

Use of Tasers
Ontario Association of Patient Councils and
The Psychiatric Patient Advocate Office
Stakeholder Consultation
February 13, 2008

Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Introductions
3. Overview of Consultation
4. Discussion
5. Break
6. Discussion
7. Next steps

Process

Issues Statement

- Define problem and scope
- What is our real concern?

What is the perspective of the various parties?

- Clients
- Families
- Advocacy Organizations
- Police Services

What options are there?

- Clients
- Families
- Advocacy Organizations
- Police Services

What are the next steps?

Issues for Discussion

1. Why are we concerned as citizens? What are the issues we need to discuss today?
2. What have others said about tasers?
 - Canadian experience/international experience
 - What is the public perception? Risk and dangerousness
 - Is it a police tool or a weapon? High voltage policing?
 - Where have they been used? i.e. hospitals, community
 - Under what circumstances have they been used?
 - What is the police perspective?
3. Impact/Myths/Realities of Tasers
 - Non-lethal vs. lethal?
 - How are tasers described by police services? Has the language changed over time?
 - Preying on fear – stereotypes/myths/misconceptions
 - Long term harm – health consequences or death
 - “Rather tasered than shot” – are there other options?

- “Why talk when you can shock”

Impact and Issues:

- Falls = injury
- Pain = loss of muscle control
- Medical injury = removal of barb/location where individual hit
- Psychological impact = impact on mental health
- No cause/effect linkage = taser not the cause of death
- What is “excited delirium” and what role does it play?

4. Shoot to kill?

- Does it have a place in our society?
- What alternatives should be available or considered?
- De-escalation techniques?
- Peer Support/Crisis Workers?

5. Are our clients more at risk?

- Why?
- Police understanding of mental illness

6. Inquest recommendations

- Lamonday Inquest – verdict May, 2005
- Vass Inquest
- What did the jury miss when making its recommendations?

7. What should be our position?

- For or against tasers?
- A middle ground?

8. Recommendations – depends on position taken:

- Police training – the law and de-escalation
- Crisis response teams to deal with clients in distress
- Stringent reporting, documentation and oversight requirements
- Education of clients/families
- Lobbying efforts
- Law reform
- Educating MPP’s and government policy makers

9. Next Steps:

Additional information available at:

www.ppao.gov.on.ca