



Shared Space Shapes a Shared Mission

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Today's Agenda

- Shared space findings
 - Pros
 - Drawbacks and workarounds
- Recommendations for shared space
- Organizational structure of the team
- Recommendations for developing an organizational chart

SAKI in Cuyahoga County, Ohio

- 2013: Cuyahoga County Sexual Assault Kit Task Force (Task Force) formed in 2013 under Prosecutor's Office
- Early 2015: CWRU brought on as research partner (pilot research project)
- Oct 2015: received BJA SAKI funds, subcontracted with CWRU for research
 - Process evaluation
 - Coding SAK case files

Why shared space?

- Process evaluation didn't include a question pertaining to a shared office space
- *Almost every single respondent mentioned, in some manner, the importance of the shared space in their process*

Methodology

Mixed-method (e.g., qualitative and quantitative) process evaluation of the Task Force

- Interviewed (semi-structured) 18 Task Force team members and conducted participant observation
- Transcribed interviews into textual data
- Textual data coded via iterative coding stages for themes
- Field notes made during observations reviewed during data analysis and informed findings

Decision to share space

- Initial recommendation to create a shared space came from an outside consultant with goal of increasing efficiency of the process
- Unexpectedly, other positive results followed from this decision.

Overview of positive outcomes

- Commitment to excellence
- Overcoming parochialism
- Increasing morale
- Improving communication
- Promoting the full use of everyone's talents

Commitment to excellence

“I think that within this Task Force—the investigations have become so good, probably better than the investigations in the other units in [the Prosecutor’s] office. It’s really quite a high bar, a high standard of investigation. I have a lot of interaction with the investigators—they actually seem to embrace that high standard and really excel on it and we’ve been successful with locating victims and witnesses that we may not have been successful with when the Task Force first started and before that when the Task Force didn’t exist.”

Overcoming parochialism

“By forcing these different disciplines to be together in a central location, we’ve been able to force direct communication between those different agencies and, we think, improve our systems, if you will, when we contact the victims, how often we contact the victims, we all get on the same page. So we try to be less intrusive towards the victims by having everybody communicating how that’s to happen.”

- Same employer
- Physical isolation
- Sense of informality
- Involving victim advocates

Increasing morale

“I feel it is a much more involved process when you can see from the beginning right to the court. You feel more successful, more driven. You feel driven because we are all collaborating and I like that.”

- Seeing others' commitment
- Frequent socialization
- Opportunity for laughing and joking

Improving communication

- Discussing issues face-to-face
- “Open door” policy of leadership
- Weekly meetings facilitate group communication
- Increase victim-centeredness

Promoting the full use of everyone's talents

“I really think everybody coming from somewhere different is the best part. You have so much experience in this building, like hundreds of years, but it’s not from the same place. It’s not all from the suburbs; it’s not all inner city. It’s not all homicide; it’s not all sex crimes; it’s not all narcotics. Like I said, we come from different places, not only career-wise, but your lifestyle, we come from totally different places.”

Drawbacks and workarounds

- *Independent workers feel stifled*—shared training helps overcome attitude while culture adjusts to different working styles
- *Highly-motivated, driven individuals working together may result in tension*—constantly reaffirm shared mission
- *Implausibility of everyone being housed in same space*—involvement in weekly meetings and shared training even more important
- *Difficulty in having different disciplines working together*

Recommendations

- Secure a shared space for investigators, victim advocates, and prosecutors
- Keep physical separation from other agencies
- Arrange offices so that investigators, victim advocates, and prosecutors intermingle
- Have at least one victim advocate placed near main entrance
- Promote cross-discipline collaboration

Recommendation, cont.

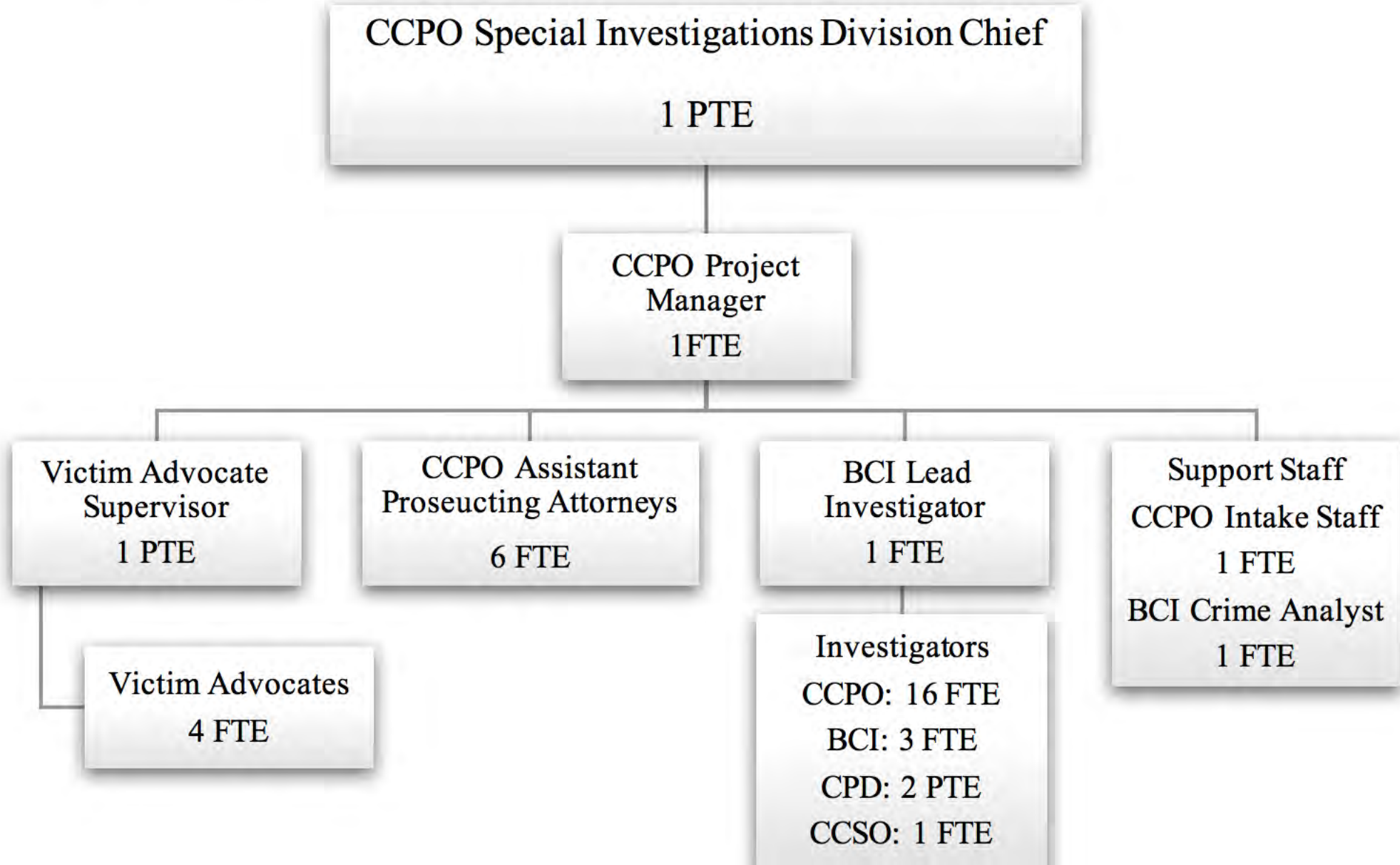
- Entire team meets regularly (at least once a month)
- Formalized protocols
- If it is impossible to house everyone together, at least have investigators and victim advocates working together
- Shared electronic management system with capability for everyone to enter notes

Organizational Structure

Task Force comprised of 5 collaborating agencies

- Cuyahoga County Prosecutor's Office (CCPO), lead agency
- Cleveland Police Department (CPD)
- Cleveland Rape Crisis Center (CRCC)
- Cuyahoga County Sherriff's Office (CCSO)
- Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI)

Figure 1. Organizational Structure and Capacity of the Task Force



Comments and Questions

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