



**An Evaluation of the Project Work of the Same Sex
Domestic Abuse Group (SSDAG)**

Author: Nardi Ling

August 2008

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank past and present members of the SSDAG Management Committee who have volunteered their time, knowledge and expertise to an invaluable project. Thankyou must also go to the individuals who have operated as Project Officers and Managers, and have ensured SSDAG were able to meet its objectives.

Finally, the author would like to acknowledge the substantial contribution of Edith Cowan University Research team to the evaluation.

Table of Content

Executive Summary	8
Introduction	10
Background	11
Description of the Project	13
Aims of the Evaluation	19
Methodology	20
Design and Procedure	20
Ethics	23
Results	24
Awareness Raising	24
Enhancing Service Provider Capacity	25
Networks/Referral Pathways	34
Discussion	36
Limitations of the Evaluation	36
Effectiveness of the Project	37
Recommendations	41
References	42
Appendices	43

List of Tables

Table 1	Resources Distribution	16
Table 2	Telephone Interviews	24
Table 3	Most Useful Areas of the Training	29
Table 4	Feedback on the Content of the Training	31
Table 5	Delivery of the Training	32
Table 6	Activities	33

List of Figures

Figure 1	Awareness Raising Activities	15
Figure 2	Services Provided by Agency	27
Figure 3	Mean Response for Improvements in Knowledge, Awareness and Confidence to Work with Diverse Sexuality and Gender Family and Domestic Violence (DSGFDV).	28

Glossary of Terms

Diverse Sexuality and Gender (DSG)

An umbrella term used to describe individuals who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, queer, intersex, transgendered or questioning.

DSG Community

A term used to define a group of people who identify as having diverse sexuality and/or gender. The word community is used for the purpose of categorisation, but does not necessarily mean that individuals identify as a homogenous group.

Domestic Abuse

The terminology enlisted by SSDAG to describe a range of abusive/violent behaviours such as emotional, financial, sexual, spiritual, physical and stalking (see www.ssdag.org.au)

Family and Domestic Violence

The terminology used in this report to describe “behaviour, which results in physical, sexual and/or psychological damage, forced social isolation, economic deprivation, or behaviour which causes the victim to live in fear” (Family and Domestic Violence Unit, 2004, 5). The use of the word family in relation to domestic violence is adopted by the Western Australian Strategic Family and Domestic Violence Plan 2004-2008 to be

SSDAG Evaluation

inclusive of Indigenous, Torres Strait Islanders and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) group's understandings in relation to kinship structures (Family and Domestic Violence Unit, 2004, 1).

SSDAG project

The term SSDAG project is used to define the activities undertaken by Project Officers and Project Managers employed by SSDAG, rather than the initiatives of SSDAG Incorporated.

Executive Summary

Background

The Same Sex Domestic Abuse Group (SSDAG) originated as a group of volunteers who were concerned about the issues facing people with diverse sexuality and gender (DSG) experiencing family and domestic violence (FDV). The key objectives of the project work undertaken by SSDAG was to raise awareness of the issue of diverse sexuality and gender family and domestic violence (DSGFDV) both within the DSG community and service providers within Western Australia, to develop a training package that would enhance service providers capacity to respond appropriately to DSGFDV, and to develop networks and referral pathways to assist DSG people experiencing FDV.

Aims

The aim of the evaluation reported here is to evaluate the effectiveness of the SSDAG project in raising awareness of the issue of DSGFDV amongst service providers, in enhancing service provider capacity via the provision of a training package, and in developing networks and referral pathways for DSGFDV.

Methodology

The effectiveness of the SSDAG project in raising awareness of the issue of DSGFDV amongst service providers was measured by conducting a telephone interview with both metropolitan and regional agencies. This was to determine whether they had

SSDAG Evaluation

heard of the SSDAG project, had received any literature or information, and whether they understood the groups aims.

The ability of the SSDAG project to enhance service provider capacity was determined by evaluating the effectiveness of their training package on DSGFDV. A focus group and self-administered questionnaire was utilized.

Anecdotal evidence was obtained to determine how successful the SSDAG project had been in developing networks and referral pathways.

Conclusions

Awareness Raising

The evaluation has found the SSDAG project has been extremely effective in raising awareness of the issue of DSGFDV amongst metropolitan service providers as indicated by the telephone interview data, with the majority of services having heard of SSDAG and approximately half being aware of the group's aims and activities.

Enhancing Service Provider Capacity

The SSDAG project has developed an innovative training package which is unique both nationally and internationally and fills a gap in service provision. The evaluation of the training package points to an extremely successful tool which enhances service provider's capacity to respond appropriately to the issue of DSGFDV; All eighty one

SSDAG Evaluation

respondents surveyed indicated that the training enhanced their knowledge, awareness and confidence with regard to DSGFDV issues 'somewhat well' or 'very well'.

Developing Networks and Referral Pathways

The SSDAG project has been extremely proactive in developing networks with other agencies in order to meet the needs of DSG people experiencing FDV and currently sit on the committee of the Armadale Domestic Violence Intervention Project (ADVIP) and the DSG Network. The project has developed a close working relationship with Perth Inner City Youth Service (PICYS) and has identified this as a referral pathway for accommodation and support services for DSG young people experiencing FDV.

The evaluation concludes with further recommendations such as securing ongoing funding, evaluating the group's resources, and continuing to define referral pathways on page 41.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The issue of family and domestic violence as it affects people with diverse sexuality and gender is one that has received little attention, particularly in regard to Australian research. However, the evidence that prevails is that DSGFDV "...is not an anomaly, but a problem that exists with equal or greater prevalence in comparison to opposite sex domestic violence (OSDV)" (Hancock and L'Veena 2007, 38). A study published in 2006 on the health of gay, lesbian, transgender, and intersex (GLBTI) Australians found "A disturbingly high percentage (32.7%) of respondents in this sample [5476] reported having been in a relationship where the partner was abusive" (Pitts et al., 2006, 51). The only research of its kind conducted in Western Australia by the SSDAG project surveyed 163 DSG respondents at Perth Fairday in September 2007. The survey found that 60% of respondents reported experiencing some form of domestic abuse (for preliminary findings see Appendix 1).

The issue of DSGFDV is covered in depth within the paper entitled '*Diverse Sexuality and Gender and Domestic Violence – A literature Review*' (Hancock and L'Veena 2007). This paper was originally formulated as a backdrop for the evaluation reported here. The reader is referred to this report at Appendix 2 as it provides a comprehensive overview of the issues pertaining to DSGFDV.

SSDAG originated in 2002 as a result of the efforts of a small group of volunteers who wanted to raise awareness of the issues faced by people with diverse sexuality and/or gender experiencing family and domestic violence. Prior to the formation of the SSDAG

SSDAG Evaluation

group, little awareness of the issue existed within the WA community, as evidenced by the dearth of information on the subject. Similarly, a lack of specific services for DSG people experiencing FDV existed at that time (and currently), including training for service providers on how to work with this issue. As noted by Hancock and L'Veena (2007, 4) "This literature review has confirmed the international scarcity of existing DSGDV training packages to assist human service providers and policy makers".

The SSDAG group received funding in 2004 from the Family and Domestic Violence Unit (FDVU) and became an incorporated body. At this time SSDAG began to develop a website and resource materials. Further funding was applied for, and received, in 2005 from both the FDVU and the Department of Justice which allowed for the appointment of project staff. SSDAG currently receive funding from the Attorney Generals Department under the Proceeds of Crime Grants Scheme. The Management Committee continues to oversee the financial management of the project work of SSDAG, as well as ensure the project work continues to realize the vision and mission of the group. The current committee consists of many of the same original members who have volunteered their time, skills and capacities since 2002 (for further information see the SSDAG website, www.ssdag.org.au).

The SSDAG Management Committee appointed a part-time Project Manager and Project worker in 2006 that began to develop awareness raising literature and a training package for service providers working with the issue of FDV. The delivery of the SSDAG project resources and materials began in mid 2006, whilst the training package delivery began late 2006. The training package continued to be developed and delivered throughout the period of 2007; however it is important to note the evolution of the project has been affected by staff turnover, both in terms of the Project Manager and Project Worker, as well as the evaluators.

SSDAG Evaluation

SSDAG has fielded a variety of staff since its inception, and has attempted various permutations of staff position. However retaining staff within a small project has been difficult. Originally the project was to be evaluated by Edith Cowan University (ECU). Indeed some of the evaluation material referred to in this report was developed by ECU (literature review, initial focus group, telephone interviews, and initial training questionnaire). However for a variety of reasons, ECU was unable to complete the evaluation. The current evaluator acknowledges the above difficulties and the impacts on the SSDAG project work, as well as obtaining evaluation information. For the purposes of this evaluation, the period of October 2006 to October 2007 has been covered as it provides the most complete information on the project work of SSDAG.

1.2 Description of the Project

1.2.1 Awareness Raising

A central platform of the project work of SSDAG has been to raise awareness of the issue of DSGFDV. As noted previously, this is an issue largely uncovered in literature and research. There has also been a lack of acknowledgement of the issue within the DSG community itself. As Hancock and L'Veena note, Vickers first brought this to our attention in WA in 1996 and noted that this was for a variety of reasons, including not wanting to give any further reason to encourage homophobia (2007, 32).

In order to market itself initially, the SSDAG project conducted an electronic mailout to over 50 services that it considered may come into contact with the issue of DFV or with DSG individuals, as well as DSG groups within WA. The email gave a brief description of the project and attached a needs assessment and resource form. The needs assessment required groups/services to complete a brief questionnaire designed to obtain information on what policy/resources were already available regarding DSGFDV

SSDAG Evaluation

and also what knowledge of DSGFDV existed. The resource form asked groups/services if they were interested in receiving training or resources regarding DSGFDV. From this initial mailout, 25 responses were received with all respondents indicating they would like to receive SSDAG resources and all but one respondent indicating they would like to receive training.

SSDAG project staff have met with service providers dealing with the issue of FDV as well as provided information sessions to staff. Such service providers include:

- *The Women's Council for Family and Domestic Violence Services (WCFDVS)*
- *Multicultural Women's Advocacy Service*
- *Diversity Officer of WA Police*
- *Diversity Officers of Murdoch University and University of Western Australia*
- *Armadale Domestic Violence Intervention Project (ADVIP)*
- *Cyber Reach Volunteers*
- *Mensline Volunteers*
- *St John of God Healthcare*
- *Family Planning WA*
- *Injury Control Council of Western Australia (ICCWA)*

They have also undertaken media releases and published articles on DSGFDV in both mainstream and DSG media; this includes writing articles and having a community listing in WA's two most prominent gay magazines: Out in Perth and Women Out West (WOW). The SSDAG project has advertised in these magazines as well as at other gay venues such as the Court hotel, a predominately DSG venue (through the medium of their posters and booklets). The SSDAG project have written articles for the ICCWA newsletter, which reaches approximately 4000 people nationwide, the FDVU newsletter,

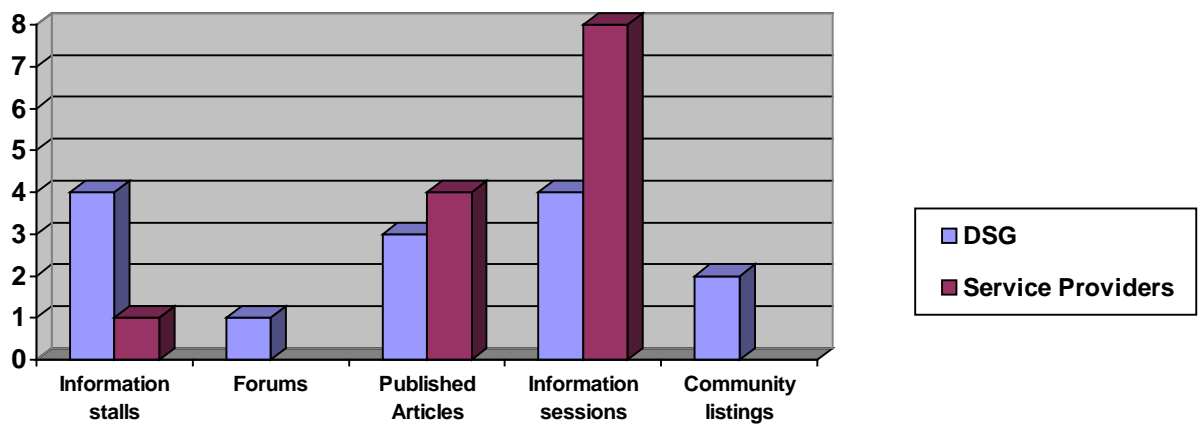
SSDAG Evaluation

and The West Australian newspaper, Perth's primary newspaper. They have also given a live interview on ABC radio, Geraldton.

The project has been proactive in Pride month (October) in both 2006 and 2007 holding stalls, participating in the Pride parade, holding a forum entitled 'Loving Beyond Discrimination', and conducting WA's first survey specifically on the issue of DSGFDV (for interim results, see Appendix 1). The survey was conducted at Perth fairday, which hosts a crowd of approximately 12,000 people and ensured accessibility of DSG respondents. The SSDAG project have also hosted a website (see below) which is a resource for both DSG people and service providers alike, and contributes to awareness raising.

Figure 1 summarises the type and number of activities that the SSDAG project have been involved in for the reporting period of this evaluation, that have contributed to raising awareness of the issue of DSGFDV within the DSG community and amongst service providers.

Figure 1 Awareness Raising Activities



SSDAG Evaluation

1.2.2 Resource Production

Furthering the aims of awareness raising, the SSDAG project have undertaken the development and distribution of a variety of resources.

A4 Posters - 3000 posters entitled "There's No Pride in Domestic Violence", with a further reprint of 200 posters.

Tri-fold Pamphlets – 3000 pamphlets entitled "There's No Pride in Domestic Violence"

A5 Booklets - 3000 booklets entitled "Another Closet: Domestic Violence in Same Sex Relationships" have been printed, with a reprint of 1000. The 36 page booklet is designed for DSG people and for service providers and provides information on the issue as well as referral details.

Website – SSDAG have hosted a website since 2005 (www.ssdag.org.au). This has been regularly updated and is useful for both DSG people and service providers in metropolitan and regional areas.

Table 1 provides information on the number and type of resources distributed to 28 groups/services in the period between March and October 2007.

Table 1 – Resource Distribution

Type of Resource	Number Distributed	Percentage Total
Booklets	1281	65.39%
Pamphlets	355	18.12%
Posters	207	10.57%
Business Cards	116	5.92%
Totals	1959	100%

SSDAG Evaluation

1.2.3 Training

The project has developed and delivered a training package to both metropolitan and regional service providers on the issue of DSGFDV. The training package has been developed with best practice principles in mind and is unique both within Australia and internationally.

The training focuses on four areas:

1. DSG and Gender Terminology
2. Introduction to Family and Domestic Violence
3. Family and Domestic Violence in DSG Relationships
4. Service Provision and Good Practice

The training is free and has been offered to any metropolitan or regional service provider who has expressed an interest. These services may specifically deal with FDV or may have a broader scope. It has been designed to provide information on DSG in general, including challenging homophobia and heterosexism in service provision, as well as specifically to the area of FDV as it affects DSG people.

1.2.4 Networking and Referral Pathways

The SSDAG project has arranged meetings with service providers within metropolitan and regional areas to provide information about DSGFDV and also to help identify key referral agencies and referral pathways. They have developed a strong link with the only other service of its kind in Australia, the Same Sex Domestic Violence Interagency Working Group (SSDVWG) NSW. This link allowed for the quick development of resources on DSGFDV, as the group had already produced materials as part of their awareness raising campaign.

SSDAG Evaluation

Developing networks and referral pathways has been identified as an area of importance as there are currently no services which specifically work with the issue of DSGFDV, particularly in relation to accommodation. DSG young people under the age of twenty-five can be accommodated at PICYS; however gay men and transgender men over this age group do not have access to accommodation services if escaping FDV. Gay women are able to access women's refuges, and some refuges will accept transgender women. However both groups are also subject to the possibilities of experiencing homophobia/transphobia whilst accommodated, and thus further isolation and abuse.

1.3 Aims of the Evaluation

The aim of this evaluation is to consider the effectiveness of the SSDAG project in raising awareness of the issue of DSGFDV amongst service providers and in increasing the capacity of service providers to respond appropriately to DSG people experiencing FDV, as well as developing networks and referral pathways.

1.3.1 Evaluation Objectives

1. To evaluate whether the SSDAG project has contributed to raising awareness of the issue of DSGFDV amongst service providers.
2. To evaluate the effectiveness of the training package in enhancing service provider capacity to deal with DSGFDV.
3. To evaluate whether the SSDAG project has established networks and referral pathways for DSG people experiencing FDV.

2 Methodology

2.1 Design and Procedure

2.1.1 *Objective 1 - Raising Awareness of DSGFDV amongst Service Providers.*

A telephone interview was conducted independently by research assistants with the ECU research team to ascertain awareness levels of the SSDAG project amongst service providers. A master list (n=88) of services contacted by the project was provided to the ECU team. From this list, a random sample of 30% of services (n=25) was utilized for the purpose of the telephone interview. “The advantage of this approach is that the evaluator can assume that the results are non-biased and reflect an accurate representation of the majority” (Hancock and L’Veena, 2007, 18). The random sample involved contacting every third service on the list. A back up list of services was also created and used on seven occasions, such as when a contact person from the master list was no longer employed.

A purposive sample was utilized for the regional areas, given the small number contained on the master list (n=8). Of these services, six participated in the telephone interview.

The telephone interview generated quantitative data from the following questions:

- *Have you heard of SSDAG?*
- *Have you received any SSDAG literature lately such as posters or pamphlets?*
- *If answered yes to Q1 and 2, are you aware of the activities, program aims and objectives of SSDAG?*

SSDAG Evaluation

The telephone interview also included an assessment by the research assistant of levels of awareness, using a rating scale of “basic”, “good”, “very good”, and “excellent”.

The telephone interviews were conducted by staff from the ECU research team during a three week period at ECU in October 2006. Staff members rang the services based on the random and purposive samples outlined above. ECU staff then collated the qualitative data received from the interviews.

2.1.2 Objective 2 - Increasing Service Provider Capacity

A training package was developed and administered to both metropolitan and regional services in WA. A focus group was held at the pilot training group to obtain qualitative feedback on the training and utilized to further develop the training package. The focus group was asked to provide feedback on a number of areas regarding the training including:

- *What are your thoughts on the DSGFDV training package and its usefulness in your work as human service professionals?*
- *Are you convinced that DSGFDV is a significant issue in society and one that warrants increased attention/resources/training?*
- *Do you think that raising awareness of the issue of DSGFDV is a valuable service?*
- *Can you suggest and discuss what you believe were the most important aspects of the DSGFDV Training Program?*
- *Can you suggest and discuss any aspects that were least useful?*
- *Overall do you think the processes that made up the DSGFDV Training Program were relevant, effective and successful?*

SSDAG Evaluation

- *Overall how do you rate the effectiveness of the DSGFDV training package in meeting its goals and objectives?*

ECU conducted the initial focus group independently from the SSDAG project staff. An ECU senior researcher conducted the focus group, recording the information via tape recorder. The information was analysed by ECU staff and then fed back to project staff to further develop the training package.

A questionnaire was developed by ECU which measured pre and post training knowledge, skills and confidence in working with DSGFDV (Appendix 4). This questionnaire was used to obtain information at the pilot training and was analysed by ECU staff (See Interim Evaluation Report, Appendix 3).

As a result of the changes experienced in the evaluation of the project (see Background) SSDAG project staff developed a second questionnaire to evaluate the training package (Appendix 5). This questionnaire was administered to training participants by project staff after receiving the training package. The results were collated and analysed by the current evaluator.

2.1.3 Objective 3 - Developing Networks and Referral Pathways

The number of meetings with service providers has been recorded by project staff as well as anecdotal evidence regarding networks and referral pathways.

2.3 Ethics

Various aspects of the evaluation have been conducted independently by the ECU research team including: telephone interviews, initial focus group and analysis of initial questionnaire data, and literature review. This provides quality, independent information that minimizes the possibility of bias. The ECU research team obtained ethics approval from the ECU Ethics board, thus ensuring the research met the University's requirements.

The questionnaires conducted at the training program by the SSDAG project staff were self administered, anonymous and confidential. Participants were required to provide informed consent across all evaluation tools.

3 Results

3.1 Raising Awareness of DSGFDV amongst Service Providers

Table 2 is adapted from the ECU Interim Evaluation Report (2007, p.16) and can be found at Appendix 3. Further breakdowns of the telephone interview data can also be found in the Interim Evaluation Report.

Table 2 – Telephone Interviews

QUESTION:	PERTH METRO: Respondents answering yes	REGIONAL: Respondents answering yes
<i>Question 1: Have you heard of SSDAG?</i>	68% (n=17)	16.7% (n=1)
<i>Question 2: Have you received any SSDAG literature, posters or pamphlets recently?</i>	36% (n=9)	16.7% (n=1)

SSDAG Evaluation

<i>Question 3: Are you aware of the activities, program aims and objectives of SDAG?</i>	44% (n=11)	16.7% (n=1)
--	------------	-------------

n=31 (Metropolitan n=25; Regional n=6)

The data shows that the majority of metropolitan service providers surveyed had heard of SSDAG (68%) whilst a minority of regional service providers had heard of SSDAG (16.7%). The table also shows that just over a third of metropolitan service providers (36%) had received some SSDAG resources, whilst almost half (44%) was aware of the projects aims. A minority of regional respondents (16.75%) had received SSDAG literature or was aware of the projects aims.

3.2 Enhancing Service Provider Capacity

3.2.1 Training Pilot Group

The pilot training was undertaken in November 2006, with 11 participants from 3 metropolitan agencies. Further demographics on the pilot group can be found at Appendix 3 (Interim Evaluation Report, page 31). ECU evaluated the pilot training via focus group (n=7) and questionnaires (n=11). Data suggested the "...initial focus group reaction to the training package was good" (Interim Evaluation report, page 13, Appendix 3). The data also suggested that there was "too much information" and that

SSDAG Evaluation

participants would benefit from “more interaction and less material delivery” (Interim Evaluation Report, page 13, Appendix 3).

ECU analysed the questionnaires from the pilot and found that overall, participants were “satisfied” with the training, with no negative outcomes (Interim Evaluation Report, page 13, Appendix 3). The feedback from the pilot group was collated by ECU and fed back to SSDAG project staff; this resulted in some changes to the training package before the next delivery.

3.2.2 Training

Results for the ‘Speaking Out’ training were collated from questionnaires based on seven training sessions held between June and October 2007 within both metropolitan and regional areas. The total number of participants who completed questionnaires was eighty-one (n=81). Participants were asked to identify what types of services their agencies provided and these are represented in figure 2. Participants were able to identify multiple services provide by their agency.

Figure 2 - Services Provided by Agency

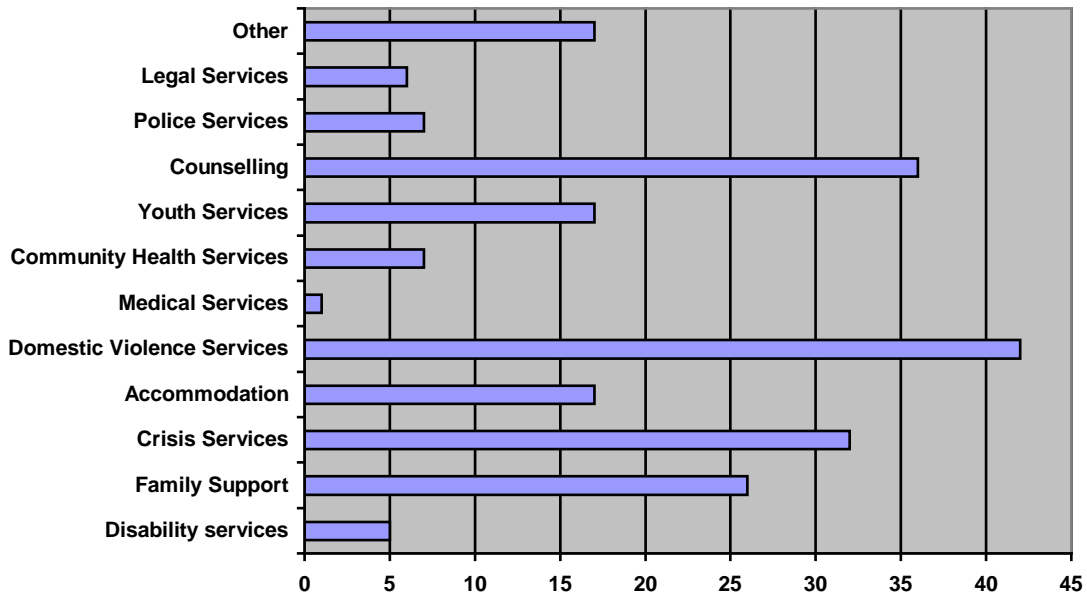
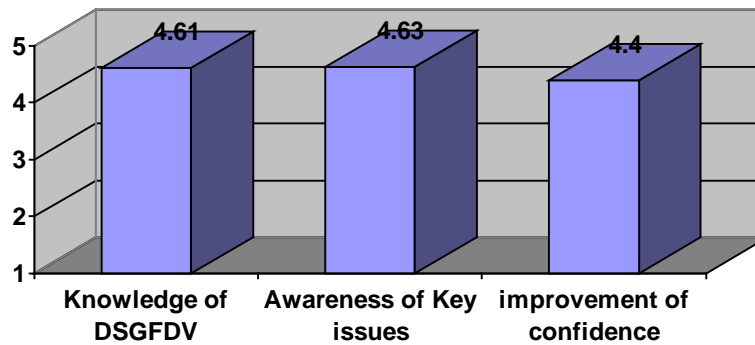


Figure 2 shows that the majority of participants worked in agencies that provided domestic violence services (n=42), counseling services (n=36) and crisis services (n=32).

Figure 3 provides a summary of responses to questions 2, 3 and 4 of the training evaluation questionnaire (see Appendix 5). These questions pertain to the degree to which participants found the training to improve their knowledge, awareness, and confidence to work with the issue of DSGFDV. Figure 3 provides the mean response across these areas.

Figure 3 – Mean Response for Improvements in Knowledge, Awareness and Confidence to Work with DSGFDV.



N = 81

1 = Very Poor 2 = Somewhat poor 3 = Neither 4 = Somewhat well 5 = Very well

Figure 3 indicates that the training was extremely successful in improving participant's knowledge of DSGFDV, the awareness of key issues and also levels of confidence, with all participants indicating the training did somewhat well or very well in this area.

SSDAG Evaluation

Table 3 relates to question 5 on the questionnaire (Appendix 5), which requires participants to provide a qualitative response to what they found most useful about the training. Participant's responses have been collated into overall categories to provide ease of analysis.

Table 3 – Most Useful Areas of the Training

	Number of responses	Percentage total
Terminology/Definitions	28	28.57%
Specific issues and examples	22	22.45%
Skills or qualities of facilitator	7	7.14%
Interactive/group work	14	14.29%
Other	27	27.55%
Totals	98	100%

N = 73

It is to be noted that 73 respondents answered this question, and were able to highlight more than one area of the training that they found useful; Hence a total response rate of 98. Of the 98 responses, a majority of participants (28.57%), found the terminology and definition section of the training most useful.

SSDAG Evaluation

In regards to other areas of the training that participants found useful, 27.55% chose “other” reasons. Some specific examples include:

- Gaps in services available to DSG people
- The dynamic between DSG and FDV
- Unhelpful ways about thinking about same sex domestic violence
- Workplace checklist
- Determining what is offensive and not offensive
- Statistics
- Realisation of isolation of DSG and other minority groups
- Learning about difficulties DSG couples face before FDV begins
- Transgender – abuse and withholding medical services

Of further importance to participants, 22.45% found specific issues and examples a useful area of the training.

SSDAG Evaluation

Table 4 relates to question 6a of the questionnaire which requires participants to provide a qualitative response on how they found the content of the training. Responses have been grouped into categories to provide ease of analysis.

Table 4 – Feedback on the Content of the Training

	Number	of	Percentage total
	responses		
Good/Great/Excellent	42		47.73%
Interesting/Informative	24		27.27%
Relevant	11		12.5%
Negative Comment	4		4.55%
Other	7		7.95%
Totals	88		100%

N = 77

Seventy-seven participants gave feedback on the content of the training and provided 88 responses. The majority of responses, 47.73%, indicate that the content of the training was “good, great or excellent”. A further 27.27% found the training content “interesting or informative”. Very few negative comments were made with regard to the training, with only 4.55% indicating a negative response to the training content.

SSDAG Evaluation

Table 5 relates to question 6b on the questionnaire which requires participants to provide a qualitative response on how they found the delivery of the training. Responses have been grouped into categories to provide ease of analysis.

Table 5 – Delivery of the Training

	Number of responses	Percentage total
Good/Great/Excellent	52	54.17%
Interesting/Informative	10	10.42%
Entertaining/Fun	12	12.5%
Negative Comment	2	2.08%
Other	20	20.83%
Totals	96	100%

N = 79

Seventy-nine participants gave feedback on the delivery of the training, providing 96 responses. Of these responses, 54.17% found the delivery of the training “good, great or excellent”. A total of 20.83% of responses also gave feedback on “other” aspects of the delivery of the training. Examples include:

- Very helpful to be able to ask questions and converse in a relaxed style
- Clear and understandable
- Ok
- Friendly. Open

SSDAG Evaluation

Table 6 relates to question 6c on the questionnaire which requires participants to provide a qualitative response on how they found the activities utilized in the training.

Table 6 – Activities

	Number of responses	Percentage total
Good/Great/Excellent	33	43.42%
Interesting/Informative	18	23.68%
Entertaining/Fun	9	11.84%
Negative Comment	3	3.95%
Other	13	17.11%
Totals	76	100

N = 65

A total of 65 participants provided 76 responses to feed back on the activities of the training. The majority of participants (43.42%) found the activities to be “good, great, or excellent” followed by “Interesting and informative” (23.68%).

3.3 Networking and Referral Pathways

As noted previously, the SSDAG project has met with a variety of agencies to provide information, resources and training. Examples of these agencies were outlined in the description of the project (page 13).

The project has developed a link in the first instance with the SSDVWG. The SSDVWG have been unique in Australia in conducting a community awareness campaign in NSW on DSFGFDV. Similarly, the SSDAG project has undertaken awareness raising as a part of the overall scope of their project. The link developed with SSDVWG allowed for the efficient development and distribution of resource materials such as the information booklet.

The SSDAG project have continued to sustain a relationship with the FDVU which has allowed for ongoing funding, and a close link in with current strategies regarding family and domestic violence at a policy level.

The project has also sat on the committee of the Diverse Sexuality and Gender Network, a unique group in WA whose aim is to ensure that all DSG people in Western Australia can reach their full potential through human rights equality and equitable access to community programs and services. Similarly, the SSDAG project has sat on the ADVIP committee, ensuring the voices of DSG people are heard with regards to the development and delivery of domestic violence services within this region.

The project have developed and maintained a strong link with Opening Closets. Opening Closets is a project which has looked at the needs of DSG people within Supported Accommodation Assistance Programs (SAAP) and has provided training and agency coaching with regards to best practice with DSG people.

SSDAG Evaluation

Finally, the SSDAG project have developed and sustained a relationship with Perth Inner City Youth Services (PICYS). PICYS operates as a service providing support and accommodation to young people, and has a DSG specific youth worker. PICYS is the only agency in WA that provides DSG specific accommodation to young people. As such, PICYS is a referral pathway for DSG young people aged between 16 and 25 who are experiencing FDV.

4 Discussion

4.1 Limitations of the Evaluation

It is noted that due to the changes in the evaluative process, there is an inconsistency in evaluation information. For example, the pilot training session was evaluated using a questionnaire developed by the ECU research team, whilst consequent training sessions were evaluated using a questionnaire developed by SSDAG project staff. There is limited value in comparing the two sets of data, therefore the pilot training data has been reflected on briefly for its assistance in identifying areas of change for the training package. The small sample size (n= 11) means that no further conclusions can be drawn.

The training sessions conducted by SSDAG project staff provide an adequate sample size, with 7 training sessions yielding 81 participants. However it is noted that the project's master list contained 88 agencies, with 50 of these being contacted directly by SSDAG project staff. It is noted that of the 25 agencies that responded to the project's introductory mailout, 24 of these agencies indicated a desire to receive training. Therefore the sample size for the training data based on agency is slightly less than a third of those who indicated interest. This may suggest that those agencies that have undergone the training have been those most motivated to do so, and could lead to a positive bias in the training data.

4.2 Effectiveness of the SSDAG Project

Overall this evaluation has found the project to be successful in the areas outlined in the evaluation objectives, and further funding is recommended for the SSDAG project to continue this innovative and important work (recommendation 1).

4.2.1 Awareness Raising Amongst Service Providers

The SSDAG project has been highly effective in raising awareness levels of the issue of DSGFDV within metropolitan agencies dealing with FDV, as indicated by the data obtained in the telephone interviews. The results indicate that a majority of metropolitan service providers had heard of SSDAG and that almost half had received resources and were aware of the projects aims. However the data available suggests that the SSDAG project have not been as effective in raising awareness in regional areas, with only one agency having heard of SSDAG, and only one agency receiving resources or being aware of the group's aims.

There are additional barriers with regard to service provision in regional areas as identified by the literature review of Hancock and L'Veena (2007, 30), and this may help to account for the results of the telephone interview. It is recommended that more work be undertaken within regional areas to ensure that the agencies are aware of the group (recommendation 2), and therefore are aware that they can access training on the issue of DSGFDV, and also are able to access the group resources (recommendation 3). It has been noted in the ECU literature review that distance is an issue for many DSG people in regional areas in regards to support and accessing information and that the internet is one means to address this (Appendix 3, p.31). Therefore it would seem particularly important that regional areas have access to website details of SSDAG.

4.2.2 Increasing Service Provider Capacity to Respond Appropriately to DSGFDV

The training package developed by the SSDAG project has been highly successful in increasing service provider's capacity to respond to the issue of DSGFDV. This is evidenced by the improvement in knowledge of DSGFDV issues, increase in awareness of the issues and confidence to work with the issues, with the mean response being between 4 (somewhat well) and 5 (very well). The qualitative data yielded from the questionnaires provided very little negative feedback from participants. It appears that the most useful parts of the training included the terminology and definitions (28.57%) and the specific issues and examples that were covered (22.45%). A variety of other areas of interest in the training were also mentioned by respondents as evidenced in the results section.

It is recommended that the training continue to be available to service providers as it has demonstrated itself as an effective means to enhance service provider capacity (recommendation 4). It is also a unique training both in Australia and internationally, and therefore fills a gap in service provision. It is recommended that the SSDAG project continue to deliver the training material to services in WA, using feedback to evaluate and refine the package. It is also recommend that the SSDAG project consider how the training can be shared as a resource for other groups both nationally and internationally, who are helping to raise the issue of DSGFDV.

4.2.3 *Developing Networks and Referral Pathways*

It is the finding of this evaluation that the SSDAG project have been extremely proactive in developing partnerships and networks with other services, in order to provide for the needs of DSG people. As noted previously the SSDAG project has sat on the board of ADVIP, as well as the DSG network, and has close ties with PICYS as an agency. PICYS provides a DSG specific worker as well as DSG specific accommodation and is therefore a referral pathway for young people under twenty-five. It is also evident that the SSDAG project have held meetings and provided information sessions to some of the peak bodies that may come into contact with DSG people experiencing FDV. For example, the project held an information session with the WCFFDVS, the peak body for women experiencing FDV.

The lack of DSG specific services (both accommodation and counseling/support) is one which warrants further consideration, but is outside the scope of this evaluation. However it is noted that the SSDAG project would benefit from continuing to strengthen its networks and define referral pathways for DSG people experiencing FDV (recommendation 5). The literature review conducted by ECU also raised the issue of the children of DSG people experiencing FDV as a further area for enquiry (Appendix 3, p.39). Therefore the forging of a relationship with the Domestic Violence Children's Counselling Service (DVCCS) would seem an important link for the project in the future (recommendation 6).

SSDAG Evaluation

A further note with regard to partnership/referral pathways includes the issue of men experiencing FDV. There are currently no accommodation services specifically for men experiencing FDV which means that gay and bisexual men are accommodated in men's hostels, or other accommodation, where they may be further exposed to homophobia and violence. It would seem imperative that relationships are developed with the Men's Domestic Violence line, as a potential first point of call for men experiencing FDV. However it is also evident that DSG men may not make contact with the Men's Domestic Violence line, and may favour other services. Anecdotal evidence from the Western Australian Aids Council (WAAC) suggests they are coming into contact with DSG men experiencing FDV. The SSDAG project has already begun the process of partnership with WAAC, and has provided a half day workshop on the issue of DSGFDV (as noted under awareness raising activities, p.14). It is recommended that the SSDAG project continue to strengthen its relationship with WAAC and other agencies as identified, and work in partnership to develop best practice responses to DSG men experiencing FDV (recommendation 7).

There are currently no safe spaces for transgendered adults in WA to go to when experiencing FDV. This is an area of great concern given that Private Lives report identified transgendered males as having the highest rates of FDV (Pitts et al. 2006, 51). It is recommended that the SSDAG project continue to develop networks which address the needs of transgender people experiencing DSG (recommendation 7).

Recommendations

1. Continued funding to SSDAG to address the issue of DSGFDV.
2. The SSDAG project continues to work with regional service providers to increase the awareness of DSGFDV.
3. The SSDAG project to ensure that regional areas have access to resources and training regarding DSGFDV.
4. The training package to continue to be made available to service providers locally, nationally and internationally.
5. The SSDAG project continues to develop partnerships with peak agencies, in lieu of lack of DSG specific services.
6. The SSDAG project examines the needs of the children of DSG experiencing FDV, and develops a working relationship with DVCCS.
7. The SSDAG project continues to attempt to define referral pathways for DSG people experiencing FDV; particularly with regards to the accommodation needs of DSG men and transgendered adults.

References

Cerise, S. 2006. *Same Sex Domestic Violence Interagency Working Group Campaign Evaluation Report*. NSW: Aids Council of NSW (ACON).

Family and Domestic Violence Unit. 2004.

<http://www.community.wa.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/209390A2-76A2-4303-9AB6-61E7DAABE3AF/0/DCDRPTFamilyandDomesticViolenceStateStrategicPlan2004.pdf> (accessed October 10th 2008).

Hancock, P. and L'Veena, T. 2007. *Diverse Sexuality and Gender and Domestic Violence – A Literature Review*. Western Australia: Edith Cowan University.

Pitts, M., A Smith, A.Mitchell, and S.Patel. 2006. *Private Lives: A Report on the Health And Wellbeing of GLBTI Australians*. Melbourne: La Trobe University.