

## **The Herman Goldstein Award Projects**

### **Using Management Tools to Better Serve the Community**

**June, 2017**

#### **1. Summary:**

##### **Nature of the Problem**

Upon his appointment to lead the Domestic Conflict Unit in the Calgary Police Service, Staff Sergeant Rob Davidson conducted a forward-looking assessment of the unit's situation. The local economy was in a serious downturn which suggested an elevated risk for domestic violence in the community at a time when resources within police service were shrinking. Given that one of his unit's mandates was to prevent domestic conflict situations from escalating to the point where charges had to be laid, Davidson had to convince senior leadership that his unit was functioning well and needed to retain existing staff in order to respond to increasing calls service. To compound matters, upon taking command Davidson observed a degree of interpersonal tension and workplace dissatisfaction that threatened to limit the unit's effectiveness. These two things taken together had the potential for interpersonal issues to limit effectiveness. This suggested to Davidson that he had to take action.

##### **Analysis**

Davidson acted on two fronts. First, to enable senior leadership to properly assess the unit's situation, he conducted a statistical analysis of how demands on the unit might change as the local economy worsened. Second, in order to better understand the situation in his unit, Davidson deployed a management tool, known as the CIV tool, in order to better understand the experience of unit members in carrying out their roles.

The statistical analysis demonstrated that frequency of domestic violence was correlated with increased unemployment, and this enabled Davidson to explain to senior leadership how the demands on the unit would likely increase in response to a worsening local economy.

The CIV tool revealed the following issues:

- a) Unit members were spending considerable resources managing low risk Early Intervention and Outreach Program (EIOP) files as opposed to higher risk files;
- b) Managing EIOP files was limiting collaboration between police officers and their case manager partners since the EIOP are handled by case managers alone.
- c) Police officers working in partnership with case managers were not working on identically matched shifts and this was impeding collaboration; and,
- d) Having team Sergeants review risk assessment decisions before passing cases on to police officers and case managers did not add value and slowed things down.

## **Responses Implemented**

The statistical analysis was a key factor in the addition of 4 additional positions within the unit at a time when the police service was reviewing of all units given its budget pressures. The potential need within the community was made clear to senior leadership through the statistical analysis.

In response to the output of the CIV process, Early Intervention and Outreach Program files received less attention, work shifts of those working in partnership were aligned, and risk assessors commenced allocating cases directly to those managing the files. The key outcome of the CIV process was that the high-risk cases managed by the Domestic Conflict Response Team increased from 769 in 2015 to 1,316 in 2016. This means that over 500 additional families received help from the unit in 2016.

## **2. Description:**

### *A. Scanning:*

This example of Problem Oriented Policing took place in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. With a population of about 1.3 million, Calgary ranks as Canada's fourth largest municipality by population. The municipal police organization serving this population is known as the Calgary Police Service. This service employs 2,768 people, 2,147 of whom are police officers. To carry out its operations, the Calgary Police Service incurs expenditures of about \$460 million per year (Calgary Police Service Action Plan, 2015-2018; Mazowita and Greenland, 2016).

The specific areas of focus of this Problem Oriented Policing project are the Calgary Police Service's Domestic Conflict Unit<sup>1</sup> ("DCU"), and within that unit, the Domestic Conflict Response Team ("DCRT"). The DCU handles approximately 20,000 calls for service per year. Each call for service is risk-assessed to determine if it should be handled by DCU, and if so, by which unit within DCU. Table 1 presents information concerning files risk-assessed by the DCU in 2015.

The primary function of the DCRT is to intervene and resolve domestic conflict situations in chronic or high risk situations before a crime has been committed. There are 8 teams in the DCRT – one team in each of the 8 district offices the Calgary Police Service operates. Each team is comprised of a police officer and a case manager from HomeFront, a domestic violence social service agency. A key selling factor in the program proposal for the DCRT was that a police officer and a case manager collaborating on jointly managed cases could get better results than either team member working alone.

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<sup>1</sup> The DCU's organization chart is provided in Appendix 2. Descriptions of the teams and commentary on how their respective case allocations differ are provided in Appendix 3.

**Table 1**  
**Allocation of Files After**  
**Risk Assessment**

	<b>Number of Files 2015</b>
<b>Allocation of files to units within DCU</b>	
Domestic Conflict Response Team	
Officer and case worker in partnership	769
Early Intervention and Outreach Program	2,266
Elder Abuse Team	355
Habitual Offender Management and Enforcement	52
Domestic Violence Team	501
Monitoring, no other action	581
Other	476
<b>Total acted on by DCU</b>	<b>5,000</b>
<b>Total not acted on by DCI</b>	<b>15,588</b>
	<hr/>
<b>Total risk-assessed by DCU</b>	<b>20,588</b>
	<hr/>

As can be seen from Table 1, cases assigned to DCRT fall into one of two categories: those that are managed by a police officer and a case manager as partners, and those that are managed by a case manager alone. The latter cases are identified as falling under the DCRT's Early Intervention and Outreach Program ("EIOP"). The EIOP is a voluntary, early intervention program under which case managers make contact with families by phone to provide support, information and access to resources. EIOP cases are relatively low risk compared to the other cases the DCRT manages.

In January of 2015, Staff Sergeant Rob Davidson assumed leadership of the Calgary Police Service's Domestic Conflict Unit (the "DCU"). At that time, Calgary was in the midst of a serious economic downturn. Calgary is located in Canada's main oil-producing province, so its economy depends heavily on the price of oil. In mid-June 2014, oil had been trading at over \$100 per barrel. By June of 2015, the price per barrel had plummeted to about \$45. The unemployment rate in the city, which had been hovering below 5% for the preceding few years, had climbed to over 6% and was rising. Expectations were that it would take some time for the price of oil to recover and the unemployment rate to decline.

The economic downturn, and in particular, the rising unemployment rate, were very worrying to Davidson. He knew that, historically, the frequency of domestic violence crimes tended to increase as the unemployment rate went up. This outcome would be particularly problematic for him because an important mandate of the DCU was to intervene in chronic or high risk incidents of domestic conflict in order to prevent situations from escalating to the point that charges had to be laid. It would be difficult for Davidson to deliver on this mandate if the

frequency of domestic violence crimes were to increase without additional resources or if his unit was not performing at a high level. From Davidson's point of view, this was an acute problem for community's safety that was not going to go away in the near future.

Davidson also had a second problem. After taking command of the DCU, he noticed that police officers and case managers in the DCRT did not seem to be working together on files in the way that he anticipated, even though they had joint responsibility for files. This caused him to question whether the benefits of the collaboration that had been outlined in the original program proposal were being realized. He also sensed that there was a degree of interpersonal tension and workplace dissatisfaction among members of the DCRT that caused him to question whether team members could, in fact, collaborate as expected. Davidson viewed these matters as significantly problematic since expectations of the DCRT were high, and the unit needed to work at peak effectiveness to meet them.

To add to these challenges, the economic pressure on the Calgary Police Service's budget led it to closely scrutinize all units in the Service. The expectation was that under-performing units could be downsized or cut altogether, with their staff re-deployed to areas with more urgent needs. It was unlikely that additional resources would be provided to existing units in such an economic context.

In order to respond to these challenges, Davidson knew he needed to demonstrate that calls for service to the DCU were likely to increase in the immediate future since the frequency of domestic violence crimes was related to economic pressures. A compelling case for this would enable senior leadership to properly assess demands on the DCU and allow him, at a minimum, to maintain current staffing levels in order to respond to community needs. He also knew he needed to explore issues related to collaboration within the DCRT. He needed to do this for two reasons. First, he knew the DCRT was vulnerable since it relied on outside funding (approx. \$2 million over three years) and the collaborative program would be at risk if it did not appear to be generating the synergies it was intended to produce. Second, he anticipated that economic pressures would lead to increased demands on the DCU, and the DCRT, at a time when no additional resources were likely to be available to them. The DCU and the DCRT needed to be functioning in peak form to have any hope of meeting these demands.

#### *B. Analysis:*

**Problem 1:** In order to increase understanding by senior management of the potentially increasing demands on the DCU, Davidson undertook the following actions:

- a) Analysis of the historical relationship between the domestic violence rate and the unemployment rate;
- b) Preparation of estimates of the current trend-line in domestic violence rates; and,
- c) Preparation of forward-looking estimates of domestic violence rates dependent on the forward-looking estimates of the price of oil.

**Problem 2:** Davidson, in consultation with HomeFront (the home agency of the social work case managers), elected to address reduced collaboration in the DCRT through the

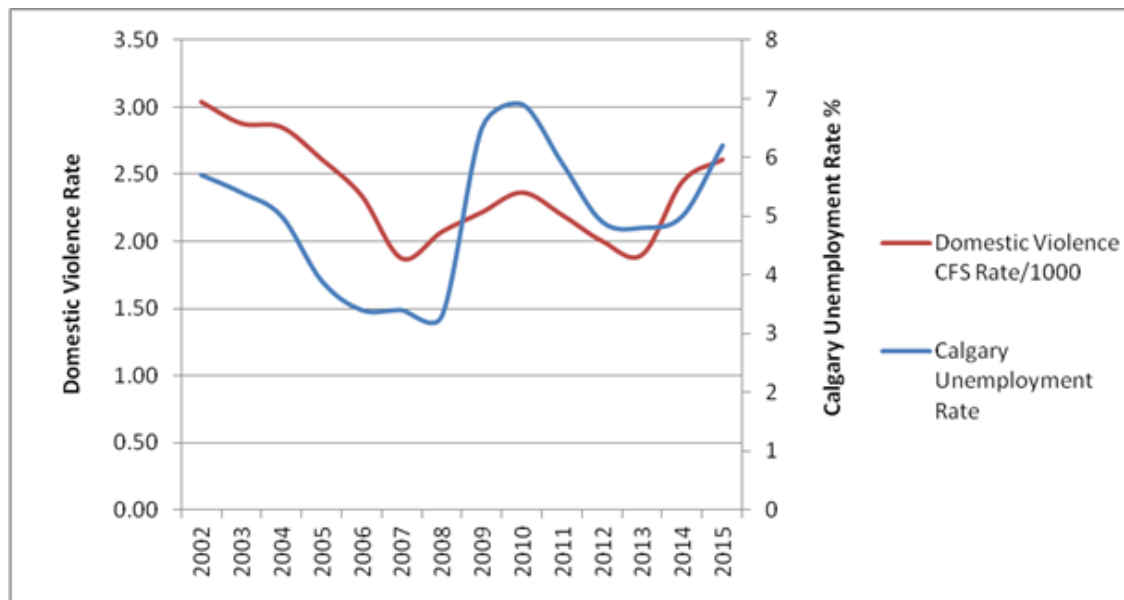
implementation of an organizational performance appraisal tool known as CIV (capability, importance, value)<sup>2</sup> that he had become aware of through his participation in a national police research project entitled Sustainable Policing in Canada. The CIV performance assessment tool seeks to improve police service performance through evaluation of the roles (not the individuals in the roles) undertaken by a police service along the dimensions indicated. Implementation of the tool is conducted using a combination of an Appreciative Inquiry approach (see Bushe, 2011; Bushe and Kassam, 2005; Cooperrider and Whitney, 2001; Drew and Wallis, 2014) coupled with structured brainstorming.

### Response to Problem 1:

Graph 1 presents historical unemployment and domestic violence rates for the period 2002 to 2015. The domestic violence rate is expressed as the number of calls for service in a year pertaining to domestic violence per 1,000 of population.

**Graph 1**

#### **Historical Domestic Violence and Unemployment Rates**



It is understood that unemployment is not a cause of domestic violence, but it is one of many stressors that can affect domestic relationships. Issues around power and control, addictions, anger, pre-exposure to violence, life skills, housing, and other factors can be exacerbated through unemployment in the home.

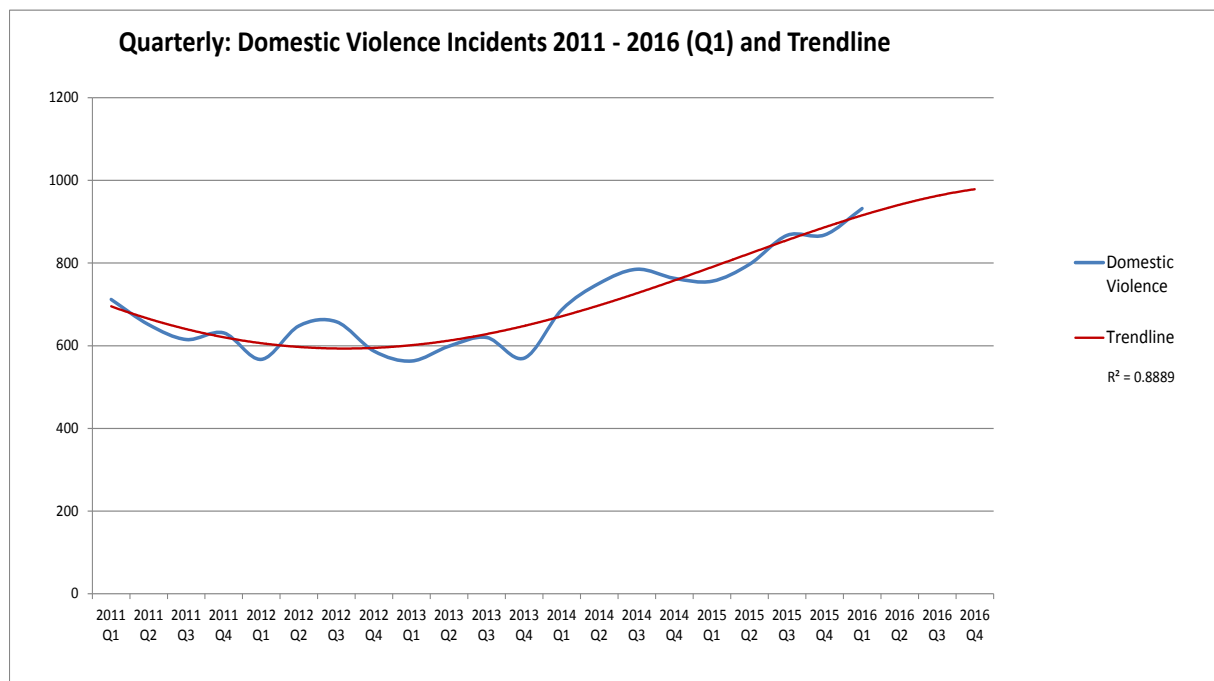
<sup>2</sup> For a description see Caputo and McIntyre (2015). For a description of an implementation see Caputo et al (2017).

Over the period depicted in Graph 1, there is an important positive correlation between annual domestic violence calls for service in Calgary and the unemployment rate in Calgary ( $r = .51, p = .076$ ). In other words, as unemployment rates rise, so too do calls for service related to domestic violence, after controlling for population growth over the years.

A statistical trend analysis is presented in Graph 2.

## Graph 2

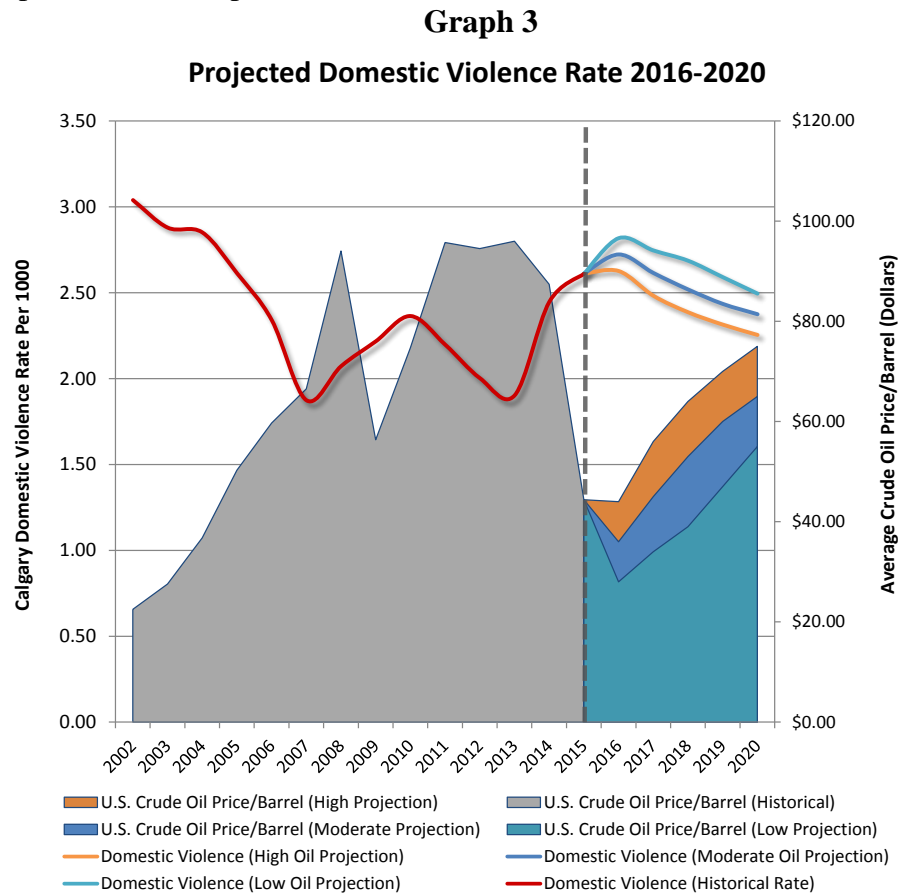
### Statistical Trend Analysis



Source: Cumulative Data (PIMS: May 2016); Unit of Count for Domestic Violence: Incident by Most Serious Violation; Domestic violence incidents include all person crime incidents as defined by Statistics Canada.

The purpose of the trend analysis in Graph 2 was to project the number of violent domestic incidents and Domestic Conflict Unit risk assessments that can likely be expected during the year. At the time it was done, the analysis suggested a continued trend upwards for 2016 for both domestic violence rates and calls for service. The average number of domestic violence incidents across 5-years (2011-2015) was approximately 2,739. It was projected that CPS could reasonably expect approximately 3,500 incidents or more of domestic violence in 2016. This represented a 28% increase from the 5-year average and a 6% increase from 2015. It is important to recognize that this projection showed that there were likely to be over 750 additional victims and families affected by domestic violence compared with the 5-year average. Reporting at the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2016 showed that the increase in domestic violence was slightly higher than expected, up 36% over the 5-year average.

In order to develop an understanding of likely demand on the DCU over the upcoming five years (2016-2020), a regression analysis was performed to predict the domestic violence rate/per 1000 in the City of Calgary dependent on the prevailing oil price per barrel. The results are presented in Graph 3.



Source: Historical Domestic Violence - Source: Cumulative Data (PIMS: July 2016); Unit of Count for Domestic Violence: Incident by Most Serious Violation; Domestic violence incidents include all person crime incidents as defined by Statistics Canada; Historical Crude Oil Barrel Price - Source: <http://www.macrotrends.net/1369/crude-oil-price-history-chart>; Historical City of Calgary Population – Source: City of Calgary Census; Projected Calgary Population Values and Oil Barrel Prices – Source: City of Calgary Alternate Oil Price Scenarios report by the Centre for Spatial Economics, March 2016.

Historical analysis indicated a statistically significant, inverse correlation between the domestic violence rate and historical crude oil barrel prices: thus, as the price per barrel of oil decreased, the domestic violence rate in the City of Calgary tended to increase. Further analysis was conducted using the *City of Calgary Alternate Oil Price Scenarios* report produced by the Centre for Spatial Economics<sup>3</sup>. Based on this information, three forward-looking scenarios were estimated.

<sup>3</sup> The Centre for Spatial Economics produces demographic and economic data pertaining to Canada's provinces and sub-provincial regions. Details can be found at: <http://www.c4se.com/>

The moderate, and most likely scenario showed that domestic violence counts would peak in 2016, and then decrease over the ensuing 5 years. The analysis further showed that the domestic violence would not return to the pre-downturn level. The projections provide a strong case for the argument that the DCU would experience sustained, higher workload with respect to domestic violence calls for service in the next 4 years.

The approach to Problem 1 did not, by itself, directly mitigate domestic violence in the context of low oil prices and rising unemployment. It did, however, provide a better context for evaluating the potential demands on DCU given the likely community safety concerns related to domestic violence incidents in the community. This is important because the improved understanding of the context that followed from Davidson's analysis provided the DCU with a better case with which to maintain its existing resources and continue to provide the community with important preventative and intervention services during a period of cut-backs and re-deployments. The analysis also underscored the need, at the time, to address Problem 2 so that the DCU could perform at maximum capability. Finally, it is important to stress that Davidson's analysis was a key factor in the DCU obtaining 4 additional positions to help it deal with increasing demands for its services in the immediate and foreseeable future.

### **Response to Problem 2:**

Davidson decided to address the apparent problems in the DCRT using the CIV tool. The CIV tool asks members of a police service to evaluate the roles they fulfill in their jobs along three dimensions:

- **Capability:** What is the police service's ability to fulfill a particular role in the eyes of both the police service and the community?
- **Importance:** Is fulfillment of a particular role required by statute, or viewed as important by the police service or the community?
- **Value:** Does fulfillment of a particular role make a contribution to the community in the eyes of both the police service and the community?

The Venn diagram in Figure 1 demonstrates "the CIV approach." As an example, consider activity X in Figure 1. Since it represents an activity that is important, it can be plotted in that circle. However, the location of 'X' in the figure suggests that the organization is not particularly good at undertaking it. The figure also shows that the particular activity in question doesn't add much value for the organization. This is why activity X is in the importance circle but not in the capability or value circles.

Mapping an activity into Figure 1 leads naturally to specific strategies depending on where the activity resides on the diagram. For example, strategies for dealing with the activity denoted by X in Figure 1 could include:

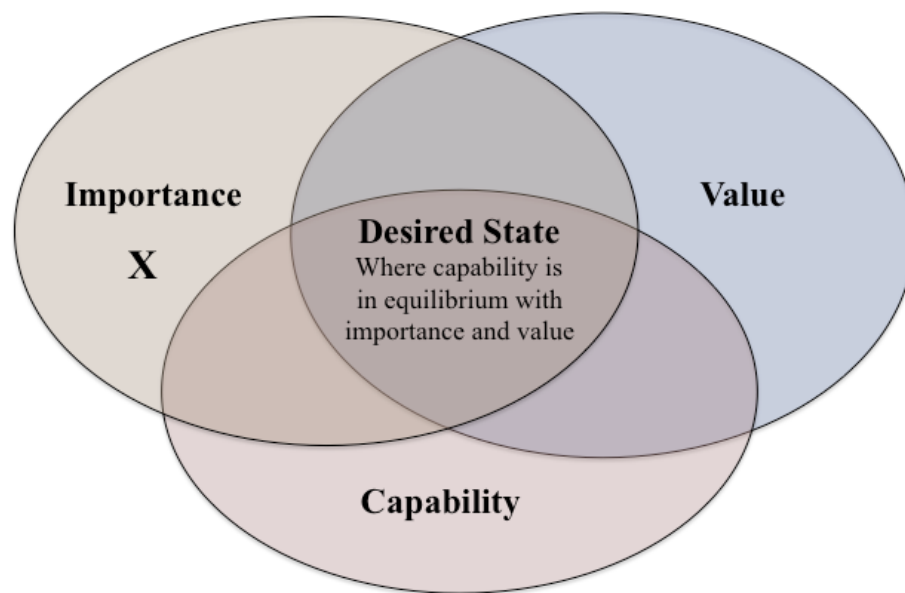
- Training or hiring to achieve capability
- Delegation to another provider
- Finding a lower cost delivery approach internally
- Ceasing to perform this activity if it is possible to do so



The CIV tool was used with members of the DCRT in order to help Davidson, his counterpart at HomeFront, and DCRT members themselves see which elements of the jobs they were doing were standing in the way of better collaboration and contributing to workplace tensions.

### Figure 1: Performance Assessment Venn Diagram

*A police service undertakes performance assessment involving consideration of its significant activities in terms of whether the service is capable of performing each activity, whether each activity is important to the police or stakeholders, and whether each activity adds value for stakeholders.*



Focus group sessions were selected as an appropriate methodology for implementing the CIV tool in the DCRT based on the fact that focus groups are more likely to produce the kind of in-depth information sought in this study since, "...the real strength of focus groups is not simply in exploring what people have to say, but in providing insights into the sources of complex behaviors and motivations" (Morgan 1996:139). As well, focus groups are commonly used in police research (see Bichler and Gaines, 2005; Barrett et al., 2009).

Elements of Appreciate Inquiry (AI) were incorporated into the focus group process in order to emphasize a positive approach to organizational assessment (see Bushe 2011; Bushe and Kassam 2005; Cooperrider and Whitney 2001; Drew and Wallis 2014). As Drew and Wallis (2014:5) note, "AI is uniquely a view of a glass half-full rather than half empty." Coghlan et al., (2003) concur and state that:

Instead of focusing on problems, organizational members first discover what is working particularly well in their organization. Then, instead of analyzing

possible causes and solutions, they envision what it might be like if “the best of what is” occurred more frequently (pp. 5-6).

Structured Brainstorming was also included in the focus group process used in this study. Structured Brainstorming ensures that the views of all participants are heard. In discussions with police partners, this was seen as especially important in a context where people are “rank conscious” and where strong personalities might otherwise dominate. Structured Brainstorming involves asking questions and having each participant write as many answers as they wish. When all potential responses have been recorded, a member of the group is invited to read all of them before discussion begins. After all responses have been read, participants are asked to consider the responses and group them into themes. This strategy ensures that all contributions are considered while avoiding the tendency to cluster responses prematurely and before all of the ideas have been heard.

The focus group sessions ended with a short debriefing period in which the participants were asked for their views on the focus group experience itself. Overall, the participants were very positive regarding their experience in the focus group sessions. The focus group participants made several interesting observations. Some participants indicated that the focus group sessions provided much more in depth information than would have been the case if questionnaires or interviews had been used because the group setting limited shallow or misleading responses that avoided addressing underlying issues. As well, some commented on the importance of having a positive focus and avoiding negativity confirming the value of incorporating elements of Appreciative Inquiry. Positive comments were also provided about the manner in which the sessions were run (the Structured Brainstorming) noting that it had given everyone a chance to have their say. In the end, the participants felt that important issues had been identified and discussed, and they hoped that senior management would take their ideas seriously.

Implementation of the CIV tool in the DCRT uncovered some issues from Davidson’s perspective:

- e) The consensus view that emerged during the focus group sessions was that the EIOP files were providing much lower benefits compared to devoting the same resources to higher risk files;
- f) Team members indicated that the handling of the EIOP files was impeding collaboration between police officers and their case manager partners, and thereby limiting the realization of the hoped-for synergies from collaboration;
- g) The fact that police officers and case managers were not working on identically matched shifts was impeding collaboration; and,
- h) Having team Sergeants review risk assessment decisions before passing cases on to police officers and case managers did not add value and slowed things down for members of the DCU in general and the DCRT in particular.

*C. Response:*

Problem 1: Senior leadership came to better understand the DCU's challenges and the likely effects of the high, and rising, unemployment rate in Calgary.

Problem 2: The DCRT stopped handling EIOP files, thus allowing more focus on chronic and high risk domestic violence situations. In response, police officers and case managers who were working together on cases were put on matched shifts. As well, assessment decisions now by-pass the team sergeants, speeding up the flow of work from the risk assessment process to individuals managing the cases.

*D. Assessment:*

Table 2 shows how files were allocated to units in the risk assessment in 2016 as compared to 2015.

**Table 2**

**Allocation of Files After  
Risk Assessment**

	<b>Number of Files</b>	
	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>
<b>Allocation of files to units within DCU</b>		
Domestic Conflict Response Team		
Officer and case worker in partnership	769	1,316
Early intervention and outreach program	2,266	1,722
Elder Abuse Team	355	381
Habitual Offender Management and Enforcement	52	129
Domestic Violence Team	501	663
Monitoring, no other action	581	950
Forward to POST (new in 2016)	-	197
Other	476	1,043
<b>Total acted on by DCU</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>6,401</b>
<b>Total not acted on by DCU</b>	<b>15,588</b>	<b>20,022</b>
<b>Total risk-assessed by DCU</b>	<b>20,588</b>	<b>26,423</b>

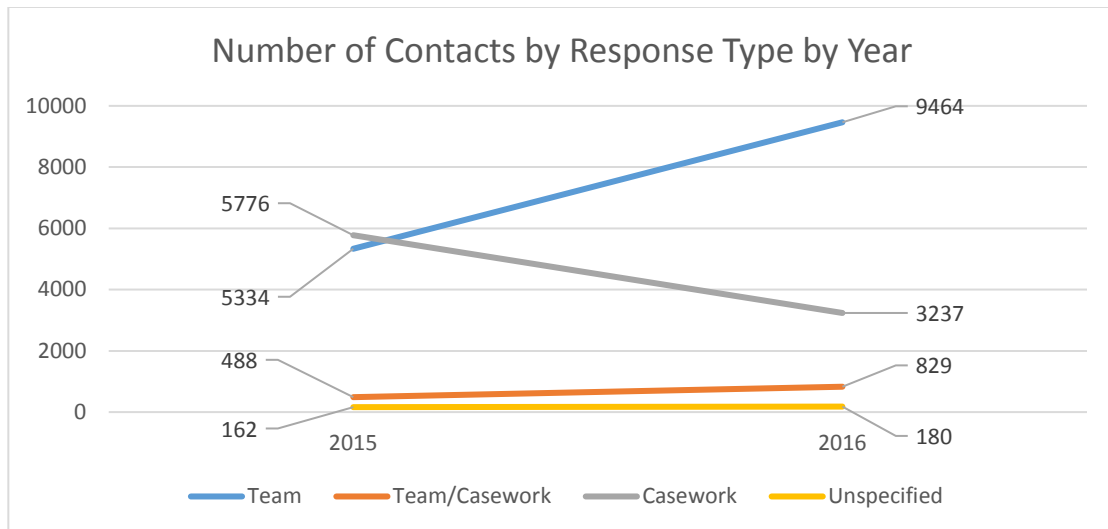
Note to Table 2: POST stands for Pregnancy Outreach Support Team

The key point from Table 2 is that the files handled in an officer/case-worker partnership increased from 769 in 2015 to 1,316 in 2016. These are the files the DCRT was designed to handle, and for which it argued that it could add value through its collaborative, partner-oriented model: a police officer and a case manager partnering to deal with a shared file. Application of the CIV tool led the DCU to realize that there was a much more valuable

compromise it should be making: dropping some low-value-added EIOP interventions and adding about 600 more families at risk that the DCRT could help. This outcome is also linked to Problem 1 in the sense that it enabled the DCU to find capacity to handle the expected increased demands on it.

The effect of re-orienting the DCRT's focus was also observable in the contact data presented in Graph 4.

**Graph 4**



Note to Graph 4: Sourced from HomeFront

EIOP contacts (the gray line) decreased from 5,776 to 3,237 and the more valuable DCRT contacts in which an officer and a case manager addressed a file jointly increased from 5,334 to 9,464. From the DCU's point of view, this represents a material increase in valuable interventions by the DCRT and a correspondingly material increase in community safety.

Through Davidson's assessment of the problem, analyses of the existing situation and strategic interventions, he was able to enhance the operations of his unit, secure additional resources and provide increased preventative and intervention service to the community during this challenging period.

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#### 4. Appendices

##### Appendix 1

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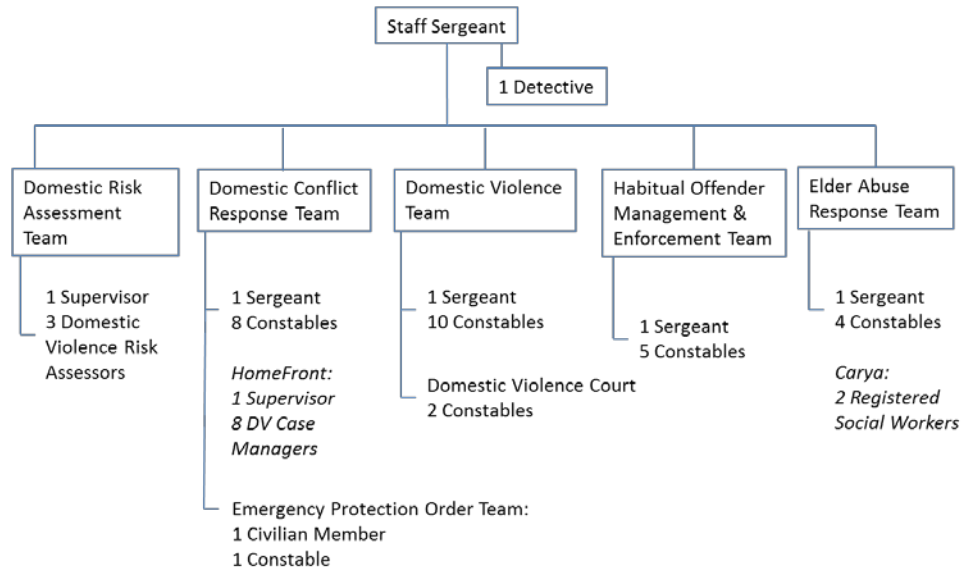
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## Appendix 2

### Domestic Conflict Unit – Police Personnel Organizational Chart





## Appendix 2

### Team Descriptions

**Domestic Risk Assessment Team:** This team assesses all incidents of reported domestic conflict and domestic violence through a formal assessment procedure. It refers incidents that require the involvement of the DCU to the appropriate team. Typically, it refers incidents that do not require the involvement of the DCU to partner social service agencies in the community.

**Domestic Conflict Response Team:** The primary function of this team is to intervene and resolve domestic conflict situations before a crime has been committed. The team is comprised of 8 police officers and 8 case managers from HomeFront, a social service agency, working in partnerships out of each of the 8 police district offices that the Calgary Police Service operates.

**Domestic Violence Team:** The primary function of the Domestic Violence Team is to manage case files that have been deemed high risk for significant domestic physical injury or lethality and are chronic in nature. This is accomplished by: assessing risk and ensuring victim safety planning is completed; reviewing and complete detailed investigations to support criminal charges; following investigations through the court process; working collaboratively with community partners to support victims, offenders and connect families with resources to help stop the violence; and, assisting uniform officers to support their domestic investigations.

**Habitual Offender Management and Enforcement Team:** The primary function of this team is to incorporate enforcement and investigative strategies to proactively target and monitor identified habitual domestic violence offenders as well as high-risk stalking and criminal harassment offenders.

**Elder Abuse Response Team:** The primary function of this team is to reduce victimization of older adults by providing a multidisciplinary continuum of services and supports to victim and the abuser. The team provides direct services to adults aged 65 and over who are in a trusting relationship with the abuser, and there is suspicion that a criminal offence has or may be perpetrated by the abuser.

### 5. Glossary

There are no glossary items