

Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Advocacy & Action for Social Change

Founded in 1990 by domestic violence survivors and their allies, the Coalition is a non-profit, statewide network of more than 60 member programs that serve victims of domestic violence in rural, urban and Indian Country communities of Washington, plus over 100 individual and organizational associates. Our work includes public policy advocacy, training and technical assistance to advocates and other systems, research, producing educational tools, and promoting public awareness about domestic violence.

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IN OUR SHOES: The Next Steps

Earlywine & Stohl

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IN OUR SHOES: The Next Steps

A Domestic Violence
Advocate's Guide
To Working For
Economic Justice
In Your Community

Companion Workbook to
IN HER SHOES:
Living with Domestic Violence —
Economic Justice Edition

Mette Earlywine & Ilene Stohl

For the
Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence

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Congratulations! You made it!

We hope you are invigorated by the knowledge that we all are working together to improve the lives of battered women and their children.

And we hope this workbook has helped your community respond to battered women in ways that improve their economic security and financial well-being.

This is the first edition of *In Our Shoes: The Next Steps*. Please let us know about your experiences using this workbook—both successes and challenges.

We would like to base future editions on your feedback. Contact us at: **inourshoes@wscadv.org**.

Keep up the great work and keep taking those steps towards economic justice for all!

IN OUR SHOES: The Next Steps

by
Mette Earlywine
and
Ilene Stohl
for the
Washington State
Coalition Against
Domestic Violence

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What is economic justice? And why does it matter for those affected by domestic violence?

Imagine a world where there is affordable housing, adequate healthcare, sufficient nutritious food, jobs that pay a living wage, quality childcare and education, and other forms of economic security for everyone. Now imagine that in such a world, economic factors would no longer contribute to the suffering of domestic violence survivors. In such a world, domestic violence could not flourish as it does now, and those affected by domestic violence would have many more options.

This is our vision at the Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence, and we know there are many who share it. We know that advocates working to end domestic violence are struggling to find ways to incorporate this vision into their work. And we thought, “Wouldn’t it be great if advocates had a workbook that would help them do this?”

So here is one—a workbook to help you take the next steps towards a future where women and girls can make decisions about their relationships without concern for the financial implications of those decisions.

About this Workbook

Purpose

This workbook will help you develop and sustain a community-based effort to advance economic security, especially for those affected by domestic violence. It was written for advocates who are working to end domestic violence. Inside, you will find practical tools, activities, questions, and worksheets to help you prepare for and engage with your community to do economic justice work. The content of this workbook is based on the assumption that you have a thorough understanding of the dynamics of, causes of, and prevailing responses to domestic violence. If that is not the case, we strongly encourage you to partner with a domestic violence victim advocacy expert as you proceed.

This workbook is designed to be a companion to *In Her Shoes: Living with Domestic Violence—Economic Justice Edition* and builds upon the experiences of its seven characters. *In Her Shoes—Economic Justice Edition* is an interactive educational tool that demonstrates the complex ways in which lack of money and access to other resources impact domestic violence survivors and their children. After going through this activity, participants understand why there must be a stronger financial safety net in place for women and their children and they are motivated to engage in local problem solving. As you plan to utilize this workbook, make sure you have a copy of *In Her Shoes—Economic Justice Edition*—you will need it along the way.¹

Part I of this workbook offers background information about economic disparity and poverty, their intersection with domestic violence, and some thoughts about what that intersection means for advocates working to end domestic violence.

Part II lays out a process that advocates can use in partnership with survivors and others in their communities to more effectively address the economic concerns of domestic violence survivors and to promote economic justice. The process, including interactive activities, is divided into the following steps:

1) Organize your program – Prepare your own organization or group for doing this work in a sustainable way.

- 2) Join up with others** – Join with survivors, low-income people, people from marginalized communities, and allies within other agencies to form a community stakeholder group.
- 3) Figure out what needs to be done** – Identify the critical needs, community strengths, and priorities for action.
- 4) Figure out how to do it** – Work together to formulate a transformation strategy that seeks to improve services, reform systems, and advance economic justice.
- 5) Do it** – Work together to implement the plan.
- 6) Follow up** – Monitor and evaluate your efforts, revise your strategies, try again, celebrate community victories, and set future goals.

Part III contains reference materials based on ten of the stations used in the *In Her Shoes: Living with Domestic Violence—Economic Justice Edition* educational tool. The lead organizer of your effort can refer to these chapters at various points in the process to:

- Educate themselves, their program and the community stakeholder group about specific economic issues.
- Forge better connections with local economic-related institutions and systems.
- Contemplate critical questions with the community stakeholder group during the planning process.
- Gather ideas about how to better address specific economic concerns in their work with individuals, systems and institutions, as well as in their work to promote economic justice.
- Explore resources for further learning, which are provided at the end of each station chapter.

The **Bibliography** at the end of this workbook offers a sampling of the resources that influenced its creation.

- Station Chapters**
- 1. Domestic Violence Program**
 - 2. Friends & Family**
 - 3. Healthcare**
 - 4. Housing**
 - 5. Job**
 - 6. Legal**
 - 7. Money & Necessities**
 - 8. School**
 - 9. Social Services**
 - 10. Welfare**

¹ Copies of *In Her Shoes: Living with Domestic Violence—Economic Justice Edition* can be purchased from the Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence, www.wscadv.org, 101 N. Capitol Way, Suite 302, Olympia, WA, 98501, tel: (360) 586-1022, TTY (360) 586-1029, fax (360) 586-1024. You can also check to see if your state or territory's domestic violence coalition has a copy available in their library.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, we acknowledge the many survivors of domestic violence who over the years have generously shared their experiences of living in poverty and living with domestic violence. You left an indelible mark on us, challenging us to see beyond your physical safety needs and the emergency services we were prepared to offer, motivating us to re-think what it means to be a domestic violence advocate, and inspiring us to partner with you to create a world in which survivors have all the resources they need.

In particular, we thank the survivors who helped us develop *In Her Shoes: Living with Domestic Violence—Economic Justice Edition*, the community education tool to which this workbook is a companion. Your courage and wisdom continue to inspire and motivate us. We also acknowledge the many domestic violence advocates and survivors around the country who are already doing economic justice work in a variety of ways and settings. You are truly leading us to a more just and hopeful world.

The following people gave enormous amounts of their time to help us craft a workbook that is user friendly and nationally relevant. We are both humbled and grateful. Your insightful comments after reading our drafts were invaluable: Anne Menard, Cathy Mann, Monica Peabody, Jen Rubin, Paulette Sullivan-Moore, Jennifer Westra, Judy Hammer, Traci Underwood, Nan Stoops, Christine Olah, Leigh Hofheimer, Judy Chen, and of course, our fearless project leader, Tyra Lindquist, whose vision for the Economic Justice Project continues to amaze us.

We extend a hearty thank you to all of our colleagues at the Coalition for making it such a delightful place to work: Christine, Grace, Jake, Jeri, Judy, Kelly, Leigh, Lupita, Margaret, Nan, Reed, Sandi, Sarah, Teresa, and Tyra.

We are also grateful to Altria Group, Inc. for its visionary and generous support of our economic justice work. Thanks to Shawna Aarons, Diane Eidman, John Barnes, and Diana Echevarria.

Last but definitely not least, we must thank our families, who put up with us while we were in the throes of writing agony: J.C., Jacob and Matt—we love you dearly.

About the Authors

Mette Earlywine and Ilene Stohl are excited to be part of the Economic Justice Project at the Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence. Together they have a combined 18 years of domestic violence victim advocacy experience in all levels of community- and shelter-based programs. Every day they valiantly test the theory that one learns by doing. They are pleased to report that it seems to be an entirely valid approach.

What Is the Economic Justice Project?

The Economic Justice Project seeks to remove the economic barriers that stand in the way of battered women's safety. Through a combination of education, advocacy and collaboration at many levels and with a variety of people and organizations, we work to promote safe access to resources such as public benefits, child support collection, affordable housing, employment and job training, education, and healthcare. We offer training and consultation to domestic violence advocates, government and social service workers, and allied organizations about the intersection of domestic violence and poverty and the opportunities we all have to build a safety net for women and children who experience both.

What Is the Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence?

The Coalition is a non-profit network of over 60 domestic violence victim advocacy programs across Washington. Founded in 1990 by survivors of domestic violence and their allies, the Coalition provides a voice for battered women's programs, promotes community accountability, and advances the movement to end violence against women. Our work includes public policy advocacy, training and technical assistance to advocates and other systems, research, producing educational tools, and promoting public awareness about domestic violence.

Our Terminology

Gender Throughout this workbook, we use female pronouns to refer to the victim of domestic violence and male pronouns to refer to the abuser. This reflects the fact that the overwhelming majority of victims continue to be females abused by a male intimate partner.² However, our terminology is in no way intended to minimize the experiences of males who are abused by females or individuals who are abused within same-sex relationships.

Domestic Violence We use the term *domestic violence* to refer to a pattern of behaviors that a person uses to gain and maintain power and control over their intimate partner. This pattern of behaviors encompasses a wide range of coercive and controlling tactics that are expressed physically, sexually, emotionally, and financially.

Survivor/Battered Woman While we are averse to reducing someone’s entire life experience to one word, we recognize that in doing this work and focusing on the experiences of women and children in abusive relationships, we do need an all-encompassing term on which to rely. Therefore, we use the terms *survivor* and *battered woman* to describe the targets of an intimate partner’s abusive behavior.

Abuser We use *abuser* to refer to individuals who direct different forms of abuse towards their intimate partner. Again, we recognize the limitations of using reductive categories, but *abuser* captures the behaviors and intentions that are of primary concern to us.

Economic Justice Broadly defined, *economic justice* means fairness and equity in economic affairs, by having laws, governments, and institutions that treat people equally and avoid favoring particular individuals or groups. For the purposes and context of this workbook, we use the term *economic justice* more narrowly to mean a situation in which women and girls have adequate access to money and other basic resources, such as housing, childcare, education and training, and can make decisions about their intimate relationships without regard for the financial impact of those decisions.

Marginalized Communities We use the term *marginalized communities* throughout this workbook to refer to those who, historically, have been the targets of oppression by the dominant groups in power in the United States. These communities include: people of color; Native Americans; immigrants and refugees; people with disabilities; people who identify as lesbian, bisexual, gay, transgender or queer; children; teenagers; elderly people; people with limited financial resources; and people whose religion, national origin, or

heritage subject them to discrimination and obstacles (e.g., Jews, Muslims, people from the Middle East). The majority of laws, services, programs, and other supports in the United States are designed to protect the rights and property of white, heterosexual, able-bodied, Christian, middle-to-upper-class citizens. Consequently, those who do not fit within this mold are often left out—marginalized—by the very services and systems designed to help. We wish for communities to avoid repeating this mistake in doing economic justice work and urge you to involve people from marginalized communities as major voices in your efforts.

Community Organizing Community organizing itself entails many activities and methods. The Asian Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence categorizes various community organizing approaches—what they term “community engagement”—along a continuum:

- 1) “Community Outreach and Education raises community awareness about the issue of violence against women and children and anti-violence resources;
- 2) *Community Mobilization* aims for active community participation and engagement supporting the anti-violence organization or addressing the problem of violence against women and children;
- 3) *Community Organizing* involves longer-term strategies meant to increase sustained community-based capacity to address violence against women and children...and
- 4) *Community Accountability* involves developing the capacity of community members to support survivors and hold abusers accountable for their violence.”³

We believe that while domestic violence victim advocacy programs have not traditionally thought of themselves as community organizers, their collective mission to end domestic violence calls upon them to participate in community organizing efforts.

2 Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Intimate Partner Violence, 1993-2001*, by Callie Marie Rennison, Ph.D., U.S. Department of Justice, February 2003. Intimate partner violence is primarily a crime against women: In 2001, women accounted for 85 percent of the victims of intimate partner violence (588,490 total) and men accounted for approximately 15 percent of the victims (103,220 total). Women are much more likely than men to be killed by an intimate partner: In 2000, intimate partner homicides accounted for 33.5 percent of the murders of women and less than four percent of the murders of men. While women are less likely than men to be victims of violent crimes overall, women are five to eight times more likely than men to be victimized by an intimate partner. Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Violence by Intimates: Analysis of Data on Crimes by Current or Former Spouses, Boyfriends, and Girlfriends*, U.S. Department of Justice, 1998.

3 Mimi Kim, *The Community Engagement Continuum: Outreach, Mobilization, Organizing and Accountability to Address Violence Against Women in Asian and Pacific Islander Communities*, Asian & Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence, 2005, p. 10.

Work in **3** Dimensions

Because domestic violence is embedded in our culture, eliminating violence against women requires advocates to *work in three dimensions*:

■ **Social Services** (Individual Advocacy)

Working with individuals to strengthen their ability to resist or cope with abuse, either through direct services such as shelter, support groups, and counseling, or through advocacy with or on behalf of individual survivors and their children as they navigate other services and systems.

■ **Social Reform** (Systems Advocacy)

Working with systems and institutions to strengthen the policies and practices that guide their responses to domestic violence.

■ **Social Transformation** (Promoting Economic Justice)

Working to eliminate inequality and oppression, resulting in a world where all people have access to the resources and remedies they need in order to be safe and to thrive.

A great deal, as it turns out.

We know that **poverty entraps battered women and their children**, yet as a movement, we have not always incorporated this information into our analysis and planning.

In the early days of the battered women's movement, the message was: woman battering happens to us—to our mothers, sisters, daughters, grandmothers, granddaughters, nieces, cousins, friends, co-workers, and neighbors—regardless of our skin color, economic status, marital status, citizenship status, and so on. Simply put, **the greatest risk factor for experiencing battering is being a woman**.

The fact that women are still the predominant targets of domestic violence has not changed.⁴ But other things have changed in the last four decades, including our analysis about how and why domestic violence continues to happen.

Now we also know that **the second biggest risk factor for experiencing domestic violence is having limited financial resources**. This is not to say that women are battered *because* they are low-income, or that people living in poverty are more violent, or that women with better financial resources are without risk. Rather, it is the case that without access to support and resources, an abuser is able to gain much more control, the survivor has fewer options, and research shows that the abuse is likely to last longer and result in more severe injuries.⁵ Survivors tell us that not having access to enough money and other basic necessities has a great deal to do with their abuser's power and control over them. Lack of income and

4 Intimate partner violence is primarily a crime against women: In 2001, women accounted for 85 percent of the victims of intimate partner violence (588,490 total) and men accounted for approximately 15 percent of the victims (103,220 total). Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Intimate Partner Violence, 1993-2001*, 2003.

5 Eleanor Lyon, *Welfare and Domestic Violence Against Women: Lessons from Research*, VAWnet, 2002, http://www.vawnet.org/DomesticViolence/Research/VAWnetDocs/AR_Welfare2.pdf.

other resources is one of the most commonly given reasons that battered women stay with or return to an abusive partner.⁶

The link between battering and poverty is supported by empirical evidence. “The evidence is growing that poor [sic] women are more likely than others to experience physical violence by their partners, partly because they have fewer options, and that the combination of poverty and intimate violence raises particularly difficult issues for them. Abused women’s access to independent economic resources, including welfare, is central to their decision-making and safety planning; this means that women who experience both domestic violence and poverty are likely to have more, and more complex, needs than those who have more resources.”^{7,8}

In other words:

- Women who are living in poverty or at very low levels of income face an increased risk of experiencing intimate violence, and of experiencing violence that is more injurious and which lasts longer.
- An abuser’s actions during the course of the relationship may plunge a woman into poverty (or deeper into poverty).
- Women who would like to leave an abusive relationship often find that they do not have the financial resources to live independently of the abuser.

“When he knew I was trying to leave, he took my name off of all our bank accounts, credit cards, shared property—everything. I had returned to college and ended up getting student loan money to get out. I lost everything in our divorce because I could not afford a lawyer. During summer ‘breaks’ I worked all the time. The decision to give priority to ‘be there’ for my child during my 50-60 hour educational work week has resulted in me literally paying the price in student loan and credit card interest rates. I now have my master’s degree, but we have been homeless several times in the process. I think the ramifications of leaving and losing everything are further reaching and longer term than most would imagine.”⁹

What Does This Mean for Advocates Working to End Domestic Violence?

While advocates have always been aware that lack of income and access to resources creates enormous hurdles for survivors, we have not always intentionally woven a focus on economics into our programs and services, advocacy with other systems and institutions, and alliances with other social justice movements. Rather, as a movement we have focused our efforts in other areas.

And we have much to celebrate. We have:

- Raised awareness about the prevalence of domestic violence and rallied everyone from celebrities to lawmakers to pay attention to the problem.
- Managed to secure government and private funding for crisis shelters, transitional housing, hotlines, and community-based advocacy services and programs.

6 Nisha Patel and Vicki Turetsky, *Safety in the Safety Net: TANF Reauthorization Provisions Relevant to Domestic Violence*, Center for Law and Social Policy, 2004. See also Martha Davis, “The Economics of Abuse: How Violence Perpetuates Women’s Poverty,” in Ruth Brandwein, ed., *Battered Women, Children, and Welfare Reform: The Ties that Bind*, Sage Publications, 1999; and Eleanor Lyon, *Poverty, Welfare and Battered Women: What Does the Research Tell Us?*, Welfare and Domestic Violence Technical Assistance Initiative, National Resource Center on Domestic Violence, 1997.

7 Eleanor Lyon, *Welfare, Poverty, and Abused Women: New Research and its Implications*, Building Comprehensive Solutions to Domestic Violence Publication #10, National Resource Center on Domestic Violence, 2000, p. 1, http://www.vawnet.org/NRCDVPublications/BCSDV/Papers/BCS10_POV.php.

8 The research shows that access to resources is critical for battered women, and when battered women have increased access to supportive services and social capital, their circumstances can change. A 2004 National Institute of Justice (NIJ) study echoes the notion that poverty and domestic violence are linked: “Violence against women in intimate relationships occurred more often and was more severe in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods. Women living in disadvantaged neighborhoods were more than twice as likely to be the victims of intimate violence compared with women in more advantaged neighborhoods... Women who live in economically disadvantaged communities and are struggling with money in their own relationships suffer the greatest risk of intimate violence... Women in disadvantaged neighborhoods were more likely to be victimized repeatedly or to be injured by their domestic partners than were women who lived in more advantaged neighborhoods.” The NIJ study found a strong link between intimate violence and the economic well-being of couples and the communities in which they lived. The report indicated that economic practices and employment policies may be an important factor in women’s risk of experiencing intimate violence: “Because economic distress has been shown to increase the risk of violence, service providers might choose to address the economic resources of these women and specifically, their need for cash assistance. Based on the findings of this study, financial assistance to women in poverty may lessen their risk of violence.” *When Violence Hits Home: How Economics and Neighborhood Play a Role*, by Michael L. Benson and Greer Litton Fox, National Institute of Justice - Research in Brief, U.S. Department of Justice, 2004, p. 1-3 and 6.

9 In 2001, we asked members of WSCADV’s Survivors in Service Caucus to talk to us about economic justice—what money had to do with getting free from their abuser, and the economic consequences for leaving. This is one of their stories.

- Enacted laws that make criminal and civil legal protections available to victims of domestic violence.
- Convinced other systems and institutions (such as law enforcement, healthcare practitioners, and welfare) that they have a role to play in responding to domestic violence.

And yet, there is a growing sense among advocates of the need to forge new strategies—strategies that seek to prevent domestic violence, address the underlying conditions that foster domestic violence, and ensure that survivors have the resources and information they need to be autonomous and self-determining on a long-term basis. One strategy that is gaining momentum is the idea of working to eliminate the economic disparity that keeps women and children trapped in abusive relationships.

Advocates around the country have embraced this concept in a variety of ways by:

- Collaborating with financial institutions to create matching contribution savings programs that help low-income women grow their wealth.¹⁰
- Partnering with local welfare offices to provide an advocacy presence on-site.
- Advocating for the passage of legislation and public policies that offer protections for domestic violence survivors in housing, employment and unemployment, welfare reform, and other economic-related areas.
- Educating welfare, child support enforcement, public housing, and employment counseling workers about the dynamics of domestic violence.
- Implementing financial education classes in shelter and community-based domestic violence services to promote women’s economic empowerment.
- Building alliances with and joining in the work of anti-poverty and economic justice groups and organizations.
- Challenging U.S. trade policies that create conditions of impoverishment in other countries, which, in turn, force women to move to this country to seek a higher standard of living.

The above examples illustrate that there are many levels on which this work can be carried out—and that the combined efforts of advocates working at the local, regional, state, national, and global level are needed.

How Can Domestic Violence Advocates Work for Economic Justice?

Our nation’s laws and policies do not reflect a commitment to promoting economic justice; rather, the expectation typically rests on the individual’s ability to “pull yourself up by your bootstraps” and overcome any obstacles standing in the way. While there are programs that exist to help, the truth is that people are not guaranteed a right to safe and affordable housing, access to healthcare services, jobs that offer a livable wage, nor education that will enable them to obtain good jobs. In fact, they are no longer guaranteed a right to the main program designed to help—welfare assistance. We cannot pave the road to economic justice with existing laws and institutions. We must be more creative, inclusive, and visionary.

Working for economic justice may represent a big change for domestic violence programs. This kind of work takes a long time and can be quite challenging, especially for domestic violence programs struggling to meet the never-ending day-to-day need in their communities for shelter, legal assistance, counseling, and other crisis-oriented and supportive services. Furthermore, many programs may not be connected to or understand economic institutions and systems like welfare, public housing, or banking. And while most advocates feel firmly grounded in their analysis of the causes and dynamics of domestic violence, they may feel less certain of their understanding of poverty and economic injustice.

Nonetheless, advocates understand that a much greater change must take place so that survivors can have better opportunities for coping with and surviving domestic violence. And increasingly, advocates recognize the need to move beyond intervention and focus on preventing and ending domestic violence. The will to do this work is in place.

This workbook will help you strengthen your program’s economic advocacy work with individuals as well as with economic systems and institutions. It will also help you get more involved in working to change the underlying economic conditions that entrap battered women and their children.

¹⁰ Individual Development Accounts (IDAs). See Part III p. 99, footnote 39, for more information on IDAs.

What Next Steps Can We Take?

How This Part Is Organized

In the following pages, we offer activities and questions that will guide you, in partnership with others in your community, through a process to more effectively address the economic concerns of survivors and to improve the economic status of women and children more broadly. We have organized the process into six steps—each a separate chapter with specific activities, questions and worksheets—for you and your community to take together. You will see that as you go through each step in the process, we are less prescriptive about your exact activities. This is intentional, as we realize that each community is unique and each community engagement process will evolve in its own way.

The Process

Step 1: Organize your program –

Prepare your own organization or group for doing this work in a sustainable way.

Step 2: Join up with others –

Join with survivors, low-income people, people from marginalized communities, and allies within other agencies to form a community stakeholder group.

Step 3: Figure out what needs to be done – Identify the critical needs, community strengths, and priorities for action.

Step 4: Figure out how to do it – Work together to formulate a transformation strategy that seeks to improve services, reform systems, and advance economic justice.

Step 5: Do it – Work together to implement the plan.

Step 6: Follow up – Monitor and evaluate your efforts, revise your strategies, try again, celebrate community victories, and set future goals.

“Community organizing is the process of building power through:

- **Identifying and involving the people most affected by the issues or problems faced by their community;**
- **Asking them to define the issues or problems, and working together to create solutions;**
- **Challenging personal, institutional, and cultural norms;**
- **Building leadership, long-term perspective, commitment and consciousness to change our culture and society.”¹¹**

Step One: Organize Your Program

Purpose of this Step

The purpose of this step is to organize and prepare your organization or group for doing this work in a sustainable way.

Goals of this Step

- Identify one or more Lead Organizer(s) for the ongoing effort.
- Increase understanding of the intersection between poverty and domestic violence globally and locally.
- Build internal support for working in three dimensions and for addressing economic concerns in all areas of work.
- Develop a program plan for the effort.

List of Activities in this Step

- Activity 1.1: Select a Lead Organizer
- Notes for the Lead Organizer
- Activity 1.2: Take a Walk In Her Shoes
- Activity 1.3: Attendance Report
- Activity 1.4: Ready to Move Forward?
- Activity 1.5: Foundations We Can Build On
- Activity 1.6: Developing Our Program’s Plan

¹¹ Adapted from material by the Asian & Pacific Islander Women & Family Safety Center (APIWFSC), P.O. Box 14047 Seattle, WA, 98114, (206) 467-9976.

Activity 1.1: Select a Lead Organizer _____



Why do this?

All great endeavors need someone to organize and lead the effort. Ideally, as many people as possible from all levels of your program will be involved in Activity 1.2, and a smaller group will complete the rest of the activities as well as continue involvement in the community-based work that happens in Steps Two through Six of the process.

However, it is also useful to identify one person to serve as the overall Lead Organizer of the effort—someone who can effectively facilitate and carry out the activities in this workbook, and who can organize, record, and rally over time. Your program may also decide it makes sense to ask more than one person to serve in this role.

Target audience

- The program wanting to do this work (with key decision makers present)

Total time needed

- This may take a series of meetings and discussions

Instructions

Gather as a group to discuss whether or not to begin the process outlined in this workbook. Select a Lead Organizer, using the questions below as a guide.

Who Should It Be?

Below is a list of qualities to keep in mind when choosing a Lead Organizer. Your Lead Organizer should:

- Thoroughly understand the dynamics of domestic violence.
- Become familiar with economic systems and economic justice concepts.
- Be skilled at facilitating activities and discussions with a diverse group of people.
- Be skilled at developing and nurturing relationships with community allies.
- Be skilled at centering the voices of survivors, low-income women and marginalized groups.
- Be really excited to begin this work!

What Will She Do?

The responsibilities of the Lead Organizer are to:

- Act as the custodian of this workbook and document the progress of your program's and community's efforts.
- Organize, prepare for, and facilitate the activities and complete the worksheets in this workbook.
- Keep the momentum for this effort going—if there is a lull in the effort, it is up to the Lead Organizer to remind the program and the community when it is time to get going again.

Select the Lead Organizer and make it official.

The Lead Organizer(s) is/are:

Notes for the Lead Organizer

What follows are five activities that will promote organizational readiness for taking on this work in a meaningful and sustainable manner. The activities will also help to create a shared understanding about what it means for your program to be doing this.

We recommend that as many people as possible from all levels of your organization—from survivors accessing services to board members—be involved in Activity 1.2. Going through this workbook will change how your program operates. Therefore, it is critical that you have broad-based and sustained support from everyone. You will need key decision makers to agree to taking these steps, and your efforts will be better informed if you solicit input from volunteers and those who work on the “front lines.”

Consider scheduling a half- to all-day retreat to which everyone is invited, or you could facilitate these exercises over a series of meetings. Use your judgment about what will work best for your program, but strive for getting input and involvement from everyone.

Sequencing of these activities relative to the rest of the workbook

Ideally, your program will complete Step One prior to moving on to the next steps. However, community organizing is an organic process and it may make sense for you to begin the work of joining with others (as in Step Two) while you work on Step One. If you find that you are encountering a lot of resistance from your program, it may also be beneficial to gain the support of community allies to demonstrate that there is community momentum for this work.

Activity 1.2: Take a Walk In Her Shoes



Why do this?

As stated in the introduction, this workbook is designed to be a companion to *In Her Shoes: Living with Domestic Violence—Economic Justice Edition*. It is important to ensure that everyone goes through the simulation and the debrief discussion. Even if everyone at your program is not going to be involved in the activities and tasks outlined in this workbook, it is important that everyone understands why you are spending so much time talking about economic justice.

In Her Shoes—Economic Justice Edition sets the stage for the work your program will be doing, and it serves as a launch pad for critical thinking, discussion, and planning. Specifically, it:

- Increases awareness of the intersection between poverty and domestic violence.
- Helps your program focus on the economic concerns of survivors.
- Makes a connection between the experiences of the *In Her Shoes* characters and the realities of your community.
- Prepares your program for more intensive analysis and planning on this issue.

Target audience

Be sure to involve everyone directly connected to your program:

- Survivors
- Volunteers
- All direct service staff
- Support staff
- Administrators and managers
- Board members

Total time needed

- 3 hours

Materials needed

- *In Her Shoes: Living with Domestic Violence—Economic Justice Edition*
- 2 coins, 3 six-sided dice, and tape

- Other props as desired (see the *In Her Shoes* Facilitator's Guide for ideas)
- Flip chart or other large pieces of paper
- Markers

Preparation needed

- Read through the *In Her Shoes* Facilitator's Guide—familiarize yourself with how the simulation works and how to give the instructions to participants.
- Be sure to set up the simulation before the meeting starts. (Allow yourself at least 20 minutes; see the Facilitator's Guide for instructions on how to set up the room.)

Instructions

■ Walk In Her Shoes (1 hour 15 min)

Run the simulation as directed by the Facilitator's Guide. Take about 15 minutes to welcome participants, introduce *In Her Shoes* and give instructions. Then allow participants at least 45 minutes to get through their characters' stories (and perhaps even begin a second character). Next, offer participants a 15-minute break, and then ask them to regroup for the debrief discussion.

■ Debrief Discussion (30 min)

The Facilitator's Guide provides instructions and sample questions for the debrief discussion. The instructions and sample questions are intended for educating audiences about the dynamics of domestic violence and the additional challenges faced by low-income women (or women who may not be low-income but don't have access to economic resources as a result of their abuser's control). Choose the questions that you feel are best suited to facilitating an engaging and useful discussion with your group.

■ If She Lived Here (1 hour 15 min)

Ask participants to get into small groups based on their *In Her Shoes* character. Give each small group a large sheet of paper from the flip chart, along with a few markers. Ask each small group to label their sheet of paper in the following manner:



Barriers	Safety Nets
If She Lived Here...	

Ask the groups to discuss their character’s experiences and list on the sheet of paper answers to the following questions (allow 15 minutes for this discussion):

1. What barriers to safety and economic independence did your character encounter as her story unfolded?
2. What safety nets, if any, were available to assist with both the abuse and the economic uncertainty?
3. What local economic resources, options, and opportunities might your character have if she lived here?

Reconvene the participants into a large group. Ask each small group to briefly read their notes to the whole group. (15 min)

Facilitate a large-group discussion using the following questions. Ask someone to record the group’s thinking on flip chart paper. (45 min)

1. What does this experience make us think about what domestic violence survivors in our community really need?
2. What does this experience make us think about the work that we do with individual survivors?
3. What does this experience make us think about the work that we do—or don’t do—with the systems and institutions represented by the stations in *In Her Shoes*?
4. Finally, what does this experience make us think about in terms of a strategy for ending domestic violence?

Close the meeting by thanking the participants and offering encouragement that this is the beginning of an exciting and ongoing effort.

Activity 1.3: Attendance Report _____

Why do this?

It is important to determine whether there is organizational support and buy-in before you begin an economic justice initiative that is likely to change the way your program operates.

Total time needed

- 15 minutes

Materials needed

- Staff roster
- Board roster
- Volunteer roster
- Names of survivors who agreed to participate

Instructions

The Lead Organizer should answer the following questions after Facilitating *In Her Shoes*—Economic Justice Edition.

1. Who attended the meeting?

What positions (direct service staff, volunteers, clients, board members, administrative staff) were represented? Who was missing?

2. If attendance was low, what were the barriers to greater participation?

If key members of your program were absent, including survivors who access your services, arrange another time to complete Activity 1.2. It is important that a critical mass of people directly connected to your program have had the opportunity to go through *In Her Shoes* and consider the implications for the program’s work with individuals, systems and institutions, and for the program’s broader work to end domestic violence. This effort will face even more challenges if you do not have broad-based support and understanding from your own program as you proceed.

Activity 1.4: Ready to Move Forward? _____



Why do this?

Organizational readiness is a key component of any successful endeavor. It is important to acknowledge whether your program is ready to move forward, and if not, to create the time and space to get ready.

Total time needed

- This may take a couple of weeks to determine

Materials needed

- List of attendees from Activity 1.2

Instructions

- **Assess your readiness.** After everyone (or close to everyone) has gone through Activity 1.2, conduct an informal assessment of whether your program is ready to continue working on economic justice issues.

You will need the approval of key decision makers (board members, executive director and other managers), but don't forget to find out what direct service staff, volunteers and survivors think as well. It will be difficult to proceed if you are facing a lot of resistance from any key players. Spend some time strategizing and implementing ways to overcome resistance. While this may take considerable time, it is worth the effort to have everyone on board before you begin. If it appears that the resistance is insurmountable, or that your organization simply isn't ready to proceed, consider whether there are any allied programs in your community that could take on this work instead.

- **Schedule the Next Step.** Once you have obtained broad-based support, schedule a time to complete the following activity (Activity 1.5: Foundations We Can Build On).

Activity 1.5: Foundations We Can Build On _____



Why do this?

This activity will help you identify program strengths that can serve as a foundation for future economic justice work and reinforce the idea of working in three dimensions to address poverty and domestic violence.

Target audience

Involve as many people as possible who are directly connected to your program:

- Survivors
- Volunteers
- All direct service staff
- Support staff
- Administrators and managers
- Board members

Total time needed

- 1 hour

Materials needed

- Lots of sticky notepads in two different colors
- Pens, markers, tape
- Copies of the description of how to “Work in Three Dimensions” on page 8.
- Pre-labeled flip chart sheets:

**Social Services
(Individual Advocacy)**

**Social Reform
(Systems Advocacy)**

**Social Transformation
(Promoting Economic
Justice)**

Preparation needed

Read through the station chapters in Part III, paying attention to the “Work in Three Dimensions” section of each chapter to gain more familiarity with the various ways that domestic violence advocates can address poverty and the economic needs of survivors in their work.

Instructions

■ Welcome participants and thank them for coming together again.

Explain the reason for meeting and affirm that this meeting is an important next step in advancing the program’s economic justice work.

■ Hand out a sticky notepad and pen to each participant. Ask the participants to think quietly about all of the services, programs and types of advocacy your program offers to address economic concerns—whether as a service to an individual survivor, or as a form of advocacy with economic systems or institutions, or as part of a larger effort to promote economic justice.

■ Tell the participants to think big and broad. Prompt their thinking with one or two examples from your program, such as:

- Giving welfare applications to shelter residents.
- Explaining to an immigrant survivor how she can access the community food bank without having a Social Security number.
- Focusing one week of the program’s 12-week support group on financial and economic concerns.
- Writing a letter of support so that a landlord will let a survivor break her lease without penalty, allowing her to relocate for safety reasons.
- Calling your legislator and asking him/her to vote yes on a bill that would enhance women’s access to safe and affordable childcare.

■ Ask participants to write down their thoughts, listing each idea on a separate sticky note. (Give them 15 minutes to write down their ideas.)

■ Hand out the copies of “Work in Three Dimensions.” Give each person time to read the hand-out, then ask the participants to place their sticky notes on one of three flip chart sheets, based on where they think each idea belongs. For example, “helping a client get her welfare sanction lifted” would be a social service, “training welfare workers on domestic violence” would be social reform, and “participating on a legislative campaign to expand welfare benefits to immigrant children” would be social transformation.



Read the sticky notes aloud, asking the participants to help you group similar or duplicate ideas together. Have the group tell you which services, programs or advocacy efforts are working really well, and circle or highlight those sticky notes. Give the group a few moments to reflect on and celebrate the economic-related work they are already doing.

Next, hand out sticky notepads that are a different color from what the participants used previously. Ask the participants again to think quietly about one or two things under each area of work that they would like to see the program start doing. Tell them to write down each idea on a sticky note, and then place them up on the appropriate flip chart sheets.



When the participants have finished, read the new ideas aloud, grouping similar ideas together as you go along. Work with the participants to identify the one new idea under each dimension that they would most like to see implemented.

Close the meeting and let the participants know that the next step will be for the program to develop a plan for supporting this work on a long-term basis.

Activity 1.6: Developing Our Program's Plan _____



Why do this?

Now that your program has more thoroughly discussed taking on or expanding economic justice work, it is time to move forward. In this activity, you will identify the concrete actions your program can take to work in three dimensions to address poverty and domestic violence. You will also identify the concrete actions your program can take to engage with the wider community in doing this work.

Target audience

- Key decision makers
- Key direct service and other staff whose workloads are likely to be affected

Total time needed

- This may take a series of meetings and discussions

Materials needed

- Flip chart
- Markers

Instructions

The overarching question to keep in mind during this process is: How can we maintain and support a long-term commitment to promoting economic justice—as a program and with our community—without compromising services and advocacy for individual survivors? Steps to take in developing your program's plan:

- 1. Have key decision makers brainstorm how they will meaningfully support this effort.** Make a flip chart list (examples: document in board minutes a commitment to economic justice, have yearly training on economic justice issues, incorporate into agency long-range plan, ask executive director to report quarterly on progress, include in staffing and work plans, build into budget, fundraise).
- 2. Have staff brainstorm how they will support and participate in the work.** Make a flip chart list (examples: ongoing staff training, progress report at staff meetings, annual participation in events hosted by other allied organizations, monitor state and national economic justice efforts).
- 3. Determine your answers to the following:**
 - 1) Who from our program is going to work on economic justice issues?

- 2) When are we going to start?
- 3) How much time are we going to spend on this work?
- 4) How much money is available to support this work?

Use the questions below to inform your decisions.

- What resources are we prepared to offer to support this work?
 - Staff time: Whose? How much?
 - Meeting and work space: Where? When? How often? For how long?
 - Money for materials, supplies, snacks, training, travel: How much?
 - Money or other resources to support active involvement of and with survivors, low-income people and people from marginalized communities (e.g., childcare, transportation, interpretation and translation of materials, accessibility needs such as understanding of and formatting of materials, access to meeting space and bathroom, different methods of communicating effectively)?
 - Any other resources?
- How will this work be integrated into our workloads?
That is, how will staff continue to do their current work, while also spending time developing relationships, recruiting stakeholders from the community, facilitating and/or participating in community groups, planning for changes to program services, and implementing those plans?
- How often are we going to reconvene to check in on how things are going? Who is going to be a part of that check-in process?

4. Discuss the following questions and record your responses on flip charts.

- How are we going to make sure that this effort isn't forgotten or lost in the shuffle of an already chaotic and overwhelming workload?
- How are we going to ensure that we are actively involved with survivors, low-income people and people from marginalized communities as we proceed?
- How are we going to ensure that we remain accountable to survivors, low-income people and people from marginalized communities as we proceed?

5. Create a "living document" out of this activity as a touchstone for your program's ongoing work through the rest of this process.

Step Two: Join Up with Others

Purpose of this Step

The purpose of this step is to join with survivors, low-income people, people from marginalized communities, and allies within other organizations and systems to form a community stakeholder group.

Goals of this Step

- Identify the people, groups, organizations, and systems in your community who have an interest—or stake—in reducing poverty and domestic violence.
- Develop and nurture relationships with the identified stakeholders.
- Figure out how to recruit and support active involvement with survivors, low-income people and people from marginalized communities—both those who are accessing your program and those who are not.
- Resolve barriers to participating in the group.
- Generate a final list of people who have agreed to serve in the community stakeholder group.

List of Activities in this Step

- Notes for the Lead Organizer
- Activity 2.1: Scavenger Hunts in Your Community
- Activity 2.2: Identifying Community Stakeholders
- Activity 2.3: Going on Tour with *In Her Shoes—Economic Justice Edition*
- Notes for the Lead Organizer: Developing and Nurturing Relationships
- Activity 2.4: Recruiting and Supporting Participation in a Stakeholder Group
- Activity 2.5: Confirming the Stakeholder Group

Notes for the Lead Organizer

This step is undoubtedly the most important step your program can take. Making connections with others, influencing and being influenced by others is the heart of community organizing. In order to make changes in your program's economic justice advocacy efforts (with both individuals and systems), you must get input from key people—namely, low-income people, survivors, anti-poverty groups and allies within economic systems. Furthermore, any efforts that your program makes to lead your community as a whole towards economic justice must inherently involve the actual community within which you're trying to make change.

This step may take the longest amount of time to complete. Take this step seriously and spend the time you need to develop respectful, trusting relationships with the people whose voices matter the most. If you only recruit people for whom participation is easy, or who think like you, or those you already know, then your efforts will not be fully informed by and may not meet the needs of the community you're trying to impact.

Activity 2.1: Scavenger Hunts in Your Community



Why do this?

This activity will help the Lead Organizer learn about and connect with local economic groups, organizations, institutions, and systems.

Total time needed

- The Lead Organizer may complete the Scavenger Hunts as needed over time

Materials needed

- Scavenger Hunt activities from Part III of this workbook

Instructions

Complete the Scavenger Hunt activities from Part III of this workbook, as needed, to supplement your understanding of local resources.

Activity 2.2: Identifying Stakeholders



Why do this?

It is important for the Lead Organizer to identify the people, groups, organizations, and systems in your community that have a stake in ending poverty and domestic violence.

Target audience

- Survivors, low-income people, and people from marginalized communities
- Direct service staff and program leaders
- Known allies to the program

Total time needed

- 30 minutes for each discussion

Materials needed

- An ongoing list of potential stakeholders

Instructions

This activity involves thinking of as many potential stakeholders as possible and will result in a list of people from which to draw your Stakeholder Group. This process will evolve as you go through it, but begin with your program staff, survivors, and any economic justice allies that are already known to the organization.

The Lead Organizer should facilitate a series of brainstorming sessions with survivors, low-income people, people from marginalized communities, direct service staff, program leaders and known allies. It may be easier to conduct the brainstorming sessions in separate venues, such as:

- During a staff meeting.
- At a support group or focus group of survivors.
- In meetings held at allied organizations.

Initial questions to ask¹²

1. Who could help you think about and plan for the improvement of economic-related services, advocacy, and ultimately justice for domestic violence survivors?

¹² Adapted from material by the Asian & Pacific Islander Women & Family Safety Center, Seattle, WA.

2. Who do survivors and low-income women believe could help?
3. Who is already working on these issues in your community?

Examples of community stakeholders to consider:

- Survivors (both those who have accessed your program’s services and those who have not)
- Low-income people
- Friends and family of survivors
- People who have experience with multiple oppressions and/or experience working across oppressions
- Direct service staff, volunteers, or leaders at the domestic violence program
- Existing groups/task forces that may be interested and could be helpful (as long as that group/task force is willing to share power by prioritizing input and decision making from survivors, low-income people, and persons from marginalized communities)
- Existing organizations whose mission/purpose are in the realm of economics
- Allied social justice or advocacy organizations
- Religious organizations involved in social justice work with congregation members and/or doing community outreach
- Colleges, universities, vocational programs, high schools
- Individual community residents

Activity 2.3: Going on Tour with *In Her Shoes*— Economic Justice Edition



Why do this?

In Her Shoes: Living with Domestic Violence—Economic Justice Edition is an incredibly effective way of getting people to understand what it is you’re asking them to work on, and motivating them to want to work on it. Doing the simulation with any group of people is a community intervention in and of itself. People are changed by witnessing the experiences of the seven characters and by what they learn through the debrief discussion afterwards. Everyone takes away new thoughts about the needs of women living with both domestic violence and poverty.

Taking *In Her Shoes* on tour can also serve the secondary purpose of being a recruiting tool for your community organizing efforts. If a group is really moved by the exercise, and people are motivated to “do something,” you have the perfect segue to asking the participants to join your longer-term community organizing effort.

Target audience

- Any community group or organization, particularly those identified in Activity 2.2

Total time needed

- At least 2 hours per session
- May take 6 months or longer

Materials needed

- *In Her Shoes: Living with Domestic Violence—Economic Justice Edition*
- 2 coins, 3 six-sided dice, and tape
- Other props as desired (see the *In Her Shoes* Facilitator’s Guide for ideas)

Preparation needed

- Familiarity with facilitating *In Her Shoes—Economic Justice Edition*
- Familiarity with the mission/program of participant group

Instructions

- Consider taking the simulation on a tour throughout your community as part of your program’s work to promote economic justice, improve your system advocacy efforts, and strengthen services to individual survivors.
- Take six months to facilitate the exercise at various organizations and with various groups, including groups of survivors, low-income people, community associations, congregations, and with formal institutions and advocacy organizations.
- Use the list you generate in Activity 2.2 as a “target audience” guide.
- Build a list of potential Stakeholder Group participants and/or other individuals to follow up with afterwards.

Notes for the Lead Organizer

Developing and Nurturing Relationships

An important task for the Lead Organizer is to build connections and alliances with others in the community who care about economic justice. In doing this, you will need to:

1. “Find out as much as you can about the community you want to work with and the organizations and leaders that make it tick...Get in touch with groups and individuals you know who may have contacts there.
2. Learn who has the ear of the community and influences people’s opinions. [Identify] individuals and organizations that can help your agency better understand the community’s experiences with and perceptions of family violence, its strengths and assets, and ways to involve its members.”¹³

Once you have developed a list of “inside” community people who might be willing to talk to you, think carefully about how you can learn from them about domestic violence and support for survivors in their community. Here are a few sample questions:¹⁴

1. What can we do to support people in your community who are dealing with domestic violence? What resources do you need that we might be able to offer?
 2. We want to learn more about your work and the challenges you face—would you be willing to share that with us?
 3. We are interested in gathering together a group of allies from our community that could educate each other more fully about these issues and seek community solutions.
- What do you think about this idea?
 - Do you have any suggestions about how this could be done?
 - Would you be willing to help?

Activity 2.4: Recruiting and Supporting Participation in a Stakeholder Group



Why do this?

When forming a community stakeholder group, it is important to consider the pros and cons of an individual’s participation, what supports they will need in order to participate, and strategies that will assist in obtaining that person’s participation. It is also important to consider how to recruit a diverse group of people who represent many views and perspectives.

Total time needed

- This can take as much or as little time as needed. It may take several months to recruit participants.

Materials needed

- Copies of the Potential Stakeholder Worksheet (fold-out form, next page) to fill out for each potential stakeholder

Instructions

As you identify potential Stakeholder Group members, the Lead Organizer should keep the information listed on the Potential Stakeholder Worksheet. (Make copies of this Worksheet as needed.)

¹³ Preventing Family Violence: Lessons from the Community Engagement Initiative, written by Kelly Mitchell-Clark and Angela Autry for the Family Violence Prevention Fund, 2004, p. 6., <http://endabuse.org/programs/children/files/Preventing2.pdf>.

¹⁴ Adapted from material by the Asian & Pacific Islander Women & Family Safety Center (APIWFSC), P.O. Box 14047 Seattle, WA, 98114, (206) 467-9976.

Activity 2.5: Confirming the Stakeholder Group_____



Why do this?

Getting off on the right foot begins with a solid Stakeholder Group to work with. It is important to have this group nailed down with firm commitments before you begin the rest of the activities.

Total time needed

- 1 hour

Materials needed

- Final list of individuals interested in joining the Stakeholder Group.
(Make copies of the *List of Stakeholder Group Members*, fold-out form, next page.)

Instructions

- Determine how large you want your group to be
- Consider issues of representation and diversity
- Decide on a final list and confirm with each individual/group
- Send follow-up letter to welcome them to the group and thank them for their participation

Potential Stakeholder Worksheet

Name _____

Is this person affiliated with a particular group or organization? _____

What are ways to safely contact this person?

Phone/fax numbers: _____

Email: _____

Mailing address(es): _____

Other notes:

What does this potential group member bring to the effort (e.g., a certain perspective or experience that would inform us about real-world needs; the ability to effect changes in policies within a particular institution or system; other tangible or intangible resources, such as money, network, reputation, or special skills)?

Do we already have a relationship with this person (or this person's group or organization)? Or do we need to initiate, further develop, or repair a relationship?

What are the benefits of this person's participation?

What are the risks of this person's participation?

How can we support this person's participation? What accommodations would be required (e.g., childcare, transportation, interpretation, facilitation to ensure this person's voice is included)?

Other things to remember as we proceed in our efforts to recruit this person to participate in a stakeholder group:

List of Stakeholder Group Members

Name	Phone #	Email
Mailing Address		Notes
Name	Phone #	Email
Mailing Address		Notes
Name	Phone #	Email
Mailing Address		Notes
Name	Phone #	Email
Mailing Address		Notes
Name	Phone #	Email
Mailing Address		Notes
Name	Phone #	Email
Mailing Address		Notes
Name	Phone #	Email
Mailing Address		Notes
Name	Phone #	Email
Mailing Address		Notes
Name	Phone #	Email
Mailing Address		Notes
Name	Phone #	Email
Mailing Address		Notes

Step Three: Figure Out What Needs to Be Done

Purpose of this Step

The purpose of this step is to work with the Stakeholder Group to identify critical needs, community strengths, and priorities for action.

Goals of this Step

- Convene the first and subsequent meetings with the Stakeholder Group.
- Make agreements about how to operate as a group.
- Gather information about what's really going on in your community—good and bad—and make a wish list of things to work on.
- Identify the priorities to work on relative to economic justice and pick one to start with.

List of Activities in this Step

- Notes for the Lead Organizer
- Activity 3.1: Get Off to a Great Start
- Activity 3.2: Facilitate *In Her Shoes*
- Activity 3.3: Engage in Mutual Education and Information Gathering
- Activity 3.4: Analyze the Information Gathered
- Activity 3.5: Make a Wish List
- Activity 3.6: Pick a Starting Point



Notes for the Lead Organizer

Your role is to be the primary convener of meetings with the community stakeholder group, to facilitate those meetings (unless the group decides otherwise), to prod the group along, and to keep track of progress.

Your role is somewhat complex. On the one hand, your job is to solicit and listen to the voices of a broad and varied group of community allies in order to inform and improve your own program’s social services, social reform, and social transformation efforts. On the other hand, you must ensure that this community dialogue and plan retains a strong vision and commitment to **economic justice for survivors** without becoming sidetracked by other issues or losing a focus on what’s really going to meet the needs of survivors, as voiced by survivors themselves.

So, how do you balance these two goals? You will need to be skillful and persistent in your efforts to keep the voices and participation of survivors, low-income people and persons from marginalized communities at the forefront of this work.

Remember:

- **Confront oppression in the group.** Help the group to understand that the very dynamics of oppression that support and uphold domestic violence, economic injustice, racism, xenophobia, able-bodyism, heterosexism, and all of the ways that privileged groups maintain their power and control over others, will inevitably surface in your meetings. Seek out sensitive and effective ways to challenge oppressive behaviors as they arise and encourage group members to both teach and learn.
- **Maintain a long-term focus.** Expect to be using this workbook for a period of years. If you leave your position with the program, select, train, and mentor another person to become the Lead Organizer.
- **This work is not a one-person job.** While you may be the primary person organizing the overall effort, your biggest task is to involve a large and wide variety of people in all phases—initially and throughout the process of working towards your goals.

What follows are a series of activities to use with your Stakeholder Group. Completing these activities will help the group figure out what needs to be done. Think about what will work best for your group and decide how to fit these activities into a series of meetings.

Activity 3.1: Get Off to a Great Start

Why do this?

Now that you have joined with others in your community to tackle the intersecting issues of poverty and domestic violence, you’ll want to ensure that the Stakeholder Group gets off to a great start by addressing issues of common group dynamics and by making sure that everyone is on the same page about what the group’s work will be.

Total time needed

- 2 hours

Materials needed

- Flip chart
- Markers
- Copies of the “Guiding Principles” on page 43

Instructions

With your Stakeholder Group, discuss the following questions and record on the flip chart any agreements you make about how to operate as a group:

1. **Introduce group members to one another.** Give everyone a chance to share their reasons for participating in the group and describe what they hope will happen as a result of this work.
2. **Does the group want to set some general ground rules for meetings?**
For example:
 - Confidential information or personal stories that are shared during meetings will not be shared or discussed outside of the group meetings.
 - Debate and disagreement are welcome and necessary, but must be carried out using language that is respectful.
 - Stereotyping and other oppressive behaviors will be interrupted.
3. **How will decisions be made?**
 - By majority vote.
 - By consensus or modified consensus.
 - What happens if a group member absolutely cannot agree to a particular decision?

Note to Lead Organizer: You may want to give examples of the kind of decisions that the group may be making, such as selecting issues to focus on, action planning, etc.

4. **What are the expectations of group members?** For example:
 - For attending meetings.
 - For doing research or other work for the group outside of or between meetings.
5. **What supports do group members need to continue their participation with the group? And who is going to provide it?**¹⁵

For example:

 - Snacks or meals at each meeting.
 - Free childcare.
 - Transportation.
 - Payment reimbursement or allowing participation to count as a work activity for low-income members.
 - Flexibility in scheduling times of meetings to accommodate participants' other obligations.
 - Interpreters for the benefit of all members of the group, along with mini-training on how to effectively communicate using interpreters.
 - Accommodations for physical access to meeting space and facilitating ease of communication among members.
6. **How should group members communicate with each other during and between meetings? Who is going to take minutes and should that responsibility rotate?**
7. **Review the “Guiding Principles” (on the next page) from the Family Violence Prevention Fund report *Lessons from the Community Engagement Initiative*. What recommendations seem particularly relevant and meaningful?**

“Guiding principles:

- Safety for survivors and their children is paramount.
- Perpetrators of abuse should be held responsible for stopping their violence and should have access to services that support their efforts to change.
- Collaboration among service providers is crucial because no one entity can keep families and communities safe and strong.
- Systems and services alone cannot stop family violence—community engagement is essential.
- Engagement work should focus on a community’s strengths, capacity and leadership, not just on its needs.
- To avoid doing harm, systems set up to intervene in family violence must focus on community needs as defined by the community—particularly people of color, immigrants and [those with low incomes].
- Lasting family violence prevention requires strategies that support broader struggles for social and economic justice and against discrimination based on race, sexual identity, gender and other characteristics.
- Meaningful community engagement is a long-term process that requires long-term investment.”¹⁶

¹⁵ In developing *In Her Shoes—Economic Justice Edition*, for example, we provided a lot of tangible supports, such as childcare, transportation, and meals, so that survivors and low-income women could participate.

¹⁶ *Preventing Family Violence: Lessons from the Community Engagement Initiative*, p. 4.

Activity 3.2: Facilitate *In Her Shoes*— Economic Justice Edition



Why do this?

This activity gives the Stakeholder Group a common understanding of and sense of purpose about the issues they are examining. In addition, the characters in the simulation will share many of the same kinds of experiences that survivors in your community have had. The group can discuss these experiences and barriers by referencing *In Her Shoes* characters and avoid breaking confidentiality about real-life situations.

Target audience

- Stakeholder Group

Total time needed

- 2-3 hours

Materials needed

- *In Her Shoes: Living with Domestic Violence—Economic Justice Edition*
- Flip chart
- Markers

Instructions

Facilitate and debrief *In Her Shoes* with the Stakeholder Group (see Activity 1.2 for detailed instructions). If any of the stakeholders have already gone through *In Her Shoes—Economic Justice Edition*, encourage them to choose another character this time around.

Activity 3.3: Engage in Mutual Education and Information Gathering



Why do this?

Engaging the Stakeholder Group in mutual education about the local issues facing low-income families, the resources and options available, and how the issues and resources impact survivors of domestic violence and their children will create a solid, community-based framework from which to conduct your work. It is important that the Stakeholder Group gathers real data from real people about what is actually going on—both good and bad—in your community, and how your economic justice efforts can make a meaningful difference.

Target audience

- Stakeholder Group
- Community members
- Survivors
- Low-income people
- People from marginalized communities

Total time needed

- 2 hours initially, more time (over many sessions) if the group decides to do more structured data collection

Materials needed

- Flip chart
- Markers

Instructions

Work with the Stakeholder Group to determine what information you need to gather and how to gather it. Some possible activities include:

- **Informal data collection methods**
 - Engage in a series of open dialogues that involve sharing experiences and intimate knowledge about the issues of economic insufficiency and domestic violence. Discuss how various systems, institutions, and resources do or do not work well for low-income survivors and their children. Also, discuss the ingenious ways that families cope with economic insufficiency outside of the offerings of mainstream service providers.

■ Create a community resource map

- Generate a map of your community that displays such things as where various domestic violence and economic-related resources are physically located in comparison to the populations who need the services. Overlay the map with available public transportation routes to the various resources.

■ Formal data collection methods

- Consider whether to issue questionnaires, conduct surveys, or hold focus groups.
- If so, with whom? How? When? Where? Who will administer the data collection and tabulate the results?
- Remember—use these methods to supplement, not replace, actual dialogues with and participation of survivors, low-income people, and people from marginalized communities.
- Be careful when looking at statistics. Remember that statistics can be incredibly informational, but do not always tell the whole story. Many statistics only tell a portion of the story, and may distort a reality or lead to false conclusions if they are not carefully examined. Anecdotal stories and case studies are just as valid and can be used in conjunction with empirical data to paint a portrait of the needs and barriers within your community.

Activity 3.4: Analyze the Information Gathered _____



Why do this?

After gathering information, it is important to regroup and consider the implications of your findings. If a particular issue emerges as the most pressing area of concern or opportunity, it is important to lead your group in a more in-depth dialogue and analysis of that issue, system or area.

Target audience

- Stakeholder Group

Total time needed

- 2 hours

Materials needed

- Flip chart
- Markers

Instructions

Lead the Stakeholder Group in thinking through the implications of what you found out during the period of mutual education and information gathering. Take time to analyze what's working and not working at the service level, system level and in terms of economic justice overall. Document your answers to the questions below on a flip chart.

If your group has come up with many competing issues, consider setting another meeting to discuss the remaining issues. Reference the relevant station chapters in Part III for a list of critical questions for communities to consider.

Initial Questions to Consider

1. "What does the information we've gathered tell us?"
2. Which themes and issues emerge repeatedly?"¹⁷
3. What appears to be the biggest need or opportunity?
4. What successes can we build on?

¹⁷ Preventing Family Violence: Lessons from the Community Engagement Initiative, p. 13.

Activity 3.5: Make a Wish List _____



Why do this?

You now know more about what is happening with low-income survivors in your community and can think broadly and creatively about possible next steps.

Target audience

- Stakeholder Group

Total time needed

- 2 hours

Materials needed

- Lots of sticky notepads in two different colors
- Pens, markers, tape
- Copies of the description of how to “Work in Three Dimensions” on page 8.
- Pre-labeled flip chart sheets:

**Social Services
(Individual Advocacy)**

**Social Reform
(Systems Advocacy)**

**Social Transformation
(Promoting Economic
Justice)**

Instructions

Help lead the group through a process of generating a wish list of what they believe needs to happen in their communities, given what the group learned from Activities 3.3 and 3.4.

Use any method that works for your group. One idea may be to repeat the exercise that your domestic violence program used in Activity 1.5 in which each individual records their ideas about what to do on sticky

notes, then posts them on flip chart sheets according to whether the idea represents Social Service, Social Reform or Social Transformation work. Once all the ideas are posted, the sticky notes can be rearranged and grouped to place similar ideas together. Alternatively, your Stakeholder Group can do this brainstorming work in pairs or small groups, then share their results with the larger group.

The point of this task is to dream big—very big—and get as many ideas as possible out on the table. Evaluation and prioritizing will come next. In the meantime, this big brainstorm can be recorded and referenced again and again as the group maintains its effort over time.

Activity 3.6: Pick a Starting Point _____



Why do this?

The Stakeholder Group will undoubtedly generate an impressive and exciting list of wishes and potential next steps. However, it would be impossible for communities to take on all that work at once. It is important for the group to narrow down the wish list and pick an initial starting point. Over time, as the group gains confidence and momentum, more ideas can be implemented.

Target audience

- Stakeholder Group

Total time needed

- 2 hours

Materials needed

- Whatever the facilitation or decision-making method requires

Instructions

The Stakeholder Group will need to narrow down the wish list to five priorities and choose a starting point. Use a facilitation process that will work well for your group and is in line with your group's original agreements. If your group is using voting as a decision-making method, consider whether survivors, low-income members, and members from marginalized communities will get more votes.

Remind the group that setting priorities and choosing one starting point does not mean that the other items on the wish list are abandoned or discarded. Rather, it means that the group is conscientiously turning its attention to one thing at a time, to ensure that the effort is well resourced and well focused.

The Stakeholder Group can consider the following questions during this process to help prioritize ideas that promote the empowerment and economic self-sufficiency of low-income survivors:

1. “Will battered women gain control over their lives and decision-making by this action?”
2. Which battered women, of which race and class, are affected? How so?
3. How will this action increase material resources (e.g., health care access, jobs, child care, housing, education) for battered women?”¹⁸
4. How does this action affect confidentiality and safety for those affected by domestic violence? How does it affect the goal of keeping services for survivors voluntary?
5. What do we as a community hope to learn from this action? How will we pass this learning on to others? What can we learn from others before we go forward?
6. Which systems and/or institutions are the focus of this action?

¹⁸ Questions 1-5 quoted or adapted from Helen Wooden-Aguilar and Andrea Farney, “Questions to Consider when Thinking, Acting and Assessing for Collusive Activity that Compromises Social Change,” Battered Women’s Justice Project Civil Advocacy Institute, March 2003 (originally adapted from Susan Schecter, *Women and Male Violence*, p. 191).

Step Four: Figure Out How to Do It

Purpose of this Step

The purpose of this step is to work together as a group to formulate a strategy for implementing the starting point you identified in Activity 3.6. Over time, your Stakeholder Group may work on other priorities, so revisit Steps Three and Four as needed.

Goals of this Step

Now that your community has figured out what it wants to work on, it is time to figure out how to get it done; that is, it is time to make a plan of action.

List of Activities in this Step

- Activity 4.1: Visioning Exercise
- Activity 4.2: In-Depth Exploration
- Activity 4.3: Questions to Consider As You Plan
- Activity 4.4: Getting Down to Details

Activity 4.1: Visioning Exercise



Why do this?

All great initiatives begin with great vision. It is helpful for groups to voice their vision aloud to ensure that the diverse perspectives from the group are represented and in accord with one another.

Target audience

- Stakeholder Group

Total time needed

- 1 hour

Materials needed

- Flip chart
- Markers

Instructions

Facilitate a discussion with the Stakeholder Group about the following questions and record your answers on a flip chart.

1. **“What is our destination**—what will we achieve, for whom and where?
2. **What is the scope of our effort**—how big, how many, how much?
3. **How can we phrase a vision statement so that it is not complicated?** Imagining that we have fifteen seconds to communicate the essence of our vision, what short phrase best captures the heart of it?”¹⁹

¹⁹ Michael Winer and Karen Ray, *Collaboration Handbook: Creating, Sustaining, and Enjoying the Journey*, Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, 1994, p. 151. For more tips on vision statements, see “Establishing a Vision and Mission” on the Community Tool Box website at: http://ctb.ku.edu/tools/bp/en/tools_bp_2.jsp.

Activity 4.2: In-Depth Exploration



Why do this?

The starting point identified by the Stakeholder Group most likely involves working with one or more institutions or systems. In order to work effectively with and within a system or institution, it is important to understand how it functions and interacts with low-income survivors. The following information will offer clarity and direction as the group proceeds with action planning.

Target audience

- Stakeholder Group

Total time needed

- 1 hour for the initial meeting
- Ongoing process (outside of meetings) as information is collected

Materials needed

- Copies of the Questions to Stakeholders sheet, fold-out form, next page.

Instructions

Help the Stakeholder Group gather information about the systems and/or institutions that are addressed by your priority action using the seven questions on the fold-out page as a guide. You can divide the questions among stakeholders or answer them as a group.

Questions to Stakeholders ²⁰

1. How is the system or institution currently responding to battered women, or what is the effect of the system on battered women and their kids?
2. What do battered women need from this system or institution? (Find out by asking battered women.)
3. Who are the system's or institution's players and staff? And what is the organization and power structure of the system?
4. What rules, policies, mandates, and laws guide the system's or institution's response?
5. What is the source of the system's or institution's funding?
6. What are the political and/or headline factors that affect the system or institution (e.g., a recent tragedy causing decision makers to react out of panic, or mounting public pressure to do things differently)?
7. What is/are the key issue(s) currently affecting the system or institution (e.g., funding troubles, lawsuits, changing priorities, turnover in leadership)?

²⁰ Adapted from Jill Davies, *Introduction to Policy Advocacy and Analysis: Improving How Systems Respond to Battered Women, Building Comprehensive Solutions to Domestic Violence*, National Resource Center on Domestic Violence, 2000.



Activity 4.3: Questions to Consider As You Plan _____

Why do this?

This is another step to prepare your group to formulate a great plan.

Target audience

- Stakeholder Group

Total time needed

- 3 hours

Materials needed

- Flip chart
- Markers

Instructions

Facilitate a discussion to answer the following questions and record your answers on a flip chart.

1. **What is our long-term goal?** What is it that we want?
2. **Who will benefit the most under our plan?** Who will get left out? Who could be hurt? Are there risks for members of our community? How are we going to address these risks? For example, how will this affect battered women, low-income people, staff at organizations, the wider community?
3. **Are there several options for achieving our goal?** What opportunities exist for implementing this initiative?²¹
4. **“How much time might it take to accomplish our goals?** Are we willing to dedicate the time required?
5. **What resources—both human and financial—are available?** What services and infrastructure might we need to add and [how can we do that]?”²²

²¹ Questions 2 and 3 adapted from Jill Davies, *Introduction to Policy Advocacy and Analysis: Improving How Systems Respond to Battered Women*, Building Comprehensive Solutions to Domestic Violence, National Resource Center on Domestic Violence, 2000. Available at: http://www.vawnet.org/NRCDVPublications/BCSDV/OtherPubs/BCS_poladv.php.

²² *Preventing Family Violence: Lessons from the Community Engagement Initiative*, p. 6.

6. **“Build a list of people in the following categories** (this list will help you determine important allies in your...efforts):
- Key people you believe will support and advocate for your...project.
 - Key people you would like to have involved but whose support you are not sure of.
 - Key people who you know, from past experience, are capable of blocking the way to your goals.”²³

Activity 4.4: Getting Down to Details



Why do this?

In this activity, the Stakeholder Group will lay out a concrete plan and action steps to take in order to achieve the stated vision and goals.

Target audience

- Stakeholder Group

Total time needed

- 3 hours

Materials needed

- Flip chart
- Markers

Instructions

Help the group build a roadmap for your plan.

Here is a sample of how the process could go:

- List the specific activities you will need to do in order to get from Point A (where you are now) to Point B (where you want to be).
- Timeline—plot your activities from first to last, listing target date and who is responsible for completing the task.
- Describe how you will know that you have accomplished what you set out to do.²⁴
- Describe how your accomplishments will have improved the lives of battered women and their children.

²³ “Sexual Assault Prevention Action Plan,” adapted by Gayle M. Stringer for Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs, 1999, from David Lynn and William Loftquist, *Youth Opportunity Planning Process*, Development Publications, 1996. Available at <http://www.wcsap.org/pdf/Planning%20Tool.pdf>.

²⁴ Tasks 1-3 adapted from “Sexual Assault Prevention Action Plan,” Gayle M. Stringer for WCSAP.

Step Five: Do It—Complete Your Plan

Purpose of this Step

The purpose of this step is to work together with the Stakeholder Group to implement the plan.

Goals of this Step

Carry out the plan developed by the Stakeholder Group.

List of Activities in this Step

- Notes for the Lead Organizer

Notes for the Lead Organizer

This is where the rubber hits the road! Excited? We hope so. You have done a lot of preparation for this moment, and here it is. Go forth and create change! As Lead Organizer, you have the very important task of supporting the group in carrying out the plan. This can take the form of gentle (or firm if necessary) reminders and other tangible supports that group members may need.

Your role also includes careful monitoring of the plan and taking into consideration things that are not working or that need to be changed. Keep track of these things and use them in the next step as you follow up and evaluate your progress.

Good luck!

Step Six: Follow Up

Purpose of this Step

The purpose of this step is to keep track of and evaluate the impact of the Stakeholder Group's efforts, revise and re-try strategies, celebrate community victories, and set future goals.

Goals of this Step

- Determine whether or not the plan is working as intended.
- Adjust the plan or focus of the work as needed.
- Acknowledge and celebrate community progress.
- Identify future goals and even more next steps.

List of Activities in this Step

- Notes for the Lead Organizer
- Activity 6.1: Taking Stock

Notes for the Lead Organizer

It is important to keep track of your efforts and keep the Stakeholder Group on track and on pace with the vision and roadmap. You may want to encourage the group to continue meeting periodically to assess and alter the plan as needed and to re-think, re-group, and re-organize.

You may need to revisit earlier steps in the process if your approach isn't working or delivering the desired results. Never fear, this is what social change and transformation look like. Be flexible and keep your eyes on the prize: economic justice and safe relationships for all.

Keep up the great work!

Activity 6.1: Taking Stock



Why do this?

No matter how great your plan is, you never know how it is going to turn out until you try it. This step helps the Stakeholder Group to take stock of successes and challenges encountered in working towards the vision of economic justice.

Target audience

- Stakeholder Group

Total time needed

- 2 hours initially, then ongoing if you need to revise the plan

Materials needed

- Roadmap from Activity 4.4
- Flip chart
- Markers

Instructions

Facilitate a discussion to revisit the plan developed in Step Four.

Answer the following questions and record your answers on a flip chart. Revisit earlier steps if you need to revise your plan or continue on as needed.

1. What successes and victories have you experienced?
2. What unexpected challenges and obstacles did you encounter?
3. Is additional action or a revised strategy needed?
4. Have you developed new allies who could join the Stakeholder Group to assist in the effort?
5. What are the next steps?

Overview

Part III is divided into 10 chapters that correspond to the stations represented as formal and informal systems and institutions in *In Her Shoes: Living with Domestic Violence—Economic Justice Edition*. These chapters are intended to provide a very brief overview of each system, highlighting some of the issues that arise for low-income survivors of domestic violence. It is in no way meant to be an exhaustive list of the issues, but rather is a start to get you thinking about what kinds of work you can do in the economic advocacy and economic justice arenas. We encourage the Lead Organizer to sift through this material as you work with the Stakeholder Group to determine where to focus your efforts or to get ideas once the focus area has been decided.

Format of the chapters

Each chapter begins with an introduction to the system or institution. To get you thinking about how these systems interact with low-income survivors, examples from *In Her Shoes* are woven throughout the chapters. Each chapter also includes a “scavenger hunt” activity that will take you out in your community to interact with different systems and institutions and make those crucial connections. We believe that it is these connections and partnerships that will help to engage the entire community to work towards economic justice.

Following the scavenger hunt is a list of some of the critical questions to ask about battered women’s experiences and needs when accessing each system or institution. Next, ideas are listed for how your community can work in three dimensions (social services, social reform, and social transformation) to address domestic violence and poverty. At the end of each chapter, you will find a short list of resources that can help you and your community group learn more about the topic area.

These chapters are intentionally brief in deference to each community's own local knowledge about what kinds of things are needed and what will work best. Again, the process of gathering information about how these systems and institutions are interacting with survivors, getting to know each system and institution, and considering what the local needs are will yield much richer data for your community than what we could include in this workbook. The stations from *In Her Shoes—Economic Justice Edition* that will be covered in the following chapters are:

Domestic Violence Program

Friends & Family

Healthcare

Housing

Job

Legal

Money & Necessities

School

Social Services

Welfare

Station: Domestic Violence Program

Over the last four decades, community-based domestic violence programs and shelters have developed sophisticated responses to violence against women that focus primarily on crisis intervention (emergency shelter, criminal justice system intervention, and therapeutic counseling).²⁵

The battered women's movement has been successful in obtaining widespread systematic changes in the law and in the criminal justice system and is beginning to make inroads into other institutions, convincing them of the role they can play in ending domestic violence.

Yet, domestic violence programs are often not equipped to deal with the economic issues facing the majority of the survivors they serve. Because we know that **survivors of domestic violence need financial stability in order to maintain autonomy and increase safety, domestic violence programs can work to shift some of their efforts towards economic advocacy and economic justice work.**

Domestic violence programs can play a key role in economic justice for survivors of domestic violence. By incorporating economic justice as a core value of the battered women's movement, domestic violence programs are able to link survivors to vital resources, financial literacy and education, and ultimately to financial empowerment and independence.

Recall that in Sarah's story, the domestic violence advocate never asks her the ages of her kids; her oldest is a 16-year-old boy, and the domestic violence shelter won't house teenage boys, so in the end, this critical housing resource is unavailable to her. The economic consequences for battered women with teenage boys screened out of domestic violence shelter services are often devastating. In another instance, the advocate helps Sarah think about who in her life is supportive and who might be able to help her financially. In the end, Sarah is able to get financial assistance from her sister. In this case, the advocate's thoughtful questioning helped Sarah discover new avenues of financial help.

²⁵ We recognize that many domestic violence programs have engaged in other work to varying degrees, but we contend that the primary focus of the majority of programs continues to be on short-term services.



Scavenger Hunt

- Think about whether your program is accessible and welcoming to low-income survivors. For example, can a survivor get to your program to access your services if she doesn't have transportation or money to pay for childcare? Do the advocates dress, talk, and interact in ways that make all survivors feel comfortable and welcome?
- Do you have applications for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and other state and federal assistance in your office? Do you know how to help people apply for these benefits? Find out how and bring information to your office.
- Do you have public housing authority or Section 8 applications in your office? If not, go to their office and bring the forms back to your program. While you are at the housing authority, strike up a conversation with a worker there, and write down their name and phone number as a contact.
- Do you have any brochures or information available about filing taxes? If not, contact the IRS (www.irs.gov) and ask them to send you information on helping battered women file for taxes and find out what credits are available to them.
- Look into what it would take to run a *Hope & Power for Your Personal Finances* group,²⁶ or other financial literacy²⁷ curriculum in your community. Or perhaps another group is already offering financial literacy groups in your community, and you could partner with them to inject more information and resources that would be useful for domestic violence survivors.
- What community members are on your board or advisory committee? Are there any bookkeepers, bankers, or accountants? Consider asking them to come to a support group you facilitate and talk about things such as getting a checking account or how to stick to a budget.

Rayna's advocate is very supportive and explains to her that her role isn't to make her leave her husband, which enables Rayna to maintain a connection to her. Additionally, her domestic violence advocate helps Rayna begin to understand the "world of finances" and helps her maintain her welfare grant.

- Explore the link between poverty and substance use and lack of access to adequate support for sobriety. Meet with local drug and alcohol counselors and think about better ways to partner with them so that survivors who are low-income and who are chemically dependent can obtain increased access to the support and services they need to be both safe and sober.
- Think about the overlap of disabilities and poverty, and their intersection with domestic violence—keeping in mind that many persons with disabilities are dependent on fixed, very low-income grants that do not adequately cover the expenses associated with their needs. Reach out to the disability advocates in your community.



Critical Questions to Consider

- We know that in addition to getting their immediate and emergency needs met, battered women need long-term support and assistance in order to become financially stable. What opportunities exist for your program to accommodate the long-term needs of survivors?
- Battered women need practical, tangible help dealing with financial concerns—how to get enough cash to cover all of their expenses, how to manage their money, how to find and get into affordable housing, how to deal with credit problems induced by the abuser or that came about as a result of coping with the abuse. What opportunities exist for your program to offer tangible, practical help—both in the short term and over the long term—from direct cash or vouchers for necessities, to educating battered women

In Ines's journey, her domestic violence advocate explains how the food bank works and signs her up for low-income housing. In another shelter, however, the advocate suggests seeing a therapist, but Ines feels she needs money, not therapy. It can be a challenging balance for advocates to promote healing and provide emotional support, while also helping women with their practical financial needs.

²⁶ The *Hope & Power for Your Personal Finances* curriculum was developed by the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence. More information on the curriculum and how to order copies is available at http://www.ncadv.org/programs/FinancialEducation_120.html.

²⁷ Financial literacy means educating about basic and advanced money management issues, from how to write checks and balance a checkbook, to how best to manage debt, to how to apply for a home loan and manage other longer-term investments.

about their financial options, to advocating with other economic systems and institutions to better respond to battered women's economic needs?

- What opportunities exist for your program to work with survivors who are experiencing multiple barriers: poverty or lack of access to money and resources, coupled with a disability, a criminal record, chemical dependency, or immigration status issues? How can you equip your program to respond to the complex needs of survivors facing all of these issues at once?

Work in **3** Dimensions

Social Services

- Offer long-term support groups that address economic issues (like a Hope & Power group).
- Include in your agency budget a line item for bus passes, gas, grocery store vouchers, and haircuts to help fill the gaps not met by welfare and other community agency programs.
- Partner with a local repair shop to offer free or discounted car repairs to domestic violence survivors.
- Have flyers at your office for food banks (including directions), and information about thrift stores and discount clothing vouchers.
- Have applications at your office for public benefits programs—cash, food, and medical assistance.
- Hold an in-service for staff to help them with their comfort level around talking about financial issues.
- Be sure that shelter policies work for low-income women and do not prohibit/mandate work or access to public benefits.
- Advocate as needed on behalf of (and with) individual battered women as they encounter barriers within the public benefits system.

Tiffany's connection to the domestic violence advocate at the welfare office is critical in helping her smooth out a miscommunication with Child Protective Services (CPS) so that she is able to keep her children. Tiffany was overwhelmed with the logistics of meeting all of CPS's demands when she did not have enough income or resources. The domestic violence advocate was instrumental in helping coordinate the requests of other agencies into a list that Tiffany could complete.

Social Reform

- Educate your funders about the benefits of funding long-term work with survivors and advocate for changes to your contracts as necessary.
- Invite tax preparers, bankers, consumer credit counseling agencies to do trainings for your staff and offer free services. Give them credit in your newsletters or other promotions.
- Attend poverty action meetings in your community—bring the voices of domestic violence survivors to the table.

When Janet tells the advocate at the shelter that she relapsed and used marijuana, she is kicked out of the shelter and told that she cannot come back there again without taking a drug test to prove that she has not used drugs. In J'Mai's story, she is unable to access emergency shelter and other services because she is using alcohol. There are few options for women living in poverty and living with addiction to turn to for help to get safe, sober, and back on their feet.

Social Transformation

- Work purposely toward a living wage for domestic violence advocates.
- Secure public funding for domestic violence programs—ensure that all levels of government see that they have a role to play in advancing community safety and health by investing in ending violence against women.
- Join with the other anti-poverty groups in your community already doing this work and work towards an end to poverty.

&&& Resource List

The Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence has developed a series of protocols regarding different shelter and agency issues. Procedures have been researched nationally and statewide and the model protocols present the best practices an agency can adopt. Model protocols are available at www.wscadv.org under the Resources section, where you can find information on:

Working with Battered Women Impacted by Substance Abuse

Confidentiality When Working with Battered Women

Working with Battered Women Involved in the Child Protection System

Working with Friends and Family of Domestic Violence Victims

Services for Limited English Proficient Immigrant and
Refugee Victims of Domestic Violence

Record-Keeping When Working with Battered Women

Working with Battered Women and their Teenage Boys in Shelter

Screening Practices for Domestic Violence Victims with Disabilities

Safety Planning for Domestic Violence Victims with Disabilities

To read more about financial education classes for battered women, see *Economic Education Programs for Battered Women: Lessons Learned from Two Settings* by Katie Ciorba VonDeLinde and Amy Correia, Building Comprehensive Solutions to Domestic Violence Publication #18, available at VAWnet.org: http://www.vawnet.org/NRCDVPublications/BCSDV/Papers/BCS18_EP.pdf.

Station: Friends & Family

We know that **battered women often turn to friends and family before they try to access service agencies**. Family, friends, neighbors, and religious congregations, among others, are in a key position to help battered women achieve safety and self-sufficiency. They may have access to cash and other resources that they can share with a survivor much easier—and with much less paperwork—than can a government or social service program. When working towards economic justice, friends and family are critical. For low-income battered women, friends and family are often the best resources they have. How can your program capitalize on this reality?

“There are several reasons for the anti-violence movement to develop strategies to support survivors’ connections with friends or family:

1. Survivors turn to people they already know for support before they try to access service agencies.
2. Survivors and their families require deeply rooted, varied and complex support networks that cannot be replaced by any service system.
3. By including friends or family members as allies, they can help to change the culture that supports abuse.

This work can be prevention: working with groups of friends to build strong relationships that can help undermine the isolation that is often part of abusive patterns. It can be an intervention: safety planning with a person who wants to reach out to an abused sister. This work can be ongoing or just one phone call. This work can fit easily into the tools we have for addressing domestic violence and it can deeply challenge our ideas about how to support survivors.”²⁸

²⁸ *Model Protocol on Working with Friends and Family of Domestic Violence Victims*, Connie Burk for the Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 2004.

Scavenger Hunt

- Go to your local community center, Boys and Girls Clubs, or other similar community-based programs that help connect people to one another. Leave flyers and brochures about your program. Meet with the staff and talk about your program and about domestic violence in general.
- Go to the places in your community where people gather to practice their religion (churches, mosques, temples). Meet with the leaders and give them informational material about the domestic violence program(s) in your area and about domestic violence in general.
- Traditionally, religious congregations have a commitment to working towards economic justice. Go to the Faith Trust Institute's website (www.faithtrustinstitute.org) to look at ways that congregations can partner with domestic violence organizations to end abuse and poverty.
- Visit the website for Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) (www.pflag.org) to see how that organization has dedicated itself to working with the friends and families of gay and lesbian individuals. Consider if there are ways that your program can be more accessible and welcoming for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender survivors of abuse.
- What are the local clubs and volunteer organizations popular in your community? Make contact with leaders of these groups and offer presentations and resources.
- Look at your organization's brochure. Does it mention anything about helping friends and family of survivors? If not, consider adding text that shows that you support the work of family and friends and are there to help them. Make it clear that you are available to talk with friends and family members, not only survivors and their children.

In different tracks of J'Mai's story, her mom can play a pivotal role: in one track, her mom helps her out by buying J'Mai a bus ticket home, while in another track she is not very supportive and makes it difficult for J'Mai to ask for help. If J'Mai's mother had better understood the dynamics of domestic violence, she might have been able to respond to J'Mai in a way that would have increased her safety.

Critical Questions to Consider

- Battered women often turn to friends and family before they turn to service agencies. What opportunities exist to partner with community groups and organizations to impact friends and family of survivors?
- We know that battered women also turn to their clergy members for support and that religious institutions are receiving federal funding to promote marriage and healthy relationships. Thus, religious leaders are in a tremendous position to begin new collaborations and projects with domestic violence programs. What opportunities for such collaboration exist in your community?
- Since most people get their jobs through personal connections, what opportunities exist to broaden a battered woman's network and provide her with vital connections to the community?

In one path, Janet's friend Vicky helps out in a big way by allowing Janet to stay with her. However, because she is unfamiliar with the tactics that abusers use to maintain control, Vicky gets duped into believing the real problem in Janet and Gail's relationship is Janet's history of drug abuse and Janet loses access to a safe place to stay.

Work in **3** Dimensions

Social Services

- Work with battered women to see their friends and family as resources and “social capital.”
- Work with battered women to access support (emotional and financial) from local congregations.
- Think of creative options for working with friends and family—in particular, practical and tangible ways to support a domestic violence survivor whether they are in or out of the abusive relationship. For example, if a mother wants to help her daughter but is concerned about where her financial support will go, suggest that she write a check directly to her daughter’s landlord.
- Broaden battered women’s effective support network.

In Linh’s story, she is very isolated. She is lucky when Yen, the cashier at the grocery store, helps her and gives her a place to stay. Linh does not access many formal institutions, and friends and family are virtually her only support. As her adult son attempts to balance his relationship with his father and his mother, Linh becomes increasingly reliant on her younger children. Domestic violence programs and schools could consider partnering together to educate children and teenagers about what to do if domestic violence is happening in their home.

Social Reform

- Equip your agency and others in helping friends and family help battered women by giving them information about your services and other services in the community.
- Partner with congregations in your community to help them meet the needs of low-income battered women.

Social Transformation

- Work on public awareness campaigns that encourage the public to help take responsibility for domestic violence.
- Support campaigns that focus on social transformation—engaging men to work against violence against women and gender stereotypes.
- Support campaigns that show where our state and federal taxes go, including to social programs that help low-income battered women.
- Involve yourself in responsible fatherhood work, marriage promotion, and healthy relationships initiatives. Someone should be at the table talking about domestic violence.

&&& Resource List

The Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence has developed a number of publications on helping battered women and their children in rural communities (which can also apply to non-rural areas). Look under the Publications section of www.pcadv.org for:

A Guide for Family and Friends

A Guide for Cosmetologists

A Guide for Faith Leaders and Religious Communities

The Family Violence Prevention Fund’s “Coaching Boys Into Men” campaign encourages men to model nonviolent behavior and teach boys and young men about respect for girls and women: <http://endabuse.org/cbim>

Rayna has very active and supportive friends and family through her mother-in-law and Jean, her prayer partner. Both are very supportive and compassionate. Their consistent outreach and active listening are critical safety nets as Rayna ponders how best to cope with Kenny’s abuse and control. They offer much-needed emotional and spiritual support, but they also offer tangible, practical help such as cash and respite babysitting.

Station: Healthcare

Domestic violence is a healthcare issue.

“Healthcare providers [are] in a unique position to help victims of abuse, if they know how to detect domestic violence and provide victims with referrals and support.”²⁹ “Because most women visit a healthcare provider for routine or emergency care, healthcare providers are often in the best position to help victims escape abuse. As the single most important, and most accessed institution in the lives of women, the healthcare setting can provide a unique opportunity to intervene, making it one of the newest and most critical areas of the domestic violence movement today.”³⁰

Recall that in Sarah’s story she must return to her abusive husband Doug after he cancels her sick child’s medical insurance. She is faced with the horrible reality that she cannot afford her son’s medication and treatment on her small salary alone, and therefore has few options to escape the abuse.

Healthcare is an economic justice issue. Access to (or lack of) healthcare is a major factor in decision making for women in abusive relationships. Battered women tell us that access to healthcare and health insurance (for themselves or for their children) are some of the reasons they must stay in or return to abusive relationships. “Choices” around healthcare are complicated, even without the difficult circumstances that domestic violence poses. Monthly premiums can make the difference between having access to healthcare and having to go to the emergency room for care, which raises overall costs and further limits people’s access to needed care. Battered women often have greater healthcare needs than women in non-violent relationships. According to one study, women with a history of domestic violence report considerably higher rates of all types of health problems than do women without a history of abuse.³¹ Chronic health problems resulting from physical and psychological abuse make accessing healthcare of paramount importance to low-income women, and specifically make affordable healthcare essential for low-income battered women and their children.

✓✓✓ Scavenger Hunt

- Does your community have a free or low-cost health clinic? If so, go there and sit in the waiting room for 30 minutes. What is it like? Talk with the head nurse if possible and find out whether the clinic routinely screens for domestic violence. If they do not, offer sample questions that the clinic could consider adding to their intake sheet.³² Are there any signs posted or brochures about domestic violence in the waiting room or in the women’s bathroom? In what languages? If not, return another time with brochures and flyers. Write down the location and contact information for the clinic.
- Visit the emergency room at your local hospital. Talk with the head nurse if possible and find out whether the clinic routinely screens for domestic violence. If they do not, offer sample questions that the clinic could consider adding to their intake sheet. Is there any information about domestic violence in the waiting room or in the women’s bathroom, and in what languages? If not, return another time with brochures and flyers.
- Find out where immigrants and farm workers in your community go to access healthcare. Write down the location and contact information for the clinic. When is the clinic open? Talk with the head nurse if possible and find out whether the clinic routinely screens for domestic violence. If they do not, offer sample questions that the clinic could consider adding to their intake sheet. What languages are brochures and flyers needed in?
- Go to your state’s medical administration website and look at what health insurance programs are available for low-income people (if any). Is there a subsidized health insurance program for adults

29 Family Violence Prevention Fund, <http://endabuse.org/programs/healthcare>.

30 Family Violence Prevention Fund, “Domestic Violence Is a Health Care Issue,” <http://endabuse.org/programs/display.php3?DocID=35#1>.

31 Jacquelyn Campbell et al., “Intimate partner violence and physical health consequences,” *Archives of Internal Medicine* 162(10), 2002, p. 1157–63. See the Centers for Disease Control’s “Intimate Partner Violence: Fact Sheet” for more statistics on healthcare and domestic violence: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/ipvfacts.htm>.

32 The Family Violence Prevention Fund has a variety of materials on healthcare and domestic violence available at www.endabuse.org/programs/healthcare.

without children? If so, is there a waiting list? Get applications to bring to your office.

- Does your state offer health insurance programs for low-income children? What are the income requirements? Are there monthly premiums?
- What kinds of healthcare do the local high schools provide? Do they have any information about dating violence available? If not, provide schools with brochures and flyers and introduce yourself to the school nurse(s) and counselors.
- Are there any low-cost dental programs in your area? If yes, find out what and where they are and bring information to your office. If not, make contact with local dentists to see if they would be willing to provide dental care for battered women on a sliding scale.
- Connect with your local health department and meet the public health nurses who do home visits in the community. Let them know about your services.
- How can persons who are temporarily (or permanently) disabled—as a result of domestic violence or otherwise—obtain healthcare coverage? What conditions are eligible and are there adequate funds to cover the need?

Rayna has very positive interactions with healthcare practitioners who are quick to spot Kenny's abusive behaviors and offer respite care and follow-up check-ins. Healthcare programs that are funded to address the spectrum of a patient's needs beyond the hospital visit benefit all potential patients, but stand to especially benefit battered women, who may be returning home to partners who are less than supportive.



Critical Questions to Consider

- Do low-income battered women and their children have adequate access to healthcare in your community—whether through health insurance, low-cost or free clinics, or out-of-pocket payments? What opportunities exist to improve access to the healthcare system for low-income women and children?
- Are healthcare providers in your community routinely screening for domestic violence? Are they equipped to offer appropriate information and referrals if a patient discloses abuse? What opportunities exist to strengthen the capacity of healthcare providers to respond to domestic violence?
- What rights and protections exist in your state or locality for a domestic violence survivor to reduce the abuser's control over her and her children's access to health insurance? Are different strategies required if the policy is in the survivor's name versus her partner's name? How can survivors be informed about those rights and protections? Where those rights and protections are inadequate, are there opportunities for improvement?
- What opportunities exist in your community to ensure that immigrant women and children have adequate access to healthcare?

Even though a nurse screens Tiffany for domestic violence, she does not disclose what is happening, for a variety of reasons. Nevertheless, it is important that Tiffany know that her doctor's office is a place where she could talk about abuse. Later in her story, Gary shows up at the hospital during the birth of their second child. The hospital staff assumes he is welcome and let him in. As a result, the paternity for her second child is automatically established, forever linking the two parents. While this may have problematic consequences for Tiffany on many levels, it also means Gary can now be legally ordered to financially support his children.

Work in **3** Dimensions

Social Services

- Accompany survivors to the hospital or clinic and advocate on their behalf as necessary.
- Incorporate questions about health insurance and access to healthcare in your intake forms and in safety planning with survivors.
- Educate survivors about the availability of low-cost or subsidized healthcare programs; help them fill out the application paperwork.
- Incorporate a healthcare program or visiting practitioner into your shelter program.
- Bring experts on healthcare to your support groups to discuss the physical impact of stress and trauma.

Social Reform

- Talk with local health clinics about domestic violence and offer training to their staff.
- Discuss screening for domestic violence with local health clinics and providers.
- Offer your program as a resource or referral for battered women who disclose abuse to a healthcare provider.
- Work with healthcare providers to consider offering reduced or free services to battered women who have lost health insurance as a result of the abuse (e.g., abuser cancels her coverage or makes her lose her job and health benefits).

Social Transformation

- Oppose federal and state cuts to Medicaid and Medicare.
- Work on campaigns that promote universal healthcare coverage by pressuring the federal government to deal comprehensively with the national healthcare crisis.
- Oppose premiums on health insurance for low-income people.
- Educate yourself and your program on the economics of prescription drugs.

&&& Resource List

WSCADV is part of the Community Partnership Against Sexual and Domestic Violence (formerly the Perinatal Partnership Against Domestic Violence), which works to promote awareness, education and action among healthcare providers regarding domestic and sexual violence. Contact Leigh Hofheimer at WSCADV at 206-389-2515 x104 for more information on this program in Washington state.

For more information about domestic violence and healthcare statistics, check out the Family Violence Prevention Fund's Health Care Program Resources at: www.endabuse.org/programs/healthcare and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention factsheet at: www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/ipvfacts.htm.

The Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence created a Domestic Violence Health Care Provider Training Evaluation Toolkit in response to the needs expressed by domestic violence advocates working in healthcare programs across Pennsylvania. This toolkit allows trainers to evaluate a range of healthcare trainings on domestic violence, with the recognition that there is often limited time for trainings or their evaluations.

Go to: www.pcadv.org

click Projects and look for the Medical Advocacy Project.

Examples of what states have done on "Health Care for All" campaigns:

www.hcfama.org (Massachusetts)

www.healthcareforall.org (California)

Station: Housing

Access to affordable housing is an economic justice issue that affects battered women's immediate and long-term safety. The inability to maintain safe housing is a key reason many survivors must return to an abusive partner. Low-income households in the U.S. encounter barriers to finding housing due, in part, to a decrease in the number of low-income housing units nationwide, a decline in federal funding for low-income housing, and the skyrocketing costs of housing coupled with low wages. For battered women, the scarcity of affordable housing options can be even more overwhelming due to ruined credit by the abuser, criminal records, and violence in the home that leads to eviction. It is critical that communities begin to address the issue of housing and homelessness as an economic justice issue and as a basic human right.

Because of Joseph's skill at tracking her down, Ines could not safely supply her real name or Social Security number to landlords or public housing agencies. Without any other options, she and her children were forced to live in a series of homeless shelters.

Scavenger Hunt

- What are all the ways that low-income people in your community cope with their housing needs? Find or gather a list of all (or a sampling if you live in a large urban area) the low-income housing providers (including landlords who accept Section 8 vouchers).
- Call your public housing authority, or the agency in your town tasked with issuing Section 8 vouchers for rental assistance. How many people are on their waiting list to receive vouchers? Find out what the agency's procedure is for processing applications for Section 8 for victims of domestic violence. What happens when a married victim of domestic violence separates from the abuser—who gets to keep the assisted housing unit or Section 8 voucher?
- Is there a homeless shelter in your community? Go there, make connections with the staff, and drop off flyers and brochures.
- Gather a few representative leases used by public housing authorities or landlords who accept Section 8 vouchers. What do these leases say about

the consequences for criminal activity or domestic violence? What impact do you imagine or know those provisions are having on victims of domestic violence?

- Look at the application for assisted housing—whether for Section 8 or other public, supportive or special needs housing. What difficulties or barriers do you see for victims who are being stalked, or for immigrant/refugee victims who do not have proof of legal status to access subsidized housing?
- Identify the real estate developers and organizations involved in affordable housing development in your community. Find out if they meet on a regular basis. Consider facilitating *In Her Shoes—Economic Justice Edition* for this group, and whether to recruit them to participate in your community stakeholder group.
- Investigate what resources exist in your community for helping people make ends meet when they are struggling to pay rent. What options exist for individuals who need help with the initial move-in expenses (typically the security deposit plus an amount equal to first and last month's rent)?
- Find out which agencies or groups address and resolve housing-related discrimination. Will they work with victims of domestic violence who have been evicted or denied housing?
- Who in your community is helping low-income individuals or first-time homebuyers buy houses? Consider if there is anyone that you could partner with specifically to assist domestic violence survivors in obtaining permanent affordable housing.
- What is the average fair-market rent in your community for one-, two- and three-bedroom homes? How does that amount compare to the average welfare grant or minimum wage salary for a one-, two-, or three-person family?

Janet was told she was not eligible for low-income housing because she did not have any children. Without enough money for first and last month's rent and security deposit, she could not move into her own place, and the low wages at her job made it impossible for her to save up for those initial move-in expenses.



Critical Questions to Consider

- What opportunities exist to improve the number of quality affordable housing units in your community? Is it possible for housing providers to prioritize housing survivors and their children?
- What material supports could be developed or expanded to assist survivors with obtaining and maintaining safe housing—from assistance with initial move-in costs to help making mortgage payments if the abuser leaves?
- How can landlords, property management companies and public housing authorities be educated about the dynamics of domestic violence, and how that can impact credit and criminal records as well as rental histories? How can they be persuaded to see the value in preserving survivors' access to safe and affordable housing? How can our community create safe, permanent housing options for survivors and children who are being stalked by lethal and dangerous abusers?

Sarah had few housing choices: she couldn't afford to rent her own place, and her older son was not allowed into the domestic violence shelter.

Work in **3** Dimensions

Social Services

- Help stabilize survivors in their new homes by following up with them after they have left shelter or transitional housing.
- Keep public housing applications stocked at the domestic violence program; educate survivors about affordable housing options and help them gather and fill out the necessary paperwork.
- Advocate with landlords to allow victims to break their leases without penalty, if moving is necessary for safety reasons.
- Advocate with mortgage companies to help a survivor keep her house during times of financial difficulty.
- Educate survivors about legal options for removing the abuser from their shared home.

Social Reform

- Work with housing authorities to cooperate with one another to facilitate emergency transfers between different developments and towns as necessary to secure safety for victims and their children.
- Work with landlords and other housing managers to develop domestic violence protocols and trainings, with input from domestic violence advocates, which prevent evictions of victims or prevent the necessity of fleeing.
- Work with shelter and transitional housing providers to collaborate with housing developers to set aside units for families who have been displaced due to domestic violence.
- Work with public housing authorities to prioritize domestic violence victims on their waiting lists.³³
- Work with employers to develop innovative programs to assist employees in securing and maintaining housing near their jobs.
- Participate in HMIS (Homelessness Management Information System) groups and work to implement special participation provisions for domestic violence shelters that maintain the privacy and confidentiality of domestic violence survivors.

Social Transformation

- Urge federal and state legislators to appropriate funds—on a long-term basis—towards building an adequate supply of affordable housing units.
- Participate in campaigns that promote community responsibility for ending homelessness.

³³ For the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's recommendations on granting preferences to victims of domestic violence, refer to Chapter 19 of the *Public Housing Occupancy Guidebook* at: <http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/programs/ph/rhiip/phguidebooknew.pdf>.

&&& Resource List

For a simulation on the “choices” people living in poverty have to make about their housing situation, check out the Hobson’s Choice homelessness “game” at: <http://www.realchangenews.org/hobsons/index.cgi>.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development website provides guidelines on all federal housing programs and the Fair Housing Act: www.hud.gov

A number of national organizations are working to end homelessness and create housing options for people living in poverty.

National Alliance to End Homelessness: www.naeh.org

National Coalition for the Homeless: www.nationalhomeless.org

National Low-Income Housing Coalition: www.nlihc.org

Beyond Shelter: www.beyondshelter.org

Harbor Communities Overcoming Violence, a domestic violence program in Chelsea, Massachusetts, has a unique community housing initiative: www.harborcov.org.

For an extensive listing of articles, bibliographies, fact sheets, papers, reports and surveys about housing issues related to ending violence against women, check out the “Categorized Annotated Resource Guide on Housing and Domestic Violence” at: <http://www.vawnet.org/DomesticViolence/PublicPolicy/Housing/HousingResources.php>.

One landlord takes a great weight off Rayna’s shoulders when she tells Rayna that only Kenny will be held responsible for the violence, and that Rayna can break her lease if needed. However, Rayna may encounter trouble renting again in the future, since Kenny forced the family to break their public housing lease. Conversely, think of Tiffany’s experience with a landlord who threatened to kick her out due to “criminal activity”—Gary’s criminal activity, that is.

Station: Job

When a survivor knows that she has access to an independent source of reliable income, her options for coping with the abuse are broader.

She can consider leaving or staying without regard to her or her children’s dependence on the abuser’s income. Furthermore, employment offers the survivor connection to co-workers and others who can provide emotional support, resources, and practical help.

Battered women tell us that they want to work, and if it is safe to do so, they will. In addition to the direct effect physical violence can have on a woman trying to hold down a job, an abuser’s stalking, harassment, and refusal to cooperate with childcare arrangements are all aspects of family violence that can be barriers to women’s employment. Studies indicate that between 35 and 56 percent of employed battered women are harassed at work—in person—by their abusive partner.³⁴ Batterers often interfere with women’s efforts to work or study by:

- Making work-related threats.
- Picking fights or inflicting injuries before important events.
- Preventing her from sleeping.
- Calling repeatedly at her work.
- Stalking her at work.
- Saying negative things about her ability to succeed.
- Refusing at the last minute to provide promised childcare.

Employers can play a crucial role in helping battered women stay safe. Studies have shown that “96 percent of employees who were victims of domestic violence reported some type of workplace problem as a direct result of their abuse: more than 60 percent were reprimanded for diminished performance and 30 percent were fired.”³⁵ Employers who understand the dynamics of domestic violence and how it adversely affects the workplace and employee performance can take a proactive position on

³⁴ Jody Raphael, *Prisoners of Abuse: Domestic Violence and Welfare Receipt*, Taylor Institute, 1996; Jody Raphael, *Domestic Violence: Telling the Untold Welfare-to-Work Story*, Taylor Institute, 1995.

³⁵ *Voices of Survival: The Economic Impacts of Domestic Violence, A Blueprint for Action*, by Janet Fender, Laurie Holmes and Sarah Levy in conjunction with the Economic Stability Working Group of the Transition Subcommittee of the Governor’s Commission on Domestic Violence, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, 2002, p. 4, citing Connie Stanley, *Domestic Violence: An Occupational Impact Study*, 1992 and Melanie Shepard and Ellen Pence, *The Effect of Battering on the Employment Status of Women*, 1988.

supporting survivors in maintaining their jobs. Employers can consider offering simple accommodations, such as routing phone calls to another worker, allowing the survivor to transfer to another job site, or allowing the employee to take (paid or unpaid) time off to take care of childcare, court, medical and other needs.

Scavenger Hunt

- Look on the Internet or call your state unemployment office and find out how to apply for unemployment benefits. Are there any provisions that allow victims of domestic violence to receive benefits? If so, what are the specific steps necessary to qualify?
- Is there a large employer in your area? What policies and practices do they have in place regarding domestic violence? Are they interested in receiving training on domestic violence? Consider facilitating *In Her Shoes—Economic Justice Edition* for them, and whether to recruit them to participate in your community stakeholder group.
- What opportunities do women have for earning a living wage in your community, and is there a way to expand those opportunities? What other groups are working on this issue in your area?

For J'Mai, her job represents a connection to others in an otherwise isolated life, and it represents steps toward her future goals. However, her fate is literally determined by a toss of the coin. In one path, her boss recognizes what is happening with Tre and offers J'Mai his support, along with connecting her to practical help. In the other path, J'Mai's boss takes her frazzled behavior and bruised appearance as a sign of incompetence and fires her.

Critical Questions to Consider

- What opportunities exist to help battered women find living wage jobs?
- What resources exist to train battered women who have been out of the workforce for a number of years due to an abusive relationship?
- What opportunities are there for collaboration with local employers who can make a tremendous difference in the lives of battered women and their children by allowing for flexibility for survivors to deal with court and childcare issues?

Work in **3** Dimensions

Social Services

- Advocate on behalf of a battered woman with her employer.
- Help survivors fill out an unemployment insurance claim.
- Have information about a job preparation agency at your program.
- Have resources about creating a resume available at your program.
- Help a battered woman prepare for an interview.

Social Reform

- Advocate to large local/state employers to better support battered women.
- Work on passing unemployment insurance legislation with provisions for battered women.
- Partner with a local job preparation agency to tailor their services to battered women or to accommodate them in a way that maximizes safety.

Social Transformation

- Work on a living wage campaign.
- Work towards gender equity/parity in pay.

As an immigrant who could not produce work authorization papers, Linh's only option was to work in sub-par conditions. There are few options available for battered immigrant and refugee women to make ends meet.

Remember Sarah's boss who has to "let her go" because her court issues interfered with her work schedule.

Janet is continually fearful of losing her low-wage job due to domestic violence and homophobia.

&&& Resource List

For information on workplace violence and steps employers can take:

Family Violence Prevention Fund:

www.endabuse.org/workplace

and

PCADV: www.pcadv.org (click Publications, then Factsheets).

Legal Momentum (formerly NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund)

(www.legalmomentum.org) is a national women's rights legal advocacy organization that has a substantial collection of information on the employment rights of survivors of abuse. Specifically, check out their report *Surviving Violence and Poverty: A Focus on the Link between Domestic and Sexual Violence, Women's Poverty and Welfare* at: <http://www.legalmomentum.org/issues/wel/Surviving.pdf>.

Coalition of Labor Union Women (www.cluw.org): A national organization for union women, focusing on a variety of concerns relevant to working families, including domestic violence.

Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence (www.caepv.org): A national nonprofit organization supporting employers and organizations to address partner violence at work, ranging from policies and programs to legal issues and legislation.

Ines's abuser intervened so that she couldn't keep her nursing license current, thus limiting her employment opportunities for years to come. Abusers often maintain control by limiting their partner's ability to get and retain employment, thus restricting their financial independence and earning power.

Station: Legal

While the legal system has implemented a variety of responses to domestic violence that focus on safety and accountability (in the form of arresting and prosecuting abusers and offering and enforcing various civil protections to victims), the legal system has not adequately used its power to aid in women's economic empowerment. In addition, the current responses often inadvertently weaken women's financial status (such as when arresting the abuser means loss of income for the household).

Access to the benefits of the criminal justice system is often restricted for low-income individuals. Battered women need access to attorneys. In a time of budget cuts, when legal services are being reduced at an alarming rate, low-income people are more and more unable to find and afford attorneys.

We need a legal system that more efficiently addresses property issues between non-married couples; enhances protective orders by including stipulations related to maintenance and payment of bills; eliminates police brutality against and over-involvement with communities of color; and cuts ties with immigration enforcement. These improvements will help ensure that low-income and marginalized communities have equal access to legal protection and law enforcement.

Domestic violence programs can work for economic justice in the legal arena by considering how the rise of the prison industrial complex disproportionately affects low-income people and people of color, and how this oppression further distances low-income battered women, battered women of color and immigrant battered women from the potential protections of the legal system.



Scavenger Hunt

- Find out which programs, firms, or individual attorneys in your area offer free or low-cost legal services. How does someone apply for these services? Is there a waiting list?
- Can survivors ask the courts for a protective order? If so, what kinds of financial protections are available, if any, to survivors seeking protective orders? For example, can a survivor request that the abuser be removed from the joint household, so that she can retain safe housing? Can the abuser be ordered to stay away from her house, job, and/or school? Can the abuser be ordered to address other economic concerns, such as paying temporary child support or spousal support?
- Do your courts require abusers to pay restitution to their victims? If so, is the amount adequate? Is that requirement enforced? What are the pros and cons for battered women?

Ines has the unfortunate experience of being married to an abuser who is a cop. Because of his law enforcement experience, he has the ability to track her down in different cities and states, which means she is unable to use her real name or Social Security number, further limiting her access to services and the economic security of a decent job. Ines's story illustrates the importance of creating pathways for victims in extremely dangerous situations to be able to legally pursue employment and government benefit programs (without having to use their name or Social Security number).



Critical Questions to Consider

- What opportunities exist to partner with legal services and private attorneys to ensure that low-income survivors are not left out of the system and that those who can't afford attorneys are well represented?
- What opportunities exist for survivors who are arrested for domestic violence? What are the long-term ramifications of pleading guilty to a domestic violence charge?
- Do your state's divorce, paternity, and child support laws help battered women access the money and assets they are entitled to?

- How are low-income women being treated when they get ensnared in the court system—criminal or civil—because of what the abuser has forced them to do?
- Knowing that abusers often have access to legal resources while battered women do not, what opportunities exist to help ensure equity in property distribution, child custody and visitation?
- What is law enforcement's role in or level of cooperation with Border Patrol and other immigration agents?
- How does criminalization of social problems disproportionately affect low-income people (e.g., “war on drugs,” “civility” laws)?

Work in 3 Dimensions

Social Services

- Help a battered woman get her criminal record expunged or vacated (if that is possible) so that she can pursue employment and other benefits with fewer restrictions.
- Keep a list of attorneys, firms or programs that offer free or low-cost legal services at your office and hand it out to survivors.
- Facilitate support groups for women at your local jail or nearest prison that address the effects of domestic violence and sexual assault.
- Be prepared to discuss the various ways your criminal and civil legal systems can assist in getting a survivor's financial needs met—whether through ordering the abuser to pay child support or restitution, or dividing property and debts via divorce or small claims court, or civil lawsuits seeking damages for pain and suffering.

Social Reform

- Partner with family law attorneys to educate judges about the importance of ensuring that women maintain equitable access to the shared resources of the marriage during a divorce.
- Work with child support enforcement personnel to ensure that child support is being collected in ways that preserve safety while enhancing economic well-being.
- Advocate for judges to allot money in protection order hearings.

Social Transformation

- Engage in discussions with your community about how to dismantle the current situation in which the legal system adversely affects people of color, low-income people and other marginalized communities.
- Work with local law enforcement to ensure that immigrant victims can safely access help from law enforcement without fear of deportation.

&&& Resource List

The Battered Women's Justice Project (www.bwjp.org) promotes systemic change within community organizations and governmental agencies engaged in the civil and criminal justice response to domestic violence that creates true institutional accountability to the goal of ensuring safety for battered women and their families.

The National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty (www.nlchp.org) has fact sheets, legal briefing materials, links, legislative tracking, agency information and other resources.

Giving Real Options to Women (GROW) is a community-based domestic violence program in Seattle dedicated to the education, advocacy, and empowerment of domestic violence survivors arrested and charged with domestic violence-related crimes. For more information, contact them at: info@givingrealoptions.org.

Linh did not have legal status to live and work in the U.S., but because her controlling husband kept her immigration papers at his attorney's office, she had to work under the table. When she tried to access the public benefits system, she had a very difficult time proving her eligibility for assistance. Without access to resources, Linh is either unable to make ends meet and thus returns to her husband (and to her ultimate death) or she and her daughters are left to live a life of poverty, long work hours, and constant looming threat of deportation. Linh's story illustrates the importance of securing protections and access to economic opportunities for battered immigrant women, regardless of their legal status.

Station: Money & Necessities

As has been discussed throughout this workbook, access to resources—specifically money and basic necessities—is key to a battered woman's long-term safety and self-sufficiency.

According to a report by the Massachusetts Governor's Commission on Domestic Violence compiled after hearings where domestic violence survivors gave testimony on the economic impacts of abuse: "When a batterer controls all family financial resources including bank accounts, paychecks, investments, and assets held jointly or solely in the victim's name, he inflicts more than economic dependency. That [tactic] results in circumstances that can leave victims homeless, unemployed and debt-ridden for years, long after flight from the abuser."³⁷

Battered women know that financial independence can be a key to getting and staying safe. Studies have shown that safe child support collection can be a tremendous factor in helping low-income parents make ends meet.³⁸ Therefore, it is critical for economic stability that custodial parents, when they are able to do so safely, receive adequate child support—consistently and without fear of retaliation.

✓✓✓ Scavenger Hunt

- What local banks do you have in your community? Go to your own bank (or another one) and investigate what it takes to open a checking and a savings account. Does your bank help first-time account openers? Ask to speak with a manager and find out how they can help battered women who may lack necessary forms of identification to open an account. What are acceptable pieces of identification and what does not count?
- Do you have the skills to teach someone how to write a check? Go to the Consumer Debit Resource site at www.consumerdebit.com and print out their hand-out on "Learn Checkbook Basics" (under "About Checking" section).

³⁷ *Voices of Survival: The Economic Impacts of Domestic Violence, A Blueprint for Action*, p. 11, http://www.harborcov.org/pages/publications/voices_of_survival.pdf.

³⁸ Vicky Turetsky, *The Child Support Program: An Investment that Works*, Center for Law and Social Policy, 2005, http://www.clasp.org/publications/cs_funding_042005.pdf.

- Look in your local newspaper and at your local community action council to find out if there are any classes on budgeting or money management. Attend a session and see if this would be a helpful class for survivors to attend.
- Go to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence website and check out the information about their *Hope & Power* curriculum: http://www.ncadv.org/programs/FinancialEducation_120.html. Investigate what it would take to start a financial literacy group in your community.
- Where are the places to get free or reduced food, clothing, and necessities (like cleaning supplies) in your community? List the places you find and put together a resource guide for battered women who come through your door needing these things.
- Find out where your local food bank is and verify the times/days when they distribute food. Drive by to make sure you could give a person good directions, including how to get there using public transportation.
- Go to the food bank on food distribution day and get in line. Chat with people standing nearby. Tell them you are trying to learn more about what's available in the community and find out if they can tell you more about applying for food assistance (food stamps) or other places or ideas about getting food. What was the most interesting thing that happened to you in line?

Janet goes to the bank assuming she can withdraw money from the account that her paychecks are deposited in, but discovers that she is not a co-signer. Because of her bad credit history, she is unable to open her own account.



Critical Questions to Consider

- What opportunities exist in your community for battered women to access the critical support that they need in order to become financially independent?
- What resources exist in your community for teaching women and girls about finances, money management and debt reduction? How can we ensure that these programs and classes include support for women who may not have control over what is happening with their family finances?
- How can you partner with your local banking community to provide tangible, long-term economic supports for battered women and their children, such as matching contribution savings programs, safe checking and savings accounts, and short-term loans?
- What opportunities and protections can you help battered women access with regards to taxation (e.g., innocent spouse relief, Earned Income Tax Credit)?

When Sarah goes to the bank to see how much money is in her account, she discovers that she is not listed as a co-signer. Controlling access to cash by restricting access to a bank account is just one of many ways that abusers limit access to resources.

Work in **3** Dimensions

Social Services

- Help a battered woman get a checking account.
- Run a Hope & Power (or other financial literacy) group.
- Help survivors save and build resources through innovative programs such as Individual Development Accounts (IDAs).³⁹
- Discuss safety of child support collection and inform survivors of their rights.
- Assist survivors in safely obtaining child support.
- Have information on taxes and the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) available at your office.

In Tiffany's story, Gary tracks her down at school after he receives a letter from child support enforcement requiring payment. This event triggers Gary to re-enter Tiffany's life and start his abuse all over again. This is a common theme in battered women's lives; Tiffany's story suggests the importance of safe child support collection.

Social Reform

- Partner with local banks to develop strategies that will help victims protect assets and repair credit damaged by batterers. Work with local banks to:
 - Provide written materials that educate all account holders about confidentiality rights and protecting assets and credit rating.
 - Implement strong policies to better protect accounts held jointly or in a spouse's name against interference such as withdrawal, closure, or use as collateral.
 - Adopt emergency procedures that would allow joint account-holders to be notified of suspicious activity and allow survivors to freeze assets.
- Work with courts and urge them to prioritize child support cases for hearings where there is domestic violence and to issue sanctions when batterers do not pay child support.
- Work with a community foundation to institute IDA programs for battered women.
- Train child support workers to do a child support safety assessment, so they can address child support issues in victims' safety plans.
- Partner with local accountants to provide pro bono services to battered women.

Social Transformation

- Work on legislation that criminalizes predatory lending.
- Work on a minimum wage campaign.
- Work to expand the Earned Income Tax Credit.
- Support initiatives to change regressive tax structures and institute more progressive taxes that place less of a burden on lower-income people.⁴⁰

&&& Resource List

The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence created and distributes copies of *Hope & Power for Your Personal Finances: A Rebuilding Guide Following Domestic Violence*. Get more information at: http://www.ncadv.org/programs/FinancialEducation_120.html.

The Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) has a number of articles on child support by Vicki Turetsky and others. Browse their publications at www.clasp.org.

Information on the federal Food Stamp Program: www.fns.usda.gov/fsp.

For a map of minimum wage laws and rates for each state, check out this webpage from the U.S. Department of Labor: <http://www.dol.gov/esa/minwage/america.htm>.

Kenny never let Rayna be involved in discussions of money or in managing the household finances. Rayna's confidence was boosted when her advocate educated her about finances and Rayna learned that she could handle money on her own if she needed to.

³⁹ Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) are special savings accounts designed to assist low-income people on the path towards asset ownership through matched savings and financial education. The programs are implemented by community-based organizations in partnership with a financial institution that holds the deposits, and funded by public and private sources. To find out what IDA programs exist in your state, go to the listing of state-by-state information on the IDA network webpage at: http://idanetwork.cfed.org/index.php?section=state&page=state_pages.html.

⁴⁰ Definition of "progressive tax" from www.wikipedia.org: "A progressive tax...is a tax that is larger as a percentage of income for those with larger incomes. It is usually applied in reference to income taxes, where people with more income pay a higher percentage of it in taxes...The opposite of a progressive tax is a regressive tax...[where] the amount of the tax is smaller as a percentage of income for people with larger incomes. Many taxes other than the income tax tend to be regressive in practice [such as] most sales taxes...[and] social security taxes."

Station: School

Battered women tell us that getting the education that enables them to get a living wage job is one of the best ways they can try to keep themselves safe from abuse.

“Survivors of domestic violence need to be able to participate in education and training programs to be able to escape abusive situations and to secure economic stability so they are less likely to have to turn to their batterer for financial support... To escape and survive, an individual needs substantive skills for the workplace. Many survivors cannot participate in education and training programs without income supports and other supports such as transportation and child care. Some survivors will also need...to attend part-time...Once a survivor has fled domestic violence, many other factors, including trauma symptoms and practical considerations, can make it more difficult to participate in education or training programs. Needing to be in hiding, being homeless, moving from shelter to shelter, coping with legal needs, and trying to support themselves and their children financially all pose huge logistical barriers for participation in education and training...[E]ducation and training can serve as the key to higher earnings and career advancement. At the same time, acquiring knowledge, building a future, and succeeding also empowers survivors and helps them rebuild self-esteem.”⁴⁰

J'Mai doesn't feel like anyone at school cares about her except for Miss Vaughn. Think about the positive impact Miss Vaughn has on J'Mai's life by listening to her and working to get her into a program that she really cares about and is invested in so she doesn't return to Tre. In another track, when J'Mai goes to sign up at the local community college and she has no address, the staffperson makes an exception and lets her use a P.O. box number. She is also very supportive and gives J'Mai information on the drug hotline, housing programs, and treatment programs.

✓✓✓ Scavenger Hunt

- Does your community have a community college or a low-cost program that battered women could attend? Find out the resources and make them available in your office.
- Find out what Adult Basic Education classes or programs are offered in your area.
- What safety precautions do your local high schools and colleges provide for victims and survivors of domestic violence? Do they have any policy related to separating partners involved in domestic violence? Who is the contact person at each school and college to speak to about this? Write down their names and contact information.
- Go online to www.fafsa.ed.gov and look through the materials on applying for federal financial aid, as well as www.studentaid.ed.gov for more general information about student financial aid and education programs beyond high school.
- Find out what financial aid programs exist locally or statewide and request information that you can distribute to battered women who come to your program.

In Linh's story, her daughter's teacher gives her a referral to attend an English class. Attending classes becomes Linh's only contact with the outside world. Domestic violence programs could think critically about how to help break the isolation for limited English speakers who live in communities without these classes or other supports.

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Critical Questions to Consider

- What opportunities exist in your community to assist survivors with finishing or continuing their education?
- What are the chances of survivors obtaining a living wage job in your community without a college degree?
- What opportunities exist in your community to partner with schools, community colleges, and universities to make education accessible and flexible for survivors and their children?

⁴⁰ *Voices of Survival: The Economic Impacts of Domestic Violence, A Blueprint for Action*, p. 53.

Work in **3** Dimensions

Social Services

- Have applications for GED classes and community college in your office.
- Have copies of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) in your office to help battered women apply for financial assistance to attend school.
- Incorporate questions about school attendance into your safety plans.
- Build alliances with financial aid offices at local schools.

Social Reform

- Partner with Adult Basic Education teachers and exchange information with participants and staff about the dynamics of domestic violence.
- Collaborate with community colleges to design education and training programs that meet the needs of survivors of violence. Programs can be designed with case management or counseling so that survivors can have easy access to the additional supports they need. Programs can be designed with flexible time standards (part-time hours, flexible start and end dates) so that survivors can participate as much as possible while also maximizing their ability to attend to unexpected domestic violence-related needs.

Social Transformation

- Work on initiatives that make access to education a basic right for all.
- Urge the federal government to increase grant programs for education, rather than student loans which need to be repaid.

Ines's story illustrates the obstacles that battered women face when relocating with new names and Social Security numbers. Ines is initially unable to enroll in school because she can't produce previous education records, but eventually gets around it by signing up for classes without actually enrolling, which makes her eligible for a degree later on. Communities can be creative when working with women who are reluctant to access education records from their past.

&&& Resource List

For a list of federal student aid programs: www.fafsa.ed.gov/what010.htm.

For information on GED testing, check out the American Council on Education (www.acenet.edu).

For information on adult education and literacy programs, check out the Commission on Adult Basic Education (www.coabe.org).

In Tiffany's story, Gary tracks her down and harasses her at school, which leads her to be late, causing her teacher to kick her out of class. Tiffany's struggle demonstrates the importance of flexibility in education programs when working with survivors.

Gail sabotages Janet's schoolwork by staying on the computer and not allowing Janet to log on for her discussion groups. This is one of many tactics of control that abusers may rely on to hinder a battered woman's ability to succeed in school.

Station: Social Services

In this chapter, we use the term social services to encompass a broad range of services and systems, including childcare, children and youth services, mental health services, child protective services, alcohol/chemical dependency treatment, and the many other services available that are meant to help individuals living in a community.

As with healthcare, social services represent an opportunity for intervention with survivors and their children, particularly those with lower incomes. People with lower incomes are often disproportionately represented in social services. Living in poverty or at the edge of poverty causes a domino effect that may leave someone more vulnerable to addiction and mental health disorders.⁴¹

Furthermore, poverty often bars access to respite childcare and other coping resources that could prevent child abuse. In the case of child protection, those with higher incomes are often able to procure more adequate legal representation and/or more easily comply with the requirements of the child welfare system and therefore do not become ensnared in that system as readily. Survivors of domestic violence with limited financial resources are quite likely to become involved in one or more social service systems.

Within the broad category of social services are places where service providers also come into contact with children and youth whose mothers are victims of domestic violence, but who are not involved with any other service providers. Service providers who understand domestic violence have the opportunity to help the child and the family as a whole.

As illustrated in *In Her Shoes—Economic Justice Edition*, these systems can impose additional significant risks and barriers, or they can be of tremendous help in assisting a battered woman to attain increased safety and economic well-being. Advocates working to end domestic violence can not only work to improve the ways that various social services respond to domestic violence, they can also work to ensure that these critical services and resources are adequately funded so that lower-income people maintain access to the supports they need to survive and thrive.

✓✓✓ Scavenger Hunt

- Find out who in your community provides free, low-cost or publicly supported treatment for chemical dependency. Go to their office. Are there any brochures or posters about domestic violence? If not, bring some. Talk to the person who oversees the counselors and counseling programs. Given that a main priority of many chemical dependence programs is to get the addicted person to take full responsibility for their use, how do they address domestic violence and safety during the course of treatment?
- Find a list of Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous meetings in your area and bring schedules to your office.
- Compile a list of mental health professionals and organizations that offer low-cost or sliding-scale fees. Invite them to attend a presentation of *In Her Shoes—Economic Justice Edition*, and discuss the implications for mental health and couples/family counseling.
- Reach out to your local child protection agency and join the Child Protection Team in your community.
- Visit your local children and youth services program, as well as day-care centers, and offer training and information about domestic violence and how to work with young people affected by abuse or experiencing dating violence.
- Engage with local high school guidance counselors and offer information about teen dating violence prevention.
- Compile a list of providers or organizations that offer treatment for domestic violence abusers at free or reduced rates.

J'Mai turns to social services on the military base, but due to lack of adequate staffing (perhaps due to budget shortfalls resulting in decreased services), she can't get an appointment right away and must wait a month. When she does get in to see a counselor (thanks to her boss's help), the counselor is very helpful, getting J'Mai a bus voucher so she can go home to her mother and giving her referrals to other resources.

41 Ellen L. Bassuk, M.D., et al., "Prevalence of Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders Among Homeless and Low-Income Housed Mothers," *American Journal of Psychiatry* 155, Nov. 1998, p. 1561-1564, <http://ajp.psychiatryonline.org/cgi/content/abstract/155/11/1561>.



Critical Questions to Consider

- How can we ensure that the mental health needs of survivors, their children, and abusers are adequately met, without simplifying the complexities of domestic violence into being “just a mental health issue”?
- What opportunities exist to intervene with families facing the dual issues of child abuse/neglect and domestic violence so that only the abusive parent is held responsible for the children’s safety?
- What opportunities exist to end the criminalization of mental health issues and drug use in this country?

Rayna is fortunate to receive counseling while on welfare. She has a very positive experience with a therapist, who addresses the physical and sexual trauma Rayna experienced as a child, which subsequently allows her to consider in more depth what is going on with her marriage to Kenny. Later in Rayna’s story, the CPS worker works with Rayna to ensure her children’s safety (rather than taking them away) and puts the responsibility on Kenny, not Rayna, to stop the abuse. Rayna’s story demonstrates the importance of accessing social services in a time when services to low-income individuals are being cut.

Work in **3** Dimensions

Social Services

- Have resources for low-cost mental health counseling available in your office.
- Have low-cost childcare resources available in your office and learn about options for state funded/subsidized childcare.
- Have information about low-cost batterer’s treatment available in your office.
- Have information about low-cost or subsidized chemical dependency treatment available in your office.

Social Reform

- Partner with child protective agencies and do cross trainings with their staff.
- Partner with drug/alcohol counselors in your community and do cross trainings with their staff.
- Partner with children and youth services programs and do cross trainings with their staff.

Social Transformation

- Support campaigns that pressure state and federal legislators to fund social services.
- Work to legitimize and pay for the job of raising children and work towards economic security of mothers.
- Fight to protect Social Security as a valuable safety net.

Tiffany finds herself in the common position of having two appointments scheduled at the same time, one at CPS, one at the welfare office. She is concerned that if she goes to CPS, she’ll lose her benefits, but if she goes to welfare, she’ll lose her kids. She doesn’t understand either system, nor does she understand her rights within each system—she simply does her best to comply with their conflicting requirements. This scenario exemplifies the importance of having an advocate help survivors navigate the system. Later on in the story, Tiffany has the experience of a CPS worker who doesn’t understand the complicated dynamics of domestic violence, blaming her for the abuse.

&&& Resource List

The National Center for Children in Poverty (www.nccp.org): Information on strategies to prevent child poverty in the United States and improve the lives of low-income children and families.

The National Mental Health Association (www.nmha.org): Works to improve the mental health of all Americans, especially the 54 million people with mental disorders, through advocacy, education, research and service.

Domestic Violence: A National Curriculum for Children's Protective Services outlines a two-day training program to teach child protective services workers how best to protect children living with domestic violence. To order copies and read excerpts of the material, see: www.endabuse.org/programs/display.php3?DocID=88#3.

Janet is able to attend Narcotics Anonymous meetings and gets support, though this is often difficult to access in rural areas.

In Linh's story, her husband John struggled with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) resulting from his experiences in the Vietnam War. Communities must figure out how to support veterans to learn effective ways of coping without using PTSD as a justification for abusing and controlling their partners.

Station: Welfare

The word *welfare* conjures up many different feelings and thoughts for people. While the rules and benefits of welfare have changed over the years, one thing remains constant: when welfare works, it can be a crucial safety net for battered women and their children.

When Congress and President Clinton approved the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) in 1996, they ended a 61-year federal welfare system that guaranteed cash and other benefits to needy families. States have now developed their own programs to move welfare recipients to work. Reform has meant that participants have to get jobs and get off welfare as soon as possible. This reflects a general societal shift that has urged the government to get out of its role in assisting the public with social services. The Family Violence Option (see Resource List at end of chapter) allows states to exempt battered women from welfare requirements or to create alternate provisions for them.

“To escape and remain free from abuse, families need a range of public benefits to provide for their financial support and to promote their ability to attain economic stability. Whether or not survivors will be able to support their families upon leaving a batterer is a major factor in deciding whether to leave. The experience of domestic violence, fleeing, or needing to stabilize in the aftermath of trauma, forces many survivors to seek financial assistance... Families dealing with domestic violence who are unable to work must be able to rely on welfare benefits in order to remain free from abuse. Once more stable, survivors need welfare program rules, including policies with respect to the work requirement, which encourage them to take appropriate steps towards economic stability that previously were impossible in the chaos of the abuse and flight.”⁴²

⁴² *Voices of Survival: The Economic Impacts of Domestic Violence, A Blueprint for Action*, p. 25-26.

✓✓✓ Scavenger Hunt

- Go to your local welfare office and hang out in the waiting room for 30 minutes. Observe how things work there. Look at the bulletin boards and notices.
- Call your local welfare office to inquire about what services are offered to domestic violence victims. Compare their answers with survivors you know who have received benefits.
- What are the eligibility requirements to get food stamps? Does your state have its own Food Stamps Program? Can immigrants without legal status access food benefits?
- What can food stamps buy? What can't they buy?
- Find out what the requirements are to be eligible for SSI (Supplemental Security Income).⁴³ Does your state have a temporary assistance program that battered women can access while they are waiting to receive SSI benefits? If so, find out how to apply.
- Can you apply for benefits online in your state? Go to your state's website to investigate all the ways to apply for benefits.

?? Critical Questions to Consider

- What opportunities exist to collaborate with your local welfare office(s) to ensure that battered women retain safe access to benefits?
- How do battered immigrants fare in the welfare system? What opportunities exist for immigrants with and without legal status to access public benefits?

Sarah has a different experience with welfare depending on which worker she sees. In one instance, she is misinformed and turned away based on the perceived level of danger she is facing. Domestic violence programs are in a position to work with their local welfare offices to provide training and technical assistance.

Work in 3 Dimensions

Social Services

- Assist battered women to fill out applications for assistance (TANF, food stamps, SSI, or other state-funded programs).
- Provide informational materials about eligibility requirements for assistance.⁴⁴
- Help a battered woman request a “fair hearing” if she is not satisfied with a decision made by the welfare office.
- Work to ensure that survivors who have changed their identities or left identification documents behind can still access needed public benefits.
- Advocate on behalf of battered women with limited English proficiency to access appropriate and timely interpreter services.

Social Reform

- Arrange to do a training on domestic violence at the welfare office with staff and administrators about the complex issues involved in serving battered women.
- If your state does not have the Family Violence Option, advocate for it to be adopted through the state legislative process.
- Advocate for better screening questions to identify victims of domestic violence.
- Work with organizations that enforce and collect child support payments to understand the complex nature of domestic violence and to understand when it is unsafe to go after support from an abusive partner.

Tiffany has the experience of flipping a coin to get caseworker A or B. With A, she gets a worker who does not understand the nature of domestic violence and thus is inflexible and unaccommodating. When Tiffany sees worker B, she is met with understanding and support; Tiffany is hopeful that she can become self-sufficient and retain custody of her kids. In another situation, Tiffany's caseworker signs her up to collect child support without explaining the process (and the danger it may place her in); this is how Gary gets re-involved in Tiffany's life and creates more problems.

⁴³ The U.S. Social Security Administration has more information about SSI, how to apply and eligibility requirements at: <http://www.ssa.gov/notices/supplemental-security-income>.

⁴⁴ You can help someone walk through the Benefit Eligibility Screening Tool at <http://best.ssa.gov> to determine their eligibility for SSI, Medicare and Social Security Disability (name and Social Security number do not need to be provided to use this tool).

Social Transformation

- Urge federal legislators to create provisions that allow welfare to be an entitlement program for battered women who need time to recuperate and get back on their feet.
- Urge federal and state legislators to allow immigrants without legal status to have access to public benefits without a wait period.

&&& Resource List

For a brief history of welfare, check out the article “How Welfare Began in the United States”: www.crf-usa.org/bria/bria14_3.html#welfare.

For statistics and relevant research on welfare and domestic violence, check out publications and reports from the Project for Research on Welfare, Work, & Domestic Violence at the University of Michigan School of Social Work: www.ssw.umich.edu/trapped/pubs.html.

For a guide on your program/organization’s role in monitoring welfare programs, read *Monitoring Domestic Violence Policy and Practice in State Welfare Programs: The Role of Community-Based Groups and Providers, A How-to-Guide* by Pamela Jons, Taylor Institute, March 1999. Available at: http://www.ssw.umich.edu/trapped/pubs_monitor.pdf.

The National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty (www.nlchp.org): Information on homelessness, as well as immigration status with regards to access to benefits.

For information on the Family Violence Option (by state), check out Legal Momentum’s “Family Violence Option State by State Summary” chart at: www.legalmomentum.org/issues/wel/FVO_statebystate.pdf.

When Rayna and Kenny are assigned two separate caseworkers, this ruffles Kenny’s feathers. A caseworker notices and then creatively assigns Rayna to meet with a social worker supposedly about her pregnancy, but really they discuss domestic violence. Rayna is deferred from work, which provides her some time to deal with and cope with the abuse, and figure out her next steps.

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