



Commission  
to Prevent Violence  
Against Women

**Arizona Commission to Prevent Violence Against Women**

**November 19, 2020**

**10:00 a.m.**

**Zoom Meeting**

A general meeting of the Commission to Prevent Violence Against Women was convened on November 19, 2020, virtually, notice having been duly given.

Members Present (17)	
Diane Umphress, Co-Chair	
Beth Hoel	
Steve Stahl	
Jon Eliason	
Kristin Flores	
Jenna Panas	
Laura Guild	
Neil Websdale	
Kay Radwanski	
Susan Smith	
Ed Mercurio-Sakwa	
Elizabeth Ortiz	
Jon Smith	
Monica Yelin	
Patricia Klahr	
Sheila Sjolander	
Daniel Rincon	
Members Absent (3)	
Kate Brophy McGee, Co-Chair	
Eve Scarff	
Nicole Bidwill	

**Call to Order**

- **Diane Umphress, Co-Chair**, called the Commission to Prevent Violence Against Women meeting to order at 10:02 AM with 17 members present. **Diane Umphress, Co-Chair**, reviewed the remote meeting platform procedures.

**Welcome/Introductions**

- **Diane Umphress, Co-Chair**, welcomed everyone and asked all members to introduce themselves.

**Approval of Minutes**

- **Diane Umphress, Co-Chair**, requested a review of the **August 20, 2020** meeting minutes.
  - **Jon Eliason** motioned to accept the **August 20, 2020** minutes. **Patricia Klahr** seconded the motion.
    - The motion passed with no dissenting votes.

### Department of Child Safety

- **Michael Faust, Director of the Department of Child Safety** was introduced by **Diane Umphress, Co-Chair**.
- **Director Michael Faust** shared data charts regarding communications and reports to the the Department of Child Safety (DCS) hotline, safety assessment completion, inactive cases, assigned new reports, and in home services. **Director Michael Faust** told the Commission that since COVID-19 the call volume for the hotline has shown a decline compared to historical numbers. Of the calls that are received, 40% report a risk factor for Domestic Violence.
- **Director Michael Faust** reported that reports from school administration and teachers have decreased since the pandemic and there has been an increase in reporting from law enforcement.
- **Director Michael Faust** also reported on out-of-home care and rates of removed children and how DCS has been working towards reunification or adoption. Currently, more children are entering foster care than exiting yet Arizona still focuses on permanency goals for children and families. **Director Michael Faust** addressed the average age of referrals on waitlists by County type and the challenges of providing services for families during the pandemic.
- **Diane Umphress, Co-Chair** emphasized the support that DCS has in Yuma and the importance of facilitating teamwork around the county with different agencies. **Director Michael Faust** discussed the impact isolation has on children and how working together strives to mitigate these problems through appropriate interventions.
- **Elizabeth Ortiz** thanked DCS for their work and expressed the added support that the Arizona Prosecuting Attorneys Advisory Council has been working on, including the “Train the Trainer” program which focuses on Mandated Reporter Training. **Director Michael Faust** spoke about the difficulty of assessing what abuse and neglect look like in a virtual world and thanked commissioners for doing their work, specifically in training during this time.
- **Patricia Klahr** inquired about how the teachers have been providing support to the children during remote learning while serving as mandated reporters. **Director Michael Faust** stated that all teachers have been trained based on district protocols. In March, DCS started sharing more communication to create awareness, additional training and materials for reporting, and outreach mechanisms for children and families during the pandemic.
- **Dan Rincon** asked about law enforcement’s increased reporting and if there is the assumption that the increase is due to limited access to other means of help, for example that which would be provided from teachers reporting abuse or neglect. **Director Michael Faust** agreed that teachers historically have played a significant role in reporting abuse and neglect. DCS research has shown that the type and severity of abuse or neglect that is being reported has not changed from historical trends, but that without teachers reporting or intervening, issues have escalated and result in law enforcement being called.
- **Dr. Neil Websdale** asked for further details about the screening process for the DCS hotline. **Director Michael Faust** elaborated that both consensus, observations, and numerical processes are used in screening allegations. Secondary quality review and reliability studies are also used. **Dr. Neil Websdale** offered to have his team meet with DCS to review analytics and screening processes used.
- **Jon Smith** confirmed that slides from the presentation could be used to show others how important they are in the process of protecting children.

### Domestic Violence Fatalities in Arizona

- **Lieutenant Dan Rincon, Scottsdale Police Department**, was introduced by **Diane Umphress, Co-Chair**.
- **Lieutenant Rincon** provided a broad overview of Domestic Violence Homicide statistics in Arizona and highlighted specific factors that influence how DV homicides are analyzed.

- **Lieutenant Rincon** reviewed data from the past twenty years regarding Arizona's population growth and changes in DV homicides. From 2012 to 2018, Arizona had a reported decrease of 38.13% partly due to county and statewide strangulation protocols that were developed. Arizona is the first state in the nation to have these protocols.
- **Lieutenant Rincon** emphasized that the average number of DV Homicides over the past 20 years has relatively remained the same despite the population of Arizona increasing by over two million during this same period. **Lieutenant Rincon** brought attention to recent news articles that discuss high percentage increases and the misconception that this gives to the public.
- **Lieutenant Rincon** stated that focus still needs to be given to communities experiencing higher rates of DV and target these communities if we intend to continue to make progress towards ending Domestic Violence. Improvements in training, policies, and best practices are needed from Law Enforcement, Courts, advocacy, and outreach are also needed.
- **Dr. Neil Websdale** stated that over the past 40 years there has been an observed change in social acceptance creating a social shift away from Domestic Violence.
- **Diane Umphress, Co-Chair** asked Commission members that are prosecutors to address if there have been increases in strangulation cases that are filed in recent years. **Jon Smith** was unaware of exactly what changes have occurred since implementing new strangulation protocols.
- **Steve Stahl** spoke regarding the increase of abuse that was reported at the start of the pandemic which has since gone down. Part of the changes that have impacted statistics is refining the questions that are asked for prosecutorial evidence.

#### Lighting Arizona Purple Update

- **Diane Umphress** requested **Gaelyn Davis** report on successes from Lighting Arizona Purple (LAP) in October 2020.
- **Gaelyn Davis** stated that this year's LAP campaign was shifted to an online platform which engaged community members and stakeholders. Throughout the month, the State Capitol building was lit purple and agencies throughout the state lit their buildings purple and used #LightingAZPurple to raise awareness and support survivors on a variety of social media platforms.
- LAP was executed as a virtual statewide awareness campaign that consisted of a 1 hour DV focused webinar that had over 200 views within the first 2 weeks and a digital campaign with COX Media. The website itcanstop.az.gov was redesigned to include direct resources for providers and survivors.

#### Request for Future Presentation Topics

- **Diane Umphress** stated that the Commission will accept public comment via written submission through the GOYFF website and encouraged Commission members to email GOYFF staff any recommendations for future Presentation topics.

#### Future Meeting Dates

- **Diane Umphress** announced the following meeting dates for 2021:
  - Thursday, February 18, 2021
  - Tuesday, May 18, 2021
  - Thursday, August 19, 2021
  - Tuesday, November 16, 2021

#### Adjourn

- **Diane Umphress, Chair** called for adjournment at 11:22PM.
  - **Dan Rincon** motioned to adjourn. **Elizabeth Ortiz** seconded the motion.
- Motion to adjourn was approved unanimously.

Dated the 20th of November 2020  
Commission to Prevent Violence Against Women  
Respectfully Submitted By:  
Gaelyn Davis  
Program Administrator, GOYFF