



Bethany
Lifeline

Bethany Domestic
Conflict Lifeline Program
Evaluation
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Introduction

The Bethany Care Society has been in operation in Calgary for more than 50 years. Today, the Society serves the needs of more than 3,500 men and women throughout southern Alberta. The Society operates long-term and residential care centers and outreach programming for seniors in Calgary and the surrounding communities.

The Bethany Care Society operates Bethany Lifeline to offer "peace of mind" and security for seniors living in their home. The Bethany Lifeline Program was started in 1985 and provides at-risk seniors and persons with disabilities with immediate voice contact with the Bethany response center through a Lifeline unit. The Lifeline unit consists of a telephone and personal help button worn as a necklace or bracelet. When the button on the locket is pushed, the Lifeline telephone is activated to dial into the response center at Bethany Lifeline. Lifeline monitors are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to offer assistance.

Bethany Lifeline has been used in the Calgary domestic conflict community since September 1999. At that time, the Bethany Care Society realized that the Lifeline benefits would be of great value to abuse victims. A partnership was formed with the Calgary Police Services Domestic Conflict Unit (DCU) to use the Bethany Lifeline Program to assist victims of violence. The goal was to enhance the safety of individuals experiencing domestic conflict through the provision of 24-hour access to emergency help without having to get to a phone.

Currently, there are 42 units available at no cost to individuals through the DCU. Funders such as PanCanadian and the Calgary Community Lottery Board support the program. Access to Lifeline units is through the DCU.

The DCU will investigate approximately 900 domestic conflict cases in a month. Each case is evaluated on its risk level; high, medium or low. If a case were determined to be high-risk, it would include such factors as a history of past incidents involving the parties, the severity of the assault and a belief that without strong intervention, homicide could be the likely outcome.

Clients are referred to the DCU through local shelters and other domestic conflict serving agencies. The DCU conducts the risk assessment for every client referred to them. If a client is "high risk" and a Lifeline phone is determined to be of value given the situation, the unit is placed in the client's home by the DCU staff for an initial 3- month period. The risk is reassessed after that time.

Accidental and test calls are expected and encouraged by the Lifeline staff. However, when an emergency call does come into the response center, the monitoring staff are in voice contact within seconds to identify potential threats and provide immediate assistance. Staff conference the call to the Communications Unit of the CPS and identify the call as a Lifeline Domestic Conflict Alarm. The benefit of the Lifeline system to the police is that when a Bethany Lifeline Domestic Conflict call is referred to them, the responding officers have the necessary information on their CAD screen when responding to the call.

In April 2000, the Bethany Domestic Conflict Lifeline Program was awarded FCSS funding in part to "assess the effectiveness and efficiency of this program". A temporary staff position was developed in August 2000 to begin this process. Leslie Tutty, Academic Research Coordinator with RESOLVE Alberta (Research and Education for Solutions to Violence and Abuse) was approached to consult with respect to the evaluation and assisted in the research design, questionnaire development, data analysis and interpretation of results. The final evaluation tools were submitted and approved by the University of Calgary Ethics Committee in January 2001.

The evaluation of the Bethany Lifeline considered the following questions:

1. Does Lifeline in the home of Domestic Conflict Subscribers act as a preventative measure/deterrent for further domestic conflict (abuse)?
2. Does Lifeline provide the client with a sense of security?
3. Does the presence of Lifeline in the home, coupled with safety planning through the DCU, provide the client with the ability to respond appropriately in emergency situations?

Method

With the questions in mind, two evaluation tools were developed:

- β A questionnaire for past and present clients of Lifeline.
- β A structured interview format to be used in a focus group with members of the Calgary Police Services Domestic Conflict Unit.

The four-page questionnaire was mailed to 43 past and present BDCLP clients in mid-March, 2001. Since the program's inception in Sept. 1999, a total of 60 clients had units placed in their home by the DCU. However, a number of these clients were unreachable or had no forwarding address or phone number.

The questionnaire focused on three areas: Personal Information, Lifeline Performance and Personal Safety and Security. Clients were asked to provide comments where possible to expand on their responses.

One of the restrictions from the U of C's Ethics Committee regarding the evaluation was that "none of the individuals being surveyed can be living with the abusive partner". In order to ensure that this stipulation was met, each client was phoned to verify address and living situation prior to the questionnaires being mailed. Two of the 60 clients had returned to their previous partner.

The focus group consisted of eight investigators currently with the Domestic Conflict Unit. All but one of these staff members had prior experience with the Lifeline units. A series of ten questions was asked of the members and responses were documented on tape and in written format by two observers. Each staff member was asked to sign a written consent form prior to the focus group. The consent forms and questionnaire will be kept at the RESOLVE Alberta office at U of C in a locked filing cabinet for seven years after the completion of the research, as stated in the Ethics Committee approval.

Questionnaire Results

In total, 22 completed questionnaires were returned, a response rate of 51%. It should also be noted that not all of the client's situations were the result of partner abuse. In some instances, the risk of abuse came from individuals other than a partner or ex-partner. Of the 22 respondents, four were from situations not directly the result of partner abuse. For example, one client was at risk of potential abuse from an ex-friend of a family member while another client was in possible danger from a friend's ex-husband.

I Personal Information:

The age range of the respondents was 20 - 57 years of age. The average age was 36 years of age (based on 22 respondents). All were female.

Twenty-two individuals responded to the questions about employment status. Of these, 12 clients were employed full-time, three clients were employed part-time and seven indicated that they were unemployed but receiving some other form of assistance. Several clients indicated that they received

more than one form of income including partner support or alimony (4 clients), Supports For Independence benefits (2 clients), Employment Insurance benefits (1 client) or Pension benefits (3 clients). One client was self-employed full-time.

Information on gross income was requested and all but three clients responded. Of the 19 respondents, seven indicated incomes of under \$10,000 - \$20,000, ten clients had incomes of between \$20,000 - \$60,000 and two clients incomes were over \$60,000.

The length of time the client was in the abusive relationship was also requested. Three clients had been in abusive relationships for less than 1 year, ten clients indicated 1 - 5 years, and five clients had been in relationships over six years. The remaining four clients who were from situations not related to intimate partner abuse all indicated that the length of time involved was less than one year.

One final question asked whether the abuser was aware that Lifeline was installed in the home. Of the 22 respondents, only two clients indicated that their partner was aware Lifeline was installed. Eleven stated their partner was unaware of Lifeline and the remaining nine were unsure.

II Lifeline Performance

A large part of this evaluation centered on Lifeline usage and accessibility. The intent of these questions was to discover how clients found out about the program, if there were any problems with the installation and/or the unit itself, if the unit was effective when used and if they were satisfied with the response of the Lifeline staff and the CPS.

The majority of clients had heard about the Lifeline program through the Calgary Police Services Domestic Conflict Unit (19 out of 22). Only five of the respondents had been in a shelter prior to having a unit installed. Of these five, three indicated that they had heard about Lifeline from the shelter staff.

All but one respondent had had no problems with the installation of the unit by the DCU. Three women added comments to this question, with one negative response regarding technical problems due to the phone line. Another respondent wrote, "They were great! Very informative and worked around my schedule to install."

Of the 22 respondents, 14 still have Lifeline installed. Of the eight that no longer have it, five indicated that it had been installed from 3 - 6 months, two clients had it for 6 - 9 months and one had it for 9 - 12 months. The removal of the unit was determined by the CPS in two situations and due to a personal decision in four cases. In two instances it was removed because of other circumstances (i.e. client was moving).

In the initial proposal, the Lifeline unit was intended to be installed for a three-month period. However, of those clients who still have Lifeline installed, only one has had it for less than three months. Three clients have had it between 3 - 6 months, two clients have had it between 6 - 9 months, and the remaining eight clients have had it longer than 9 months. As such, the original length of time appeared to underestimate the need.

Respondents were asked if they were pleased with Lifeline. Again, the majority indicated that they were very pleased (18) or somewhat pleased (3), with only one person stating that she was very disappointed. This client commented, "the police responded in an exceptionally poor manner".

Comments from the remaining respondents centered on client safety and security issues, Lifeline operators (monitors) and the police response. Eight responses involved safety and security including:

β It has given me peace and a feeling of safety and security that I would not have without it.

- β I enjoyed feeling safe in my home. I was able to go to sleep at night in my bed and know if there was a problem, I could push a button.
- β It was this system which helped me to leave the shelter confidently to live independently.

Clients were asked how many times they had made use of Lifeline to contact the Calgary Police Department in an emergency situation. The majority (17) had never used Lifeline in an emergency situation, three clients had used it once and two had used it twice. One client stated, “Fortunately, I never had to use it.”

Six clients had used the unit “by accident”. Therefore, the response to the question “If you used the unit, were you satisfied with the response/service received?” also included both those who had used it in emergency situations and those who had set it off accidentally. Of the ten who responded, eight indicated that they were very satisfied, one was somewhat satisfied and one was very unsatisfied. Positive comments included “staff at Bethany Lifeline do an excellent job in responding to a call” and “very attentive and friendly operators”.

Twelve respondents were either very satisfied or satisfied with the response time on behalf of the Lifeline monitors. One client who “accidentally” set off the alarm twice mentioned, “at the time, it felt very 'quick' (the response from the monitors), but the waiting time for the tests seemed long”. It appears that the client was referring to the monthly "test calls" that the Lifeline monitors routinely provide in order to ensure that the unit is functioning properly.

A final question queried the client’s satisfaction with the response time from the Calgary Police Services. Nine clients responded, eight of who were very satisfied. One client stated “I accidentally bumped the button once. Two squad cars and four officers (arrived) inside of 5 minutes. Did a thorough search of my house. I was very impressed”.

Most of the clients had not encountered any problems with the Lifeline unit (18 out of 22 had no problems). Four clients indicated problem situations including:

- β Dog set it off by accident. Went into panic. Forgot that you needed password. Police came out. They were very surly when they found out.
- β It went off even when I wasn’t home.
- β Police responded in an exceptionally poor manner.
- β In my situation, the only concern I had was that the voice telling me that a “help call was in progress” was so loud that it would alert the abuser on the outside of my home, thus allowing him to get away before he could be apprehended by the police. I hesitated to use it on several occasions for the reason mentioned above, and called police quietly from my home phone.

No clients indicated that others in the household had used Lifeline, except when accidentally activated. When clients were asked if they thought it would be helpful for other family members to have a locket, four respondents stated that they thought it would be helpful if they (the children) are old enough to use and understand the proper use. Most were either living by themselves, were the only ones at risk of danger, or felt that their children were too young to have a locket.

III Personal Safety and Security

The final section of the questionnaire asked questions to determine if the Lifeline units provided a sense of security and safety for the clients.

Clients were asked if they had developed a safety plan. Approximately 2/3 of our respondents (14 of 22) had developed a safety plan, usually with the help of the Calgary Police Services, shelters, Calgary Legal Guidance Center and/or family members.

Additionally, clients were asked if Lifeline had altered their relationship with the members of the Calgary Police Services. Twelve respondents indicated “no” while eight agreed that it had altered their relationship and two were not sure or did not comment. Seven of the eight commented, stating that the relationship was altered in a positive way:

- β It has allowed me to use their services less, however, more effectively.
- β I have significantly more respect for their reaction and the way they treat my situation. They take it very seriously and have insured me that I have their help when I need it. The two “tests” or accidental contacts really showed me how seriously they treat these cases and I know now that I can count on them - the system really works! I am thankful that I had a test case to try this with, and now my confidence in the system is 100%.

The one negative comment (with no accompanying explanation) was that “Police still treat domestic violence like it was still 1974. At least in my case.”

An additional category asked clients to respond on a scale of 1 - 4 to four statements, with 1 indicating that they strongly agree with the statement, and 4 indicating they strongly disagree. One hundred percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they feel/felt safer with Lifeline installed (17 strongly agreed and 5 agreed).

Seventy three percent (16 clients) strongly agreed that their family feels/felt safer with Lifeline installed, with an additional 14% (5 clients) rating it as 'agreed'. In contrast, two respondents disagreed that their family felt safer with Lifeline and the final respondent stated that this question was not applicable. Of these three, two lived alone and the remaining client provided no further explanation of why she disagreed with this statement.

When clients were asked if Lifeline reduced the incidence of harassment from their partner/abuser, the responses varied widely. Forty one percent (9 clients) strongly agreed or agreed that Lifeline reduced the incidence, while 23% (5 clients) disagreed or strongly disagreed and 36% (8 clients) did not respond or indicated that this question was not applicable.

Of the eight clients who did not respond, three simply left the question blank, one client indicated that it was not applicable, one client stated that she was not sure, and two clients stated that they "don't know if he knows". The remaining respondent stated, "I'm not sure if he is aware I have it. I believe he is and that is why he is no longer harassing me at home".

The final question in this series asked if Lifeline provided the client with increased confidence to deal with crisis situations. Ninety five percent (21) of the clients agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, the other 5% did not respond.

The remaining question was whether having Lifeline installed affected others living with the client and if so, how? Thirty six percent (8) stated that Lifeline did affect others living with them, an additional 36% (8) said no and the remaining 28% (6) had no comment one way or the other. Those who stated that they felt Lifeline did not affect others living with them either lived alone or had small children who were not aware of the unit.

Several clients commented about this question, the majority dealing with safety issues and children's feelings. For example:

- β My family feels safer for me and worried less about the time I spend alone.
- β My son, although only 7 years at the time the system was installed, understood that we were safer in case of an emergency if his Dad showed up.

- β Very much so! My children feel more secure in their home, knowing help is very near. Prior to having this installed, my kids did not want to be home by themselves. (Mother of 12 and 15-year old children.)

One client stated that the system “gave us a false sense of security” but did not expand on her statement further.

The last section of the questionnaire asked for additional comments. Eleven respondents took the opportunity to provide further feedback for Lifeline and the CPS Domestic Conflict Unit. The majority of the comments were positive reflections on the program including:

- β It was this system (Lifeline) that helped to put me at ease knowing that precautionary safety measures were taken. Having the Lifeline button at night, especially helped me to be able to sleep knowing help would be immediate if necessary if my ex was to come around.
- β Lifeline has given me the security that I know the police are involved and are aware. All the pertinent information is on file and in a crisis situation I would not have to get “restraining order” numbers etc. The Lifeline has, in a way, given me a sense of calmness in my home. Thank you.
- β The Lifeline helps me realize that I don’t have to deal with this alone - I have a lot of help and resources out there!
- β I am very grateful for the use of the Lifeline system, most specifically to have access to help if needed, when I walk between my house and my unattached garage, especially at night. I had previously been cornered there many times and was so afraid that I often could not bring myself to park in the garage, for fear of being accosted. I always take the locket with me now, and tested it from the garage with the Lifeline staff, so I feel that I will have help if I need to use it. It has made a huge difference to my peace of mind.

Two clients were not pleased with the response to their emergency calls from the Calgary Police Service once Lifeline was activated. One client wrote:

- β I think more understanding is needed by the police in cases such as this, because they made the problem a lot worse by their response. People in these situations are in a nervous state to begin with, they don’t need added stress. It only takes a little at these times to make a person snap. (This particular client had accidentally activated her response button, did not know where the voice was coming from (the Lifeline monitors voice) and could not remember the password. The police were dispatched as per our response protocol.)

Focus Group Results

The focus group gathered information from the Calgary Police Services Domestic Conflict Unit regarding their view of the Lifeline program. The questions centered on their general impressions about how the Lifeline program was working, what problems they were encountering or what suggestions for change they could provide. Additional questions were asked to determine the effect of Lifeline on their clients, if Lifeline was beneficial to the client as well as the DCU, and if clients had ever turned down an offer for Lifeline.

The level of participation in the focus group was impressive (8 out of a possible 10) given the schedule and workload of the officers in the unit. Several helpful suggestions and comments were provided. The more relevant suggestions and comments are included in this report throughout the Conclusion and Recommendation sections.

In general, the officers were very positive about the Lifeline program. They view it as a "tool" that can assist the client and the DCU throughout the investigation. It not only allows the victim to get a good

night's sleep but it provides the constable with some peace of mind regarding the victim's situation as well.

The officers believe that the presence of Lifeline in the client's homes helps build the client's confidence in the (police) system which further helped to reduce the "worry" that can work against safety planning. Lifeline was viewed as a part of the safety planning process for the client.

They identified some problems with the program in terms of retrieval of the Lifeline units and occasionally delayed installation times due to workload of the officers. At times, due to a credit history or financial situation, a client had difficulty qualifying for a Telus line.

The members of the focus group were impressed with the Lifeline staff's handling of the calls in the Response Center. They did not consider the installation of the unit to be difficult. The main problem appeared to be finding the time to do the installation.

Conclusion

The survey respondents reported a range of age and income levels, with the majority of respondents indicating incomes under \$60,000. Not all the respondents were victims of partner abuse, though all were women. Over half of the respondents were employed full-time. The length of time the respondents were in their abusive situations also varied, with the majority indicating they had been in the relationship over one year.

These demographics are similar to those of a group of 202 women who had sought refuge in two of Calgary's emergency shelters in the past five years (Tutty and Rothery, in press).¹ In this group, there was also a wide age range and the majority, but not all, were abused by intimate partners. Two differences were the higher proportion of women working full-time and the higher annual income levels of the Lifeline clients than the shelter sample. This, however, is consistent with shelters as being resources for women with few resources. It also reminds us that not only women who reside in shelters need protection from abusive partners.

The intent of this evaluation was to determine if the Lifeline program was making a difference in the lives of the clients served by the program. Overall, the results of the client questionnaire and the focus group are extremely positive in terms of the effect the Lifeline has on both the client and the police.

The clients all agreed that they feel or felt safer with Lifeline installed in their homes and the majority agreed that it helped their family feel safer as well. This is consistent with the observation from the focus group that Lifeline helps to build confidence in the system as well as allowing the client to "sleep at night and not jump at every noise". All of this helps to alleviate the "worry" that occurs in these situations. According to the constables, worry is a negative that "works against safety planning" and can "prevent the clients from responding properly".

When clients were asked if they believed that Lifeline provided them with the confidence to deal with crisis situations, 95% agreed that it had helped them deal with crisis situations with more confidence. Two-thirds of the respondents indicated that they had a safety plan developed along with the DCU, local shelters and/or outside agencies. Once again, this validated the focus group's conclusion that Lifeline is an important aspect of the safety plan and in order for it to work, the client needs to be in control and confident.

¹ Tutty, L. & Rothery, M. (in press). Abused women and the shelter experience. In L. Tutty & C. Goard (eds.) *Murder of my soul: Experiences of women abused by intimate partners*. Halifax, NS: Fernwood.

The presence of Lifeline in the client's home was not problematic in most cases according to the questionnaire results. In contrast, some of the officers in the focus group indicated that they were not sure that their clients were wearing the locket or that the client even had the unit plugged in. Nevertheless, when the domestic situation was unsafe, or the behavior (or the risk) of the perpetrator increased, the officers believed that the clients would wear the bracelet.

Lifeline also provided the constables with a sense of relief in knowing that there was help for their client if needed. It assisted the police to support them through those "crisis periods" when the possibility of the recurrence of domestic violence was high. Such times could include court dates, holidays and other special family events.

The installation of Lifeline by members of the DCU was not a problem according to the clients. However, it can create difficulties for the officers involved because of the time required for the installation and their currently high workload. Alternative arrangements for Lifeline unit installation and removal could be considered to alleviate this problem.

Both the police and the clients were pleased with the performance of Lifeline and the response from the Lifeline staff/monitors. However, both clients and some focus group members raised concerns about the response from the police service when responding to calls. In two instances, clients felt that they had not been treated appropriately by the responding officers, who were not typically members of the DCU. It should be noted that it was not the CPS response time that was the problem, but the interaction from the police officers that should be reviewed. The DCU is working to make changes with respect to this.

Although the majority of the respondents did not use Lifeline in an emergency situation, the unit was obviously a reassuring presence in their homes. From the police perspective, placing the unit in the homes of their clients let the client know that they (the police) believe them. This can be of benefit to their investigation, especially if the client has had negative contact with the police in the past. Some of the client responses from the questionnaire validate the police point of view.

We also wondered whether the existence of Lifeline in the homes of their clients reduced the number of calls received from the client to the DCU. The police in the focus group suggested that it would be difficult to measure this and that the number of calls typically taper off with time as the investigation proceeds. One client stated that Lifeline allowed her to "use their services less, however, more effectively".

One area we were hoping to explore was the impact of Lifeline on the perpetrator (i.e. if the perpetrator was aware of Lifeline, would it effect their behavior?). Not surprisingly, this was difficult to assess, since only two of our clients knew that their abuser was aware that Lifeline had been installed. The majority of clients were either unaware or not sure if their abuser knew of Lifeline.

Did Lifeline reduce the incidence of harassment from their abuser? Most clients found this a very difficult question. One interesting observation is from a client whose Lifeline alarm frightened her abuser away before the CPS could arrive, suggesting that the unit does have the potential to act as a deterrent in some instances.

A concern for several clients was the loudness of the voice coming from the unit itself. This can be either a positive or negative depending on the situation. Although the unit can be programmed to respond in a quieter manner, this has not been taken into consideration previously.

The effect of Lifeline on other family members was not as clear. Only about 1/3 of the respondents indicated that Lifeline affected others living with them. In situations where the client had children, the majority agreed that the unit had a positive effect on family member's feelings of safety. The police

officers suggested that Lifeline reminds family members that there is a problem and reinforces the need to continue to do safety planning.

At the present time, each unit comes with one locket. Lifeline wondered if it would be advantageous to provide additional lockets for other family members. The client response to this question suggests that this would not often be necessary.

The majority of Lifeline clients had heard about the program through the DCU. In the focus group, members of the DCU commented that the shelter staff does not usually contact them to request Lifeline for an individual. They stated that, to date, the shelter staff has left that decision up to the discretion of the DCU when referring clients. Occasionally, the DCU receive calls from an outside agency requesting Lifeline for a client. Problems can occur if the agency is unwilling to disclose details about the client or the client has not given them permission to disclose pertinent information. Shelters are aware that when they contact the DCU, they are required to disclose certain information in order to investigate the situation. However, the focus group participants agreed that the outreach workers for the shelters were one group that could possibly refer clients to them, but have not previously done so.

The focus group participants were asked whether any clients had turned down the offer of a Lifeline unit. They noted that some clients had refused them because of the contract involved or their previous experience with contracts. Some clients were hesitant to sign their name on a contract because they did not understand it. Others were not eligible for a phone line due to unpaid bills or overdue accounts. One client refused the offer because of the contract and the control she thought that it would give to her ex-partner. Still other officers had had Lifeline units "thrown" at them during court appearances when a client was not ready".

Recommendations

1) It appears obvious that a personal response system in the home of domestic abuse victims provides the victim with a feeling of safety and security that helps them get on with their lives. This is as much a benefit to the client as it is to the police. Not only does the existence of Lifeline in the home of the client put the investigator's mind at ease, it also provides the client with the confidence necessary to deal with crisis situations. Most of the clients did not use the Lifeline unit for emergency situations (only 5 of 22 indicated they used the unit for an emergency situation). Yet, they unanimously agreed that the unit helped them feel safer in their homes.

The total number of respondents who completed the questionnaire was somewhat less than hoped for (51% response rate). However, the positive response from the questionnaires that were returned would suggest that two of the three questions stated at the outset have been addressed. These would include:

- β That Lifeline provides the client with a sense of security while at home that is necessary for them to "get on with their life".
- β That the existence of Lifeline in the home, coupled with safety planning through the DCU, provides the client with the ability to respond appropriately in emergency situations.

Based on the responses received, the BDCLP should be continued and expanded as needed to continue to assist those clients who are at high risk of domestic violence. Lifeline provides clients with a unique service than other available emergency measures in that clients are allowed to make mistakes and it is okay to press the locket in error. Lifeline is particularly appropriate for those clients who are anxious or concerned about false alarms as subscribers speak with a staff person every time a Lifeline is activated.

2) When clients were asked how they had heard about the Lifeline program, the majority of clients found out about Lifeline through the DCU. In order to make the Lifeline program more accessible to all

agencies, more information regarding program access should be made available to the shelters and outside related agencies.

The CPS Domestic Conflict staff agreed that this was one area that could be improved, especially for outreach workers at the shelters who may have clients that would benefit from a unit. Protocol around access to Lifeline units should be made clear to all potential agencies and should include permission from the victim to release pertinent information to the DCU when an agency is requesting a Lifeline unit on their behalf.

An additional access issue is related to some client's inability to qualify for a phone line. While this does not happen often, perhaps some special consideration for these clients could be arranged with Telus. This issue would apply to both Lifeline and ADT DVERS accessibility.

3) The results from this questionnaire were inconclusive regarding the ability of Lifeline in the home to act as a preventative measure/deterrent for further domestic conflict. While Lifeline provides the client with a feeling of safety and security, it is unclear if the threat of the unit is enough to discourage the abuser from further violence.

Both the police and the clients stress the importance of safety planning for these individuals. Safety planning combined with Lifeline may act as a deterrent for abuse. Once a client is working with the DCU, the officers will review the safety planning measures with the individual. This in itself may be the reason that the client is successful in their feelings of safety and security. It is difficult to separate these two safety measures and, in fact, together they may be the reason for such a successful program.

Lifeline should be considered as one "tool" in the safety planning process. Work should continue with other emergency measures that have been put into place, including the 911 cell-phone program, ADT DVERS and the reinforcement of existing security measures by the DCU. Lifeline may want to consider the voice volume on the unit itself in some instances. Is the loud response of the unit of benefit to the individual or would a quieter volume allow for the CPS to respond in time to deal with the perpetrator?

4) The results of the focus group suggest that Lifeline assists the CPS in their investigation in two ways; it relieves some of the investigating officers worry regarding the client's safety and it informs the units responding to an emergency call about the client's situation.

More training could be conducted with the responding officers. The clients indicated that not all of the responding officers are aware of how best to respond to the domestic conflict calls. Though the majority of responses were positive, the CPS may want to continue to work on this area with their members.

5) Lifeline installation and retrieval by members of the DCU could become a problem if the amount of requests for Lifeline continue to grow, given the workload of the unit staff. Lifeline and the DCU should continue to investigate the possibility of other installation methods for these clients in the future.

Overall, the evaluation process of the BDCLP has provided useful information and a tool that will continue being utilized to assess Lifeline's effectiveness with its clients affected by domestic violence. The survey will be collected as clients are finished with the Lifeline program.

It is hoped that the results from the evaluation will help in the continuing awareness and prevention of domestic violence within Calgary. Lifeline, combined with other measures available to domestic violence victims, is a positive step in providing increased safety and security to these victims.

Appendices

(Available from Bethany Lifeline upon request)

- 1) RESOLVE Consent form for questionnaire
- 2) RESOLVE Focus Group Consent Form
- 3) Bethany cover letter for questionnaire
- 4) Questionnaire
- 5) Questionnaire summary
- 6) Focus group summary