child Protection Worker

The RDVU child protection worker has the delegated authority under the *Child, Family and Community Service Act* to make decisions around child protection for any of the Unit's case files involving children. In order to exercise this mandate the CP worker is to maintain a dual focus on both the non-offending and offending parent.

The safety of the non-offending parent (the victim) in a high-risk domestic violence case is a very important factor in the safety and protection of the involved children. The CP worker interviews the non-offending parent to better understand the situation and is to work with that parent and the Unit's victim services providers to ensure adequate supportive services are in place to enhance the parent's ability to care safely for their children. The CP worker also seeks to build rapport with the non-offending parent to reduce anxiety over the child protection process.

The CP worker conducts interviews with the offender and is to work with the Unit's other members to monitor and assess risk on an ongoing basis. This work involves checking in with and engaging the offender and undertaking activities that can range from the development of support plans with the abuser to address their harmful and criminal

behavior to obtaining protective intervention orders under the *Child, Family and Community Service Act* in order to restrict the offending parent’s access to the children.

3.2 RDVU Program Logic

Figure 1—Guiding Principles and Assumptions of the RDVU Program

Victim and Child Safety and Support	Offender Management and Accountability	Collaboration and Coordination
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The safety of victims and their children is paramount: risks must be assessed and decreased. • Information and support for victims and their children has an empowering effect whereby victims have an enhanced capacity for informed decision making. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing and monitoring offenders reduces the risk of further violence and communicates the seriousness and consequences of their criminal behavior. • The perpetrators of domestic violence must be held accountable for their criminal behavior. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent and integrated approaches and responses to domestic violence cases increases victim safety and offender accountability. • Information sharing between community agencies throughout the lifecycle of the case management process increases victims safety and offender accountability.

3.2.1 Program Principles and Assumptions

RDVU program documents articulate that the Unit’s goal is to increase victims safety and offender accountability by: 1) providing a cross jurisdictional response that is uniform in approach in domestic violence cases; and 2) by providing timely follow-up services such as investigation, risk-assessment, offender monitoring, safety planning for victims and children and intensive victim support in select domestic violence cases where high-risk factors are present (see Appendix A). The researchers supplemented the RDVU’s stated purpose and mandate in its program documents with results from interviews with the Unit’s operational staff and management team to construct the guiding principles and assumptions of the RDVU intervention that are presented in Figure 1 above.

3.2.2 The RDVU Logic Model

The RDVU logic model is presented in Figure 2 below. A short description of each of the major categories of the model is provided, followed by a brief discussion that explains the connections between RDVU activities and the chain of results or outcomes that are expected to flow from the occurrence of the Unit’s activities.

Logic models present a “road map” of a program: they are intended to highlight how programs are “expected to work, what activities need to come before others, and how desired outcomes are achieved” (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004, p. 1). The RDVU logic model is the core component of this report’s evaluation framework: by providing a visual representation of the RDVU, the logic model is intended to help build a shared understanding among Unit staff and stakeholders alike of the RDVU’s stated objectives and goals and its methodology or approaches for achieving those objectives and goals. In doing so, the logic model presented herein serves as the backdrop against which RDVU staff, managers, and partnering agencies can collectively measure program results and plan program improvements.

3.2.2.1 Development of the RDVU logic model

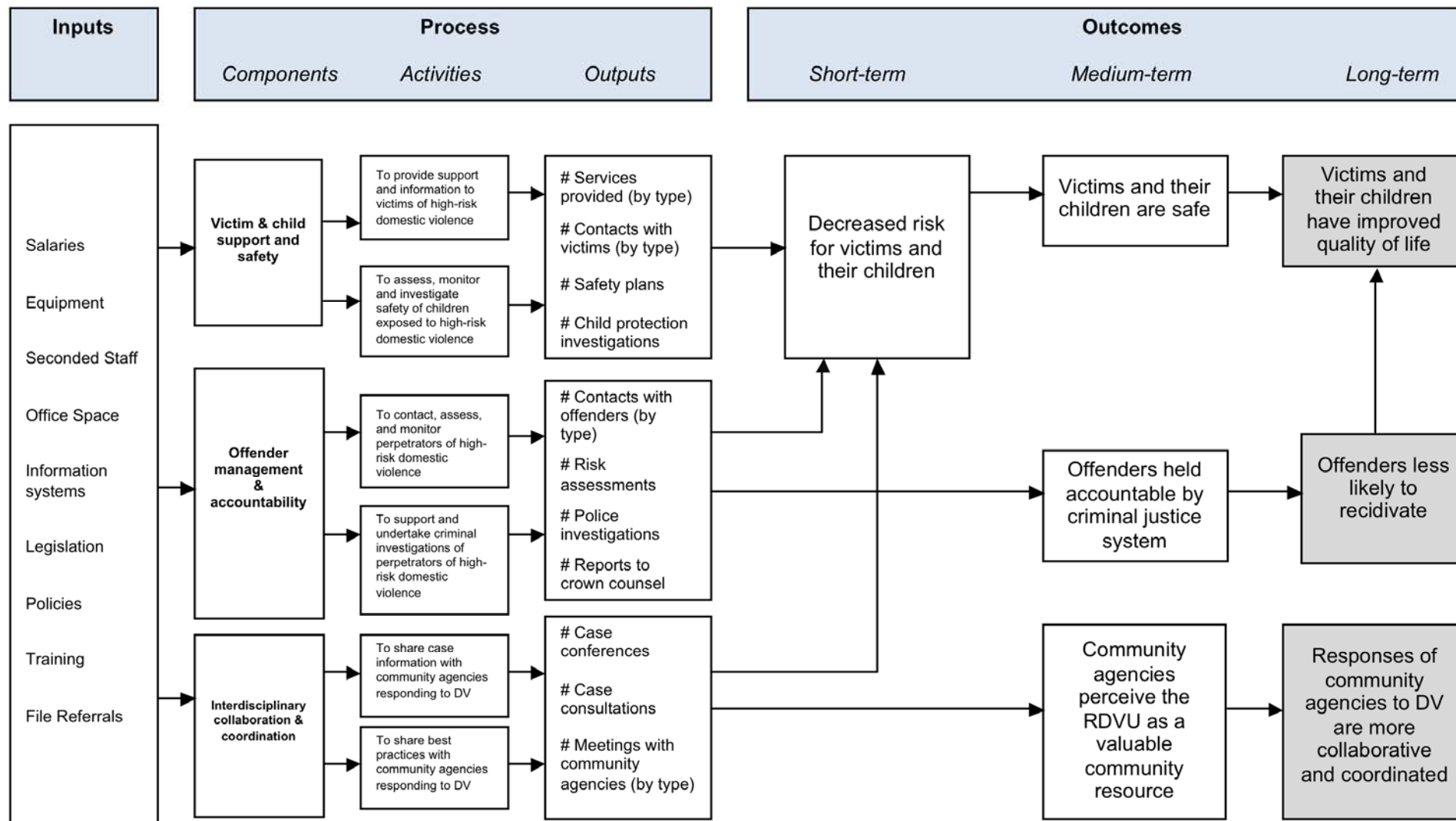
The RDVU logic model was developed in collaboration with the Unit’s staff and management team over the span of more than two years. The development process began with an initial round of interviews aimed at developing the RDVU program description that was presented in the previous chapter. At the conclusion of this round of interviews a draft logic model was circulated to RDVU management and staff for feedback. This feedback was incorporated into a subsequent iteration of the logic model, which the researchers attempted to validate through selected interviews with Unit members and representatives of other community agencies involved with the RDVU. A final logic model was presented to the RDVU management team and confirmed for inclusion in this report.

Throughout the development of the RDVU logic model the researchers attempted to explain the purpose of a logic model as a focused management tool for demonstrating what the Unit does and how it intends to progress toward its goals and achievement of intended results. Developing a simple-to-understand logic model that embodied a comprehensive theory encapsulating the complexities of the Unit’s intervention was a challenge. While this is likely a challenge in the development of any program logic model, it has been acknowledged as particularly acute in the development of logic models

for coordinated community-based initiatives, particularly those responding to domestic violence (Adler, 2002).

Figure 2—RDVU Logic Model

RDVU Program Logic Model



- External Factors**
- Socio-economic demographics of victims and offenders
 - Adequate resourcing for Crown, Community Corrections, Police, MCFD, and other community agencies to collaborate and coordinate with RDVU
 - Appropriate and adequately resourced services for victims and their children are available in the community
 - Adequate resourcing for the Courts to conduct trials in a timely manner

3.2.3 RDVU Inputs

A program’s inputs are the “resources that are required to operate a program—they typically include money, people, equipment, facilities, and knowledge” (McDavid and Hawthorn, 2006, p. 47). The list provided in the RDVU logic model—from budget to file referrals—represents each significant category of resources the Unit requires to undertake activities and produce intended results. Appendix H provides a more detailed explanation of each category of resources (inputs) listed in the RDVU logic model.

3.2.4 Process

The RDVU logic model uses the headings “Process” and “Outcomes” to distinguish between the work taking place to implement the program (i.e. process) and the expected changes resulting from the work that has been implemented (i.e. outcomes). Framing the logic model in this way was helpful to both the researchers and RDVU managers, as it presents a clear demarcation between operations and results.

3.2.4.1 Components

Components are the “clusters of activities in the program” around which the Unit’s work is organized (McDavid and Hawthorn, 2006, p. 47). The three components of the RDVU consist of the following:

1. Victim & Child Safety;
2. Offender Management and Accountability; and
3. Interagency Collaboration and Coordination.

The RDVU logic model attempts to strike a balance between the interdisciplinary, cross-functional approach to cases and the individual mandates of its members. The logic model’s components are not bound to any single member or professional discipline of the Unit. Framing the logic model in this manner reflects the philosophy of collaboration and coordination underpinning and guiding the activities of Unit members as they seek to work across disciplines and professional boundaries to provide holistic assessments of and responses to individual cases. The logic model does not make explicit reference to

the specific members of the Unit who have statutory authority to undertake activities such as “criminal investigations of perpetrators of high risk domestic violence cases” or “assess, monitor and investigate safety of children exposed to high risk domestic violence.” Presenting a logic model to align with the highly divergent mandates of the specific professions of the Unit’s police members, its child protection worker, and the victim services workers would illustrate an intervention characterized by silos of response and thus fail to establish the key interdisciplinary dynamics upon which the Unit is intended to function when intervening in high-risk domestic violence cases.

3.2.4.2 Activities

Under the heading “Activities” are statements relative to each component. These statements are intended to indicate the grouping of activities required to implement and apply the RDVU program theory. Individual activities have been omitted from the logic model because the list of outputs implies the specific activities that occur in relation to each of the activity statements. Moreover, the RDVU managers and researchers of this report arrived at the opinion that the logic model provides no additional information if each individual activity relative to each component is provided. Table 1 below provides a comprehensive list of individual activities relative to each of the activity statements of the logic model.

Table 1—RDVU Activities

Components	Activity Statements	Individual Activities
Victim & child Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide support and information to victims of high-risk domestic violence • To assess, monitor and investigate safety of children exposed to high-risk domestic violence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact victim and provide emotional support • Interview victims and their children • Conduct safety planning • Provide court support, preparation and accompaniment • Provide information and referrals to community resources • Investigatory work related to child protection • Make child protection decisions • Supervise visitation/access to children
Offender management & accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To contact, assess, and monitor perpetrators of high-risk domestic violence • To support and undertake criminal investigations of perpetrators of high-risk domestic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview offender • Conduct risk assessment • Perform and or oversee any required criminal investigations • Complete reports to crown counsel • Contact and monitor offender activity • Ensure response by police when offender commits high-risk breach
Interagency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To share information across 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct case conferences for referrals

collaboration & coordination	organizational boundaries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To promote best-practice responses to domestic violence among community agencies in the region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise and coordinate with other community agencies about cases (Counseling, housing, Crown, Police etc.) • Coordinate on an ongoing basis with other RDVU members and community agencies to collectively assess risk and conduct safety planning • Conduct training and information sessions with community agencies • Provide case consultation advice
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3.2.4.3 Outputs

The RDVU logic model lists outputs—the measurable products of the Unit’s activities. The list contains reference to sub-categories of outputs (i.e. contacts by type OR meeting by type etc.). The list of outputs and reference to sub-categories is an attempt to capture outputs in relation to all of the individual activities listed in Table 1 above. In doing so, the logic model avoids the complexity of listing each individual output for those identified as having a sub-category.

Outputs are an important consideration of the performance measurement strategy chapter. First, the quality of outputs is an important factor requiring measurement, as quality can be a mediating factor influencing the likelihood that a program’s activities achieve desired results (Weiss, 1997, p. 131). Second, outputs are necessary to trigger the cause and effect linkages of a program’s theory of change and as such are important “bridging variables,” or interim markers of success to desired outcomes. Measurement of bridging variables is key to the RDVU performance measurement strategy (see chapter 4).

3.2.5 RDVU Outcomes

A program’s intended outcomes are the desired benefits/changes derived by program participants as a result of exposure to the program. The intended outcomes in the RDVU logic model are displayed across a time-related sequence, from short- to long-term. Short-term changes are necessary conditions for achieving long-range ends and are expected immediately or very shortly after program exposure. Long-term outcomes are expected well after exposure to the program and, as the causal chain of the RDVU logic model demonstrates, are dependent on occurrence of earlier results.

It is difficult to put a timeframe in which the intended outcomes in the RDVU logic model are expected to occur. Each individual case will constitute unique circumstances impacting not only the duration required for intended results to occur, but whether expected outcomes occur at all. The timeframe for outcomes will also be impacted by external factors outside the control of the RDVU, particularly for those outcomes expected further along in the causal chain over which the RDVU has significantly less control and influence.

The RDVU short- and medium-term outcomes are the intended changes the Unit has the greatest likelihood of influence and control and, as such, are the most immediate yardstick of success. This perspective is supported by the formative focus of this evaluation framework: to provide the Unit's managers and partnering agencies with information and feedback to support program improvement.

The Unit's long-term outcomes are out of scope of the performance measurement and evaluation strategies presented in this report. The RDVU and its partnering agencies do not have a clear consensus on when the Unit's long-term outcomes should occur nor what the Unit's impact should be. Several members of the Unit alluded to the issue of expectations around the RDVU's long-term outcomes and impact by stating that the Unit's success should not be defined solely in terms of preventing repeat "revolving door" cases involving the same victims and offender (i.e. cases where victims and offenders do not experience long-term outcomes despite previously receiving the RDVU intervention), but rather whether the Unit decreases risk each time it becomes involved in these cases; keeps the victims and their children safe; and works to hold the offender accountable (Interview, 2010).

4 RDVU Performance Measurement Strategy

This chapter proposes an RDVU performance measurement strategy to support the Unit’s management team in monitoring delivery of program elements and making timely, informed decisions and adjustments respecting RDVU operations.

The key focus of the performance measurement strategy is on “bridging variables” to the RDVU’s short- and medium-term outcomes. Bridging variables are the critical steps or interim markers of success to the RDVU realizing its intended short- and medium-term intended results as identified in the logic model presented in the previous chapter of this report. To support the Unit’s ongoing calculation of bridging variable measures, the chapter recommends implementation of three surveys to capture data on the program-related experiences of clients and members of community agencies involved in RDVU cases.

The proposed RDVU performance measurement strategy compliments the evaluation strategy outlined in chapter 5 of this report. The implementation of the RDVU performance measurement strategy and collection of performance data will result, over time, in a readily available time-series database for future evaluators to assess against other lines of evidence collected as part of their evaluative assessments of the Unit.

4.1 Defining performance measurement

Performance measurement can be defined as the “ongoing process of establishing performance objectives; transforming those objectives into measureable components; and collecting, analyzing, and reporting data on those measures” (Mulvaney et al., 2006, p. 432). As a program management tool performance measurement is intended to provide regular feedback on key dimensions of a program’s performance, such as operating efficiency, service quality, client satisfaction and effectiveness (Poister, 2003, pp. 3-4; Martin and Kettner, 2010, p. 4). It is a process that requires data on dimensions of

program performance be collected and considered on a routine schedule, which facilitates the creation of baseline and time-series data that becomes an increasingly rich source of performance trends of a program over time.

The overall purpose of performance measurement is to support program managers to do the following:

- Continuously monitor progress in delivering effective interventions;
- Understand what it is they can do to maintain or improve program performance on an ongoing basis; and
- Demonstrate program results.

(Treasury Board Secretariat, 2009, p. 3)

In addition, performance measurement can contribute to program managers and staff learning to “think evaluatively” (Patton, 2004, p. 4). The discipline of routinely measuring program performance promotes ongoing thinking about “points of intervention” for program improvement and provides a common lens and language that program managers and staff can use to make evaluative judgments about a program (Martin and Kettner, 2010, p.10). An evaluation culture in turn can support revisions or alterations of a performance measurement strategy by contributing and responding to the information needs and priorities of program managers, funders, and other primary stakeholders.

One key event that can provoke revisions or alterations of a performance measurement strategy is a program evaluation. An evaluation may identify dimensions or aspects of a program for which program managers or other primary stakeholders seek ongoing feedback—a situation for which a performance measurement strategy can be adapted to provide specific information critical to ongoing decision making and the goal of program improvement.

4.1.1 Performance Measurement and Evaluation

Performance measurement and evaluation have distinct yet complementary functions. One important distinction is that the former does not establish cause and effect relationships between a program and observed changes or effects. Performance measurement can indicate *what is happening* with a program at a point in time, whereas evaluations can provide retrospective explanations of *why it is happening* (Mulvaney et al., 2006, p. 432; McDavid et al, 2006, p. 310).

As a precursor to evaluation, performance measurement and the routine collection of data helps program managers monitor a program’s operational components, which in turn supports decision-making about if and when an evaluation should be undertaken. Moreover, time-series performance data establish performance trends—a performance “story”—and are sources of information about a program that evaluators can analyze against other evidence they collect during the course of an evaluation (Poister, 2003, p. 12).

4.2 Purpose of the RDVU Performance Measurement Strategy

The performance measurement strategy described in this chapter is intended for formative uses: it sets out a performance measurement plan designed to support the Unit’s management team in continuous learning about and improvement of RDVU operations.

The strategy is also intended to support the performance accountability of the RDVU as a collaborative initiative. The Unit’s partnering agencies must all demonstrate the benefits of continued participation in and support of the RDVU. Meaningful and credible performance data will assist each of the partnering agencies in the process of assessing their individual contributions to sustaining the Unit and the Unit’s progress in meeting the goals and objectives—and shared vision—upon which it was founded.

If implemented, the performance measurement strategy will provide the Unit’s managers and partners with a baseline of understanding about how performance will be measured by providing a common lens through which they view how the Unit is doing on an ongoing basis. Over time, as Unit staff, managers, and partnering agencies become familiar with ongoing data collection and analysis of performance reports and trends, the performance measurement strategy can evolve to include additional measures of interest to one or more partnering agencies.

4.3 Considerations for an RDVU Performance Measurement Strategy

4.3.1 Current RDVU Performance Measurement Efforts

The RDVU managers and its partnering agencies are all familiar with performance measurement; however, while each of the partnering agencies apply comprehensive performance measurement strategies to program areas within each of their respective organizations, these same practices have not been applied to the RDVU.

The Unit’s current performance measurement efforts—summarized in the RDVU annual report (see Appendix G)—provide data on the following aspects of RDVU operations:

- The number of case referrals from each community agency the Unit received in the previous year of operations, including the proportion of cases accepted from each referring agency;
- Unit decisions respecting each case referral (i.e. whether the Unit accepts or declines a case referral, including whether or not a case is declined due to a lack of RDVU resources, or whether the Unit provides consultation services to a referring agency when declining direct involvement in a case); and
- Court outcomes for those cases where the Unit intervenes provided as follows:
 - The number pending trial
 - The number involving peace bonds
 - The number where no charges are laid charges or charges are dropped

- The number resulting in conviction and acquittal
- The number where the accused pleads guilty

4.3.2 Current Gaps in RDVU Performance Measurement

The Unit's current measures provide a promising foundation for a more comprehensive performance measurement plan and all of these existing measures have been incorporated into the strategy and set of measures outlined in this chapter, as noted in the RDVU Performance Measures Matrix presented in Tables 1 and 2 below. Nevertheless, there are numerous aspects of RDVU operations for which no measures exist and, as a consequence, no data are currently collected.

One example of current gaps in the RDVU's current set of performance measures relates to Unit-victim service experiences. Numerous evaluations of interventions similar to the RDVU have invested significant effort asking victims to report on their levels of satisfaction with services received; whether they believe these services resulted in positive changes for themselves and their children; and whether or not they experienced increased feelings of safety during the intervention experience (see Whetstone, 2001, pp. 371-398; Exum et al, 2010, pp 1-34; Hovell et al, 2006, pp. 137-159; and Pratt, 1999, pp. 1-21).

Another gap worth mention here is the reflections of members of community agencies who refer cases to the RDVU and work with the Unit's members to decrease risk in high-risk case and hold offenders accountable. As with measures of Unit-victim service experiences, numerous studies have considered self-report measures of members of a wide range of community agencies on their interactions with RDVU-like interventions, such as the degree to which members of these agencies believe the intervention assists them in responding to high-risk domestic violence cases (see Whetstone, 2001, pp. 371-398; Light, 2009, pp. 1-52; Edmonton Police Service, 1994, pp. 1-7; Pratt, 2000, pp. 1-20; Uchida et al, 2001, pp. 11).

4.3.3 RDVU Performance Measurement Priorities

Human service programs often cite adequacy of resources as a significant barrier to implementation of performance measurement (Zimmermann & Stevens, 2006, p. 322). The RDVU management team and Steering Committee members were not an exception to this trend, expressing concern early in the development of this evaluation framework about the potential impact any “administrative burden” resulting from additional data collection requirements of a performance measurement strategy might have upon direct service either to victims and their children or with respect to the Unit’s offender management and accountability work (Interviews 2011 & 2012).

In order to address resourcing concerns respecting more comprehensive performance measurement, we initiated a participatory process with the Unit’s management team outlined in the following four stages of development:

- Stage 1—A discussion on potential uses of performance measurement and possible opportunities it can provide in supporting continuous learning and program improvement (formative uses);
- Stage 2—A discussion on example performance measures from literature of RDVU-like interventions and the relevancy and appropriateness of applying these measures to the RDVU theory of change (logic model);
- Stage 3—A discussion on the desired focus of a potential RDVU performance measurement strategy, identification of possible measures, introduction of bridging variables, and expectations of the information that might be gleaned from such measures and how such information might be used by the Unit’s managers; and
- Stage 4—A discussion to finalize a draft set of performance measures.

Early in the process outlined above the Unit’s managers identified a preference for a performance measurement strategy focused on outcome measurement, specifically

information on the extent to which the Unit is achieving intended results. The managers provided two reasons for an outcomes-focused strategy:

1. The collaborative partnership would benefit from the collection of and reporting out on a more comprehensive set of intended results than the current criminal justice outcomes (court case dispositions); and
2. If the Unit is going to expand its performance measurement efforts, its limited capacity to engage in collecting and measuring data should be concentrated on outcomes as opposed to outputs.

(Interviews 2011 & 2012)

4.3.4 Proposed Focus: Bridging variables to RDVU outcomes

The researchers maintained that the Unit's preference for an outcomes-focused strategy should be considered in the context of the Unit's current process/output data collection. As a relatively new, collaborative initiative with limited performance measurement and no plan for evaluation, the researchers made the case for the measurement of "bridging variables" to the Unit's short- and medium-term outcomes.

Bridging variables are critical steps or "sub goals" that must be achieved between work done by a program and its intended outcomes in order for the cause and effect linkages of a program's theory of change to occur (Weiss, 1972, p. 48-49; McDavid and Hawthorn, 2006, p. 50). A measure of a bridging variable could be the occurrence of an activity (i.e. an output) or the presence of "part-way accomplishments on the road to desired outcomes (Weiss, 1997, p. 129)."

The researchers explained that the measurement of bridging variables would provide the Unit and its partners with ongoing information on whether or not the linkages in the RDVU's theory of change are occurring and working—a prudent, yet crucial step in helping the Unit and its partnering agencies better understand and improve RDVU operations and ensure the Unit's causal process is activated. The Unit's management team viewed the measurement of bridging variables to the Unit's short- and medium-term

outcomes as a compromise between a strategy focused entirely on measurement of outcomes and one limited entirely to measurement of outputs. They also agreed that the expected benefits of the bridging variables approach warrants the increased effort that will be required of the Unit's OIC and other managers to implement this proposed performance measurement strategy.

4.4 The RDVU Performance Measures Matrix: A Logic Model Approach

This performance measurement strategy uses a logic model approach to determine and organize the proposed performance measures for the RDVU. Accordingly, the logic model introduced in the previous chapter sets out the theoretical linkages between the Unit's inputs for each of its three main program components; the process by which the Unit's inputs are translated into specific activities by each component; and the changes or results expected as a result of these activities.

The RDVU Performance Measures Matrix below lists a total of 25 proposed performance measures in accordance with the following categories of the RDVU logic model: inputs; process (includes outputs and quality); and outcomes. The Matrix sets out the following information for each measure:

- Data source—Identifies the database or survey instrument the Unit is to use to collect data necessary to calculate a given measure;
- Currently measured (Y/N)—Indicates whether or not the Unit currently collects the required data and calculates a given measure;
- Responsibility for measurement—Identifies the Unit member(s) responsible for collecting data and calculating a given measure; and
- Frequency of measurement—Establishes the proposed schedule for calculation of a given measure.

(See RDVU Performance Measures Matrix below)

A general discussion on each category of performance measures follows the Performance Measures Matrix, including potential future directions for each category of performance measures.

Each of the categories of performance measures has corresponding appendices. The appendices are intended as a guide to the Unit's managers to assist with implementation of the measures and this performance measurement strategy. They also provide the following information for each measure:

- Description—Provides a general definition of a given measure;
- Calculation—Sets out how to calculate a given measure;
- Purpose—Describes the rationale and objective of each measure;
- Recommended method of data collection—Proposes the manner in which the Unit is to collect data necessary to calculate a given measure; and
- Frequency of measurement—Proposes the schedule for calculation of a given measure.

(See Appendices I, J, K, and L)

RDVU Performance Measures Matrix

Table 1—Input and Process measures matrix for RDVU program

	RDVU Logic Model Area	Description of performance measure	Data source	Currently measured	Responsibility	Frequency of measurement
Inputs	Inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of RDVU case referrals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record date and time of day when RDVU receives each case referral 	RDVU database	Y	RDVU managers	Quarterly
	Process	Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of case conferences dispositions by type <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record date and time of day of RDVU case conference decision 	RDVU database	Y	RDVU managers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of contacts with victims, children and offenders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record date and time of day of RDVU contact with victims, children, and offenders 			RDVU database	N	All RDVU members	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of reports to crown counsel 			PRIME & JUSTIN	N	RDVU OIC or other police members	
Quality of Outputs		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfaction ratings of victims on the communication, competency, courtesy, empathy, reliability, and responsiveness of RDVU staff and services 	RDVU Client survey	N	RDVU victim services manager	Quarterly
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfaction ratings of community agencies on communication, competency, courtesy, reliability, responsiveness, and tangibles of RDVU staff and services 	RDVU Community agency survey A & Community agency survey B	N	RDVU managers	Bi-annual

Table 2—RDVU Outcome measures matrix for RDVU program

	RDVU Logic Model Area	Bridging variables to RDVU outcomes	Performance measures	Data Source	Currently Measured (Y/N)	Responsibility	Frequency of measurement
Outcomes	<i>Short-term outcome:</i> Decreased risks for victims and their children	Community agencies understand role of RDVU and its mandate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of case referrals RDVU accepts and takes over (by agency and total for all referrals) Responses of members of community agencies to community agency surveys 	RDVU records Community agency surveys A & B	N	RDVU managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly for case referrals Bi-annual for community agency surveys
		RDVU provides a timely response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Average time between case referral and RDVU case conference decision Average time between RDVU accepting case and first contact with victims and offenders Responses of community members to community agency survey 	RDVU records Community agency survey A	N	RDVU managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly Bi-annual for community agency surveys
		Victims are supported and have increased knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responses of victims to client survey 	RDVU Client survey	N	RDVU victim services manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly
		Offenders abide by conditions of release and court orders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of RDVU cases with reported breaches on “no contact” 	PRIME	N	RDVU OIC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly
	<i>Medium-term outcome:</i> Victims and their children are safe	The incidence of recidivism falls during RDVU involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of RDVU cases where repeat victimization is reported to authorities Proportion of victims who self-report subsequent victimization during RDVU involvement in their case 	PRIME & RDVU Client survey	N	RDVU OIC & victim services manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly
		Victims feel safer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of victims who report feeling safer 	RDVU Client survey	N	RDVU victim services manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly

	RDVU Logic Model Area	Bridging variables to RDVU outcomes	Performance measures	Data Source	Currently Measured (Y/N)	Responsibility	Frequency of measurement
Outcomes	<i>Medium-term outcome:</i> Offenders held accountable by criminal justice system	Police conduct thorough investigations and submit reports to crown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of RDVU cases where Unit submits reports to crown for charge assessment Proportion of RDVU reports to crown where charges are approved 	PRIME & JUSTIN	N	RDVU OIC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual for reports to crown counsel Quarterly for outcome of charge assessments
		Police respond to offenders who breach bail conditions or court orders of “no contact”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of RDVU cases where breaches are reported where Unit submits reports to crown for charge assessment Proportion of RDVU cases with reported breaches of “no contact” where the offenders are detained for these breaches. 	PRIME & JUSTIN	N	RDVU OIC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly for all measures
		Crown counsel initiates court proceedings and conducts prosecutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of court dispositions (by type) for RDVU cases where crown approves charges 	PRIME & JUSTIN	Y	RDVU OIC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly
	<i>Medium-term outcome:</i> Community agencies perceive the RDVU to be a valuable community resource	Community agencies understand the role and mandate of the RDVU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of case referrals RDVU accepts and takes over (by agency and total for all referrals) Responses of members of community agencies to specific statements in community agency surveys 	RDVU records Community agency surveys A & B	N	RDVU managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bi-annual
		Community agencies believe the RDVU supports them in their work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The responses of members of community agencies to specific statements in community agency surveys 	Community agency surveys A & B	N	RDVU managers	
		Community agencies believe the RDVU provides effective services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The responses of members of community agencies to specific statements in community agency survey A 	Community agency surveys A	N	RDVU managers	

4.5 Proposed RDVU Performance Measures: Inputs

As discussed in the previous chapter, inputs are the resources a program uses to accomplish its intended purpose(s). While the RDVU logic model lists multiple inputs, the RDVU Performance Measures Matrix presented in this chapter lists one input requiring ongoing data collection and monitoring: RDVU case referrals.

RDVU case referrals trigger the involvement of the Unit and they set the parameters of the Unit's subsequent intervention process. The Unit currently uses the RDVU case file Excel database to track case referrals according to referral source. The Unit uses these data to calculate the proportion of case referrals by referring agency and presents this information in the RDVU Annual Report, along with data on the Unit's case conference decisions with respect to case referrals (see Appendix G).

The ongoing collection of case referral data is important for several reasons. First, the Unit's tracking of case referral data provides valuable information on not only how many case conferences Unit members participate in during a given period, but also which community agencies have referred cases to the Unit. These data can then be used to calculate the proportion of case referrals accepted (or declined) for RDVU intervention. The measure of case referrals (inputs) to cases referrals accepted (outputs) provides valuable information on the extent to which frontline staff at a given agency may be aware of the criteria the RDVU applies when assessing risk and accepting cases for the Unit's intervention. An agency with a low proportion of accepted case referrals may have staff who are experiencing challenges in understanding the Unit's role and mandate, as well as the presenting factors in a case of domestic violence indicating high-risk. This is valuable information for the Unit

The others inputs provided in the RDVU logic model—the Unit's budget, number of seconded staff, equipment, information systems, and governing legislation—are generally fixed and not likely to change in the short term. Accordingly, these inputs do not require ongoing data collection and monitoring. This is not to say these other inputs are without

value from a performance measurement perspective. The RDVU may wish to revise its performance measurement strategy in the future to adopt measures of efficiency as advocated by Martin and Kettner (2010) whereby data on one or more categories of services provided (outputs) is compared to a relatively fixed input, such as the RDVU budget.

4.6 Proposed RDVU Performance Measures: Process

The RDVU process as outlined in the Unit’s logic model constitutes the stages through which RDVU inputs are translated into activities within each of the Unit’s three program components. The Unit’s “program process” is composed of two dimensions of measures:

1. Outputs; and
2. Quality of outputs.

The RDVU’s outputs are the products of the Unit’s activities and, therefore, a fundamental measure of what the Unit does and the services it provides. However, it is not enough for a program to simply deliver activities and services in accordance with its program theory. The quality of its activities and services plays a very important mediating role in whether a program achieves its intended results or not. Accordingly, the RDVU Performance Measures Matrix includes measures of program quality as part of the Unit’s process monitoring.

4.6.1 Outputs

The RDVU Performance Measures Matrix lists three output measures for the Unit. A brief description of the three output measures is provided in Table 3 below—a complete description of each measure, including summaries on the purpose, formulas for calculation, and the recommended data methods is provided in Appendix J.

Table 3—RDVU Output Measures: Overview Description

RDVU Output	Description
1. Number of case conferences <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Date and time of case conference referral b. Date and time of case conference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of case referrals to the RDVU that the RDVU decides to (aggregate and by referring agency): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Take action ○ Decline action ○ Provide consultation/advice

decision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The date and time when the RDVU makes each case conference disposition—this output data supports the calculation of the bridging variable “RDVU provides a timely response” (see RDVU Outcome Measures Matrix).
<p>2. Number of contacts with victims, their children, and offenders</p> <p>a. Date and time of RDVU makes first in-person contact with victims, their children, and offenders involved in each case</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The recorded date and time a member of the RDVU makes in-person contact with a victim, children, and the offender for the first time for each case the Unit decides to take action. The date and time data when the RDVU makes first contact in each case for which it takes action supports the calculation of the bridging variable “RDVU provides a timely response” (see RDVU Outcome Measures Matrix).
3. Number of reports to crown counsel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of reports to crown counsel prepared in whole or in part by members of the RDVU for those cases for which the RDVU takes action. Reports to crown counsel are a key activity of the Unit’s work to hold offenders accountable and collection of these data supports calculation of all of the bridging variables to the RDVU outcome “Offenders held accountable by criminal justice system” (see RDVU Outcome Measures Matrix).

The performance measurement strategy outlined in this chapter is outcome-focused: it emphasizes the collection, measurement and monitoring of operational data to assist the RDVU in determining the extent to which the Unit is likely achieving desired outcomes. The three output measures listed in the Performance Measures Matrix support the Unit’s management team in ongoing monitoring of measures intended to provide feedback on the bridging variables listed in the RDVU Outcome Measures Matrix. For example, the output data respecting the Unit’s contact with victims and offenders, as well as the output data case conference decisions, are both to be used to calculate whether the Unit provides a timely response, a bridging variable (or interim marker of success) to the Unit’s efforts to decrease risk when intervening in a case.

The three output measures recommended in this chapter fall well short of the comprehensive list of output variables provided in the RDVU logic model. There can be no doubt that the collection and monitoring of data to measure all of the RDVU’s output variables would provide the Unit’s managers and the RDVU Steering Committee with a more complete picture of the volume of RDVU activities and services provided. However, measures of service volume are currently not a priority for the RDVU—the

Unit's management team prefers to focus its limited available resources on collecting the necessary data in support of ongoing outcome monitoring.¹¹

4.6.1.1 Potential future direction for RDVU Output measurement

As with any organization's strategy, the RDVU performance measurement strategy is intended to evolve over time in accordance with the priorities and planning of the RDVU Steering Committee and the partnering agencies that provide the necessary resources to support RDVU operations. One or more of the Unit's partnering agencies may develop an interest in knowing more about the Unit's outputs at some point in the future after the implementation of the RDVU performance measurement strategy. For example, there may be a desire in the future to answer questions such as what services are delivered, to whom, and how efficiently?

4.6.1.1.1 Contacts

One RDVU output variable that the Unit's partnering agencies may wish to take a closer look at in the future is the number of contacts made per case. The RDVU service methodology is partially predicated upon the logic that risk is reduced through regular contact of Unit members with victims, their children, and offenders. The Unit does not currently track the number of contacts Unit members make in each case.

Other units similar to the RDVU have used data on contacts to calculate an average number of contacts per case as a measure of service intensity over time (Uchida et al, 2001, p. 10). While the Performance Measures Matrix in this chapter recommends the Unit record when members first make in-person contact with victims, their children, and offenders, the purpose is to record the date and time of such contact to support calculating the timeliness of the RDVU's response after deciding to take action in a case. Data on the number of contacts that Unit members have with victims, their children, and offenders during the lifetime of an RDVU case would provide a clearer picture on the "intensity" of

¹¹ The Unit's management team maintains that its core activities and services—risk assessment; safety planning; contacts with victims, their children, and offenders; emotional support; police investigations—are delivered for each case and, if required, the data to measure these outputs could be retrieved *ex post facto* from one or more of the individual, separate databases the Unit members access through their home agencies. For example, the Unit's victim services workers record all the RDVU services they provide to victims and their children in OSNIUM, the VVTHS case management database.

contacts as a dimension of the Unit's efforts to reduce risk and to manage and hold offenders accountable.

4.6.1.1.2 Service completions

Another output variable to consider is the number of cases closed within a given period. The Unit could compare data on cases closed—or service completions—with data on case referrals accepted (an input the Unit currently tracks) to calculate the average number of days the Unit is actively involved in (and responsible for) a case. The average number of days a case remains active could be compared from one period of time to another to provide the Unit with an early warning system as to when its capacity to accept new cases may be impaired. Data on cases closed could also be used to calculate the average costs to close RDVU cases, should the Unit's partners develop an interest in measures of efficiency or productivity.

4.6.2 Quality

While outputs measure how much service is being provided, the literature on performance measurement also emphasizes the importance of the quality of the service being provided. High-quality human services are more likely to have "...low error rates, less paperwork, less reprocessing time, happier funding sources, more satisfied clients, lower costs, and a better public image" (Martin and Kettner, 2010, pp. 8). The implication is that high-quality services are more likely to achieve their intended results when compared to the same, but poorer quality services. Carol Weiss echoes this perspective when stating that a "...program can fail not because its services were inappropriate or poorly designed but because they were badly delivered" (Weiss, 1997, p. 131).

Quality measures indicate how well a program was received by clients, as well as aspects of program delivery that may require modification so as to improve the delivery of a program to clients. It is, however, important not to confuse quality measures with outcome measurement. Outcomes are the changes individuals experience as a result of participating in and receiving services of a program. Measures of quality provide information on how program services are delivered, not the effects or changes resulting

from the delivery of these services. This is an important distinction that must be clearly understood in a performance measurement strategy aimed at measuring both program quality and outcomes.

Academics who write about the evaluation of domestic violence services place importance on the measurement of program quality. Some research suggests that clients of a domestic violence program who perceive its services to be respectful and appropriate are more likely to return to the program in the future (Sullivan, 2011, p. 357). Engaging and connecting victims of high-risk domestic violence with the continuum of services intended to promote their safety and support is an extremely important function of the RDVU service methodology. Another important function of the Unit is to engage and connect with community agencies that form the continuum of services to respond to domestic violence cases. Accordingly, the RDVU performance measurement strategy outlined herein recommends that the quality of the RDVU service delivery methodology be measured on an ongoing basis.

The literature sets out two general approaches to developing quality performance measures:

1. Quality standard approach—the measurement of a program’s services according to a defined level or standard of quality.
2. Client satisfaction approach—the measurement of a program’s services according to feedback of clients, usually by means of a client satisfaction survey.

(Martin, 2010, p. 55; Poister, 2003, pp. 223-234)

The RDVU performance measurement strategy recommends the Unit adopt the client satisfaction approach and administer surveys to solicit feedback from victims involved in RDVU cases as well as community agencies. The client satisfaction approach is recommended for the following reasons:

- There is no clear consensus in the literature or among the RDVU members or partnering agencies about specific quality standards for the types of services the RDVU provides;
- The types of services the RDVU provides are more appropriately assessed from the client perspective—information on how participants feel about the services they received is helpful to managers in their quest for program improvement by, for example, suggesting aspects of the program that may need to be modified or expanded (Riger et al, 2002, p. 65); and
- The literature suggests that clients who provide positive feedback on their level of satisfaction with the delivery of a program’s services are more likely re-engage with the program in the future (Hogard, 2007, pp. 315-317). This is a very important consideration when dealing with cases of domestic violence, where risk to victims and their children can elevate very quickly.

4.6.2.1 Measuring Quality: The RDVU Client and Community agency surveys

The RDVU performance measurement strategy proposes the RDVU administer a total of three surveys:

1. *Client survey*—to be administered to victims (excluding children) in the cases for which the Unit applies its service methodology (see Appendix M);
2. *Community agency survey A*—to be administered to members of community agencies who have referred cases to the Unit or members of community agencies with whom the Unit has had substantive contact concerning an RDVU case (see Appendix N); and
3. *Community agency survey B*—to be administered to each member of a community agency who attends a RDVU information session (see Appendix O).

Each of the three surveys contains measures of quality using the client satisfaction approach. Quality is measured by asking respondents to provide feedback on their level of satisfaction with specific dimensions of quality.

The dimensions of quality to be measured in the RDVU surveys come from the performance measurement and quality management literature. Martin and Kettner (2010) identify 15 dimensions of quality applicable to human service programs. Some examples include “responsiveness,” the timely delivery of program services; and “reliability,” the dependability and consistency of a program’s services (Martin and Kettner, 2010, pp. 53-55). Martin and Kettner advise the selection of quality dimensions will vary according to the priorities of program managers and stakeholders.

The RDVU performance measurement strategy recommends seven dimensions of quality to be measured. The seven result from consultations with RDVU members, as well as a review of survey instruments implemented by other programs responding to domestic violence (see Appendix P for other example surveys). Each of the seven dimensions is listed in Table 4 (Column A) below, while the statements used in the surveys to measure each dimension are listed in Column B. Column C lists the specific RDVU survey where each of the statements is provided for respondents to rate.

Table 4—RDVU Quality Measures

Column A	Column B	Column C
RDVU Dimensions of Quality	Survey statements <small>[Respondents rate each statement as: “Very good”; “Good”; “Fair”; “Poor”; “Very poor”; or “Don’t know”]</small>	RDVU Surveys where statements are used
1. Communication	• Staff communication with you	• Client survey • Community agency survey A
	• Presentation delivery	• Community agency survey B
2. Competency	• Staff skills and knowledge	• Client survey • Community agency survey A • Community agency survey B
	• Staff ability to address your needs	• Client survey
3. Courtesy	• Staff courtesy and respect towards you	• Client survey • Community agency survey A • Community agency survey B
4. Empathy	• Staff compassion and understanding	• Client survey
5. Reliability	• Consistency of staff responses	• Client survey • Community agency survey A
6. Responsiveness	• How quickly staff respond	• Client survey
	• Staff availability	• Client survey • Community agency survey A
7. Tangibles	• Presentation content	• Community agency survey B

4.6.2.2 Potential future direction for RDVU Quality measurement

4.6.2.2.1 Incorporating a quality standard approach

While the RDVU performance measurement strategy recommends the Unit implement the RDVU surveys to capture the satisfaction of clients (victims) and members of community agencies, this does not preclude the Unit from also incorporating a quality standard approach. There are aspects of the RDVU service methodology for which the Unit might consider developing quality standards. For example, a portion of the Unit’s work is providing referrals to victims. One or more partnering agencies may seek information on the appropriateness of these referrals and whether the clients who are referred to them actually receive services. The Unit could establish a benchmark proportion of referrals meet the definition of “appropriate,” track each referral made to determine whether or not it was appropriate, and then calculate the proportion of referrals that meet the established benchmark. The additional administrative resources required to implement a quality standard approach would of course need to be considered, along with the anticipated benefits of measuring program quality from this perspective.

4.7 Proposed RDVU Performance Measures: Outcomes

4.7.1 Performance measurement and the question of attribution

An outcome can be defined as a change in a person or system that results from a program’s activities. The RDVU logic model presents the following short and medium-term outcomes expected—and the key constructs to be measured—when the Unit intervenes in high-risk cases of domestic violence:

- A decrease in risk for victims and their children;
- Victims and their children are safe;
- Offenders are held accountable by the criminal justice system; and
- Community agencies recognize the RDVU as a valuable resource to assist them in responding to cases of high-risk domestic violence.

The performance measurement strategy outlined herein is “outcomes focused,” meaning the bulk of administrative effort to collect and measure performance data is aimed at providing the Unit’s management team and the RDVU Steering Committee with information on the extent to which the Unit is achieving the short and medium-term outcomes in the RDVU logic model.

It is worth stating again that attributing outcomes to a human service program such as the RDVU is extremely challenging. Performance measurement provides “data that are descriptive, but not rigorously evaluative” (Poister, 2003, p. 20). Performance measurement is not a tool to demonstrate definitively that a program caused or did not cause a particular observed outcome to occur. Unlike evaluations that use comparison groups and research designs aimed at determining the causal relationship between a program and its effects, performance measurement generally “assumes attribution” between a program and observed outcomes (McDavid et al., 2013, p. 327).

This caveat is important to understanding the approach outlined herein with respect to RDVU outcome measurement: the measures related to the Unit’s short and medium-term outcomes are intended to provide RDVU partners with ongoing feedback on the extent to which the Unit’s activities are likely accomplishing these intended results.

Given that performance measurement cannot definitively attribute outcomes to a program, performance measurement results must be considered alongside the results of a program evaluation in order to more adequately address the attribution question. Performance data tell a performance “story” that can be analyzed and compared with other data collected during an evaluation, which will result in a more composite picture of observed outcomes and the extent to which they can be attributed to the program. The point is that the RDVU performance measurement strategy aims to provide the Unit’s management team and primary partners and stakeholders with information about what is happening with the program, not why it is happening.

Accordingly, this evaluation framework is built upon the theoretical perspective that ongoing performance measurement and episodic evaluation, as recommended in the following chapter, are complimentary tools for the RDVU and its partnering agencies to assist them in understanding what the Unit does, what it accomplishes, and the likelihood of a causal link between the two.

4.7.2 Bridging variables: Measuring the likelihood the RDVU is achieving short and medium-term outcomes

This performance measurement framework seeks to provide the Unit’s managers and partnering agencies with information to help gauge the probability or likelihood that the Unit is achieving its intended results. The approach to achieving this goal is through the measurement of “bridging variables” to each of the short- and medium-term outcomes of the RDVU logic model.

Bridging variables are the interim markers of success to desired outcomes—they are the necessary steps or “sub goals” that must be achieved between work done by a program and its intended outcomes in order for the cause and effect linkages of a program’s theory of change to occur (Weiss, 1972, p. 48-49; Weiss, 1997, p. 129, McDavid and Hawthorn, 2006, p. 50). If a program demonstrates achievement of identified bridging variables then it presumably is more likely to achieve its theory of change and reach its ultimate objective, provided the program theory is not based on flawed logic (i.e. a causal process that does not produce desired effects).

The performance measures matrix lists a total of 12 bridging variables in relation to the short- and medium-term outcomes in the RDVU logic model, with one or more measures for each of these bridging variables. The RDVU bridging variables, while not explicitly identified in RDVU logic model, are perhaps best represented as the arrows leading from the Unit’s outputs to the short- and medium-term outcomes: each of these arrows is composed of multiple bridging variables with one or more measures that, once populated, will facilitate the Unit’s staff, managers, and partnering agencies in making ongoing,

informed assessments on the extent to which the Unit is successfully achieving the necessary interim steps required to link the Unit's activities (cause) with the following intended outcomes (effect) identified in the RDVU logic model:

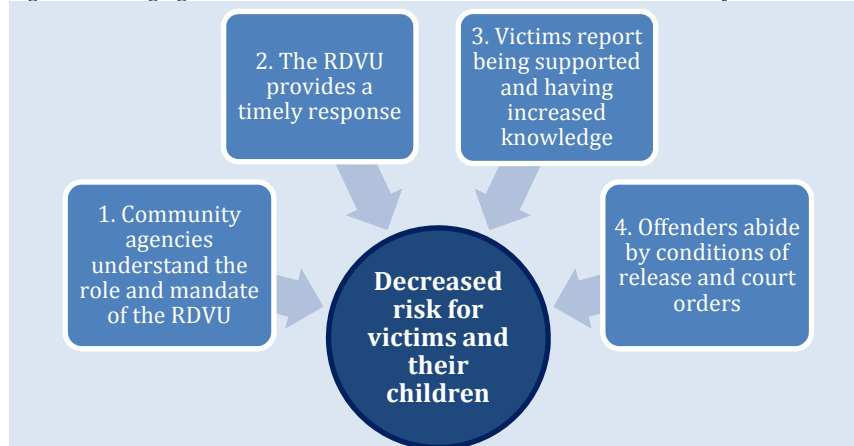
- Decreased risk for victims and their children;
- Victims and their children are safe;
- Offenders are held accountable by the criminal justice system; and
- Community agencies perceive the RDVU as a valuable community resource that assists them in their response to cases of high-risk domestic violence.

The performance measures matrix does not contain any bridging variables and accompanying measures of the long term outcomes presented in the RDVU logic model. The reason, as discussed in the previous chapter, is that the long term outcomes generally occur sometime after the Unit has discontinued its involvement in a case and, as a consequence, the achievement of these outcomes is likely to be impacted by a much greater range of variables outside the control or influence of the Unit than is the case with both the short- and medium-term outcomes. However, this does not preclude the Unit from attempting to measure long term outcomes either as a function of its ongoing performance measurement efforts, or as part of a future evaluation.

4.7.2.1 Short-term Outcome: Decreased risk for victims and their children

Figure 1 below presents the four bridging variables to the Unit's efforts to decrease risk for victims and their children. These bridging variables are necessary steps to reducing the risks of exposure to further violence for victims and their children after the Unit becomes involved in their case.

Figure 1—Bridging variables to the RDVU short-term outcome *Decreased risk for victims and their children*



1. Community agencies understand the role and mandate of the RDVU—The RDVU requires referrals and information from community agencies in order to intervene in high-risk domestic violence cases. If community agencies do not understand the role or mandate of the RDVU they may delay a case referral or fail to provide information crucial to the Unit’s work in assessing and reducing risk. For these reasons it is vital that members of community agencies have a clear understanding what the Unit does and when to refer cases to the Unit.

The following performance measures are proposed to assess this bridging variable:

- Proportion of case referrals RDVU accepts and declines for each agency that refers cases to the Unit; and
 - Responses of members of community agencies to statements (five-level Likert items) in RDVU Community agency surveys A and B about the role and mandate of the RDVU.
2. RDVU provides a timely response—Risk in a domestic violence situation can escalate quickly. It is therefore essential the Unit respond to case referrals by quickly obtaining critical information relevant to assessing the level of risk involved and then promptly conducting a case conference. Additionally, when the RDVU takes over a case, it is very important Unit members promptly contact

victims and offenders to begin risk mitigation work necessary to ensure victims and their children are safe.

The following performance measures are proposed to assess this bridging variable:

- Average time—number of elapsed days, or portion thereof—between case referral and RDVU case conference decision;
 - Average time—number of elapsed days, or portion thereof—between RDVU accepting case and first contact with victims and offenders; and
 - Responses of community members to statement (five-level Likert item) in RDVU Community agency survey A about the promptness of the Unit’s response to case referrals.
3. *Victims report feeling supported and having increased knowledge*—The RDVU provides emotional support, information and referrals, safety planning, and advocacy to victims. This work is intended to remove barriers to victims seeking help and to assist and empower them to seek positive changes in their lives, changes that are ultimately aimed at decreasing risk to themselves and their children. Accordingly, it is important the Unit have some indication as to the extent victims feel supported and have increased knowledge about domestic violence, the system of response to it, and safety strategies to protect themselves and their children.

The following performance measure is proposed to assess this bridging variable:

- Responses of victims to multiple statements (five-level Likert items) in the RDVU Client survey respecting the level of support and information they believe they have received from RDVU members.
4. *Offenders abide by “no contact” conditions of release and courts orders*—After the RDVU takes on a case, members begin the offender management process.

They contact the offender to interview and notify him of the Unit’s involvement, which is supplemented with further contacts at times through the lifecycle of the case in order to monitor compliance with release conditions, particularly conditions of “no-contact” with a victim. By making offenders aware that their actions and behavior are subject to the Unit’s scrutiny, the Unit intends to deter offenders from escalating risk by breaching “non contact” conditions and, by extension, supporting the Unit’s other efforts to decrease risk to victims and their children.

The following performance measure is proposed to assess this bridging variable:

- Proportion of RDVU cases with one or more reported breaches to authorities of “no contact” release conditions or court orders.

4.7.2.1.1 Outcome: Victims and their children are safe

Figure 2—Bridging variables to the following RDVU outcome: Victims are safe



Figure 2 above presents two bridging variables to the Unit’s objective of ensuring victims and their children are safe:

1. *Victims report feeling safer*—According to the RDVU’s program logic, the Unit’s risk reduction work is a necessary precondition to achieving the objective that victims and their children are safe. This work involves connecting victims and their children to support services aimed at increasing their psychological safety so that they may apply the information and support they receive to making decisions that

ultimately contribute to safety for themselves and their children. Victims' perceptions of their safety and the safety of their children is therefore an important bridging variable to achieving the objective that victims are safe from further violence and abuse during the RDVU's involvement in their case.

The following performance measure is proposed to assess this bridging variable:

- Responses of victims to statement (five-level Likert item) in RDVU Client survey respecting their perception of their own safety.

2. *No incidents of repeat domestic violence during RDVU involvement*—The safety of victims and their children is a paramount concern of the RDVU. An obvious, but important bridging variable to achieving this important objective is the extent to which victims and their children are exposed to further violence and abuse during the period in which the RDVU is involved in their case. The following performance measures are proposed to assess this bridging variable:

- Proportion of RDVU cases where repeat victimization is reported to police during RDVU involvement in these cases; and
- Proportion of victims who self-report subsequent victimization during RDVU involvement in their case (measured by response of victims to a question in the RDVU Client survey).

4.7.2.1.2 Outcome: Offenders held accountable for their crimes

Figure 3—Bridging variables to the following RDVU outcome: Offenders held accountable for their crimes



Figure 3 above presents three bridging variables to the Unit’s objective of ensuring offenders are held accountable:

1. *Police conduct thorough investigations and submit reports to crown counsel*—A key goal of the RDVU is to undertake the necessary work to hold offenders accountable. The Unit attempts to contribute to this objective through the investigative expertise of its police members in conducting thorough domestic violence investigations, or assisting other police to the extent necessary to ensure thorough investigations, and preparing or helping to prepare detailed reports to crown counsel for charge assessment. The following performance measures are intended to indicate the extent to which the RDVU engages in such work in those cases in which it intervenes:
 - Proportion of RDVU cases where Unit submits or assists with submission of reports to crown for charge assessment; and
 - Proportion of RDVU reports to crown where charges are filed.
2. *Police respond to offenders who breach conditions of “no contact”*—Additional work of the Unit in support of the goal of ensuring offenders are held accountable consists of responding to, or coordinating responses to, reported breaches by offenders of their release/bail conditions or court imposed conditions. The Unit

considers any contravention of conditions of “no contact” with a victim to be a “high risk” breach that demands an immediate and thorough response from the Unit and other authorities each and every instance it is reported. This work can involve investigating the breach, incarcerating the offender, and submitting a report to crown counsel for the breach.

The following performance measures are proposed to assess this bridging variable:

- Proportion of RDVU cases with reported breaches of “no contact” where the Unit prepares or helps to prepare a report to crown for charge assessment in relation to the breach of “no contact”; and
- Proportion of RDVU cases with reported breaches of “no contact” where the offenders are detained for these breaches.

3. Crown counsel conducts prosecutions—After crown counsel approves charges, the next stage of work in support of the Unit’s goal of holding offenders accountable is for crown to initiate court proceedings and conduct prosecutions of offenders. While the Unit undertakes a number of activities in support of these proceedings, it is ultimately the responsibility of crown counsel to present evidence and pursue a conviction with the aim of holding offenders accountable.

Court dispositions of RDVU cases are a crucial step to holding offenders accountable. Guilty pleas, conviction or acquittal at trial, stays of proceedings, or crown decisions to drop charges are all important indicators of the degree of success of the efforts of crown and the Unit in achieving the goal of holding offenders accountable, which is ultimately achieved when the criminal justice system formally sanctions offenders at sentencing.

The following performance measure is proposed to assess this bridging variable:

- Proportion of court dispositions (by type: guilty pleas, conviction or acquittal at trial, stays of proceedings, or crown decisions to drop charges) for those RDVU cases where crown approves charges.

4.7.2.1.3 Outcome: Community agencies perceive the RDVU to be a valuable community resource

Figure 4—Bridging variables to the following RDVU outcome: Community agencies perceive the RDVU as a valuable community resource



Figure 4 above presents three bridging variables to the RDVU’s objective that community agencies—specifically, the members of community agencies—perceive the Unit to be a valuable community resource that assists them in their response to cases of high-risk domestic violence:

1. Community agencies understand the role and mandate of the RDVU—(same bridging variable as above with the outcome *decreased risk for victims and their children*)—The RDVU requires referrals and information from community agencies in order to intervene in high-risk domestic violence cases. If community agencies do not understand the role or mandate of the RDVU they may delay a case referral or fail to provide information crucial to the Unit’s work in assessing and reducing risk. For these reasons it is vital that members of community agencies have a clear understanding what the Unit does and when to refer cases to the Unit.

The following performance measures are proposed to assess this bridging variable:

- Proportion of case referrals RDVU accepts and declines for each agency that refers cases to the Unit; and
- Responses of members of community agencies to statements (five-level Likert items) in RDVU Community agency surveys A and B about the role and mandate of the RDVU.

2. Community agencies believe the RDVU supports them in their work—One of the key streams of work of the RDVU is to share information with community agencies so as to support the goals of the Unit and, ultimately, to promote positive outcomes for cases of domestic violence. This work not only includes the sharing of information and best practices relative to those cases the RDVU takes over, but also involves Unit members consulting with and providing information, guidance or advice regarding domestic violence cases to which the Unit has no direct involvement or role. In this manner, the Unit intends to serve as a resource for other agencies, helping to build capacity to provide effective, holistic responses to domestic violence in Greater Victoria.

The following performance measures are proposed to assess this bridging variable:

- The responses of members of community agencies to statements (five-level Likert items) in RDVU Community agency surveys A and B.
3. Community agencies believe the RDVU provides effective services—Those agencies that have had case referrals accepted by the Unit, or agencies that have had substantive contact with the Unit respecting specific cases, will all have their own impression about the effectiveness of the RDVU response to these cases. The degree to which these agencies believe the Unit responds effectively is an important bridging variable determining whether these agencies believe the

RDVU is a valuable community resource that assists them in responding to cases of domestic violence.

The following performance measures are proposed to assess this bridging variable:

- The responses of members of community agencies to statements (five-level Likert items) in RDVU Community agency survey A.

4.7.2.2 Potential Future direction of Measurement of RDVU outcomes

4.7.2.2.1 Measuring long term outcomes

The focus on outcomes of this performance measurement strategy is applied to measuring bridging variables to the short- and medium-term outcomes presented in the RDVU logic model. The purpose is to support the formative uses of the performance measurement strategy in providing feedback to the Unit’s managers and primary stakeholders on the extent to which the RDVU is undertaking and following the process envisioned in the RDVU logic model and, as a function of this, the likelihood that the short and medium-term outcomes are occurring as anticipated in the program’s theory of change.

As the RDVU logic assumes the long term outcomes generally occur sometime after the Unit has discontinued its involvement in a case—and, as a consequence, the achievement of these outcomes is likely to be impacted by a range of variables well outside the control or influence of the Unit—the RDVU performance measurement strategy does not provide measures of bridging variables to the intended long term outcomes presented in the RDVU logic model, nor any other measures intended to observe the occurrence of these long term outcomes.

There can be no doubt that the RDVU partnering and non-partnering agencies will be interested to learn of the long term outcomes and impact of the Unit on the lives of victims and their children; on offenders; and on the community agencies responding to domestic violence. For example, the performance measurement strategy could be adapted, perhaps, to capture information on repeat domestic violence involving one or

more persons of a closed RDVU case. A further client survey could also be developed for administration at intervals after the closure of an RDVU case in an attempt to capture how victims and their children are coping well after the Unit is no longer involved in their situation. However, adapting the performance measurement strategy to include such measurements raises attribution issues, which are more significant when dealing with long-term outcomes and impact of a program.

The RDVU's long term outcomes and impact are arguably more suitable to a future summative evaluation than a performance measurement strategy intended for formative purposes. For human service type programs such as the RDVU, methodologically defensible impact (summative) evaluations built around an experimental evaluation design can address the issue of attribution; however, these kinds of evaluations are extremely expensive and time consuming to undertake and would raise ethical issues with respect to having a control group (i.e. persons denied the benefit of the RDVU intervention for the purposes of comparison).

Whether the RDVU considers carrying out an impact evaluation or adapting the performance measurement strategy for summative purposes, consideration should be given to the following factors:

- There is no consensus in the DVU literature, nor among members of the Unit and its stakeholders, on the extent to the Unit's intervention is intended to result in victims and their children living lives free of domestic violence and offenders never again re-victimizing their partners. The RDVU handles high-risk cases, which by their very nature generally involve severe, repeat victimization. Such factors complicate expectations about the impact an intervention such as the RDVU can be expected to have on subsequent recidivism (Friday et al, 2006, pp. 46-51).
- There is also the issue of when the impact of the RDVU should be assessed: at what point after the closure of an RDVU case should the Unit attempt to

measure whether or not offenders have recidivated or the quality of life for victims and their children has improved?

While the RDVU Steering Committee may want to consider evaluation options aimed at informing partners and stakeholders of the Unit's long term outcomes and impact, this report recommends the Unit first commit to implementing the RDVU performance measurement and evaluation strategies contained herein. The accumulation of performance measurement data as well as the findings of the two-stage evaluation recommended in the next chapter will provide considerable guidance on any future evaluative assessments of the RDVU program.

4.8 Measuring External Factors

The RDVU logic model presents a number of external factors that could potentially influence the achievement of the Unit's intended outcomes. These external factors could mediate the extent to which the Unit achieves its intended outcomes, whether short, medium or long term and should also be considered as part of the assessment of alternative explanations for observed results of the RDVU program.

The proposed community agency surveys provide an opportunity to capture or flag potential factors related to the wider political context within which the RDVU operates. Any issues that do emerge can be explored further during a future evaluation.

A number of evaluations of interventions similar to the RDVU have considered socio-demographic characteristics of victims and offenders as research suggests that certain characteristics can mediate the impact of an intervention (Hovell, Seid, and Liles, 2006, pp. 137-156; Coker et al, 2000, pp. 553-559; Orchowsky, 1999, pp. 45-62). The RDVU Client survey does include some very basic socio-demographic measures (age range, sex, first language, and country of birth), which are intended to provide the Unit, if it so desires, with limited information on the "reach" of its intervention. The Client survey

could be expanded in the future to include measures such as education attainment; income level; marital status; previous experience of violence and abuse, and many other variables that could potentially mediate the Unit’s efforts to achieve intended results. Moreover, the Unit or an evaluator could also consider using socio-demographic measures in regression analysis that examines the association between these variables and observed outcomes

4.9 Overview of RDVU Data Sources

The RDVU performance measures matrix introduced earlier lists the following data sources:

1. RDVU Client survey
2. Community agency survey A
3. Community agency survey B
4. RDVU records
5. PRIME
6. JUSTIN

The three surveys are primary sources of data to be administered by the Unit and intended to capture a range of data to be used to calculate a number of the bridging variables to the RDVU short- and medium-term outcomes (see Appendices M, N, and O for a copy of each proposed survey). A discussion on the development and administration of the surveys is provided below.

RDVU records—the RDVU case file database—is a Microsoft Excel file the Unit uses to record a range of case related information it extracts from PRIME and JUSTIN as well as data on case referrals and case conference decisions. In the absence of more sophisticated software, the Unit will need to expand use of its case file database to manage all of its data recording and information needs respecting this performance measurement strategy. For example, the Unit’s database will need to be used to record and track survey data and calculations, as well as record further data from PRIME and JUSTIN that are necessary

to populate the proposed measures. Appendix L provides a recommended method of data collection for each bridging variable and provides details on how the Unit can use its database to record and track data.

The PRIME and JUSTIN databases are also a very important source of RDVU performance measurement data:

1. PRIME (Police Records Information Management Environment)—A common online information system used by all police in BC to collect, retain and share information about police incidents and crimes.
2. JUSTIN—An online computer information system used to track criminal cases from initial police arrests and crown counsel charge assessment through to court disposition.

PRIME and JUSTIN cover a wide range of information on specific cases that can be used to calculate proposed bridging variables to RDVU outcomes outlined in this chapter. The data collection methods outlined for each bridging variable in Appendix L recommend the Unit record data from PRIME and JUSTIN on an ongoing basis as necessary to populate the proposed performance measures. For example, one measure requires the Unit to record breaches of “no contact” orders by offenders involved in an RDVU cases (see Appendix L). The recommended data collection method for this bridging variable is for the Unit to record reported breaches in the RDVU case file database when the Unit becomes aware of a breach of “no contact.” Doing so will save time and limit the need for *ex post facto* data collection and recording when the Unit prepares quarterly or annual performance measurement reports.

4.9.1 RDVU Surveys

Surveys are a key source of primary data that can provide ongoing feedback from victims and members of community agencies about their interactions and experiences with the RDVU. The researchers discussed the development of surveys in the early stages of the

development of this evaluation framework when it became clear that additional sources of information were necessary to measure RDVU performance on an ongoing basis.

The purpose of the surveys is to capture broad patterns in responses that will assist the Unit and its partnering agencies in understanding and improving the RDVU intervention. The surveys are intended to capture recollections of RDVU clients and members of community agencies as part of the measurement of bridging variables to the short- and medium-term outcomes in the RDVU logic model. The surveys will also serve as an important source of data—additional lines of evidence—to be assessed as part of a future evaluation (see the evaluation strategy outlined in the next chapter). The survey data can be compared to and integrated with face-to-face interview data conducted as part of a future evaluation, providing an evaluator the opportunity to assess and analyze “areas of convergence, inconsistency, and contradiction among the findings” (Andres, 2012, p. 46).

4.9.1.1 Survey Design

The RDVU surveys were developed through an iterative process involving a review of survey instruments used by RDVU-like interventions and domestic violence services providers, a review of the literature of best practices in survey design, as well as consultations and survey testing with the Unit.

The primary sample survey instruments used to guide construction of the RDVU surveys are the surveys administered by the Vancouver DVU, as well as the Docking Institute’s *Domestic Violence Services Satisfaction Survey* (see Appendix P for copies of these surveys). The Vancouver DVU surveys are brief and administered in person by members of the Unit. The Docking Institute survey, on the other hand, is a lengthy, self-administered survey in which clients of domestic violence services complete self-report without the presence of an interviewer or facilitator.

The researchers, in consultation with the Unit, chose to design short, self-administered surveys that are to be submitted anonymously by respondents. The main rationale for the selection of self-administered surveys over interview-based surveys was the sensitivity of the subject matter and the fact that the RDVU does not have the resources to hire an

interviewer external to the Unit to administer the surveys. The presence of an interviewer who is a member of the Unit raises validity issues respecting data that are collected, particularly in the case of clients who have had numerous interactions with Unit members and the expectation of receiving services in the future.

The RDVU surveys are principally designed around Likert statements based on a 5-point scale ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree.” The researchers attempted to develop clear, straightforward, and unambiguous Likert statements containing one feature or experience relative to measuring a bridging variable to the short- or medium-term outcomes in the RDVU logic model. The statements are presented in a linear progression to “walk” both clients and members of community agencies through their service experience and interactions with the RDVU.

The researchers conducted a series of tests of the survey instruments. First, an initial iteration of each survey was provided to the Unit’s members, who completed them and provided feedback. Only the RDVU Client survey received substantive feedback: two members expressed concern over the complexity of the language and phrasing in some of the Likert statements in the Client survey. The researchers revised the Client survey based on this feedback.

The researchers then requested the Unit’s OIC to assist in administering the surveys as a pilot test to clients and members of community agencies. The Unit’s OIC “pilot-tested” the final iteration of RDVU Client survey with two former clients (victims) in closed RDVU cases. The OIC also sent the final iterations of the community agency surveys to three members of community agencies who have had previous interactions with the Unit. The researchers incorporated feedback from the pilot test into the design of the surveys.

4.9.1.2 Administration of Surveys

As presented in Table 3 below, this report recommends the Unit implement separate administration processes for the RDVU client survey and the community agency surveys. For the client survey, the researchers recommend the unit provide the survey directly to clients to complete in a controlled environment, preferably the RDVU office at the

Saanich police department, and for the completed survey to be sealed in an envelope by the client until such time as the Unit records survey data for reporting purposes. The intention is to have clients self-administer the survey independent of any assistance from a Unit member—a Unit member who provides assistance to a client is to indicate this at the end of the survey so that the Unit is able to calculate the proportion of completed client surveys where assistance is provided.

Table 5—Survey Administration Processes

Survey	Proposed Administration Process
RDVU Client survey	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A Unit member—preferably one of the Unit’s victim services workers—presents a hard copy of the survey in person to clients at a time deemed most appropriate near the end of their service experience with Unit and when the client is at the RDVU office. 2. Unit member administering the survey explains the purpose of the survey, that it’s anonymous, and to be completed without the assistance of any Unit member, unless assistance is requested. 3. Unit member then informs clients that it should not take any longer than 5 to 10 minutes to complete and explains the procedure for clients to seal the survey upon completion: an unmarked envelope is to accompany the survey and clients are to place the survey inside and seal the envelope once they have completed the survey. 4. Client is to place the sealed envelope in a box (Client survey Response Retention Box) designated for receipt of RDVU Client surveys—it is recommended this box resemble a voting ballot box. 5. The Client survey Response Retention Box should be accessed once every three months to allow the Unit to open each of the envelopes to input the survey data into the RDVU case file database, from which the calculations can be performed as outlined in Appendix L.
Community agency survey A	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Unit OIC sends email invitation to members of community agencies that referred one or more cases to the RDVU in the previous 6-month period, as well as members of community agencies with whom Unit members have had substantive contact in the previous 6-month period concerning RDVU cases. 2. Unit’s email invitation includes a link to Survey Monkey (or other online survey tool) and describes purpose of the survey, that responses are anonymous, and that the survey will only take a few minutes to complete. 3. Respondents are provided 2 weeks to complete the survey. The online survey tool will allow only one survey to be submitted by each individual who receives an invitation to participate. The survey tool should also generate a reminder email after 7 days to anyone who has not submitted a survey.
Community agency survey B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommended the Unit follow the same procedures as outline above for Community agency survey A. • In order to email this survey, the Unit will need to have email addresses for anyone who participates in one of the Unit’s

Each RDVU client (adult) should be given an opportunity to complete a survey. It is very important for the Unit to communicate to clients that completion of the survey is voluntary and anonymous—none of the information provided will be used to identify a client. The researchers recommend the Unit administer the Client survey near the end of a client’s service experience, but prior to any trial, if applicable in a given case, due to the potential for court decisions to influence client responses.

Administration of a survey before the service experience and another survey afterward could increase the validity and reliability of survey findings; however, the researchers decided against such an approach. The concern is that clients—who are already dealing with the stress and emotions stemming from recent violence abuse, as well as a series of requests from responders to their situation—will be overburdened if requested to complete a survey at the beginning of their service experience (Campbell et al., 2008, p. 371). A further related concern is that the client may perceive a request to complete a survey as demonstrating a lack of empathy for what the client is experiencing, which in turn could compromise the “respectful relationship” staff seek to build with a client (Sullivan, 2011, p. 356; Interview, 2010).

The researchers considered other possible formats for the self-administered Client survey, such as using an online survey tool similar to the approach recommended for the community agency surveys, or providing clients with a postage-paid envelope to allow them to return completed surveys through the mail. Other studies of similar interventions have documented low response rates with these formats (Whetstone, 2001, p. 391). Moreover, the RDVU members raised concerns about the potential to compromise safety of victims and their children with both an online and mail-in survey (Interviews, 2011).

As Table 5 above indicates, the proposed administration approach for the community agency surveys is for the Unit to use an online survey tool such as Survey Monkey. Online survey tools provide an efficient and inexpensive method to administer surveys; manage survey responses; organize data; and calculate measures. In addition, because an

invitation is sent via email to participate and submit a survey, the Unit can track who is invited to participate—an important source of information for an evaluator to assess whether selection bias is a factor in the administration of the community agency surveys.

4.10 Frequency of Measurement

The performance measurement matrix recommends that most measures be calculated quarterly, with the exception of the following measures:

- All measures in the community agency surveys—It is recommended these surveys be administered and responses collated on a bi-annual basis. The purpose is to ensure that members of community agency are only sent one survey in a 6-month period regardless of the number of case referrals they have made or interactions they have had with the Unit concerning cases.
- The overall proportion of RDVU cases for which a reports to crown counsel is made—This particular measure is intended to provide an overall indication of the proportion of RDVU cases that involve work related to the RDVU program component of “offender accountability.” The information provided by this measure will be more meaningful when it is considered on an annual basis, as opposed to quarterly.

All measures that are calculated quarterly can be presented in an interim report to the RDVU Steering Committee, which meets on a quarterly basis. This will provide the Steering Committee members with ongoing information about program operations. The Committee currently receives an annual report prepared by the Unit’s OIC—this report provides measures on case referrals, case conference decisions by the Unit, and court dispositions. The quarterly reports will provide these measures plus an additional 20 more measures not currently tracked by the Unit and the data provided in each can be “rolled into” the RDVU’s annual report, which is an important communication tool for the RDVU with its wider stakeholder community.

4.11 Implementation of RDVU Performance Measurement Strategy

This proposed performance measurement strategy will not be successfully implemented if the Unit’s managers do not assume the role of organizational champions of it and the broader, more comprehensive performance measurement it establishes for the RDVU. The researchers for this report have expended a lot of effort to incorporate the feedback of the RDVU respecting what to measure; the feasibility of data collection; and the resources required to support ongoing performance measurement.

Responsibility for collection and measurement is identified in the performance measures matrix—the main organizational champion is the Unit’s OIC; however, this report recommends the other members of the management team share responsibility for preparation of the quarterly reports, if possible. Responsibility for preparation of these reports could rotate every quarter, and all members of the management team could work together to prepare the Unit’s annual report.

Apart from the administration of the RDVU Client survey and record date and time of first direct contact with victims, their children, and offenders, there will be no impact of the performance measurement strategy described herein on the frontline duties of the Unit’s members—it is the management team that must engage in ongoing data collection and measurement, as well as the quarterly compilation of results. The members of the Unit will likely be very interested in the interim, quarterly performance measurement reports. The Unit’s managers—as the organizational champions of performance measurement—should explain how the Client survey will support the Unit’s continuous learning and improvement objectives.

The Unit’s managers must also advocate “up” for performance measurement. The RDVU Steering Committee support for the performance measurement will likely be enhanced when they receive quarterly reports, which will prompt discussion and reflections at the Committee’s quarterly meetings. Moreover, the annual report—once populated with the range of performance measures proposed in this strategy—will serve as a communication

tool not only amongst the members of the Steering Committee, but also within each of the Committee members' respective organizations as well as the wider stakeholder community in the CRD.

In addition to the support of the Unit's managers, the relevance of the performance measurement strategy is also important. The researchers recommend that the performance measurement model be reviewed regularly and that the RDVU managers encourage regular reviews with the Unit's frontline and Steering Committee members. While continuity of measures is important to provide a capacity for the Unit to conduct time-series analysis of performance measurement results, the information needs and priorities of the RDVU partnering organizations may change. Completion of the proposed evaluation in the next chapter could serve as an ideal trigger for a review of the performance measurement strategy.

A final word is required on when the strategy presented in this chapter should be implemented. The researchers approached the development of the RDVU performance measurement strategy from the perspective of what is possible now, within existing resources. The performance measures; primary data sources; data collection requirements; and reporting requirements are intended of implementation as soon as possible—the Unit does not require new information management technology; additional staff; or any training to commence the measurement procedures outlined herein and in Appendices I, J, K, and L.

This evaluation framework is built upon the theoretical perspective that performance measurement and evaluation are complimentary tools to assist program managers and stakeholders in an ongoing process of learning about and improving a program to achieve intended results. Accordingly, the proposed performance measurement strategy must be considered alongside the proposed evaluation strategy proposed in the next chapter: this performance measurement strategy requires implementation for at least one year prior to undertaking the two-stage evaluation outlined in chapter 5.

4.12 Conclusion

This chapter presents a proposed performance measurement strategy for the RDVU intended for formative uses: it sets out a performance measurement plan designed to support the Unit's management team in continuous learning about and improvement of RDVU operations.

A total of 25 performance measures are proposed, the bulk of which are aimed at measuring bridging variables to the RDVU's intended short- and medium-term outcomes. In order to sustain the ongoing collection of data necessary to calculate many of the proposed performance measures, this chapter presented three new primary data sources for the Unit: an RDVU Client survey and two community agency surveys.

A number of recommendations and suggestions for the Unit are included throughout this chapter and the related appendices; however, the overriding recommendation is as follows:

- 1. The RDVU's management team implements the proposed performance measurement strategy as soon as practicable in order to start accumulating data that will be that will be used in the later evaluation. In doing so, the managers will need to implement the administration of the RDVU Client Survey, the Community Agency Survey A, and Community Agency Survey B.**

5 Evaluation Strategy

This chapter describes and explains the evaluation strategy the researchers recommend for the CRD RDVU. First it will outline specific considerations that play an important part in guiding decision making regarding the most appropriate strategy. Next it will set out a two-phase evaluation strategy for the RDVU. Phase 1 is a process evaluation. Phase 2 assesses short- and medium-term program outcomes. Both phases are formative evaluations.

5.1 Project Specific Factors Influencing Strategy

Strategy decisions will be informed by the program description, the program logic model created by the researchers, availability of resources, environmental context, lessons learned from previous research, an awareness of the needs driving the evaluation, and the project's performance measurement system (see Chapter 4).

Considerations include:

- Nature of the program: It is new and somewhat complex and innovative. It addresses a sensitive subject area where confidentiality is highly important. Clients of the program do not voluntarily choose to partake in its services, and they are a vulnerable population at a difficult time in their lives.
- Program logic: The program theory/logic model for producing outputs and outcomes is multi-staged. Some of the outcomes are challenging to measure and the long term ones are likely to be achieved, if at all, years in the future.
- Context: The program has many stakeholders – the different kinds of agencies directly involved in the program as well as clients (victims and offenders) and agencies that work with the RDVU. The RDVU is multi-jurisdictional, and, while it has enjoyed considerable support, agency resources must be stretched and re-balanced to accommodate it. The recent withdrawal of funding by Sidney and North Saanich and withdrawal of a detective by Victoria may indicate a weakening of support from some RDVU stakeholders. On the other hand, the

RDVU and its performance have inspired enough confidence in other professionals that the Vancouver DVU has lately followed their lead by adding a child protection worker.

- Resources open to evaluators: Access to offender and victim information and files is sharply limited due to confidentiality protections. File management systems are not ideally organized to sort domestic violence cases (e.g. K files are not rated for severity).
- Lessons learned: Utility of results in case comparison studies between RDVU cases and non-RDVU cases is severely compromised when lack of access to justice system records keeps evaluators from attaching information to cases and controlling for relevant factors such as severity of abuse. Low client response rate is an issue with surveys and interviews.
- Performance measurement system: The performance measurement system should be in place for at least a year before an evaluation is conducted. If implemented as described in Chapter 4, the performance measurement system will be a rich source of data for project evaluation purposes. Expected performance measurement system data is integrated into the evaluation strategy. It will be important for Unit members and the Steering Committee to ensure the performance measurement system is implemented successfully enough to properly support an evaluation of the RDVU. Before going forward with a project evaluation, the evaluator should check over the performance measurement system data set and take account of any gaps (e.g. measures that have not been implemented) and reliability issues (e.g. low survey response rate).

5.2 Description of Evaluation Strategy

The CRD DVU is a new program that has had no formal implementation evaluation as of yet. A process evaluation to assess implementation is an advisable first stage in a two-stage evaluation process in order to determine whether the program is set up and operating in accordance with its design.

The outcome evaluation (second stage) will focus on assessing attainment of short- and medium-term outcomes. This focus is manageable in terms of timeframe and resources. Existing literature will be referenced as appropriate to substantiate the likelihood that short- and medium-term outcomes, if they occur, will lead to the long-term outcomes included in the program logic model.

5.3 Two Stage Evaluation

5.3.1 Phase 1—Process Evaluation

The process evaluation will be utilized to monitor and document the program's implementation. It will be performed at least one year after the program monitoring system is set in place.

The process evaluation will have a mixed-methods design and a combination of qualitative and quantitative data sources.

Data gathered on an ongoing basis as part of the performance measurement strategy described in Chapter 4 will be compiled for analysis in addition to data gathered specifically for this evaluation.

Prior to project evaluation, a review of the existing performance measurement data will be required so the evaluator can identify gaps or reliability concerns and include these in the analysis. To this end, the evaluator should consult the quarterly and bi-annual Unit reports that are recommended in the performance measurement strategy. The evaluator should also find and record the number and proportion of victims who were administered the RDVU Client Survey, the number and proportion of community agencies that were administered the RDVU Community Agency Survey and the completion rate of all the surveys administered (defined as the number for which some or all statements/questions are answered).

The responses and insights of clients and other stakeholders in regard to the intervention as they have experienced or observed it will be gathered using a basic approach that relies on multiple independent lines of evidence but does not include any explicit comparison groups. The research approach here will be to conduct interviews and draw information from existing survey data generated by the performance measurement system. The evaluator will conduct semi-structured interviews with RDVU staff, RDVU operations managers, CRD RCMP/police officers who hold the position of liaison between their branch and the RDVU, the members of the VAWIR committee (see list of VAWIR committee members in Appendix V) and a target number of five victims from RDVU cases. Victim interviewees will be recruited by the Unit, which will provide assurances that participation decisions will have no bearing on the client's case, the victim is free to terminate participation at any time and interviewer/interviewee confidentiality will be maintained. Ideally the victim interviewees will include members of some especially vulnerable minority groups (e.g. Aboriginal people and people with English as a second language). Recommended interview questions are provided in the Appendices Q, R, S and U. Survey data will be pulled from responses to the performance measurement system's RDVU Client Survey (see Appendix M), RDVU Community Agency Survey A (see Appendix N) and RDVU Community Agency Survey B (see Appendix O).

Observation of three new case conferences will be performed in order to learn about the Unit's interaction style and decision making processes. The evaluator, a non-participant, will perform the observation for neutrality reasons. Since the evaluator is not a member of the RDVU or the RDVU member agencies, confidentiality concerns will have to be addressed. A background clearance for the evaluator will need to be obtained. The evaluator will have to sign a confidentiality agreement. Approval for the evaluator's attendance at the three case conferences will also have to be granted by all of the police/RCMP chiefs as well as representatives of Victoria Women's Transition House and MCFD. The RDVU's steering committee will be asked to facilitate the approval process, which might involve a Memorandum of Understanding. A guide for case conference observation is provided for the evaluator in Appendix T.

5.3.1.1 Framework for Process Evaluation

Evaluation models prepared as guides for targeted process evaluations of social programs concentrate on the fidelity of a program implementation (match of implementation to program theory), service delivery, response (satisfaction), reach (participation rate), client recruitment and the program context (environmental facts that may influence program implementation or outcomes). Our framework, an adaption of these models, is summarized in Table 1..

Table 1—Stage 1 of Evaluation Strategy: Framework of Process Evaluation

Process Component	Evaluation Questions	Data Source	Existing Data at Time of Evaluation (Y/N)	Data Analysis/Synthesis
Fidelity	To what extent has the program intervention been implemented in conformity with the program design's underlying theory?	Interviews Case Conference Observation	Interviews - N Case Conference Observation - N	<u>Interviews</u> - Compile relevant information provided <u>Case Conference</u> <u>Observation</u> – Content analysis. Code notes according to emergent themes. Create a descriptive summary from coded notes.
Service Delivery	To what extent are all of the intended services being provided as regards victims, offenders and community agencies?	Performance Measurement System Outputs Interviews	Performance Measurement System Outputs - Y Interviews - N	<u>Output data</u> - Summarize the service output figures <u>Interviews</u> - Compile relevant information provided
Response (Satisfaction)	What is the service satisfaction level with among victims, offenders and community agencies?	RDVU Client Survey RDVU Community Agency Survey Interviews	Surveys - Y Interviews - N	<u>Surveys</u> - Calculate score based on responses to service rating questions <u>Interviews</u> - Compile relevant information provided
Reach (Participation Rate)	Do some sub-groups of domestic violence victims appear to be underserved?	Literature Interviews RDVU Client Survey	Literature - Y Interviews – N RDVU Client Survey - Y	<u>Literature</u> - Identify especially vulnerable sub-groups and their rough expected proportion of the total population <u>Interviews</u> - Compile relevant information provided <u>Survey</u> – Perform frequency analysis on

Process Component	Evaluation Questions	Data Source	Existing Data at Time of Evaluation (Y/N)	Data Analysis/Synthesis
				each of the variables of age, aboriginal identity and English as second language
Client Recruitment	How are cases being referred to the RDVU?	Performance Measurement System Input Data Interviews	Performance Measurement System Inputs - Y Interviews - N	<u>Input Data</u> - Summarize relevant input figures <u>Interviews</u> - Compile relevant information provided
	How are clients being selected by the RDVU?	Interviews Case Conference Observation RDVU Community Agency Survey A	Interviews - N Case Conference Observation - N Survey - Y	<u>Interviews</u> - Compile relevant information provided <u>Case Conference Observation</u> - Content analysis. Code notes according to emergent themes. Create a descriptive summary from coded notes. <u>Survey</u> - Compile relevant response data
Program Context	What external factors in the environment surrounding the program might influence its operation or outcomes?	RDVU Community Agency Survey A RDVU Community Agency Survey B Interviews Other available sources (e.g. newspapers)	Surveys - Y Interviews - N Other available sources e.g. newspapers - Y	<u>Surveys</u> - Compile relevant response data <u>Interviews</u> - Compile relevant information provided <u>Other available sources</u> - As appropriate to the nature of the source and the data

Fidelity: To what extent has the program intervention been implemented in conformity with the program design's underlying theory?

The underlying theory of the RDVU design is one of collaboration between Unit members and giving top priority to the safety of victims and their children. RDVU use of collaboration and adherence to a victim safety centered approach will be checked through interviews with Unit members and stakeholders and through observations of new case conferences. Case conference stands out as a regularly occurring instance when group collaboration in the Unit is key and priorities in important decision making are exposed.

The unit members come together to work closely to decide on the involvement of the Unit in a case, all resources that are available are tabled for discussion, and Unit members have to consider and negotiate each other's professional points of view and values and their mandates as a unit.

Service Delivery: To what extent are all of the intended services being provided as regards victims, offenders and community agencies?

The services in question are the outputs described in the logic model. Service delivery data on case conference dispositions and reports to crown counsel will be drawn from the performance measurement system. Further information will be gathered in interviews using the service delivery checklist on the interview guides (see Appendices Q, R and S).

Response (Satisfaction): What is the service satisfaction level among victims, offenders and community agencies?

The evidence provided by RDVU Client Surveys (for victims) and RDVU Community Agency Survey (for community agencies) will be used with the formulas provided in the performance measurement system. Information regarding the satisfaction level of victims and agencies will be gathered in interviews.

Reach (Participation Rate): Do some sub-groups of domestic violence victims appear to be underserved?

Investigate the whether the domestic violence victims in any of the following especially vulnerable sub-groups of domestic violence victims appear to be underserved by the RDVU: Aboriginals, people who speak English as a second language, the disabled, LGBT, people under 20 years of age, the elderly, ethnic minorities and pregnant woman. Consult existing literature for possible indications of the expected proportion of these sub-groups in the CRD domestic violence population.

Take data from RDVU Client Surveys' demographic questions regarding age range, aboriginal identity and English as a second language. Perform frequency analysis for each of these variables.

Collect information from interviews with RDVU staff, RDVU operations managers, liaison officers, and the VAWIR committee.

Client Recruitment: How are cases being referred to the RDVU? How are clients being selected by the RDVU?

- How are cases being referred to the RDVU?

Examine the Performance Measurement System Input Data RDVU case referral data and interview responses to check if case referral is proceeding as expected.

- How are clients being selected by the RDVU?

Gather information from interviews with Unit members, case conference observation, and the RDVU Community Agency Survey A.

Program Context: What external factors in the environment surrounding the program might influence its operation or outcomes?

Use information provided by the RDVU Community Agency Survey A; RDVU Community Agency Survey B; and interviews with the Unit members, Unit commander, liaison officers and VAWIR. Check for relevant information about contextual factors that might be available in other sources such as newspapers. Relevant factors might, for instance, strengthen or weaken support for the Unit or impact the demographic make up of the offender and victim population with which the Unit works.

5.3.2 Phase 2—Assessing the Outcomes of the Program

The outcome evaluation will address achievement of short- and medium-term outcomes. The evaluation of these outcomes will be directed by the research questions below:

1. Achievement of short-term outcomes:
 - Is the risk for victims and their children decreased in cases handled by the RDVU?

2. Achievement of medium-term outcomes:
 - Are the victims and their children in highest risk cases safer now than they were before the RDVU was in operation?
 - Are offenders in highest risk cases held to greater accountability by the criminal justice system now than they were before the RDVU was in operation?
 - Do community agencies perceive the RDVU as a valuable community resource?

5.3.2.1 Short-term Outcomes

Research question:

- Is the risk for victims and their children decreased in cases handled by the RDVU?

An implicit research design will be used here since there is no practical comparison group. There is not a feasible way of tracking the level of risk being maintained over the course of non-RDVU cases. The RDVU was established to provide an ongoing, intense involvement and monitoring that was not available before, so no similar records exist pre-RDVU. Current non-RDVU cases will be lower risk cases, and the resources will not be expended to monitor these cases at the level that would indicate ongoing risk level.

This outcome will be operationalized as it is in the performance measurement system. The evaluator should compile the performance measurement system data for each of the four bridging variables for the short-term outcome: (1) community agencies understand the role and mandate of the RDVU, (2) the RDVU provides a timely response, (3) victims report being supported and having increased knowledge, and (4) offenders abide by conditions of release and court orders. The measures and calculations associated with

these bridging variables in the performance measuring system should be reapplied here. Summarize the story told by the numbers.

Interviews will provide an additional line of evidence. Interview subjects will be asked about changes to risk level of the RDVU's cases and their impressions regarding causation.

5.3.2.2 Medium-Term Outcomes

Research Question:

- Are the victims and their children in highest risk cases safer now than they were before the RDVU was in operation?

The measures for increased safety will be the bridging variables from the performance measurement system: (1) incidents of repeat violence during RDVU active involvement period and (2) victims report feeling safer. RDVU Client Survey data from the performance measurement system will be employed to provide evidence regarding victim incidence of repeat violence and victim feelings of safety as they are in the performance measurement system. Interview responses will be another line of evidence.

Additionally, there will be a before and after design comparison of repeat violence in connection with RDVU cases and pre-RDVU high risk cases determined to be similar to RDVU files for the purposes of this research. The similar cases will be located through the procedure described below (see "Procedure for Locating Comparable Cases"), and then the number of repeat incidents of violence indicated in police records in the first twelve months after the case becomes active with the Unit will be compared to the number of repeat incidence of domestic violence found in police files for the parties to the similar cases in the twelve month period following the opening of the analogous cases. A comparison should also be made of severity of child interventions performed during the twelve month period in those cases that include children. More severe interventions would be an indication of lower safety.

Research question:

- Are offenders in highest risk cases held to greater accountability by the criminal justice system now than they were before the RDVU was in operation?

Evidence of level of offender accountability will be taken from the performance measurement system's data and calculations regarding the accountability bridging factors: (1) police conduct investigations and submit reports to crown counsel, (2) police respond to offenders who breach and (3) crown counsel conducts prosecutions. Interviews will provide a buttressing line of evidence.

Pre-RDVU comparable cases, the same sample of cases mentioned above in the victim safety outcome comparison, will be used to further address this question. A comparison will be made of charge approval rates and severity of court disposition for the pre-RDVU cases and RDVU cases. The evaluator will employ a before and after design to compare pre-intervention data on court outcomes for the select domestic violence files in the CRD from July 2007 to July 2010 to post-intervention data on charge approval rates and severity of court disposition for domestic violence files handled by the DVU in the CRD from July 2011 to July 2012 and July 2012 to July 2013.

5.3.2.2.1 Procedure for Locating Comparable Cases

For the outcome questions about victim safety and offender accountability there will be a comparison of select events in RDVU cases with those in high risk cases that have been determined to be similar to RDVU files for the purposes of this research.

There will be a comparison of the outcomes of domestic violence cases handled by the RDVU to the outcomes of similar sorts of domestic violence cases in the CRD before the RDVU was in operation. This will require identifying a representative group of CRD cases in the PRIME database that were closed before the RDVU was implemented in July 2010.

The comparison will include files from the three years prior to DVU implementation (July 2007 to July 2010). The researchers are told by the RDVU that there are about 130

new domestic violence files per month (or 1560 per year) in the CRD. The evaluator will run a script that would search for key words and phrases (e.g. "broken bones") in CRD domestic violence files to arrive at a short list that the domestic violence unit staff can then examine and report to us regarding which cases would have met their criteria for accepting a case.

The cases must be CRD cases that were never handled by the DVU but would have been handled by the DVU had it been in operation at the time (i.e. must meet the DVU's acceptance criteria in terms of high level of risk). Therefore, they must be cases closed before July 2010 (because after that point the CRD was operational so the cases that would have been handled by an operational DVU were picked up and handled by the DVU).

In order to compare the data from each of the three pre-DVU years separately to the post RDVU data, there must be a representative showing of cases from each year which are sorted by date.

Because the RDVU includes a child protection worker, it is necessary to look at outcomes for domestic violence cases where the victims have children. Since phrases such as "domestic abuse" and "domestic abuse with children" can only be searched separately not concurrently in the police PRIME database, separate searches may be required to locate the files with children.

Because there are so many cases and examining them will be a time consuming process for the RDVU staff, depending on how big the search results are it may be desirable to take a random sample from the results sets for each of the three years instead of including all the cases in the next step. The officer in charge of the Unit has estimated it should take an average of 30 minutes per file to assess suitability.

RDVU staff will review the result sets from each year and, using their risk assessment skills and resources, determine which cases would very likely have been taken on by the RDVU had it existed at the time and performed a case conference on the case.

The first 50 cases from each year that are judged to meet RDVU case acceptance standards will be reserved for use (at least 20 cases should include children). Relevant outcomes connected to those cases will be researched by RDVU staff or a police worker. The resulting data on the sub-set from each year and their associated court outcomes and child protection outcomes will be delivered to the evaluator with suspect and victim identifying information removed. The evaluator will compare the data for court outcomes for each of those years with outcomes for 50 cases selected from domestic violence files handled by the RDVU in the CRD from July 2011 to July 2012 and 50 more from those handled from July 2012 to July 2013. The 2011 to 2012 and 2012 to 2013 cases will be found through disproportional stratified sampling that oversamples cases with children so children will be present in 20 cases of each sample.

The role of the RDVU staff in the design described above ensures cases selection decisions from the samples will be as close as possible to ones made by the RDVU to accept or decline referred cases. It also acknowledges the evaluator's records access limitations.

Research question:

- Do community agencies perceive the RDVU as a valuable community resource?

Evidence of will be drawn from the performance measurement system's data and calculations regarding the accountability bridging factors: (1) community agencies understand the role and mandate of the RDVU, (2) community agencies believe the RDVU supports them in their work and (3) community agencies believe the RDVU provides effective services. Additional information will be taken from interviews.

5.4 Conclusion

The evaluation strategy described in this chapter is designed to suit the specific character and circumstances of the RDVU. The RDVU is a new, complex, innovative program with a multi-stage logic model, multiple stakeholders and a sensitive subject area.

The evaluation strategy involves a two-stage evaluation. The first stage is a process evaluation to check if the program is set up and operating according to design. The second stage is an outcome evaluation to check whether the program is successfully achieving its intended short- and medium-term outcomes. This planned two stage evaluation uses both data expected to exist in the performance measurement system records and newly generated data. With regard to the evaluation, the researchers make the following recommendation(s):

- 1. The evaluation strategy described herein should be implemented no sooner than a year after the performance measurement strategy is implemented. The evaluation will require an external evaluator for neutrality reasons and, before commencing the evaluation, the evaluator should check over the performance measurement system data set and take account of any gaps and reliability issues.**

6 Conclusion and Next Steps

The Capital Regional District domestic violence unit, or RDVU, was created in reaction to a domestic violence tragedy and to the barriers to agency communication and cooperation that can compromise a community's response to high-risk domestic violence situations. It is a permanent co-located, collaborative, interdisciplinary unit.

This report presents an evaluation framework for the RDVU that is comprised of a performance measurement strategy and an evaluation strategy. The performance measurement strategy, once implemented, will provide a system that will collect and monitor indicators of the domestic violence unit's success. The data the performance system creates and records will be valuable for management purposes and for the planned future evaluation. The evaluation strategy is the blueprint for a future two-phase formal formative evaluation of the domestic violence unit's implementation and effectiveness. To proceed with the evaluation framework, the researchers of this report make the following key recommendations, as presented previously in Chapters 4 and 5, respectively:

- 1. The Unit's management team should implement the performance measurement strategy described herein as soon as practicable in order to start accumulating data that will be that will be used in the later evaluation. In doing so, the managers will need to implement the administration of the RDVU Client Survey, the Community Agency Survey A, and Community Agency Survey B.**
- 2. The evaluation strategy described herein should be implemented no sooner than a year after the performance measurement strategy is implemented. The evaluation will require an external evaluator for neutrality reasons and, before commencing the evaluation, the evaluator should check over the performance measurement system data set and take account of any gaps and reliability issues.**

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