

# SEEDING GENERATIONS

New Strategies  
Towards Services for  
People who Abuse

Report by **Purvi Shah**,  
Consultant to the Interagency  
Working Group on NYC's  
Blueprint for Abusive Partner  
Intervention (IWG)

# SEEDING GENERATIONS

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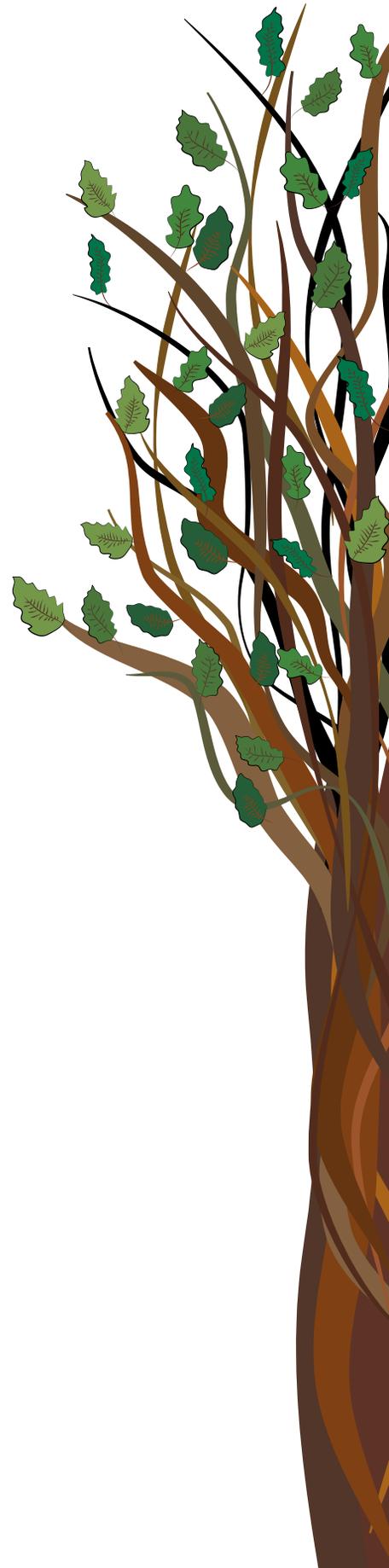
## Supporting Survivors, Breaking Cycles

An Executive Summary

on Reframing Interventions for People who Abuse

Report by **Purvi Shah**,  
Consultant to the Interagency Working Group on  
NYC's Blueprint for Abusive Partner Intervention (IWG)  
and hosted by the Center for Court Innovation

Seeding Generations: Executive Summary



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A report developed with wisdom from survivors of intimate violence and people who have caused harm, the Coalition on Working with Abusive Partners (CoWAP), Interagency Working Group on NYC's Blueprint for Abusive Partner Intervention (IWG), and tireless advocates in the field

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## SOWING THE SEEDS

*There should definitely be a service for batterers so that they don't re-victimize another person. Because, I mean, love is one of the most basic needs of life so just like you need food and water, you're gonna need love. So eventually you'll get yourself back into another relationship and you don't want to harm your love—you know you want to keep it sacred. — Sharlena from Voices of Women*

Everyone deserves to live without violence and to be in healthy relationships. Everyone deserves the basic necessity of love. And yet, violence is woven into our culture: we see this in the fact that across our country 1 in 4 women and 1 in 9 men will suffer intimate partner violence “with a negative impact such as injury, fear, concern for safety, needing services” (The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey: 2010-2012 State Report: <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/NISVS-infographic-2016.pdf>). Furthermore, we find that communities facing multiple oppressions have increased vulnerability to violence even as resources to serve survivors and address harm are fewer. The “Sexual Orientation Report indicates that individuals who self-identify as lesbian, gay, and bisexual have an equal or higher prevalence of experiencing IPV, SV, and stalking as compared to self-identified heterosexuals” (The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey: An Overview of 2010 Findings on Victimization by Sexual Orientation at [https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/cdc\\_nisvs\\_victimization\\_final-a.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/cdc_nisvs_victimization_final-a.pdf)).

For decades, much of the anti-violence field has worked from the basis that abusive partners don't change—and can't. We have focused services on survivors, fostering vital survivor-centered approaches. We know we must continue to advocate for more resources and strategies for survivors—there aren't enough supports for safety and transformation. Yet, by ignoring abusive partners and seeing criminal legal responses as our de facto option, have we left out a crucial part of the equation for ending

### **NYC Data on Domestic Violence**

In New York City in 2016, 83,672 calls were made to the NYC Domestic Violence Hotline and 91,617 intimate partner-related domestic incident reports were filed with the NYPD across our five boroughs. Devastatingly, 38 intimate partner homicides occurred. (Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence 2016 Fact Sheet) <http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/ocdv/downloads/pdf/ocdv-fact-sheet-2016.pdf>

violence? What do we do when survivors request services for their partners or family members causing harm? For communities of color, indigenous communities, and queer communities, where biased criminalization wreaks havoc on families and communities, can we find other ways to promote safety and well-being for survivors, children, abusive partners, and our communities?

In New York City, such questions have catalyzed a new effort to plan and implement a comprehensive approach for abusive partner intervention and services for people who cause harm as a crucial part of our work to support survivors, foster healthy relationships and communities, and end violence. Building from an October 2015 policy roundtable hosted by the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV) and the Coalition on Working with Abusive Partners (CoWAP), the Interagency Working Group on NYC's Blueprint for Abusive Partner Intervention (IWG) was created to develop a comprehensive strategy to improve and coordinate abusive partner interventions in New York City.

As an independent consultant to the IWG, over the past year, I have had the joy of partnering with amazing community members, devoted service providers, and talented government and non-profit staff to arrive at a new, visionary NYC Blueprint for Abusive Partner Intervention.

## Blueprint Development Process: Overview

Element 1: CCI IRB-approved first-hand research

- 31 interviews with direct stakeholders (survivors of violence and/or people who have caused harm)
- 47 interviews with government and non-profit staff
- 6 focus groups with 29 government and non-profit staff
- 6 observations of current abusive partner programming

Element 2: Collective participatory change process

- 4 visioning and action-mapping meetings with the IWG
- 4 visioning and action-mapping meetings with CoWAP

Element 3: Field input (selected)

- January 2017 The United States Department of Justice Office for Victims of Crime and Office on Violence Against Women National Roundtable on Programs for DV Offenders
- Spring 2017 NYC Domestic Violence Task Force
- August 2017 First Lady of NYC Community Conversation on Abusive Partner Intervention Programs

*There's so much stigma around violence that it's difficult to find services. There's a very big gap. What if we're not covering these people that might be helped? The focus on victims is valid. But the public's perception of perpetrators is that they're very violent and don't respond to interventions. If we're really trying to address violence, perpetration should be part of the equation. — **Anonymous***

The following NYC Blueprint for Abusive Partner Intervention emerges from the collective wisdom of everyone who participated in the first-hand research, interactive meetings, and year-long process with me. As the report author, I have pooled, organized, architected, and elaborated these recommendations for the IWG's review and consideration for adoption. This Blueprint of my crystallized recommendations envisions three arenas for progress: **transformative solutions; concrete innovations in accountability with healing; and, integration of services towards safety, wellness, and impact.** Through the gathering of collective wisdom, the recommendations are bold, specific, actionable, and compelling.

In these recommendations, we find concrete ways to challenge the cultures of violence including adopting an anti-oppression lens and moving beyond a gender binary. We pool innovations in behavior change and program design. We find expanded frameworks for supporting survivors, people who cause harm, families, and communities in the larger mission to end intimate and gender-based violence and foster healthy relationships, families, and communities. And we encounter interventions designed to interrupt cycles of violence, support community-led transformations, and widen the spaces for love in our world.

*I think the goals for an abusive partner is having that acceptance and finding peace with their inner selves to recover, to get rid of the shame, the guilt, the remorse, letting them know they have a safe place to share and to resolve their ongoing issues. Then they have more of an increased percentage on moving forward with a freer life. — **Theresa Sullivan***

## Promising Practices for Abusive Partner Interventions

### Element 1: Liberation framework and accountability structure

- Fostering an environment where participant has own stake in accountability, growth, community connection, and liberation
- Ensuring API services operate in connection to survivors and/or survivor advocacy to further accountability and safety
- Holding space for trauma-informed behavioral change over time—with a focus on transformative healing in order to repair harm and interrupt generations of violence including historical oppressions and generational trauma
- Integrating differential and risk assessments to align safety considerations with interventions responsive to each individual causing harm
- Enabling case management and wrap-around services to support and maintain behavioral change

### Element 2: Facilitation and group structure

- Co-facilitation with gender and gender expression representation relevant to the population served
- Relationship-building with participants with respect and honoring dignity
- Allowing space for diverse learners while drawing upon fundamentals of adult learning or teen developmental frameworks depending upon population served
- Enabling use of scenarios, role plays, and activities that enable practice for embodying transformation of behaviors
- Utilizing a combination of individual, pair share, small group, and large group teaching modalities to deepen participation and ways of learning

### Element 3: Ensuring access and inclusion

- Free programming
- Transportation reimbursement
- Geographical access
- Flexibility in timing with services on evenings and weekends
- Curricula which are tailored to populations with culturally-specific frameworks (i.e. countering heteronormativity, biphobia, transphobia, and enabling range of gender expressions in LGBTQIA groups)
- Providing meaningful language access

### Element 4: Fostering community connection

- Linking to community networks to enable behavior change maintenance
- Fostering peer accountability and leadership towards becoming a credible messenger over time

# TRANSFORMATIVE SOLUTIONS

Area 1

# TRANSFORMING CULTURES OF VIOLENCE TOWARDS HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

*Because of being a guy, we practice being tough. If it's okay for you, great. Personally, I loathe that feeling. You're telling me I can't be sad. I was told my entire life to suck it up, to say less words. I need this to help me heal.*

*Everyone wants to change quickly. A lot of people hate to admit they're wrong. It's holding you back. People need to talk about it. I can tell you why I did it. I can tell you what I went through. I could talk about it. I comfortably talk about what I did. If people hear that more, they understand more of what domestic violence is.*

*Different levels of triggers and family history manifested into what I went through. What I put certain people through. I was trying to get my point across. Nothing was satisfied. Nothing was cleared up. And things weren't the same. It was too late. We have to figure out how to stop it or it's going to keep spreading.*

— **Jamel Hooks Jr.**

## NEED

Focus on transformative solutions rather than temporary band-aids

## STRATEGIES FOR RESPONSE

- Fund community solutions through community leadership development and investment in community-based organizations
- Focus on anti-oppression frames through centering access and voice for marginalized groups
- Focus on interventions prior to, independent of, and beyond criminal justice and systems involvement

- Focus on behavior and transformative change as evaluation measure
- Focus on culture change towards healthy relationships, families, and communities

## FOUNDATIONAL RECOMMENDATION

This recommendation precedes all other recommendations and enables the success of subsequent strategies.

### ○ Recommendation 1

In consultation with the IWG and CoWAP, create 5 borough-specific advisory boards on abusive partner interventions with direct

stakeholders, anti-violence advocates and services providers, abusive partner interventions practitioners, and community members in order to enable emergence of community solutions while furthering Citywide coordination and collaboration on promising practices

All subsequent recommendations should be implemented after consultation with the IWG, CoWAP, and the 5 borough-specific advisory boards:

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### o Recommendation 2

Issue 5 borough-specific Request for Proposals (RFPs)—one for each borough—for City-funded programs to enable 5-year borough-based funding streams for multiple community-specific programs in order to develop individual, whole family, and/or community solutions towards safety, accountability with healing, wellness, and transformation. In line with the priorities of the borough’s advisory board, develop borough-specific RFPs for City-funded programs that are inclusive of and/or focused on communities of color, disabled individuals, people causing harm to elders, justice-involved individuals, low-income communities, immigrant communities, individuals who are Limited English proficient, LGBTQIA communities, veterans, women abusers, and/or youth

### o Recommendation 3

In order to enable and maintain behavior changes and as part of a transformative arc, fund a) interventions for post-program aftercare and b) lifetime involvement through a leadership development institute of direct stakeholders who can be mobilized as credible messengers

### o Recommendation 4

Expand Relationship Abuse Prevention Program (RAPP) in schools including a pilot program for a) deaf students as well as programs for b) students of color, disabled students, immigrant students, LGBTQIA students, and/or girls

### o Recommendation 5

In consultation with credible messenger teams, create impact evaluation processes and data collection tools to chart behavior change and transformation as well as community health and wellness indicators

### o Recommendation 6

In consultation with credible messenger teams, survivors of violence, and advocates, fund a media campaign focused on interrupting cycles of violence, highlighting motivations for change, and encouraging services involvement

# FOSTERING INNOVATIONS IN ACCOUNTABILITY WITH HEALING

Area 2

# FOSTERING HOLISTIC SERVICES, BEHAVIOR CHANGE, AND PROGRAM INNOVATIONS TOWARDS ACCOUNTABILITY WITH HEALING

*I guess if I had to create a new message it would be that there is help out there. I know I felt deeply alone, unable to see myself as a violent person. I was caught up in my victim identity as a survivor of sexual violence. Ultimately, I spent so much time focused on victimizing as opposed to healing. I don't want anyone to be alone in that. — Kimber*

## NEED

Shortage and under-resourcing of current interventions for abusive partners and people who cause harm

## STRATEGIES FOR RESPONSE

- Enable trauma-informed, restorative, and motivational change approaches
- Enable voluntary behavior change models
- Enable whole family solutions towards safety, accountability with healing, wellness, and transformation including interventions that go beyond a nuclear, heteronormative family and include multi-generational approaches, extended family, chosen family, and family formations reflective of disabled, immigrant, queer, people of color, poor, and/or trans communities

## FOUNDATIONAL RECOMMENDATION

This recommendation precedes all other recommendations and enables the success of subsequent strategies.

### ○ Recommendation 1

Fund a service for pre-intervention individual assessment (which could include differential, risk, survivor / family / community input, etc. as needed) to enable responsive, inclusive interventions and wrap-around services that are trauma-informed and focus on behavior change

All subsequent recommendations should be implemented after consultation with the IWG, CoWAP, and the 5 borough-specific advisory boards:

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### o Recommendation 2

Fund full-time staff members at living wage levels at current as well as new abusive partner interventions and programs doing innovative behavior change, trauma-informed, holistic work

### o Recommendation 3

Augment NYC Domestic Violence Hotline and other government and agency hotlines/textlines with capacity building and training to intervene with and provide referrals to people who cause harm or implement a new anonymous helpline targeted to people who cause harm

### o Recommendation 4

In partnership with the community leadership development and credible messenger teams, pilot a peer mentorship program with models that may include 12-step programs

### o Recommendation 5

Pilot 3-year community-based restorative justice interventions inclusive of and/or focused on communities of color, disabled individuals, people causing harm to elders, low-income communities, immigrant communities, individuals who are Limited English proficient, LGBTQIA communities, veterans, women abusers, and/or youth

### o Recommendation 6

Increase funding to existing programs and foster new community programs focused on incarceration-based services for justice-involved survivors and/or abusive partners to enable individualized services that can be continued after release in order to increase safety, accountability with healing, and wellness as well as enable transforming behavior and community reintegration

### o Recommendation 7

Fund whole family program models and services that foster safety and wellness such as supervised and therapeutic visitation as well as approaches to address co-parenting skills and parenting after violence including capacity building and training to address abusive behaviors in fatherhood programs and services

# INTEGRATING SERVICES FOR SAFETY, WELLNESS, AND IMPACT

Area 3

# INTEGRATING ABUSIVE PARTNER INTERVENTIONS AND INNOVATIONS TOWARDS SAFETY, WELLNESS, AND SYSTEMS IMPACT

*In my case, I want to say, that's what bothered me the most. Because even when he would abuse me, he would say and I'm quoting him, he would say, 'You want to go to the police—go ahead. They're not going to do anything. There is nothing that they will do to me.' And when I went to the court and got an order of protection, I felt like I saw he was right. He said the police, you know, nobody's going to do anything to him and I feel like that's what happened. All the hassles happened with me. I ran around to give him the order of protection. Yes, the order of protection protected me for a year but there was nothing offered to him. He was always angry. There was nothing to tell him that that wasn't right to do. Nothing to tell him that you are wrong. I would have liked that because at least with that, I would have had that peace of mind that if another woman comes into his life, she will not suffer the way I did. At least he had received that help. So, in my case, that bothered me the most. — Iffat*

## NEED

Low coordination of current abusive partner interventions and dissonance with services for survivors of violence

## STRATEGIES FOR RESPONSE

- Integrate interventions for people who cause harm into existing survivor advocacy and intimate violence trainings, services, and interventions
- Integrate interventions with communities by enabling borough-based strategies while fos-

tering coordination and promising practices through a City hub

- Integrate innovations in accountability with healing across agencies, providers, and stakeholders
- Align criminal legal system responses with transformative solutions to ending violence

## FOUNDATIONAL RECOMMENDATION

This recommendation precedes all other recommendations and enables the success of subsequent strategies.

o- **Recommendation 1**

Ensure implementation of recommendations in this NYC Blueprint for Abusive Partner Intervention as well as integration of interventions for people who cause harm into all current and future recommendations of the NYC Domestic Violence Task Force by a) Funding 2 full-time staff members for abusive partner interventions within the Mayor’s Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV); and b) Mobilizing on current and future opportunities to integrate abusive partner interventions into NYC Domestic Violence Task Force recommendations. With the two new staff members, 1 position would focus on a) coordination of Queens and Staten Island including borough stakeholders, advisory boards, and programs funded in these boroughs through the City solicitation; b) practitioner training, promising practices guidelines development, and impact assessment around behavior change and transformative solutions; and, c) enabling community solutions, while 1 position would focus on a) coordination of Bronx, Brooklyn, and Manhattan including borough stakeholders, advisory boards, and programs funded in these boroughs through the City solicitation; b) assessments and systems coordination; and, c) enabling community solutions. Both staff members will liaison with the NYC Domestic Violence Task Force to connect abusive partner interventions with survivor-centered advocacy

All subsequent recommendations should be implemented after consultation with the IWG, CoWAP, and the 5 borough-specific advisory boards:

## RECOMMENDATIONS

o- **Recommendation 2**

Build support for CoWAP to provide trainings, supervision, practitioner retreats, and field-building and integration activities as it sees fit

o- **Recommendation 3**

In consultation with CoWAP, issue a City solicitation to fund training proposals that include ongoing training provision for practitioners of abusive partner interventions, borough advisory board members, credible messengers, intimate partner violence service providers, elder abuse service providers, and relevant stakeholders. The solicitation should include training on facilitation and promising practices in interventions with people who cause harm as well as how to responsibly engage allied providers and responders

o- **Recommendation 4**

Through the Mayor’s Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV), develop and implement trainings for service providers and allied responders (i.e., social workers, substance abuse counselors, faith-based leaders, etc.) in order to find new entry points for abusive partner assessments and voluntary interventions

○ **Recommendation 5**

Integrate information on and resources for people who cause harm as part of the NYC Healthy Relationship Training Academy

○ **Recommendation 6**

Integrate trainings on abusive partner interventions and resources into the training programs at NYC Family Justice Centers (FJC) in order to enable referrals, support promising practices, and successful integration of abusive partner interventions

○ **Recommendation 7**

Building on recommendations from the NYC Domestic Violence Task Force, FJCs should partner with the borough advisory boards and credible messenger teams in neighborhood-based roundtables, forums, and community engagement on intimate violence

○ **Recommendation 8**

Building on recommendations from the NYC Domestic Violence Task Force, the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV) and the NYC Department for the Aging (DFTA), along with partner Weill Cornell Medical Center, should coordinate on integrating abusive partner interventions into PROTECT policies, trainings, on-the-ground practices, and referral pathways to respond to survivors while providing referrals to people who cause harm

○ **Recommendation 9**

Building on recommendations from the NYC Domestic Violence Task Force, the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV) and the Administration for Children's Services (ACS) should coordinate on integrating abusive partner interventions and work with whole families into ACS policies, trainings, on-the-ground practices, and referral pathways to services at community-based organizations and FJCs

○ **Recommendation 10**

Building on recommendations from the NYC Domestic Violence Task Force, the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV) and the Department of Education (DOE) should coordinate on training Respect for All liaisons, Sexual Harassment liaisons, and school staff who address bullying and sexual harassment, including youth dating violence, on abusive partner interventions and resources so as to provide multiple responders and entry points across manifestations of violence

○ **Recommendation 11**

Building on recommendations from the NYC Domestic Violence Task Force, the Department of Education (DOE) should include information on abusive partner interventions and resources as part of the City's Comprehensive Health Education recommended curriculum, guidelines, trainings, and resources

o- **Recommendation 12**

In partnership with the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV), the Department of Education (DOE) should train school Parent Coordinators and Parent Leaders as well as other community members on abusive partner interventions and resources

o- **Recommendation 13**

Building on recommendations from the NYC Domestic Violence Task Force, the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV) and the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) should coordinate on integrating information on abusive partner interventions and resources into healthy relationship workshops offered through DYCD-funded programs

o- **Recommendation 14**

Building on recommendations from the NYC Domestic Violence Task Force, the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV) and the Fire Department of New York (FDNY) should coordinate to further capacity and training for firefighters, paramedics, and EMTs to respond to and provide referrals to people who cause harm

o- **Recommendation 15**

Building on recommendations from the NYC Domestic Violence Task Force, the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV) and the NYC Department of Health

and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) should coordinate on integrating abusive partner interventions into ThriveNYC programs, including through trainings, assessments, on-the-ground practices, and referral pathways to respond to and provide resources to people who cause harm

o- **Recommendation 16**

Building on recommendations from the NYC Domestic Violence Task Force, the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV) should coordinate across City agencies on integrating intimate violence risk assessments that include survivor, children, family, and community input when needed and enable linkages to comprehensive assessment services in order to ensure wrap-around services and appropriate interventions to people who cause harm

o- **Recommendation 17**

Building on recommendations from the NYC Domestic Violence Task Force, the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV) and the Department of Probation (DOP) should coordinate to ensure that DOP's specialized domestic violence programming includes and fosters wrap-around services, aftercare, and community program participation for people who cause harm



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## Transformative Solutions

Area 1 of 3  
Reframing Interventions for People who Abuse

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May we collectively create change.

Warmly,  
Purvi Shah

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## FRAMING

*Look at everything around us. It's economically depleted. You see these generations of violence. My father and my mom went through the same issues that me and my children's father go through. You have to understand community dynamics. — Lindsay*

*Penmanship doesn't change because you change the pen. You might get away with abusing one person but what is going to happen when you get into another relationship? It's important for abusers to get help (counseling, group support, volunteer opportunities) that might be the only thing that can/will stop them from abusing someone again. That has the potential to change the pattern/trend of abuse and impact the way his generation is living. — Samantha Taylor*

We live in cultures where violence—from mass shootings to hate violence to interpersonal violence—surrounds us and infuses our communities, institutions, and how we live our lives. In the United States, the women's movement has made life-saving gains on recognition of gender-based violence and particularly in the need to support survivors of violence with services and criminal legal system responses.

Where we have fallen short is recognizing the power of reparative strategies and transforming the intersecting conditions that lead to violence. We have consistently invested in a crisis response frame while short-shrifting the long-term work of transformation.

With the collective wisdom of survivors, people who have caused harm, advocates, and community members, this Blueprint for Abu-

sive Partner Intervention seeks to reframe our current frames of gender-based violence advocacy. By seeing abuse as a behavior instead of a person (i.e. person who causes harm vs. abuser) and utilizing the term "intimate violence" to include elder abuse, family violence, intimate partner violence, and women who use force, the Blueprint challenges conventional framings of gender-based violence while underscoring gender oppression and heteronormativity in violence. The solutions presented here challenge the current narratives for survivors of violence including the imperative to leave to get services, the necessity of carceral solutions, and that intergenerational healing and wellness through breaking cycles of violence with people who cause harm is impossible.

*There is a list of numbers for the victim. I haven't seen any services for the abuser so they can get help. I would like to see that being offered. It's so painful to see this is the norm. — Iffat*

On a practical level, the solutions here connect people with each other—partners and chosen family, agencies and communities, professionals and community leaders, and survivor advocates and providers serving people who cause harm—with the knowledge that these categories overlap and our solutions need to work against such binaries and towards interdependence. The solutions here recognize that change is more than completion of a program, that people need to practice change and supports are vital for practice, and that prevention is part of intervention. The solutions here recognize that transformation happens in community and that programs must be accountable to survivors and culture change of violence.

The strategies here look to a liberation framework where people who cause harm have a stake and choice in their own growth, evolution, community connection, and liberation. This Blueprint envisions an architecture where stakeholders—not systems—lead the way.

With these complex solutions, the aim is not to sanitize violence or the real complexities of people's lives, systems, and behaviors. The goal is to acknowledge all of this and yet open up space to interrupt violence and cultures of violence. From this vantage, we can ensure connections of personal and systems account-

ability and transform the intersecting conditions that spur or enable violence.

To find transformation, we will need to go against the grain. I am personally grateful to have had my own assumptions challenged through the process of speaking with survivors, people who have caused harm, providers, and community members. In my 20 years of advocacy for survivors of violence—rooted in South Asian communities and communities of color—I too have advanced received wisdom such as mediation can't work, counseling can't work, batterers don't change. This year-long process of fostering participatory, transformative change has enabled me to re-examine such precepts and open up new strategies that give opportunity to heal from violence and be in healthy relationship and community.

Through the process, content, and format of this report, my frame is to enable reframings. My hope for this report—rooted in the power of transformative listening—is that it holds multiple realities and vantage points and keeps alive complexity. I aspire for this work to open conversations, facilitate concrete and actionable short-term solutions as well as enable visions where generations from now, we see an end to all kinds of violence. Working together, transformation is possible—and imminent.

## Reframings on Abusive Partner Interventions and Ending Violence

### Element 1: Transformative Solutions

- Fostering interventions for people who cause harm as a necessary part of supporting survivors and ending violence intergenerationally
- Mobilizing the wisdom of survivors of violence and people who have caused harm in fashioning solutions to ending violence
- Moving beyond carceral responses to localized, creative community solutions
- Resisting cultures of violence by addressing intersecting oppressions and cultivating culturally-specific, anti-ableist, anti-classist, anti-heteronormative, and anti-racist programming
- Focusing resources and evaluation measures on long-term culture shifts and prevention over short-term band-aids

### Element 2: Holistic Services towards Transformative Justice

- Fostering a belief and a praxis that people can change and communities can transform
- Moving beyond punishment to accountability with healing
- Fostering wholeness through wrap-around services, whole family strategies, and re-entry programming
- Mobilizing innovations through trauma-informed, restorative, and motivational change practices
- Making space for voluntary services and peer mentorship models
- Investing in professionals and community members advancing this work through resources, training, and leadership opportunities

### Element 3: Integrating Interventions towards Safety, Wellness, and Impact

- Fostering interdependence through team-based approaches and investments
- Investing in people, trainings, and collaborations
- Amplifying existing services through connection and integration

*As important as it is to have a team dedicated to a survivor, it's just as important for that person who's perpetrating harm to have a team. They've been trying to do whatever it is they're doing—healing, harming, avoiding—on their own for so long. It's going to take a lot of different people to get through to them. Someone who perpetrates harm does not expect support. — Kimber*

## METHODOLOGY

*Programs need to have individuals running programs that are close to the problem. And we were talking about the fact that you have all kinds of people who want to do things to help deal with the problem but none of them experienced the problem. We need to have formerly incarcerated individuals running some of these programs and setting some of these policies. Policy is the big thing because policy sets where the money is gonna come from.*

— **Anonymous**

As an independent consultant to the Inter-agency Working Group on NYC’s Blueprint for Abusive Partner Intervention (IWG), over the past year, I have had the joy of partnering with amazing community members, devoted service providers, and talented government and non-profit staff to arrive at a new, visionary NYC Blueprint for Abusive Partner Intervention.

Because I wanted to ensure the voices of direct stakeholders—survivors of violence and/or people who have caused harm—I navigated a process for research approved by the Center for Court Innovation Institutional Review Board (CCI IRB). In 2017, I received approval both for interviews with direct stakeholders as well as non-profit and government staff. My IRB-approved research also included focus groups with non-profit and government staff to reach allied providers and include voices outside the IWG. Finally, I conducted program observations to ground my analysis in day-to-day work. As part of the research, I utilized American Sign Language interpreters for 2

research participants and a Spanish interpreter for 2 participants. All research participants selected how they would like to be identified— anonymously, by first name, by full name, and/or by name and title. In addition, research participants who requested review were sent their comments for inclusion in the Blueprint to ensure accuracy. Research participants will also receive a copy of this Blueprint if they indicated interest in receiving it. The collective wisdom of community stakeholders, practitioners, and program participants informs this Blueprint: it would not exist without their partnership.

Alongside the first-hand research, I led an interactive participatory change process with the IWG and members of the Coalition on Working with Abusive Providers (CoWAP). The topics of each meeting I facilitated are provided in the text box on the Blueprint Development Process. I am grateful to CoWAP and IWG members for your active participation and collaboration—you made this Blueprint visionary and actionable.

Finally, I worked to include voices at the table not always found in policy discussions—primary stakeholders, culturally specific service providers, and practitioners working in related advocacy and social justice arenas. My aspiration is that the Blueprint and recommendations gathered here will amplify a movement building and systems change approach and continue to center the voices of direct stakeholders and

marginalized practitioners in order to transform systems and cultures of violence.

The following NYC Blueprint for Abusive Partner Intervention emerges from the collective wisdom of everyone who participated in the first-hand research, interactive meetings, and year-long process with me. As the report author, I have pooled, organized, architected, and elaborated these recommendations for the

## Blueprint Development Process

Element 1: Center for Court Innovation IRB-approved first-hand research

- 31 interviews with direct stakeholders (survivors of violence and/or people who have caused harm)
- 47 interviews with government and non-profit staff
- 6 focus groups with 29 government and non-profit staff
- 6 observations of current abusive partner programming

Element 2: Holistic Services towards Transformative Justice

- 4 visioning and action-mapping meetings with the IWG
  - Jan. 31, 2017: Mapping transformative interventions and linking prevention to intervention
  - March 30, 2017: Enhancing collaborations and coordinated response
  - May 18, 2017: Recommendations for abusive partner interventions
  - June 16, 2017: Recommendations for access & inclusion
- 4 visioning and action-mapping meetings with CoWAP
  - Feb. 21, 2017: Research on gaps in abusive partner intervention services in NYC, ways to fill gaps, and role of CoWAP
  - March 21, 2017: Mapping a story for abusive partner interventions
  - April 18, 2017: Enabling voluntary participants
  - July 18, 2017: Recommendations for abusive partner interventions

Element 3: Field input (selected)

- January 2017 The United States Department of Justice Office for Victims of Crime and Office on Violence Against Women National Roundtable on Programs for DV Offenders
- Spring 2017 NYC Domestic Violence Task Force
- August 2017 First Lady of NYC Community Conversation on Abusive Partner Intervention Programs

IWG's review and consideration for adoption. This Blueprint of my crystallized recommendations envisions three arenas for progress: transformative solutions; concrete innovations in accountability with healing; and, integration of services towards safety, wellness, and impact. Through the gathering of collective wisdom, the recommendations are bold, specific, actionable, and compelling.

## Research Participant Overview

### Element 1: Direct Stakeholders

- 31 research participants
  - 24 individuals who identify as survivors of violence
  - 5 individuals who identify as both survivors and people who have caused harm
  - 2 individuals who identify as people who have caused harm and who grew up with abuse/ were bullied/faced community violence
- Borough representation included:
  - 10 based in the Bronx
  - 10 based in Brooklyn
  - 5 based in Queens
  - 4 based in Manhattan
  - 2 based in Staten Island
- Age ranged from 19-66:
  - 8 ranged from 19-29
  - 8 ranged from 30-40
  - 7 ranged from 41-50
  - 7 ranged from 51-60
  - 1 ranged from 61-66

### Element 2: City and non-profit staff

- 74 research participants:
  - 12 from community-based organizations
  - 12 from government agencies working across arenas
  - 12 from legal and courts staff
  - 12 from non-profit agencies
  - 11 youth services providers
  - 8 abusive partner interventions practitioners
  - 2 elder services providers
  - 2 from law enforcement
  - 2 public health program clinicians
  - 1 clinician/researcher
- Borough representation included:
  - 6 based in the Bronx
  - 10 based in Brooklyn
  - 8 based in Queens
  - 2 based in Staten Island
  - 48 based in Manhattan including providers serving all boroughs

## TRANSFORMING CULTURES OF VIOLENCE

*For me it was more spiritual than anything. I think it was my faith in God and the individuals who are my teachers in that faith. A lot of my help came through them. And I also went to therapy for my acts of violence and the crimes I committed because I seriously believe something wasn't working right in my head for me to be that violent. Now granted, I grew up in a community and neighborhood where violence was prevalent. And it was at one point there that what I thought was going on in my community was the norm, when somebody would say, 'You shouldn't be doing that' but I would say, 'You don't live in my community. You don't understand how our community looks at that.' And then I looked around at my community. I recently took my granddaughter to one of my old neighborhoods that I had grown up at and I was showing her where we lived. As I was counting off where everybody, all my friends, lived at, I realized that all of us went to prison. That was in that community. Some of them are dead. Some of them are still alive. All of them had one thing in common: that we all ended up in prison at some point during our lives. Our community was set up from the beginning. A lot of us came from broken families, fathers who were drinkers, functional alcoholics. I saw a lot of violence growing up. I was exposed to a lot of street violence as well as violence in my own family.*

— **Anonymous**

Violence emerges from violence, a spiral of intergenerational and community harms. In a web of connection, how do we explore the stitching of community violence, structural oppression, hate violence, intimate partner violence, and other manifestations of violence? And how do these explorations impact abusive partner interventions—and how we interrupt

cycles of violence? How do we design programs and interventions for people who have caused harm based on an understanding of the connections between structural violence, state violence, community violence, and interpersonal violence? What would our interventions look like if we did?

The following Blueprint for Abusive Partner Interventions in New York City grapples with these profound questions by suggesting strategies that center survivors, long-term transformative solutions in addition to short-term crisis response, and community-led solutions focused on transforming behavior, norms, and human possibility. Part of the transformation strategy includes changing how we do the work: the strategies are all connected to community leadership in each borough. The solutions here seek to transform the relationships of communities to systems, inequity across and within boroughs, mobilize youth and community members over the long-term, and leverage media to foster access to services and culture change. The solutions here are hopeful—hopeful that we can serve more survivors and their families, hopeful that we can serve marginalized populations such as justice-involved survivors and LGBTQIA youth of color and deaf individuals, hopeful that we ourselves can see the work differently and make change in our own patterns of practice.

These strategies also acknowledge the deep contradictions of this work and still lead with a heartfelt humanity, envisioning that people have the power not only to change themselves but our communities, social structures, and entrenched norms. Joseph Maldonado, Men’s Roundtable Co-Facilitator at CONNECT, explains, “Our socialization of boys and men and girls and women is really patriarchal and affirms men as subjects and women as objects. It’s that socialization we have to interrupt. We know this country’s history of genocide and structural racism. It’s still a choice to abuse and that’s really believing in the humanity of men. A choice to do or not to do. All of those different intersecting points of oppression are happening at the same time. Forms of oppression work in an interlocking way. To hold on to our humanity is to own every choice you make.”

*This is very important—the courts having an opportunity to exercise authority to mandate these kinds of programs which will make the abusers know beyond being told that they can’t do this and they can’t do that. That’s just like a stop sign. But guess what? You just come to a stop sign for a second and then you continue down the road to the next stop sign. But in between those stop signs, they need to be forced, the court needs to mandate them to programs where they can begin to have a different kind of conversation about their own victimization that makes them abusers and to begin to see themselves outside of themselves in these scenarios. — Ann*

## **Abusive Partner Interventions as Transformative Solutions**

Element 1: Enabling expanded survivor services and responses to ending intimate violence

- Fostering survivor-centered solutions rooted in families and communities
- Minimizing systems violence such as incarceration
- Opening space for wholeness, connection, and community-led transformation of the conditions that lead to violence

Element 2: Shifting the questions—in addition to enabling safety, are we:

- supporting a survivor, family, and/or community?
- supporting accountability and healing for people who have caused harm?
- reducing violence across its forms?
- reducing oppressions?
- interrupting violence systemically, in communities, in families, individually, and/or generationally?
- enabling transformations?
- creating space for healthy relationships, connection, and love?
- fostering peaceful and healthy communities?

Element 3: Nurturing seeds

- Building connections among anti-violence advocates and providers of abusive partner interventions
- Nurturing connections with the gender-based violence movement to ending all forms of oppression
- Promoting healthy practices, envisioning peace, and reproducing wellness

*I didn't have people to talk to about it but I don't think I had a sense of my own suffering.*

*I just had the numbness and the anger. I probably spent my entire 15th year contemplating killing my father, murdering him, like how can I get away with it? You know, which one of my friends could do this and they were on board. They were like, 'Just let us know when.' Because he was that kind of guy everybody hated and it was so hard because he gave me some of the most profound seeds I have ever had in my life.*

*So, there's this real, you know, just complete opposite ends of the spectrum—on the one hand, he probably instilled some of the most powerful values that I carry with me but on the other hand, caused some of the most horrific damage I've ever seen.*

*He instilled one of the most powerful seeds that I have to this day. The different seed—"you're different" for me shows up as responsibility, things that I can get to be responsible—to change the dynamics.*

*I get to be in that room. I get to have a seat at the table. I have all those experiences that I get to pull from and use with the men that I work with because I know that I'm not the only one sitting at that table that has a range of those experiences.*

*So how do I get to use my own experiences to forward other men and to call them to the forefront to be their higher self? To be there and to plant that seed of responsibility in them if they've never had it? And if they have had it, then how to identify it—how to see them.*

— **Manny Yonko**, Administrative Director, Office of Clinical Practice, Policy and Support, Domestic Violence and Policy Planning, Administration for Children's Services

## FOUNDATIONAL RECOMMENDATION: RECOMMENDATION 1: CREATE 5 BOROUGH-SPECIFIC ADVISORY BOARDS ON ABUSIVE PARTNER INTERVENTIONS

*Disabled people, trans people, gender nonconforming and non-binary people, people in poverty—when these peoples’ voices get to make impact, change happens. It behooves service providers to listen to, and take into account, the lived experiences and needs of survivors of violence and oppression.*

— **Deesha Narichania**, DV Coordinator at St. Luke’s-Roosevelt Crime Victims Treatment Center

### GAPS

A centralized, cookie-cutter New York City response to deliver abusive partner interventions has led to communities being left behind. An urgent need expressed uniformly amongst survivors, people who have caused harm, advocates, and community members is to go beyond a one-size-fits-all approach. Yet, how do we turn that urgency into reality? Systems are often set up to be uniform and consistent for the sake of efficiency. Such templates may facilitate scaling the work but have unintended impacts—including excluding many populations from services. “Most of the programs cost money and are in English only or sometimes Spanish. There’s no access for people who speak other languages or who have hearing impairments,” notes Kaela Economos, Community Office Social Work Director and former Social Work Supervisor, Family Defense Practice at Brooklyn Defender Services. When addressing intimate partner violence, elder abuse, and other violences,

individual stories and needs matter—and a one-size-fits-all system cannot respond.

People living in boroughs outside Manhattan also suffer in the current template of services delivery. Jack Skelton, Relationship Abuse Prevention Program Coordinator at Day One, observes, “So many services are centralized in Manhattan.” A borough such as Staten Island, with its geographic distance, has particularly been underserved—with no abusive partner intervention program currently available (this gap, however, will begin to be addressed in a new City contract that will be released in 2018). As a result of geographic isolation, individuals are forced to attend programs in other boroughs. “We’re talking about defendants who can’t pay a MetroCard. We’re setting them up to violate a condition of their plea. This is a failure of the system,” reflects Victoria Levin, Assistant District Attorney, Richmond County District Attorney’s Office.

*Any intervention has to be about developing leadership in the community stakeholders. That model is most successful. It can't be just after a problem has happened but before problems have happened. Create space so people will come.*

— **Joseph Maldonado**, Men's Roundtable Co-Facilitator at CONNECT

The distinct needs from borough to borough and population to population can be more effectively addressed in a model where each borough has its own leadership, planning, and resources to address community needs. Even one program can have strikingly different populations depending on the borough. For example, the STEPS to End Family Violence Teen Accountability Program (TAP) classes in the Bronx and Brooklyn have group dynamics and needs that vary—linked to the economic and social context of the boroughs and communities living there. In the two TAP sessions I observed, each of the Brooklyn participants was in college or approaching it. The same educational access was not true for the Bronx-based participants. “What we know from doing this work is that we need a lot of different models in different communities. The problem is finding a model that’s cost-effective, time-sensitive, and works. We tend to forget that most interventions have limited time in personnel and a high cost factor built in,” summarizes one provider of abusive partner interventions. While this Blueprint advances an ethic of adequate investment in order to achieve results, it is also strategic to allocate limited resources and time by borough since a borough-based strategy enables different models while maximizing opportunities

through being attuned to local needs and community strengths. In short, the work can be more effective—which also makes the investment meaningful. Furthermore, with the 5-borough Family Justice Center framework, the Mayor’s Office to Combat Domestic Violence already has a parallel and organically-connected model. Additionally, the strategy here fosters borough-based community leadership with a mutual flow of ideas and information from community members to government and non-profit staff—allowing for deeper community involvement and say in services. Finally, through sharing strategies, promising practices, and resources, this community-led investment can deepen effective collaboration across boroughs and spur field-building in partnership with the citywide Coalition on Working with Abusive Partners (CoWAP).

A borough-based structure promotes the community connections that enable our ultimate long-term goal to end violence. By having the voice, investment, and leadership input of direct stakeholders, practitioners, and community members in each borough while coordinating promising practices across boroughs in partnership with CoWAP, a rigorous services provision framework can emerge alongside work to build community power and

transform cultures of violence. In this way, a borough-based strategy enables local needs to be addressed, specialized community-based services to be provided, and to foster creative, community-led solutions while facilitating coordination, collaboration, and promising practices. Such a mechanism can circumvent entrenched systems, a need that Christina Curry, Executive Director at the Harlem Independent Living Center, eloquently describes: “We can talk in creative ways. But the system doesn’t think that way. It’s entrenched. They are not hearing. They are not listening. They are following a path invented in the 60s and that’s how they’re investing. It doesn’t work.” The borough advisory boards offer a structure for listening, coordination, and actionable change based on the input of stakeholders.

This model of borough advisory boards setting priorities embodies more fully key values of community leadership, interdependence, and facilitation of multiple solutions. The borough-based strategy led by an advisory board comes closer to a framework of emergent strategy over mechanized professionalization. It is also a powerful bridge-building opportunity. As Sharlena from Voices of Women points out, “The courts should have more integration into

actual community.” A borough-based set of advisory boards could make such partnerships a reality—and begin to problem-solve services limitations more effectively.

Changing how we do the work—by enabling communities to lead—is also a fertile ground of innovation. Through the way this borough-based strategy is conducted—in collaboration with communities as well as agencies and providers—we can begin not only to work in crisis but to cultivate long-term solutions. “We want to prevent and challenge the social norms to end violence. We consider it part of our mission to end violence. If we can help change the patterns that lead to that violence, we should do that. And do that as a community,” states an advocate and leader of TAP.

Finally, implementing a process for community and stakeholder involvement allows for voices not usually found at policy and decision-making tables. In order to enact meaningful access and relevant services, we need direct stakeholder voices and input. Furthermore, an advisory board process ensures services do not stagnate and that programs can be reviewed routinely for efficacy. In a city with

*Just being a part of something that is so publicly needed, something that will shape lives, change lives. If you need me for anything, please call me. Anything.*

— SaSha

rapidly changing demographics, resources, and needs, that capacity to be flexible is an asset and facilitates responsiveness to needs and emerging needs. The aim of this architecture is to provide an ongoing site and process for enhancement of interventions with people who harm—until we end violence. As Henry Algarin, Program Director at Brooklyn TASC, observes, “This has to be continuing. It’s not going to be solved overnight. It’s not going to be solved with your recommendations. It’s just a start—planting a seed too.”

## STRATEGIES FOR RESPONSE

- Mobilize community leadership and community-led strategies with borough-based advisory boards
- Integrate field development, promising practices, strategies, resources, and collaborations through borough-wide participation in CoWAP
- Enable ongoing partnership, needs assessment, flexible programs, specialized and culturally specific services where no borough is isolated
- Ensure each borough’s programming can be accountable to communities and advance promising practices for interventions while nurturing local innovations, solutions, and long-term strategies through ongoing advisory board input
- Facilitate the capacity for a credible messenger and community action team through involvement in the borough advisory board

## RECOMMENDATION

- In consultation with the IWG and CoWAP, create 5 borough-specific advisory boards on abusive partner interventions with direct stakeholders, anti-violence advocates and services providers, abusive partner interventions practitioners, and community members in order to enable emergence of community solutions while furthering Citywide coordination and collaboration on promising practices

## RECOMMENDATION 2: ISSUE 5 RFPS FOR CITY-FUNDED PROGRAMS TO ENABLE 5-YEAR BOROUGH-BASED PROGRAMS FUNDING

*“We need realistic strategies working with these cultural groups where people want to keep families together. How do you work with couples who want to keep the family together? It needs to be culturally sensitive. They want more services for their partners. They want to stay together. There aren’t enough programs in Queens. It really is difficult to get services in one’s language.”*

— **Anonymous**

### GAPS

“The competition for resources is just really damaging,” reflects Michele Paoletta, Director of Social Services and Training at Day One. In the movement to end violence, we know services for survivors are too few. We see the battles over funding for prevention versus interventions. We also encounter the framing of abusive partner interventions as “taking away” of resources from survivors. As Margarita Guzmán, Deputy Executive Director at Violence Intervention Program, Inc., explains, “It’s a scarcity mentality. We don’t want to lose resources. Which means we don’t have enough responses.”

A scarcity model does a disservice to all survivors who seek to have more solutions than separation and ending relationships. Furthermore, a scarcity model reinforces the marginalization already experienced by under-resourced populations. “My leaving mainstream intimate partner violence work and

going into LGBTQ work made a shift in my thinking,” shares Catherine Shugrue dos Santos, Co-Director of Client Services at the New York City Anti-Violence Project. “I had believed all the myths that they were batterers—that that’s what they were. That we were throwing money down a hole if we funded APIPs and that it was dangerous. In a framework of exclusively patriarchy, that made sense. But I didn’t fully understand privilege, power, and intersecting oppression. Yes, I understood how it impacted survivors, but not how it impacted abusive partners, too many of whom were experiencing oppression and trauma every day.”

There are other ways to frame the need and funding for a variety of responses. “We need to absolutely address that issue head-on: this is not a cut in services for survivors and kids. We need to think of it as prevention and just a justice thing. How we should treat people and give

*Government intervention shapes the work when it's really about transforming our behaviors. It appears that the City government is really trying to establish a structure and centralize the modality being used in the city, and move toward NYC certification of these types of programs. In doing that, we can lose a lot of creativity as well as cultural and community aspects needed, moving away from one-size-fits-all approaches. It can also endanger survivors and give them a false sense of hope and limit their autonomy on what accountability looks like. We need community models outside the criminal justice system. The Mayor's Office also represents money and resources to the field. A lot of that plays a role in the menu of options/alternatives we have available to interrupt and prevent these cycles of violence.* — **Quentin Walcott**, Co-Executive Director, CONNECT

them a chance to get better,” remarks Liberty Aldrich, Director, Domestic Violence & Family Court Programs at Center for Court Innovation.

We have an opportunity here to deepen our contexts for justice—and efficacy. These false resource divides limit the spectrum of necessary services and approaches to ending violence. The false resource divide limits efforts to increase resources to all aspects of the work, keeping us in a state of constant crisis response and inability to sustainably innovate or address long-term needs—which would eventually reduce the level of crisis response needed.

One part of the work doesn't have to suffer for another to flourish: we can lift all boats by more strategic and amplified investments. The Blueprint funding strategy presented here offers opportunity for each borough to respond to community needs, seed necessary

services and programs with community input, and enable medium-term funding in a 5-year model. In this vein, a borough can offer a range of prevention, intervention, and community-led solutions—and that mix can vary by borough to address local needs, stakeholder concerns, and resources available.

Separate borough-based RFPs for City-funded programs can address borough-specific needs and communities—such as the language diversity in Queens. An advocate from Garden of Hope, which serves the Chinese American community, indicates a dire need for language access in abusive partner programs, noting, “They couldn't find services in the community. They just sit there and stare at the presenter. They don't have language capacity.”

Not only are certain boroughs sidelined but marginalized populations—including indi-

viduals who primarily speak languages other than English, LGBTQIA people, and disabled individuals—are not given adequate attention and resources to serve their communities. In a model where consistency and scalable structure is the norm, underserved populations do not have meaningful access to services. A funding model with a more decentralized structure allows for the most marginalized to provide leadership—as well as gives direct stakeholders an opportunity to shape services and programs based on community needs and values.

Paul Feuerstein, President/CEO of Barrier Free Living, speaks to the importance of culturally specific services, saying, “We attempted to start some services for deaf abusers but deaf people didn’t want to talk about it. The level of abuse in the community is so great that it’s hard to come to grips with it. Or for individuals who are deaf, the services don’t exist. Having specialized services for the community is a priority.”

In addition to specialized services, advisory board input in developing borough-based RFPs for City-funded programs can grow community partnerships as well as field coordination and collaboration through partnership with the Coalition on Working with Abusive Partners (CoWAP). Borough-based City funding streams can also foster space for partnerships with community-based organizations to deliver

vital services and programs. Having community input and presence is also a community engagement strategy and assists in reaching populations. “We need local community organizations providing services—someone who’s a reflection,” indicates Gene A. Johnson, Jr., Mediator and Facilitator. With a borough-based funding strategy, we can build further programs that meet the needs of more communities while fostering increased capacity for sustainable long-term change.

## STRATEGIES FOR RESPONSE

- Utilize the development process for RFPs for City-funded programs to foster community connections, integration of services, and connections between the work—prevention and intervention, mainstream and culturally specific, and survivor-centered and whole family approaches
- With input from the borough advisory board, release RFPs for new City-funded programs for abusive partner interventions connected to survivor safety, healthy relationships, and family wellness
- With input from the borough advisory board, release RFPs for City-funded programs unique to each of the 5 boroughs in order to address community needs and enable innovative programs and community partnerships

*A social worker can't be everything in the community or outside the classroom.  
That kind of transformative change can't happen in half of one day of the week.  
We need to make an investment in that kind of change. — Kimberley Moore*

- With input from the borough advisory board, include guidelines for culturally specific and specialized services within each RFP for City-funded programs
- Foster sustainability with flexibility by enabling 5-year funding streams within each borough
- Integrate coordination and collaboration across boroughs by facilitating participation in CoWAP as part of each City-funded contract

## RECOMMENDATION

- Issue 5 borough-specific Request for Proposals (RFPs)—one for each borough—for City-funded programs to enable 5-year borough-based funding streams for multiple community-specific programs in order to develop individual, whole family, and/or community solutions towards safety, accountability with healing, wellness, and transformation. In line with the priorities of the borough’s advisory board, develop borough-specific RFPs for City-funded programs that are inclusive of and/or focused on communities of color, disabled individuals, people causing harm to elders, justice-involved individuals, low-income communities, immigrant communities, individuals who are Limited English proficient, LGBTQIA communities, veterans, women abusers, and/or youth

## RECOMMENDATION 3: FUND LONG-TERM AND COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION INTERVENTIONS

*He cooks now. Either we'll cook together or he cooks before I get home or cuz he watches the kids in the house. And so, he'll do it before I get home or when I get home and he'll make sure they're bathed and make sure whatever they got to get done, they do, they clean up. He wants to spend more time with them now and do family outings and you know I try to tell him, 'OK, we're separated now so you could just take the kids and go. You don't need me there anymore.' And he doesn't like that. He still wants to do things together.*

*He's like, 'But I'm trying. I'm doing this and I'm trying to make you happy.' But when I see certain things happen—that he gets frustrated—and I still see a glimpse of the old him and I'm like, it's just going to take time to heal. It's just going to take time for him to learn how to really deal with it in another way besides suppression.*

*He took me out for my birthday on Sunday and he still wanted me to have sex with him and I had to really be firm with him. It took a lot from both of us because I really didn't want to do anything. He was trying to force me—I got a bruise on my hand because he was trying to force me to have sex with him. This is why I see you still have a long way to change. — Janice*

### GAPS

“The time frames in which we have to work are a drop in the bucket,” expresses B. Indira Ramsaroop, Senior Policy Analyst, Office of Clinical Practice, Policy and Support, Domestic Violence Policy and Planning at the Administration for Children’s Services.

One significant struggle in abusive partner interventions is the problem of time. How long

should a program be? What happens after a program is finished? How do participants incorporate learnings or behavior modifications? And crucially: what is the environment that supports them in maintaining behavior changes?

Across the board, providers noted the current programming timelines are insufficient to the outcomes desired, including behavioral

*I believe that even though harm is awful, that it is a part of life. But it is often said that change is a part of life. Therefore, I would hope that a person who perpetrates violence can overcome that desire to do something different. It matters to me because sexual violence has permeated my life not only as a perpetrator but also as a victim. I need to believe that it is possible to change. I have witnessed a lot of change in my life. But it's very insular. The change that comes from being your own support system is not very long-lasting. — Kimber*

change and healing of trauma—and the healing of trauma that enables behavioral change. “You want to fix something that is profound and complicated and deep but you don’t want to spend too much time and money on it. Twenty-six weeks is not enough to change behavior. It is enough to begin,” observes Erica Willheim, PhD, Clinical Director, Family PEACE Trauma Treatment Center at New York-Presbyterian Hospital. “In other countries, there’s no such thing as a 26-week group. There’s a 2-year program in England. It really is that serious. You’re changing a profoundly wired-in behavior. It’s in the body. Trauma is remembered and repeated in the body so you have to practice being different. You have to practice every day.”

While a number of interventions for people who cause harm are even less than 26 weeks, in New York City, a number of court-mandated 26-week programs exist. These programs predominantly serve heterosexual men of color, including individuals experiencing poverty or a lack of documentation status—a fact noted in one of the groups I observed, as a participant, looking around the table, commented, “I didn’t

know until I went through the system. It’s a sea of brown and black and one white guy who’s Russian. If you don’t have capital in this country, you don’t matter. If we had money, we wouldn’t be here in this program.” Quentin Walcott, Co-Executive Director of CONNECT, verifies, “Mostly poor people and people of color end up in the batterers programs. Others go to therapy and individual counseling.” In addition to manifesting systemic oppressions, including racism and classism, current interventions for people who cause harm are not designed to include and be safe for queer, trans, and women participants.

In this particular program session I observed, a co-facilitator deftly moved the conversation to validating that reality of racial and socioeconomic inequity while reinforcing intimate partner violence is also a reason everyone is in the room. He also noted that the men in the room have an opportunity to heal themselves and repair their relationships, an opportunity to heal family dynamics and grow—forced or not. As another abusive partner interventions program facilitator describes, “You have them for 26 weeks. They’re a captive

audience. It can be positive and it's up to us to take advantage of that. There is an opportunity for us to provide a safe space for 26 weeks. It's the beginning of transformation to see a healthy relationship. There are opportunities."

In the programs I observed with effective frameworks, revelations and transformation can happen within a session. But what happens when participants leave the room? Learning and incorporating learnings is not the same thing. As Sharlena from Voices of Women professes, "I feel that if somebody would like to have the choice to do, it should be an ongoing process—not something that's maybe eight hours. It should be at least 6 months to a year in order to make that a part of a lifestyle." Lifestyle change is crucial and difficult even in 26 weeks. "Twenty-six weeks is not long enough for behavior change. If we had funding, I'd love to have a second phase group. It provides them with a certain structure and safety they may not have another place," notes Nazy Kaffashan, Program Director at the Family Wellness Program at Children's Aid.

Outside of the complete lack of programs serving most marginalized communities, part of the structure missing in current abusive partner intervention programming is aftercare—or an extension of the services in a different format to help codify program take-aways and incorporate change. "Where is the place to continue having the conversation? Many want to seek help and change behavior but need the outlets. We are that community response to constantly hold them accountable and see themselves. But what happens when that reminder is gone? What side

do you see again?" asks Albery Abreu, Abusive Partner Intervention Specialist, Family Wellness Program at Children's Aid. Walcott crystallizes, "For batterers groups, the community has to support it to truly work."

Change is a process—and practitioners underscore support is necessary. Enabling supports that can be sustainable and flourish in communities opens spaces for people historically marginalized or traumatized by systems including women who use force and disabled, immigrant, limited English proficient, queer, and trans people causing harm—including to elders, children, and relationships outside of intimate partners. "People actually need support to change. I wonder how can those services be more inviting and match the incident that took place," ruminates Essex Lodes, National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs Coordinator at the New York City Anti-Violence Project. "How would we have spaces for support in community? How do we have the services readily available to people who are not going to identify as an abuser or criminal? How do we have services not within the systems? How do we pull back the intervention and put it in more communities? How are you meeting the needs in communities?"

Some concrete strategies to ensure the abusive partner interventions New York City has can be effective are to 1) fund them fully (which also eliminates the need to charge participant fees); and, 2) enable longer-term programming such as aftercare and community-supported programming.

“As far as a buddy system, it would help out. A lot,” Jamel Hooks Jr. articulates. “You’re going to fail. It’s not easy. You have to sit down and breathe and practice every day.”

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The call for longer-term services in interventions for people who harm is inextricably connected to fostering community leadership in ending violence. Our goal is not to offer endless streams of services endlessly but to resource communities to address violence before it begins—even if that vision will take generations.

Community members can facilitate change in an everyday way that programs cannot. Going to a program once a week is not the same as living in a community day in and day out. And the work of engaging change from a community context involves knowledge, resources, and skills. One model relevant to the work to transform gender-based violence is Cure Violence, a violence prevention program that leverages young men of color as “credible messengers” to stem gun violence. The model has been proven to be effective in reducing violence while mobilizing economic, leadership, and community health gains. Gun violence, the violence of poverty, and gender-based violence are related. As Juan Ramos, Executive Director at Community Driven Solutions, Inc. underscores, “There is an epidemic in our community and we play a role in that and we can play a role in ending that. Violence against women is another symptom of men’s violence.”

In fact, community-based credible messengers can reach where mainstream programs and interventions cannot. “Community engagement work is just beginning to be more valued. It’s a specialty and a skill set,” notes Eric L. Cumberbatch, Executive Director at the Office to Prevent Gun Violence, Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice.

The transformation of enacting violence to coaching others to end violence is a profound strategy in ending violence. As Lindsay shares, “I live in the Bronx and a lot of times around my area, a lot of men are so gang-affiliated or aggressive or just not a positive role model. To be able to provide them with somebody who might be more level-headed and more responsible is a huge, huge thing.”

Again, this transformation takes time. And volunteering—serving as a credible messenger—is itself a violence interruption strategy. Samantha Taylor offers, “There’s always volunteering and that’s great but then that’s at the tail end of the experience. It is unwise for an abuser to volunteer when he/she has not passed the hump or the hurdle of understanding why they behave the way they do—what’s the root of their abusive nature. Volunteering is definitely a good thing. It fills up an emptiness you feel inside based on my personal experience. When you go through something traumatic or when you cause something traumatic and you get the help that you need, it changes your life for the better. Counseling has the power to re-center you and plant your feet on higher grounds. There is a lot of power in understand-

ing who you are, why you did what you did, how to not do it anymore, and how to move from a dark or hopeless to a bright or hopeful place. When you've seen your personal growth and you gain understanding, you're giving the opportunity to say, 'You know what, I've either caused harm or someone harmed me. However, I'm alive and I'm improving daily and I no longer seek to hurt.' That reminds you of where you came from and motivates you. It also guides your thoughts and helps you to stand your ground—it prevents you from desiring to go back to that awful state of mind or relationship. In teaching and guiding others, you're teaching and guiding yourself too. It's a win-win situation: you're helping someone and you're helping yourself at the same time."

Fostering community leadership and enabling the development of credible messengers is itself an aftercare and long-term violence interruption strategy. Community involvement in ending violence creates a space for purpose, legacy, and intergenerational healing. "We don't ever outgrow the age limit of mentoring each other," Ramos remarks. "Men listen to other men. As men, we like to think about what legacies do we want to leave behind. We're concerned about your overall wellness and really grabbing men's hearts. Grabbing their hearts makes them see they too benefit from changing this. We also want to invest in your well-being. We want to build communities where healthy families exist."

Clinical interventions and formal abusive partner intervention programs are vital. And,

if we want to end violence, we must transform hearts, spirits, minds, and community networks. As Cumberbatch shares, "We can't be scared to talk in a way that is more holistic. We're not connecting with people at the deepest level. I've seen what change looks like. It's a spiritual path. Healthy people will have a healthy neighborhood will have a healthy community."

### STRATEGIES FOR RESPONSE

- Enable programming and interventions that build on current 26-week programs
- Foster community-based interventions and supports for participants who have finished programs as a short-term maintenance of behavior change as well as long-term prevention and transformation
- Mobilize community leadership and credible messengers to activate community change
- Invest in long-term, community-based prevention and social change responses that address the intersecting conditions that lead to all kinds of violence

### RECOMMENDATION

- In order to enable and maintain behavior changes and as part of a transformative arc, fund a) interventions for post-program aftercare and b) lifetime involvement through a leadership development institute of direct stakeholders who can be mobilized as credible messengers

## RECOMMENDATION 4: EXPAND RELATIONSHIP ABUSE PREVENTION PROGRAM (RAPP) IN SCHOOLS FOR DEAF AND OTHER STUDENTS

*The majority of people don't think that way of accessibility. I haven't seen much change—just the players change. Different location, same discussion. I cannot be the only deaf person in New York City and yet I'm the only one that's called to the meetings. There have to be others at the table. Deaf LGBTQ are not invited. I'm so pessimistic of getting noticed and invited. — Christina Curry, Executive Director, Harlem Independent Living Center*

### GAPS

We wait to address violence after it happens. We don't build out networks to involve more voices—and pool additional strategies and leaders to end violence. And we sideline populations including young, LGBTQIA, and deaf people.

We can address some of these gaps and both intervene with and prevent violence through augmented investments in the NYC school-based Relationship Abuse Prevention Program (RAPP). In particular, developing a program that works with deaf students would include a population that is unserved—and build bridges to other youth while setting up positive behavioral practices. There is a demand: as one RAPP coordinator informs, “Young people really want to know how to be in healthy relationships.” Despite a significant curiosity, one social worker shares that social emotional learning opportunities are slim, saying, “We need to educate young people how

to identify their emotions: our urban youth are not getting that.”

More opportunities for youth-based services would correlate to early lessons in defining healthy relationships and behaviors. “Over 12 years of law enforcement, the one thing I've always noticed is it starts from home. There's a lack of positive guidance within many of the high recidivist cases that I held or had,” New York Police Department Sergeant Joseph Alohan offers. “More has to be done on a teenage level: teaching how do I identify a healthy relationship or an unhealthy relationship—to set people up for the most successful nonviolent relationship possible.”

Michele Paoella, Director of Social Services and Training at Day One, underscores that working with youth enables a proactive response to nip violence in the bud: “Looking at prevention and what that means is a gap. In that

there is a moment when power and control take root, there's a moment before that." Enabling additional RAPP spaces can help foster new norms preventing violence and embodied behavior towards healthy relationships.

The RAPP structure of support contrasts with school responses that may focus on discipline and suspension and contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline. Or school staff may work in a way that is not trauma-informed. "There's a lot of slut-shaming that happens. If teachers just say, 'You shouldn't be sending these pictures anyway,' it sets up an environment where students can't talk about experiences," one RAPP Coordinator at Day One relays. "Students feel validated in RAPP space. That's something they don't find within school or communities generally." Amplifying why a shame-based approach isn't effective, Jeimi Burgos, RAPP Coordinator at Day One, notes, "When you only focus on what someone has done with shame, it makes them learn to do things undercover. They're taught not to do things but not that they're doing things because something's wrong, that there's trauma still there." Colleague Jamila Hinton, RAPP Coordinator at Day One, concurs and notes that the intervention has to include relational frames: "Most staff-initiated interventions come from a place of shame. The basis of respect for a young person's agency is missing. Most of the interventions have to focus on inner/outer work instead of just behavior change."

RAPP is a vital space for much-needed support and intervention particularly for

LGBTQIA youth beginning to explore relationships and their own sexuality—often in environments that squash openness and re-inscribe heteronormative relationships. "There are so few out queer and trans youth, there is a stranglehold to maintain relationships," notes Jack Skelton, RAPP Coordinator at Day One. Underscoring that marginalization leads to lack of mentorship, community supports, and vital interventions, Kimberley Moore explains, "There is a lot of voyeurism around queer and trans relationships. Young people in these relationships are not encouraged to be critical of patterns. There is more physical violence and less support."

In a parallel context, Burgos attests, "In a lot of cultures of color, there is a taboo of talking about relationships." Not only is RAPP a vital space for LGBTQIA youth and youth of color (and LGBTQIA youth of color), it is also a space where program participants may speak to abuse in the home—without automatically triggering court and law enforcement involvement. Paoella explains, "People are afraid to go get help without assurance of confidentiality. The relief and the shift is really palpable. For some youth, offering alternatives would increase help-seeking behaviors. There's more opportunity without requiring the criminal justice arm."

In fact, RAPP is a beautiful model of fused prevention and intervention work—which are often the same coin. "You're changing the nature of a violent society by individual work. It's a big internal struggle. As a clinician, I love to work through contradictions. I think that's

really powerful,” attests Tao-Yee Lau, RAPP Coordinator at Day One. Part of the power of RAPP is its potential and demonstration of new strategies for intervening with and ending violence. “We need to have a container to incubate culture change,” advises Essex Lordes, National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs Coordinator at the New York City Anti-Violence Project. “Schools are spaces to incubate alternatives. Culture change is super important and possible with youth.”

Such school-based strategies could blossom further community-based responses and stem the pipeline to criminal legal systems. “Young men of color are institutionalized before services are offered or they are incarcerated—we need to learn how to invite before indicting. There could be interventions and preventive services offered in communities that signal zero tolerance or norm change before going to court—such as mandating going to a Wellness Center,” observes Juan Ramos. Or as Skelton remarks, “Young people shouldn’t be locked up. That shouldn’t be an intervention.” Paoella crystallizes, “We’re talking about breaking down oppressions.”

Opportunities for youth prevention and intervention can have immediate and life-long impacts as community members attest. “Starting young, starting with high school kids—I feel like what helped me a lot was my after-school program. If more kids had that, a lot of crime as a whole would be decreased—just having something, a place where you can go to and feel safe and be able to talk to people as well as

make money to be able to afford to go to school every day. So that’s a big plus—starting with them as young as possible.”

## STRATEGIES FOR RESPONSE

- Initiate abusive partner interventions for deaf communities through a RAPP program that works with deaf students
- Expand resources to enable further RAPP programs with attention to queer and trans youth and communities of color
- Foster community-based youth services to address violence without criminal legal systems involvement

## RECOMMENDATION

- Expand Relationship Abuse Prevention Program (RAPP) in schools including a pilot program for a) deaf students as well as b) students of color, disabled students, immigrant students, LGBTQIA students, and/or girls

“He went to like social work, therapy, couples therapy—he went to a lot but it was too hard because the ones that he went to, I guess they weren’t like licensed licensed. They were just people there that he could just run to and talk to but they weren’t really helpful at that moment.”

He was like a femme type. He would wear a lot of feminine clothes. And they would not take him seriously. They would be looking at him like, ‘Oh well, maybe if you stop dressing this way, maybe if you stop dressing that way, your family would accept you.’ When I felt like that was the wrong thing to say. Like everybody has their own preferences—they should dress the way that they want, walk around the way that they want. And the counselor that we had was very homophobic so I felt like if he was homophobic, he should have just...I don’t know. I just feel like if you know the place that you’re going to work at there’s going to be LGBT people there, then you should know how to treat them because they’re already going through enough on the outside. And if you don’t feel like you can treat them the right way, you shouldn’t be working with them at all. They didn’t take him so seriously. They felt like he was just kidding around until when he committed suicide. Then I went there and I was like, ‘Do y’all think he was kidding?’ They were like, ‘No. We apologize. We wish we could have dealt with it in a better way.’ But I said it was too late—it’s too late to take whatever you said back. I feel like if they were more understanding and more cautious of the LGBT youth that he could have still been alive and still trying to do better. — **Shamel**

## RECOMMENDATION 5: CREATE IMPACT EVALUATION PROCESSES AND DATA COLLECTION TOOLS TO CHART BEHAVIOR CHANGE, TRANSFORMATION, AND COMMUNITY WELLNESS

*“Even the detective said, ‘Zebras don’t change their stripes.’ In the big picture, if we’re saying abusers are not going to change, is that a constant? Is the responsibility then put on the abused instead? That’s so weird. And I don’t think anyone is immune from being an abuser or abused. There might be some predisposition but I don’t think that there’s a certainty. Just to know you can change is the big thing. There are times people told me I couldn’t change. How destructive that thought process is. Obviously, it takes work and how great that there are services that can facilitate that. — Anonymous*

### GAPS

We work in a field where there are life and death consequences. One intimate partner violence homicide is too many. As a result, many systems are focused on risk assessment and safety for survivors. Within the arena of abusive partner interventions, the commonly-held belief is that abusers can’t change. This vantage has been informed by research but practitioners question the scope of the research and its framework. “The big barrier still out there is they don’t work, they don’t work,” says one advocate. “It’s frustrating. Everyone says they don’t work. People don’t even really understand how to look at the research. There’s so much research to be done.” A City employee concurs: “The research is really unsatisfying. You’ll get

a couple of papers on this topic and the subject goes dead and then basically makes the same criticism and not a lot of promising practices.”

The focus on evidence-based practices has been narrow in scope, arising from concerns about lethality and measuring recidivism. Such an approach has put advocates and abusive partner intervention practitioners in a defensive stance. “The consequences of not acting are so horrifying that our ability to think creatively has been constrained,” observes one City employee. “There is a hunger for understanding of evidence-based practices. There aren’t a whole lot of interventions that point to a silver bullet.”

In part, the research has often been a mismatch from community and movement-

building goals and criminal legal system and research models. “We don’t have a quantifiable risk assessment that is structured in line with our values,” states Catherine Shugrue dos Santos, Co-Director of Client Services at the New York City Anti-Violence Project. “The common risk assessments are focused on fatality and we’re not only interested in lethality. Most have only been tested with cisgender women, predominantly in heteronormative relationships with cisgender men who have abused them.” Furthermore, the goals of abusive partner interventions have focused on course completion and measuring recidivism, which does not actually measure a decrease in all kinds of violence, behavior change, or increase in wellness. “We have to look beyond recidivism rates because that’s only physical violence—which is a disservice to survivors,” observes Quentin Walcott, Co-Executive Director of CONNECT. Furthermore, practitioners indicate the research reflects programs with flawed design: “‘People can’t build empathy’ is irresponsible to say as abusive partner intervention program providers,” observes Manny Yonko, Administrative Director, Office of Clinical Practice, Policy and Support, Domestic Violence and Policy Planning at Administration for Children’s Services. “You can’t just put people in a chair and scream at them. I know that’s putting a survivor at risk.”

Practitioners in the field seek to have effective programs but gauge efficacy in different terms and timelines and in a format that considers the timespan of interventions, noting again the need for long-term behavior change supports. Furthermore, practitioners seek greater qualitative texture. “There are additional ways to do research like asking, ‘How did that impact your life?’” observes Terri Roman, Project Director of the Bronx Domestic Violence Complex, adding that we also need to know why people did not finish programs. “The reasons people get terminated are important.”

In bridging the desire for evidence-based practices and values of transformative, inclusive work, one City employee asks a crucial question: “How do you apply evidence-based practice models that are about honoring and validating the individual?” Practitioners have a few responses. “What’s happening in that relationship? The first step is to have an actual assessment to see,” remarks Rita Abadi, Clinician and Operations Manager, Sexual Assault and Violence Intervention Program at Mt. Sinai. Furthermore, advocates seek new measures focused on behavior change and resocialization: “We weren’t measuring transformation. We need to resocialize ourselves to feel healthy and display emotions,” notes Juan Ramos, Executive Director at Community Driven Solutions, Inc. “We don’t give anything up by being this type

*There is a point where you have to let go and a point where you have to run for your life. — Samantha Taylor*

of man.” Outside recidivism, practitioners seek measures and research that connect to behavior change, health impacts and community belonging, and social transformation of gender norms.

We have an opportunity not only to design programs differently but invest in more meaningful evaluation. After all, recidivism measures are not only restricted to physical violence but are also usually captured in short time frames of 2-to-5 years. We need evaluation that will look at lifetimes and at intergenerational impacts. We need not only a numbers frame but an impact frame which would further long-term solutions. “We’ve all lost clients here to homicide and suicide. Everything is weighted towards identifying that risk,” shares Margarita Guzmán, Deputy Executive Director at Violence Intervention Program, Inc. “The vast majority of DV relationships are so far from that and so destructive. The majority of homicides had little or zero criminal legal history. How do you even find them? If you’re a community member, we need to build capacity for people to see.”

Guzmán demonstrates the critical importance of community interventions alongside agency-based services. A diverse set of approaches, as well as measures, is necessary. As Michael Scherz, Director, Domestic Violence Project at Lawyers for Children, observes, “It’s a tall order that generations of violence can be addressed by some folks in a room and a facilitator.” We do need to measure program efficacy. And we need to align the measures with the program purposes while fostering a range of interventions—within agencies and communi-

ties. As a City employee suggests, “Everybody wants evidence-based programs. How do we know that’s a good investment? We have to stick out our necks and say we’re going to try something. We have to be evidence producers. As an Administration, that’s the scary thing to do.” The time is ripe to realign our practices and measures with our values—and become evidence-producers through new programs, strategies, and transformative solutions.

### STRATEGIES FOR RESPONSE

- Foster assessment tools that, alongside risk, assess needs and strengths
- Expand risk assessment tools to attune to the needs and contexts of underrepresented communities including women who use force and LGBTQIA communities
- Foster evaluation systems that measure behavior change, community impact, and interruption of intergenerational violence
- Build out connections between agencies and communities in order to more effectively address risk and have community input on health and wellness measures

### RECOMMENDATION

- In consultation with credible messenger teams, create impact evaluation processes and data collection tools to chart behavior change and transformation as well as community health and wellness indicators

*Programs can't afford evaluation. Most batterers intervention programs are not fully funded and yet we're applying this medical research model.*

— **Juan Carlos Areán**, Program Director, Children and Youth Program, Futures Without Violence

## RECOMMENDATION 6: FUND A MEDIA CAMPAIGN FOCUSED ON INTERRUPTING CYCLES OF VIOLENCE

*So, we live in New York City. It's a lot of fast-paced things going on, a lot of entertainment media. I think relationships these days start much earlier than maybe other locations, even before the teenage years. And at that point, I feel we should address the community on a community level—just to strike that conversation of approaching what a relationship looks like—not what they might see or hear. And community organizing is key for that so other people can be involved—the elders can be involved cuz they import a lot of wisdom.*  
— **Sharlena** from Voices of Women

### GAPS

We have had a number of public service campaigns targeted to survivors to reach out for services and to say there is no excuse for abuse. But a similar media strategy for people who cause harm is lacking. In addition, much of the messaging is shame-based while centering carceral responses and not pitched to inspire voluntary outreach for services. Not only is there a gap in interventions that focus on behavior change, there is a gap in advertising for interventions for people who harm. A media campaign could help contextualize violence happens, what it looks like, motivations for change, and the City resources available.

Furthermore, media often perpetuate the divides present in our society. “A lot of visuals and media are very white,” notes Yumnah Syed, Coordinator of Evaluation & Training, Institute for Adolescent Trauma Treatment and Training at Adelphi University and former Youth Empowerment Advocate at Sakhi for South Asian Women. Additionally, the representation of communities of color—particularly black and brown men (the majority of individuals mandated for abusive partner interventions)—is often negative and racist. “Everybody has a boiling point. Being poor, racism, being disrespected in every form. You show up in

*They misunderstand who they are outside of the media.* — **Jamel Hooks Jr.**

*The key messages for a public service campaign are: 1) this happens and it's not as private and covert as we think it is; and, 2) there are ways you can get help within your context and conditions you are living in. — Quentin Walcott,*

Co-Executive Director of CONNECT

the media always being portrayed as violent,” explains one City employee. “Life can be really hard for the families we work with. It would be responsible for us to take the holistic approach to understand the whole context.”

Outside of broad social messaging, the field of abusive partner interventions itself needs media support and information-sharing. “There’s a nervousness to work with this population due to a lack of accessible literature. Since they don’t see it enough, they can’t envision it. We don’t know what it looks like to work with men or services with abusive partners,” observes Albery Abreu, Abusive Partner Intervention Specialist, Family Wellness Program at Children’s Aid. Having more field tools and shared messaging on the work itself could open doors to more practitioners as well as range of responses.

Whether field materials or public campaigns, what is clear is we cannot ignore media and their impact. Not only are media connected to modes of abuse but media’s power can overshadow our services. As Gene A. Johnson, Jr., Mediator and Facilitator, observes, “Social media is hard because it becomes an echo chamber and reinforces what you believe in.” For this reason, one particularly productive strategy that STEPS to End Family Violence utilizes in its

Teen Accountability Program (TAP) is analyzing media and engaging media as teaching tools. One TAP group session I observed utilized media tools—and participants were engaged in the lesson and able to identify issues of power and control and violence. Media provide a crucial platform for learning.

We can support creation and dissemination of media for utilization of services, intervening with people who cause harm, and creating messaging so youth inform and educate each other as a teaching tool among peers. As an advocate and leader at TAP states, “If there’s a hope of ending violence, we need to work with these young men to educate them and challenge the social norms that lead to patterns of abuse and violence.”

And we can also use media to create a community working together to end violence. Sarah Pantaleon suggests the City can foster media that promote open conversations: “Maybe some sort of a talk show—talking about family and relationships, how important it is and then you know, maybe at the end of the show, people could give the information for places that you could go and talk to someone in anonymity. You don’t have to tell the name. You just have to call and talk to someone. Some of the people, at least in my ex-husband’s case, he was trauma-

tized as a child. He never had the opportunity to get therapy. And he has a lot of shame—and that shame changed into anger. And although as a survivor myself and victim, it’s hard to forgive him, I need to empathize because he’s living in his own hell in his mind. So, maybe a radio show, a talk show. Maybe the City has some channel that they can have and people coming forward who have been a survivor or abuser who are very brave, who don’t mind to tell their story and how they have overcome. They can come and talk and share their experience. Humans connect with each other through their own pain and problems so if someone who feel so much shame can see others, that he or she is not alone, maybe that will help them to reach out for help.”

## STRATEGIES FOR RESPONSE

- Foster a public service campaign connected to opportunities for anonymous, agency-supported, peer, and community behavioral change
- Frame media tools and products with a motivational change focus with the message that support is available and change is possible
- Foster youth and community-led media tools and campaigns to mobilize credible messengers and link prevention to intervention to intergenerational change

## RECOMMENDATION

- In consultation with credible messenger teams, survivors of violence, and advocates, fund a media campaign focused on interrupting cycles of violence, highlighting motivations for change, and encouraging services involvement

*I mean it’s very important that the person recognizes that they need the help. Because you look at how long it took my husband to realize it and he was refusing to get to help because he didn’t see himself that way—just because he didn’t hit me and you know he just saw it as I wasn’t a battered wife even though he has hit me. Since it wasn’t often, he didn’t see it as that situation. So, I think it is important for the person to first recognize that they have the problem because it’s just like an addict. If an addict doesn’t realize that they have a problem, they’re not going to want the help or be open to it. So, I think that’s the first step. — Janice*

## REFRAMINGS TOWARDS TRANSFORMATIVE SOLUTIONS

*“People need support to be non-violent. Strangely the movement to end violence never talks about nonviolence...or peacebuilding. What if we all made a commitment to nonviolence. What if we actually studied the great teachers of nonviolence? Sadly the movement to end violence has replicated the violence of white supremacy/male supremacy and capitalism. We’re so committed to power and control without realizing it.”* — **Sally N. MacNichol**, Co-Executive Director, CONNECT

*“We have the power to change the nation behind something like this you know. I keep seeing younger and younger and younger people—both gay and straight—have to deal with domestic violence somewhere in their family. It’s scary but it’s still a reality. It’s still very much prevalent in our communities. You know I go to an SRO every single day and cops are either leaving or coming from my building—someone has physically assaulted somebody, a couple fighting—and other than being in the system, there are no outpatient programs where somebody can learn their way. But if they set it up instead of incarcerating—because incarceration I believe only progresses a behavior, there really is no rehabilitation there—and when you allow a person to get to the bottom of those fears, things start to change. Things start to change.”*  
— **C. Delaine Dixon**

*“Being in this work saved my life or I would have been on the other side of the table. That is the thing I hold on to that lets me know behavioral change is possible.”* — **Manny Yonko**, Administrative Director, Office of Clinical Practice, Policy and Support, Domestic Violence and Policy Planning, Administration for Children’s Services

*“I want to consider the work in a liberation framework as opposed to just violence intervention. I want to think what does liberation look like and how can we adjust and reframe things to that goal as opposed to just make somebody safe—which is impossible. As opposed to investing in or supporting someone’s liberation. I feel like we have such an investment in safety and violence interruption but why are we stopping at interruption? What does safety even mean? I think people think liberation sounds so much more unwieldy and non-definitive than safety but I don’t think that’s true. I don’t think that’s true. I don’t know what it means to be safe but I do think I can know what it means to feel liberated and embrace the vulnerability in that process.”*  
— **Margarita Guzmán**, Deputy Executive Director at Violence Intervention Program, Inc.







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**COALITION ON WORKING  
WITH ABUSIVE PARTNERS**  
Safety. Accountability. Support



# SEEDING GENERATIONS

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## Fostering Innovations in Accountability with Healing

Area 2 of 3  
Reframing Interventions for People who Abuse

Report by **Purvi Shah**,  
Consultant to the Interagency Working Group on  
NYC's Blueprint for Abusive Partner Intervention (IWG)  
and hosted by the Center for Court Innovation



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## FRAMING

*Look at everything around us. It's economically depleted. You see these generations of violence. My father and my mom went through the same issues that me and my children's father go through. You have to understand community dynamics. — Lindsay*

*Penmanship doesn't change because you change the pen. You might get away with abusing one person but what is going to happen when you get into another relationship? It's important for abusers to get help (counseling, group support, volunteer opportunities) that might be the only thing that can/will stop them from abusing someone again. That has the potential to change the pattern/trend of abuse and impact the way his generation is living. — Samantha Taylor*

We live in cultures where violence—from mass shootings to hate violence to interpersonal violence—surrounds us and infuses our communities, institutions, and how we live our lives. In the United States, the women's movement has made life-saving gains on recognition of gender-based violence and particularly in the need to support survivors of violence with services and criminal legal system responses.

Where we have fallen short is recognizing the power of reparative strategies and transforming the intersecting conditions that lead to violence. We have consistently invested in a crisis response frame while short-shrifting the long-term work of transformation.

With the collective wisdom of survivors, people who have caused harm, advocates, and community members, this Blueprint for Abu-

sive Partner Intervention seeks to reframe our current frames of gender-based violence advocacy. By seeing abuse as a behavior instead of a person (i.e. person who causes harm vs. abuser) and utilizing the term "intimate violence" to include elder abuse, family violence, intimate partner violence, and women who use force, the Blueprint challenges conventional framings of gender-based violence while underscoring gender oppression and heteronormativity in violence. The solutions presented here challenge the current narratives for survivors of violence including the imperative to leave to get services, the necessity of carceral solutions, and that intergenerational healing and wellness through breaking cycles of violence with people who cause harm is impossible.

*There is a list of numbers for the victim. I haven't seen any services for the abuser so they can get help. I would like to see that being offered. It's so painful to see this is the norm. — Iffat*

On a practical level, the solutions here connect people with each other—partners and chosen family, agencies and communities, professionals and community leaders, and survivor advocates and providers serving people who cause harm—with the knowledge that these categories overlap and our solutions need to work against such binaries and towards interdependence. The solutions here recognize that change is more than completion of a program, that people need to practice change and supports are vital for practice, and that prevention is part of intervention. The solutions here recognize that transformation happens in community and that programs must be accountable to survivors and culture change of violence.

The strategies here look to a liberation framework where people who cause harm have a stake and choice in their own growth, evolution, community connection, and liberation. This Blueprint envisions an architecture where stakeholders—not systems—lead the way.

With these complex solutions, the aim is not to sanitize violence or the real complexities of people's lives, systems, and behaviors. The goal is to acknowledge all of this and yet open up space to interrupt violence and cultures of violence. From this vantage, we can ensure connections of personal and systems account-

ability and transform the intersecting conditions that spur or enable violence.

To find transformation, we will need to go against the grain. I am personally grateful to have had my own assumptions challenged through the process of speaking with survivors, people who have caused harm, providers, and community members. In my 20 years of advocacy for survivors of violence—rooted in South Asian communities and communities of color—I too have advanced received wisdom such as mediation can't work, counseling can't work, batterers don't change. This year-long process of fostering participatory, transformative change has enabled me to re-examine such precepts and open up new strategies that give opportunity to heal from violence and be in healthy relationship and community.

Through the process, content, and format of this report, my frame is to enable reframings. My hope for this report—rooted in the power of transformative listening—is that it holds multiple realities and vantage points and keeps alive complexity. I aspire for this work to open conversations, facilitate concrete and actionable short-term solutions as well as enable visions where generations from now, we see an end to all kinds of violence. Working together, transformation is possible—and imminent.

## Reframings on Abusive Partner Interventions and Ending Violence

### Element 1: Transformative Solutions

- Fostering interventions for people who cause harm as a necessary part of supporting survivors and ending violence intergenerationally
- Mobilizing the wisdom of survivors of violence and people who have caused harm in fashioning solutions to ending violence
- Moving beyond carceral responses to localized, creative community solutions
- Resisting cultures of violence by addressing intersecting oppressions and cultivating culturally-specific, anti-ableist, anti-classist, anti-heteronormative, and anti-racist programming
- Focusing resources and evaluation measures on long-term culture shifts and prevention over short-term band-aids

### Element 2: Holistic Services towards Transformative Justice

- Fostering a belief and a praxis that people can change and communities can transform
- Moving beyond punishment to accountability with healing
- Fostering wholeness through wrap-around services, whole family strategies, and re-entry programming
- Mobilizing innovations through trauma-informed, restorative, and motivational change practices
- Making space for voluntary services and peer mentorship models
- Investing in professionals and community members advancing this work through resources, training, and leadership opportunities

### Element 3: Integrating Interventions towards Safety, Wellness, and Impact

- Fostering interdependence through team-based approaches and investments
- Investing in people, trainings, and collaborations
- Amplifying existing services through connection and integration

*As important as it is to have a team dedicated to a survivor, it's just as important for that person who's perpetrating harm to have a team. They've been trying to do whatever it is they're doing—healing, harming, avoiding—on their own for so long. It's going to take a lot of different people to get through to them. Someone who perpetrates harm does not expect support. — Kimber*

## METHODOLOGY

*Programs need to have individuals running programs that are close to the problem. And we were talking about the fact that you have all kinds of people who want to do things to help deal with the problem but none of them experienced the problem. We need to have formerly incarcerated individuals running some of these programs and setting some of these policies. Policy is the big thing because policy sets where the money is gonna come from.*

— **Anonymous**

As an independent consultant to the Inter-agency Working Group on NYC’s Blueprint for Abusive Partner Intervention (IWG), over the past year, I have had the joy of partnering with amazing community members, devoted service providers, and talented government and non-profit staff to arrive at a new, visionary NYC Blueprint for Abusive Partner Intervention.

Because I wanted to ensure the voices of direct stakeholders—survivors of violence and/or people who have caused harm—I navigated a process for research approved by the Center for Court Innovation Institutional Review Board (CCI IRB). In 2017, I received approval both for interviews with direct stakeholders as well as non-profit and government staff. My IRB-approved research also included focus groups with non-profit and government staff to reach allied providers and include voices outside the IWG. Finally, I conducted program observations to ground my analysis in day-to-day work. As part of the research, I utilized American Sign Language interpreters for 2

research participants and a Spanish interpreter for 2 participants. All research participants selected how they would like to be identified— anonymously, by first name, by full name, and/or by name and title. In addition, research participants who requested review were sent their comments for inclusion in the Blueprint to ensure accuracy. Research participants will also receive a copy of this Blueprint if they indicated interest in receiving it. The collective wisdom of community stakeholders, practitioners, and program participants informs this Blueprint: it would not exist without their partnership.

Alongside the first-hand research, I led an interactive participatory change process with the IWG and members of the Coalition on Working with Abusive Providers (CoWAP). The topics of each meeting I facilitated are provided in the text box on the Blueprint Development Process. I am grateful to CoWAP and IWG members for your active participation and collaboration—you made this Blueprint visionary and actionable.

Finally, I worked to include voices at the table not always found in policy discussions—primary stakeholders, culturally specific service providers, and practitioners working in related advocacy and social justice arenas. My aspiration is that the Blueprint and recommendations gathered here will amplify a movement building and systems change approach and continue to center the voices of direct stakeholders and

marginalized practitioners in order to transform systems and cultures of violence.

The following NYC Blueprint for Abusive Partner Intervention emerges from the collective wisdom of everyone who participated in the first-hand research, interactive meetings, and year-long process with me. As the report author, I have pooled, organized, architected, and elaborated these recommendations for the

## Blueprint Development Process

Element 1: Center for Court Innovation IRB-approved first-hand research

- 31 interviews with direct stakeholders (survivors of violence and/or people who have caused harm)
- 47 interviews with government and non-profit staff
- 6 focus groups with 29 government and non-profit staff
- 6 observations of current abusive partner programming

Element 2: Holistic Services towards Transformative Justice

- 4 visioning and action-mapping meetings with the IWG
  - Jan. 31, 2017: Mapping transformative interventions and linking prevention to intervention
  - March 30, 2017: Enhancing collaborations and coordinated response
  - May 18, 2017: Recommendations for abusive partner interventions
  - June 16, 2017: Recommendations for access & inclusion
- 4 visioning and action-mapping meetings with CoWAP
  - Feb. 21, 2017: Research on gaps in abusive partner intervention services in NYC, ways to fill gaps, and role of CoWAP
  - March 21, 2017: Mapping a story for abusive partner interventions
  - April 18, 2017: Enabling voluntary participants
  - July 18, 2017: Recommendations for abusive partner interventions

Element 3: Field input (selected)

- January 2017 The United States Department of Justice Office for Victims of Crime and Office on Violence Against Women National Roundtable on Programs for DV Offenders
- Spring 2017 NYC Domestic Violence Task Force
- August 2017 First Lady of NYC Community Conversation on Abusive Partner Intervention Programs

IWG's review and consideration for adoption. This Blueprint of my crystallized recommendations envisions three arenas for progress: transformative solutions; concrete innovations in accountability with healing; and, integration of services towards safety, wellness, and impact. Through the gathering of collective wisdom, the recommendations are bold, specific, actionable, and compelling.

## Research Participant Overview

### Element 1: Direct Stakeholders

- 31 research participants
  - 24 individuals who identify as survivors of violence
  - 5 individuals who identify as both survivors and people who have caused harm
  - 2 individuals who identify as people who have caused harm and who grew up with abuse/ were bullied/faced community violence
- Borough representation included:
  - 10 based in the Bronx
  - 10 based in Brooklyn
  - 5 based in Queens
  - 4 based in Manhattan
  - 2 based in Staten Island
- Age ranged from 19-66:
  - 8 ranged from 19-29
  - 8 ranged from 30-40
  - 7 ranged from 41-50
  - 7 ranged from 51-60
  - 1 ranged from 61-66

### Element 2: City and non-profit staff

- 74 research participants:
  - 12 from community-based organizations
  - 12 from government agencies working across arenas
  - 12 from legal and courts staff
  - 12 from non-profit agencies
  - 11 youth services providers
  - 8 abusive partner interventions practitioners
  - 2 elder services providers
  - 2 from law enforcement
  - 2 public health program clinicians
  - 1 clinician/researcher
- Borough representation included:
  - 6 based in the Bronx
  - 10 based in Brooklyn
  - 8 based in Queens
  - 2 based in Staten Island
  - 48 based in Manhattan including providers serving all boroughs

## HOLISTIC SERVICES AND APPROACHING TRANSFORMATIVE JUSTICE

*Had I not been exposed to this work, I would not have been able to forgive my mother's abuser. I blamed all men for his behavior, when my issue was with that particular individual. I realized my real work was to work with all men to change the message we receive at an early age that women are our property and we can do what we want with them if they are emotionally and intimately involved with us. We have to send the message that there is zero tolerance for this, but you can also get help. This work planted a seed for me for forgiveness. We're doing it because men can change. Men can undo the harm we commit against women and girls if we only begin to challenge our behaviors, attitudes, and silence on the issue. I am allowed to undo what I was carrying. — **Juan Ramos**, Executive Director, Community Driven Solutions, Inc.*

### FOSTERING HOLISTIC SERVICES AND TRAUMA-INFORMED ACCOUNTABILITY

Re-envisioning interventions for people who cause harm imagines change is possible—and envisions a world where survivors can access justice, accountability is possible, and our work transforms generational trauma and cycles of violence. We have understood the significance of holistic services in survivor advocacy. And now it is vital to see how holistic interventions for people who cause harm can foster increased safety and wellness across our communities.

In part, violence treats people as less than whole beings. Rather than reproducing violence, as systems and service providers, we need to

foster wholeness. “Our responses are rooted in the criminal legal system where people aren’t considered in their wholeness,” indicates Margarita Guzmán, Deputy Executive Director at Violence Intervention Program, Inc. “The prosecution is based on incident-based responses. People get broken down into events/incidents/specific points in time.” When we see only slices of people, are we utilizing the interventions that will get us to our goals of healthy relationships, families, and communities?

Members of the Coalition on Working with Abusive Partners (CoWAP), as crystallized in a session I led on story mapping, seek to change the narrative from “abusers are bad people who deserve to be punished” to seeing our work as

*“One time with my daughter’s father, this was actually years ago and I actually punched him in the eye. And to this day I don’t know why I did that. I apologized but just the fact that I did that. He didn’t do anything to even deserve that and that might also stem from, like I said, abuse in the household. I was sexually abused at a young age so I believe maybe a lot of my negative behavior is because I was so young and I wasn’t able to stand up for myself. So, I realized that later on, years apart at some point, I abused other people that really don’t deserve it. No one deserves to be sexually abused either. I’m just saying that to say that you tend to hurt those that don’t deserve it either. The repetition, that cycle: it just transforms in a different light. — Grace*

“restoring wholeness to family and relationships beyond heteronormativity and recognizing what led to lack of wholeness—structural racism and historical trauma.” Providers want to acknowledge the complexity of people’s experiences and lives while furthering accountability. In part, especially for teens and young adults, our response to intimate violence could have life-long consequences. “From the young men, I’ve learned that things happen in a relationship and one incidence doesn’t define you,” shares Gene A. Johnson, Jr., Mediator and Facilitator. “You made choices that got you here but that doesn’t have to define your life.” Accountability can be a journey towards wholeness—not simply a punishment that shrinks one’s humanity.

How do we encourage capacity for people who cause harm to be healthy and in healthy relationships? One core strategy is to connect accountability with healing in a framework that

allows for wholeness through access to holistic services. Trauma-informed accountability interventions can do just that. One fear, particularly for advocates who helped mobilize systems to take gender-based violence seriously, is that allowing a trauma-informed lens will excuse abusers and violent behavior. It need not be so. As one advocate observes, “It has to be either you’re doing accountability work or trauma-informed work. The idea that you could be doing both at the same time is hard for people to wrap their heads around. It’s not either/or. You can do both without making excuses.” The advocate also speaks to what holds us back from embracing trauma-informed accountability—the fear of amplifying harm: “It’s really hard to do something that’s scary when you’ve seen women die or systems fail.”

Safety is pivotal—and the basis for how we have designed our responses to abuse. Safety-oriented responses have prioritized

mandates through law enforcement, courts, or agencies as well as stop-gap solutions to remove survivors and children from harm. And yet, have we transformed behaviors? Have we created healthier relationships and communities? According to the NYC Domestic Violence Task Force 2017 goals and recommendations report, “Domestic violence now accounts for one in every five homicides—and two in every five reported assaults—citywide” (p.2 of <http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/criminaljustice/downloads/pdfs/domestic-violence-task-force-2017-recommendations.pdf>). The NYC Domestic Violence Task Force raised concerns on the stagnation of intimate partner violence homicides in NYC—even as homicides generally have decreased.

Given this current context, if our responses have been targeted to safety and ensuring mitigation of physical harms (including death), and the impact is not necessarily as we would want, isn’t that a call to re-envision our services? As Rebecca Thomforde Hauser, Associate Director, Domestic Violence Programs at the Center for Court Innovation, notes, “This person isn’t just one thing. It’s increasingly untenable that there are programs for other kinds of offenders but not people who use intimate partner violence.” What would happen if we thought more broadly on safety? What if our interventions were designed from a vantage point for fostering well-being and wellness? What if we began with the principle that not only survivors but people who cause harm deserve healing—and their healing can further survivor healing, children’s healing, and healing in our communities? Or

as Essex Lorde, National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs Coordinator at the New York City Anti-Violence Project, asks, “How do we change conditions that are creating harm and not just the harm?”

In re-vamping interventions for people who cause harm, we have an opportunity to center wellness, an expanded and integrated sense of safety, and the accountability of actual behavior change. Rather than scratching the surface, we can begin to look at the roots of cultures of violence and shape our responses to transform those cultures. In our work with individuals, that work to change the conditions that lead to harm and not simply address the harm as a discrete unit would approach transformative justice—a process of community-based accountability that centers values, safety and survivor self-determination, accountability, and changing the political conditions that lead to violence (modified from <http://www.usprisonculture.com/blog/transformative-justice/>). “At the core of transformative justice is accountability,” observes Guzmán. “It’s about how we become something different. It results in behavior change. It shows up in different ways including the process of the work.”

Within the context of interventions for people who cause harm suggested in this report—some rooted in systems and some in communities—the goal is to approach transformative justice through engaging processes of doing the work that address root causes, commit to the possibilities of healing, and build community power in order to transform all

violence. To do so, we need to ground a clear definition of accountability. As Quentin Walcott, Co-Executive Director of CONNECT, explains, “Accountability is three things: 1) acknowledgement of what I’ve done; 2) dealing with the consequences and not blaming the person I abused or a system; and, 3) demonstrating some sort of an internalized change that can be manifested via reparations or activism.” Such a vision of accountability enables immediate and long-term change, as seen in CONNECT’s Father’s Day Pledge, which furthers community commitments to ending violence while opening space for engaging more community members in the conversation. We can both address current harms and commit to a future free of violence.

To approach transformative justice in our systems work would be to acknowledge that people who cause harm could benefit from healing—and that we can enable accountability with healing through trauma-informed approaches. “From an early childhood mental health perspective, domestic violence is a type of trauma exposure that can critically impact child development across all domains: social, emotional, cognitive, physical,” explains Erica Willheim, PhD, Clinical Director, Family PEACE Trauma Treatment Center at New York-Presbyterian Hospital. “For young children in particular, witnessing domestic violence can negatively impact

the attachment relationship with the primary caregiver that is being abused, as well as create a foundational template for abusive expectations in intimate relationships. Can I trust others? Am I worthy of being treated respectfully?”

How then does understanding trauma or history of abuse influence our work? For one, as Willheim notes, it helps us to understand cycles of violence: “Intergenerational violence: your trauma has been fused to your parenting and relational life.” If we were to intervene with children witnessing abuse as well as people causing harm with services that incorporated healing, we could begin to interrupt intergenerational violence. We could begin to transform violence and understand that transformation is a core objective. “One of the joys of my work is seeing kids transform—going from a bad place to a good place,” shares Michael Scherz, Director, Domestic Violence Project at Lawyers for Children. “Part of our aim is not just legal remedies but to go from one place to another.”

Or as Albery Abreu, Abusive Partner Intervention Specialist, Family Wellness Program at Children’s Aid, offers, it would be “the mental and physical healing of trauma that has been that way for years and centuries. Doing this work is an opening to healing with communities. We would ideally create a support group for men to speak to men, men who have done



*Advocacy has also been my therapy. — Lindsay*



## How Do Holistic Services Get Us Closer to Transformative Justice?

### Element 1: Focus on Wholeness

- Humanizes the person causing harm while enabling accountability
- Opens up interventions such as whole family services and restorative justice
- Underscores relationality, interdependence, and hopefulness for transformation

### Element 2: Use of Anti-Oppression Lens and Goal of Liberation

- Trauma-informed frame to heal historical and structural oppressions as a pathway to healthy relationships and communities
- Going beyond the binary: inclusion across identities including gender identity and sexual orientation
- Enabling differential assessment to provide interventions useful to each person causing harm in the journey to behavioral change and wholeness
- Situating services as opportunities for transformation and liberation

### Element 3: Linkage of Prevention and Intervention

- Viewing interventions as interrupting cycles of violence while preventing future harms
- Preventing systems harm including through diversion, alternatives to incarceration, and community-rooted responses

### Element 4: Building community power and changing the conditions that lead to violence

- Enabling survivor input and empowerment through the process of accountability
- Fostering credible messengers and direct stakeholder involvement for community-led transformation
- Collaborative use of resources with a collective stake in transformative solutions

healing work and unlearned behavior and have new ways of coping. Imagine if they can speak to other men who are not there. We can create a network where the norm will become healing.”

## HOLISTIC SERVICES REQUIRES TRANSFORMING CRIMINAL LEGAL SYSTEM RESPONSES AND FOSTERING AN ANTI-OPPRESSION LENS

“At the time sitting in jail was just not an option for him. And I think that those 5 days in jail did help open his eyes and help him realize that ‘I need to stop, I need to change.’ And beyond that,

*we have a son together my son—our son—was very young at the time and he’s always behaved one way with me but he was a very positive—and still is—figure in my son’s life. And he didn’t want my son to see that anymore. My son and jail—not wanting to be an inmate again—was motivation enough for him.” — SaSha*

*“I called the cops to diffuse the situation. It didn’t make a difference because he still comes back. He violates my order protection. He won’t stay away from me.” — Anonymous*

*“He had to take a class but he didn’t finish. He went a couple of times and then he stopped going. He started making excuse about oh, he don’t like. ‘They’re talking about this and that.’ But it’s an excuse. I would like that the Court send a letter that he had to do that or he going to jail. He is scared—he don’t like jail at all. He don’t like jail at all. I would like they can provide mandatory program where if he don’t follow the program and we catch you with a drug, you going to jail. First, you’re doing a thing that is not legal—and you’re not supporting your child.” — Fey*

At a loss for how to change a loved one’s behavior and/or meet their family’s needs, many survivors access law enforcement and the courts for safety, vital economic supports, and a mandate for change. Some survivors report that incarceration or the threat of incarceration does indeed shift behavior. And some survivors have found law enforcement to be a lifeline. Ronndolyn Black speaks to the police officer who was her sole support in facing a former partner who continued to stalk her, sharing, “He basically told me that if he ever came back, just call him and he said, ‘I’ll arrest him as many times as it takes until he knows that he’s to leave you alone.’ I didn’t know anything about an order of protection. I didn’t know anything about what I could do. This was the only person that told me there’s something that we can do and you don’t have to deal with him coming here and bothering you. At the time, I didn’t even know anything about the court system or what I could do. The only person that was there

for me was that police officer. And that was it. I wasn’t given any other kind of information or other options.” Black adds that only a court mandate and looming incarceration threat would have spurred the person causing her harm to “stop and seek services.”

And yet, in Black’s situation, the intervention ended with law enforcement response. Looking back, she reflects that having had more information and wrap-around supports could have altered her decision-making and choices in pursuit of safety and accountability. “And another thing is that I didn’t know if you do decide to press charges exactly what happens cuz I didn’t get any kind of information as far as what happens next, what can happen, what will happen, what can I expect. Just having that information so I would have known what decisions to make—like should I get an order of protection or should I leave? Should I go in the shelter? Just knowing that you have options and I didn’t have anyone to really tell me any kind of information as far as that. It’s just like you have gone through this—the stuff that I’ve gone through—and I get the feeling people act like, ‘Well, you have been here now 1,000 times so you know what to expect.’”

A lack of integration of systems and holistic services—offering interventions in silos—can lead to the limited safety options Black describes. Furthermore, some survivors fear reaching out to law enforcement due to structural racism. One survivor shares she was afraid to leave her apartment and find her abuser had locked her out with her daughter with nowhere

to live. She added that the sexual and physical violence she faced made her feel ashamed to call law enforcement—and that her partner had threatened that the police would detain her for being undocumented. She describes, “Él era un hombre que era una persona de muy alta inteligencia y era un ingeniero y el jamás iba admitir ante la sociedad ni a si mismo que él era un abusador. Cuando una persona como esta tiene una relación con un inmigrante, según yo he visto, se siente superior, se siente más grande, un americano poderoso. Mi estatus migratorio le dio poder sobre mí. Yo tenía miedo, tenía miedo de llamar a la policía, tenía miedo de que pasara conmigo, con mi hija, tenía miedo de que la policía me pidiera mis papeles y yo sé lo que pasa cuando uno está en medio de un montón de inmigrantes. Si uno no es americano, es mucho más difícil.”

“He was a man who was a person of very high intelligence and he was an engineer and he would have never admitted to society or himself that he was an abuser. Whenever this kind of person has a relationship with an immigrant, and this is what I’ve seen, they feel superior, they feel greater, a powerful American. And my immigration status gave him power over me. I was afraid. I was afraid of calling the police. I was afraid what would happen to me, to my daughter. I was afraid of my immigration status if the police asked for my papers and I know what happens if you’re in the heap of immigrants. If you aren’t American, it’s much harder.”

Even as survivors call on law enforcement and court support, for communities facing

oppressions, law enforcement can mirror violences faced in personal relationships. In addition to undocumented immigrants, LGBTQIA community members fear police violence. Such fears are amplified for immigrant queer community members. Carlos shares, “My husband doesn’t look gay. Nobody would think that he is gay. So, he is a white American man and I’m a Latino man and we both are going to speak about violence here—we both are big. Right now, I think I am bigger than my husband. In the eyes of a straight man, who’s going to think he’s being violent with me? When, if you go for stereotypes, I’m bigger and I can be very stronger than him. So, I think that all those situations need to be considered, especial if there’s going to be legal things involved.

Police is too extreme. I understand because sometimes police needs to show strength, authoritarian because how can you control this monster like this huge City? Besides that, the City needs to understand that we’re coming from bullied violent childhoods, you know, so it’s hard for us to trust. So, there is a lot of straight good men outside but the City needs to understand that we gays grow bullied by straight guys. So, it is hard for us in a situation where we are feeling so vulnerable to call a straight guy to tell him because we are already crushed in our self-esteem in all those things. And I’m saying this very from the bottom of my heart because I know that this is going to help others, you know.”

Oppressions are woven through people’s lives and not distinctly occurring. How do we

fashion responses to ending intimate violence that recognize the violence of being withheld legal status and the continuum of bullying and hate violence? How do we address violence as a whole and treat survivors and people who cause harm as whole people? How do we create alternatives for safety outside systemic responses while increasing the safety of systems responses?

Particularly in our current political moment—as Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers show up to courts and schools to apprehend community members, and as we work in an environment rife with homophobia, Islamophobia, transphobia, xenophobia, and misogyny—service providers and community advocates have been asking questions on how to do the work safely for survivors and people who have caused harm. “One of the things that concerns me as we think about abusive partners is that the world has changed for the immigrant community,” observes Cecilia Gastón, Executive Director at the Violence Intervention Program, Inc. “Even being charged is a deportable offense. So how are we going to offer interventions? Forget about the shadows. We’re going underground. Enforcement now has become life-threatening for everyone involved.” Gastón underscores that given current federal actions against immigrants, the City’s Family Justice Centers cannot provide a “magic bullet” for interventions.

Noting the bind placed on undocumented people who have caused harm, an attorney concurs with this view, explaining, “It can be

incredibly harmful. We often have this battle in the DV part. We can’t advise a client to take a plea that makes them potentially deportable.” Building on this catch-22, Ashley Burrell, Supervisor, Criminal Defense Practice at the Bronx Defenders explains, “The office policy is not to treat someone different because of their immigration status which is frustrating.” Indeed, survivors may want the abuse to end but rarely do they seek deportation of loved ones. The way court-mandated services are set up puts communities facing oppressions in jeopardy.

The national fervor targeting Muslims and the federal “Muslim Ban” have also brought additional surveillance and scrutiny to Muslim, Middle Eastern, and South Asian communities. “The issue at hand is one of trust. Given the current anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant atmosphere, members of our community are not comfortable seeking help from outsiders. The women and children we work with are connected with the faith community and are looking for a Muslim serving organization,” shares Robina Niaz, Founder and Executive Director at Turning Point for Women and Families. For communities facing state and structural violence, we need services that support education, prevention, and community-based culturally specific responses. When we turn to court-mandated interventions for people who cause harm, we see the primary populations are economically disadvantaged men of color. Structural racism plays a role in surveillance to sentencing, manifest in the fact that “1 in every 10 black men in his thirties is in prison or jail on

any given day” (<http://www.sentencingproject.org/issues/racial-disparity/>). This context of disparity and over-reliance on a punitive model is seen in schools with youth causing harm. “Schools are holding them accountable in violent ways that have repercussions on their families and communities,” Kimberley Moore indicates. “We need creative ways to intervene. We need to empower themselves to hold themselves accountable.” As with adult systems, the response is often focused on violence after the fact rather than prevention or behavioral change supports. “People don’t respect the counseling time as they do class time,” Moore notes.

Jack Skelton, Relationship Abuse Prevention Program Coordinator at Day One, speaks to the violence of one youth responding to violence from a parent: “He’s trying to be safe by enacting violence. Structurally there are so few choices. The school social worker supporting him is very isolated and overworked herself. He’s not going to have an immediately less abusive relationship with his mom. It requires work on her part. There’s only so much the school can do.” Again, we encounter a dearth of resources—and choices—available for responding to violence. Bolstering education, prevention, and counseling staff and resources could foster interventions that address the complexity of lived violence. Again, incarceration is not seen as the solution. Skelton explains, “Young people shouldn’t be locked up. That shouldn’t be an intervention.”

Given historical and current oppressions, it is no wonder that one City employee states, “We

need to think differently about how we protect victims and hold perpetrators accountable especially as it relates to law enforcement.”

With this backdrop, how does the criminal legal context affect abusive partner interventions? In part, a court mandate can activate historical oppressions and contexts of coercion. “Those that are court-mandated are extremely angry once they’re there for the group. They don’t identify with what they did,” indicates Henry Algarin, Program Director at Brooklyn TASC. “Most Spanish-speaking clients are undocumented and so are compliant.” Compliance does not necessarily convert into behavior change—it can simply mean course completion and the performance of participation. Or it can even increase survivor sympathy for their loved ones: “One client felt that the abuser was poly-victimized by causing the abuse and by going through the system,” shares Carlton Delpeche, Supervisor at the Safe Horizon Queens Family Justice Center & Criminal Court Reception Center.

Often people with privilege manage to avoid the court system and mandated programs. “Consenting to those programs is like admitting to guilt,” Anita relays. “Those programs should be separated and not have a negative impact on the case. It should have a positive impact. I’m dealing with an educated, upper class white man who doesn’t want this on his records anywhere.”

This is not to say that abusive partner interventions do not strategically utilize the context of systems coercion. “We know we have

## Data on Criminal Legal System Impacts

### Element 1: Climate of anti-immigrant actions

- 2017 Advocate and Legal Service Survey Regarding Immigrant Survivors: “The survey documents that 78 percent of advocates reported that immigrant survivors expressed concerns about contacting police. Similarly, three in four service providers responding to the survey reported that immigrant survivors have concerns about going to court for a matter related to the abuser/offender. Finally, 43 percent of advocates worked with immigrant survivors who dropped civil or criminal cases because they were fearful to continue with their cases.” (<http://www.tahirih.org/news/survey-reveals-impact-of-new-immigration-enforcement-policies-on-survivors-of-violence/>)

### Element 2: Impact of incarceration on women and families

- Who Pays? The True Cost of Incarceration on Families: “Women bear the brunt of the costs—both financial and emotional—of their loved one’s incarceration. In 63% of cases, family members on the outside were primarily responsible for court-related costs associated with conviction. Of the family members primarily responsible for these costs, 83 percent were women.” (<http://whopaysreport.org/executive-summary/>)

### Element 3: Incarceration of trans and gender nonconforming people

- “Transgender and gender nonconforming people, and transgender women of color in particular, face unacceptably high rates of imprisonment. This is due both to their disproportionate reliance on street economies stemming from a lack of viable economic alternatives due to pervasive discrimination in all areas of their lives, as well as targeted harassment and profiling by police. Once in jail or prison, transgender people face a dramatically increased risk of mistreatment, including sexual assault by guards or other prisoners. Recent studies show that transgender women are 13 times more likely to be sexually assaulted in prison than others.” (<https://transgenderlawcenter.org/legal/prisons>)

### Element 4: School Discipline and Pushout of Black Students

- Black Girls Matter: Pushed Out, Overpoliced and Underprotected ([http://www.atlanticphilanthropies.org/app/uploads/2015/09/BlackGirlsMatter\\_Report.pdf](http://www.atlanticphilanthropies.org/app/uploads/2015/09/BlackGirlsMatter_Report.pdf))
- 2011-12 school year data: “In New York City, Black girls represented 56 percent of all girls disciplined, compared to white girls, who represented only five percent of such girls. The enrollment of Black girls was about twice the rate of white girls but they were subjected to school discipline at ten times the rate of their white female counterparts (9,076 vs. 884 cases, respectively).” (p.19)
- 2011-12 school year data: “In New York City, Black boys comprised 48 percent of all boys disciplined, while white boys represented only nine percent of all such boys. Even though there were about twice as many Black boys enrolled in the school system, the number of Black boys disciplined was six times the number of white boys (13,823 cases vs. 2,541 cases, respectively).” (p.20)

leverage. They need to respond to the police, the court, and being in front of a judge,” remarks Abreu. “It can be a tool to reduce or prevent violence. We can utilize that power to offer teaching moments and to have the capacity to work case-by-case.” Such individualized attention in a social services framework can ease the harms embedded within a coercive criminal justice frame. Within the criminal justice context, the Department of Probation’s Promoting Accountability and Community Ties (PACT) program offers a blend of accountability through 12 weeks of educational classes alongside case management with their probation officer. The program observation I conducted of a PACT session focused on healthy relationships and covered topics from economic abuse, sexual violence, healthy masculinity, and white privilege. Interaction with probation officers and the probation department involved personal attention—and offered a compelling example of accountability with contextualization of historical oppressions. For people who cause harm unable to engage services outside of a court mandate, working in a diversion, alternative to incarceration, and/or community-centered probation context can complement services based in community contexts outside the criminal legal system. Ultimately, the rightful goal of programs such as PACT is to do a warm hand-off to community organizations to continue the accountability with healing process from a community vantage—in order to facilitate behavior change in the communities where people live and interact every day as well as to further culture change on violence.

We need to be able to hold the complexity that incarceration is a deterrent for some people who cause harm and that incarceration will not end intergenerational violence. Criminal legal interventions are often better resourced than community resources—and therefore able to provide more wrap-around services. Ultimately, shifting resources to communities to be able to do the work more deeply will engage broader swaths of survivors and people causing harm. And even with effective criminal legal interventions, what is the social cost? As Ramos contextualizes, “We come back to the community. How does that impact my community? If an order of protection, now he’s homeless. Did the time in jail cause him to lose his job? They’re part of our community. How do we best invest in men in our community? How do we work with men in a preventative way?”

Even while acknowledging historical oppression and systems harm, Ramos is clear in the need to address accountability unequivocally. He states, “Many still see survivors as the reason for jail—not their own actions.” Advancing an understanding of historical and structural oppressions does not deny the need for gender analysis and examining heteronormativity. Gender oppression is a core aspect of intimate violence and should be part of the accountability framework. In fact, accepting accountability itself can be gendered: “Women usually don’t deny the violence. They take accountability right away,” notes one abusive partner interventions provider. “With men, they don’t take responsibility. In the first interviewing session, women

will admit to it.” Depending on socialization, peer feedback, and community experiences, gender nonconforming and non-binary people who cause harm may demonstrate a variety of levels of accountability—that are also connected to gender oppression and heteronormativity. Keeping a gender analysis while recognizing a non-binary frame, including queer and trans individuals and women who use force, is essential to designing strategies that reflect the people served and foster liberation.

Broadening our frames includes seeing that we can create new approaches to addressing violence by expanding our understanding of safety. “Safe means a lot of things. Safe from harm, threat of arguments, tensions not there,” conveys Abreu. “Keeping them safe from another system so as to not harm them and repeat the cycle.” We need to consider the safety of relationships and we need to consider the safety of the systems we have set up to address abuse—as well as the harms that can come to oppressed communities by being caught in these systems. By fostering an anti-oppression lens and understanding the complex impacts of the criminal legal system on communities facing structural oppressions, we can shift our interventions to seeing the whole of people’s lives and offering services that enable dignity alongside accountability.

In describing the process for developing a new whole family program, Lisa O’Connor, Chief Program Officer at Safe Horizon, states, “We are working to be actively anti-racist in our relationships with each other and with clients.

Part of this work is recognizing that safety is often jeopardized by structural racism.” The process for how we engage this work—and whether we replicate systems of coercion—is vital to acknowledge and attend to. As Reshmi Sengupta, Director of Programs at Sakhi for South Asian Women, explains, “We need to recognize our power and privilege as service providers and hold back our biases in providing services.”

In community contexts also, frameworks need to be examined and emerge from centering accountability with transformative healing. Lordes elaborates on the complexity of community accountability work—including that survivors may also seek punitive rather than transformative solutions. “Community accountability: what is that? There are different levels of barriers to getting support. There’s too much community accountability that can look punitive at times. You get exiled. The shunning that happens can be a way for survivors to get revenge,” Lordes observes. “The queer community also has its limitations and less capacity. Community accountability processes that go well are like unicorns. It’s in the context. We can’t do everything survivors want. Sometimes people want solutions that are not realistic. It’s important to think about what’s best for the collective such as transformative solutions versus individual survivor’s needs or advocates.” In addressing immigrant and/or queer and trans communities, a clear focus on interventions that address harm and the intersecting conditions that led to harm are crucial.

An accountability with healing framework in an anti-oppression lens enables us to see how intimate violence is linked with other manifestations of violence—and strive to eradicate them all. “The hyper-masculinity piece is real and it’s one we all struggle with—whether it’s males or females,” Cumberbatch notes. “It’s almost a reconditioning. This is a very violent country. You carry on traditions of a lot of the violence you’ve seen. For example, the practice of violence in forms of disciplining. You’re teaching a pattern of how to operate. I look at violence as a learned behavior. What have they been exposed to? The two aren’t separate and apart.”

With an understanding of connections across violences, and the goal of reducing harm—in systems, in our services, and in our relationships—we can view our work as reducing violence—from interpersonal to

systemic—and fostering a space for liberation. It is vital for us to remember transformation is possible, that healing is possible, and that, if we design our services with liberation in mind, that transformative healing is possible. Or as Janice offers, “I want to heal the world. I want to heal not only the women but the men too. There’s a reason behind their anger. There’s a reason behind their pain and for abusing. Maybe they was abused as a child. Maybe they was abused by a past partner. And you know, when you leave one relationship, you have to make sure you’re healed before you go into the next relationship cuz otherwise it’ll continue. It takes courage to share your story. And the more you share it, the more you heal. It takes courage to own up to it to say, ‘OK, I was wrong and I hurt this person. And not only does that person need healing, but I need healing too.’”

### **On the Horizon: Programs and New City Contract in Development**

- This fall, the NYC Anti-Violence Project is launching a group for people who have caused sexual violence and harm
- Safe Horizon is in the process of developing a whole family model of survivor services delivery
- In 2018, a new City contract for abusive partner interventions in the criminal legal system will support trauma-informed, culturally specific approaches

## FOUNDATIONAL RECOMMENDATION: RECOMMENDATION 1: FUND A SERVICE FOR PRE-INTERVENTION INDIVIDUAL ASSESSMENT

*He is a great father. And even as a partner, he's a good person. It's just when he was on those drugs. And that's what pushed me to go and do an order of protection—it was just the look in his eyes. Like I didn't know that person. I didn't know that person. — Kierra Coll*

*What he did was wrong. He needs to be accountable for his actions. I love him. And I was pregnant. He was my support. Maybe there are services they could have recommended as a new father. — Anonymous*

### GAPS

One impact of not viewing people who cause harm as whole beings is that we have not invested in tools to understand what motivates abusive behavior—and what can be done to address the root of the problem as well as transform abuse-enabling patterns. We have operated with an assumption that education can shift behaviors—even when new behavior patterns are not practiced nor supported with ancillary services. A consistent practice of differential assessment—or assessing all the needs, risks, and behaviors related to the abuse and violence being perpetrated—would open up new strategies for addressing people who cause harm as well as make ongoing interventions more impactful. As one provider observes, “We don't know much about the perpetrators. The

biggest gap is knowing how these people differ and matching to interventions.”

Currently, abusive partner intervention groups cater only to heterosexual men who are predominantly men of color. Access across ability and language needs is nearly nil. Or as Christina Curry, Executive Director at the Harlem Independent Living Center, describes in relation to deaf participants in current abusive partner intervention groups: “As long as they show up and sign their name, they're good to go. So, they have no participation.”

Henry Algarin, Program Director at Brooklyn TASC, points to the need for tailoring interventions to contexts such as PTSD, saying, “The veterans are not being serviced correctly. They need mental health services for PTSD.

Individuals with severe mental health issues should not be in my program. But if I say no, the court doesn't have many other options. There are not many batterer intervention programs for the mentally ill." With a one-size-fits-all frame, urgent needs—including mental health and language access—are overlooked. The result is participation without impact.

While a number of vectors for assessment—including employment situation, immigration status, housing stability, and risk—need to be incorporated, across the board we find a call for mental health and substance abuse assessment and interventions. Not only are such contexts important in furthering specific strategies for change but we are missing opportunities for coordinated interventions that could actually support transformation. "In substance abuse situations, no one is screening for intimate partner violence. And when assessed for intimate partner violence, people are not getting access for mental health. Many people are struggling with mental health issues that might be treatable. Some of the people might be interested in changing at a moment in their relationships. They traditionally seek couples therapy but intimate partner violence limits that access so those people are not covered by any intervention even when they're willing to work on it," observes one provider.

We do not need to disregard dynamics of patriarchy, heteronormativity, and the structural contexts of intimate violence—including the disproportionate violence caused by men to women. Such power and social structures

enable abusers to abuse and get away with it. And, also true, is that targeted behavioral and mental health interventions can make a difference. As Michelle Kaminsky, Chief, Domestic Violence Bureau at the Kings County District Attorney's Office, observes, "If you have cases when the offender has mental health issues, once you get stabilized, there is a change in behavior." Building on the need for mental health and substance abuse services, Kaminsky also points to the benefit of long-term job training, education, support, and counseling. Without abandoning power and control analyses, we also need to make room for intersecting factors—which, when addressed, can lead to behavior change.

Not only do we need differential assessments to tailor interventions towards trauma-informed behavioral change but their absence opens survivors and their families to further risks. One attorney notes, "We see people come through revolving doors on contempt charges and the real issues don't get addressed. Giving someone one more criminal conviction is not solving the problem. Also, in some ways, these cases are treated like any other case and often postponed. I think the immediacy is assessing complainant's needs and getting to the underlying issues." We are both missing root causes to violence as well as perpetuating systems responses that may endanger survivors.

We also need differential assessments in order to account for the impact and survival mechanisms of historical oppressions, genera-

tional traumas, and capitalist dehumanizations. Through differential assessment, we begin to lay out an equity analysis and can shape institutional responses to minimize additional structural harm. “The families that come to us, the minority groups of disproportionately black and brown family that come to us, we’re making judgments about their capabilities,” remarks B. Indira Ramsaroop, Senior Policy Analyst, Office of Clinical Practice, Policy and Support, Domestic Violence Policy and Planning at the Administration for Children’s Services. “There are other economic factors, trauma factors affecting these families. Let’s do that differential assessment of the survivor and abusive partner. Is there something else going on? Learned behavior in history? Are there mental health or substance abuse issues? We need a deeper assessment to engage families in the process. Someone may need therapy in addition—to get to where they need to be. We need to be responsive to the needs of a child and a family.”

Differential assessment would allow for responsiveness—and open up options for services including wrap-around services, counseling and therapeutic interventions, targeted anger management, and responsible advocate-informed mediation. In addition to safely exploring approaches once-jettisoned by the field, gathering individualized information could open space for motivational approaches and voluntary services for people who cause harm. Ultimately, we will both enable more entry points for behavior change as well as increase efficacy in behavioral change.

## WRAP-AROUND SERVICES

*“I tend to think a little bit deeper than the surface of things especially in terms of services—you know I wasn’t mandated. I self-referred to all my services. I chose them and I sought them out because I wanted to be a better mom. I have four children—one boy and three girls and I want to be able to show them strength and I don’t want my son to feel that he ever needs to raise his hand in anger. He’s three and he does it anyway. And you know what, I’m really glad that my drug treatment program also has parenting there and that’s taught me how to meet him where he’s at. He might not understand things as well as everything yet but it teaches me to meet him at his level.*

*I was just fortunate to find this place that had all of these services under one roof. I was at one point in my case going from one program to another in the same day and just being the fact that I can go upstairs and downstairs and not have to hop on the train and ‘Oh my God. How am I going to get the car fare’ and you know it really alleviated a lot of stress. A lot of stress because bouncing from Brooklyn to the Bronx to Queens for therapy, parenting, it can be daunting. It can put you off of wanting to do that service.*

*It wasn’t until I found this one place that was like, ‘OK, I got parenting upstairs. I got my vocational counselor in the basement. They’re serving lunch for me. I’m doing my tox screening and meeting with my case manager. Then I’m meeting with my therapist.’ And this was all within the same building. It made it a lot easier and accessible and also the fact they have childcare—that*

was really good too. I know that when my kids come, they can be engaged—while I’m getting services—in some kind of an activity.” — **Lindsay**

The next step from conducting a differential assessment is to enable the services that would be supportive interventions—and enabling case management and wrap-around services in an accessible way. Coordination of services can reinforce supports even as mandating services without ease of access can increase stress and unhealthy stress reactions that prevent modifying abusive behaviors.

## COUNSELING AND THERAPEUTIC INTERVENTIONS

“It’s mandatory to go to jail. You go to jail—the person gets angrier, more violent. They can cause harm as soon as they come out but if they go to therapy they can probably get down to the core of what is the underlying issue—why are they abusing, why they feel like they need to do these specific things, and offer them medication or they can say, ‘Oh, well you know I don’t have a job cuz I’m not working right now.’ OK, so let’s help you get into something to get some services where we can get you into a job or get your GED. Like a lot of the times money and work is the biggest issue. There were times when I was working a better job—even if I was making a dollar more—and it was, ‘Oh, you think because you make more money than I do, you’re better than me’ and I’m like, ‘We’re a team.’ If it were mandatory, a lot of situations would be way different because they would spot-on find

someone who’s very abusive, who needs to be in jail. I don’t think that anyone needs to be in jail per se but everyone needs help. Everyone needs someone that can push them over that bump.”

— **Kierra Coll**

“It proved very counterintuitive to go to couples therapy because the anger came out even more. This person had things they had to deal with first.”

— **Anonymous**

“Family counselors do a tremendous harm by not telling the abuser they’re an abuser. There has to be a way—or an obligation to report. Ideally, I should have been warned and told the strategies to get out in a safe way. Also, the abuser never finds that initiative to change because the psychologist doesn’t tell him.” — **Anita**

Therapeutic counseling is both a valuable option for addressing trauma and behavior change—and a land-mine for missed accountability and amplified threats to safety. When done effectively individual therapy can shift narratives of excusing abuse and begin to build new frames for action. As with supervised visitation and therapeutic visitation, individual and/or couple-based therapeutic interventions need to prioritize survivor safety, acknowledgment of harm, and trauma-informed behavioral shifts. Training and professional supports are required for effective therapeutic interventions and to ensure accountability for people who cause harm.

Therapeutic work in the context of intimate violence is complex—and, if done well, can open spaces for change. “Individuals, men in particular, need to learn that they can express angry emotions without aggression and abusive behaviors,” observes Larry D. Edwards, LMSW, Founder & Director of Edwards Mentoring and Social Services, “They need to understand and embrace this to some degree prior to participating in a group. If the group is to effect positive behavioral change, men have to accept being emotional beings, otherwise there is no sincere way for them to experience empathy.” By honing in on individual context, individual therapy can support people who cause harm to be open to further interventions. In this way, when done intentionally and with training on intimate violence dynamics, therapeutic interventions can lay a ground for or buttress change.

In an individual therapeutic context, one strategy for mitigating danger and responding to specific needs is to utilize multiple therapists. “If it means more than one therapist, then it means more than one therapist—especially for extended family. We have different dynamics going on and culture plays a role in everything we do,” explains Beverly James, Associate Commissioner, Child Welfare Support Services at the Administration for Children’s Services. Again, differential assessment can help tailor such interventions and increase our efficacy in reducing and ending abuse.

## ANGER MANAGEMENT

*“Even in that search, that person had really a hard time. When he reached out for an anger management group, he was told, ‘Unfortunately, I would like to have these groups but no one consistently shows up to them.’” — Anonymous*

*“A lot of why I caused harm was because of the trauma that I experienced. I felt that if I was as big and bad as possible that I would be less likely to get abused again. I’m from Brooklyn, born and raised. And Brooklyn girls, we have a reputation as a little bit of hot-heads. And you know this anger management that I’m taking at my drug treatment program actually provided me with a pause button, actually provided me with an incentive to stop and think before I just explode. And even in terms of learning the correlation between boundaries and anger and why if you feel your boundaries are not being respected, you might be angry and more inclined to trigger events—even learning about what trigger events are, how to recognize the signs of anger. People really overlook signs of anger a lot. Because anger is ingrained in our society a lot especially everywhere we look—at movies and day-to-day activities and interactions. And I just find that it helped me in not only providing me with the tools in the classroom or in the course but how to bring that outside—how to take that outside when somebody just cut in line in front of me or just pushed my stroller. You know I learned how to have that pause button. And that’s why I feel like it really did change me a lot even in parenting. Even in parenting—it taught me a lot of patience.” — Lindsay*

While anger management can be an easy pass for not addressing larger dynamics of violence, it can also be useful depending on the context and individual. Furthermore, it can be an entry point for harm reduction as well as deeper work for long-term change. It can also be a productive space to address women who use force within the context of misogyny and homophobia. Depending on the approach, anger management can also be a useful space to consider re-directing energy. For example, anger at oppression is justifiable. But how can this anger or rage be channeled productively rather than spurring harm and furthering oppressions? Anger management with intentional curricula of taking responsibility and connecting to dynamics of violence can influence behavior—including transformations that can impact future generations.

## MEDIATION

*“A lot of survivors want mediation or counseling. An order of protection makes mediation difficult.”*  
— **Dale Carter**, Director, Safe Horizon Queens Family Justice Center & Criminal Court Reception Center

*“There were peer services available to me when I was called out for sexual violence so it was basically someone who knew a therapist. A mediator approached me with a list of boundaries—determined by the person I harmed—which needed to be respected. That list included leaving the place I was living immediately, taking an extended time away from my home, not inter-*

*acting with this person, anything that I need to communicate with them being done through a second mediator, and then engaging that mediator to try and do something different.*

*So, I met up with the mediator who was a former therapist with a background in supporting people who harm. For the next month or two we met every other week; they would listen to what I'd experienced and structure the next couple of weeks with specific tasks that I would need to do. They emphasized harm reduction and strengths-based techniques. If I wasn't perfect one week, they were not about to shame me for it. So being able to have someone patient with that process is good. I did leave my home and continued to engage the mediator over the phone weekly or bi-weekly over the next year and a half until I moved to New York. Then we discontinued because I felt like I was in a really good place.*

*This mediator was valuable in terms of bringing their own skills to share with me. They were valuable because they too had perpetrated sexual violence in the past, having undergone a lot of change towards connecting to their conscience and rebuilding empathy. They were very good at focusing on specific ideas like not to get caught up in shame and guilt and then re-affirming the steps I would need to take repeatedly because some of those things I would not really begin to learn for years afterward. But it was a good starting place to just have new tapes to listen to for me.”*— **Kimber**

Because of unequal power in relationships with abuse, mediation has been seen as unsafe. Gene A. Johnson, Jr., Mediator and Facilitator,

explains, “General consensus is that traditional mediation is not appropriate for domestic violence. It’s probably not safe as a mediator is neutral and not an advocate—which is hard when one party has power and control.”

And yet, survivors who want to maintain relationships often seek couples counseling and/or mediation in search of a neutral third party who can address violence and help make it stop. Furthermore, survivors and people causing harm who do not want to engage systems responses—including LGBTQIA individuals and immigrants—benefit from independent resources that can promote safety. What would be possible if we re-framed mediation in a way to mitigate harm but open access to another route for accountability and behavior change? Johnson adds, “The DV Community is small, the batterers intervention community even smaller. We would screen them out of mediation and send them to court. No other resources were being offered. There is probably a process for domestic violence victims. It probably doesn’t look like a traditional mediation.” Exploring non-conventional and advocate-informed mediation with training and assessment could open new avenues for survivors to achieve their aims while attending to safety. While every intimate violence relationship may not be served by mediation, a blanket rejection of a practice communities, including marginalized communities, are requesting and utilizing is short-sighted and stymies the possibilities for addressing violence—including through whole family and community-based approaches.

## MOTIVATIONAL CHANGE

The use of differential assessment can not only open up new avenues for intervention but new techniques for engaging people who cause harm. Having a sense of an individual’s context can enable strengths-based responses as well as motivational interviewing techniques. “I love using motivational interviewing with clients,” attests Kaela Economos, Community Office Social Work Director, former Social Work Supervisor, Family Defense Practice at Brooklyn Defender Services. Economos notes that building trust and relationship through motivational interviewing allows for getting beyond defensiveness to an individual’s motivations for change. The approach also offers an opportunity for individuals to understand their own socialization and family dynamics without a provider making assumptions. Such a judgment-free approach can address trauma while opening and visualizing behavioral changes. Finally, by engaging someone’s humanity, choice-making, and possibility for evolution, fostering motivational techniques can reduce the coercive components of systems engagement and decrease the toxic masculinity embedded in how we often do our work to end violence.

## VOLUNTARY SERVICES

*“I really love my ex-husband. You know, if you have an abuser and there’s love between them, if you get the abuse out of it, then you have a nice family. It would have helped a lot. At the time, we were undocumented. He was undocumented too. I am in the process of getting my documents*

*now through the U-Visa but we couldn't afford to go to therapy. We didn't have support. The only way I got services was because I became a victim. And I was in the system. And all of the police reports and court and all those different things put me in contact with social workers and that sort of thing. For a very, very long time he was abusing me until I was brave enough to go to court and I had to be reassured by many people that I wouldn't be deported. Obviously, you're scared."* — **Anonymous**

"We are a society of reactionaries," observes Terri Roman, Project Director of the Bronx Domestic Violence Complex. As a result, we don't have enough entry points in addressing violence until violence has already happened and people are involved in child welfare and/or criminal legal systems. Having voluntary services would not only offer a vital entry point for ending abuse but also mitigate the stress and harms of systems involvement. "There's no agency involved until after disposition. And there can't be a mandate until a disposition, which seems to perpetuate the problem further," explains John Montero, Senior Court Clerk at the Manhattan Integrated Domestic Violence Court. "You are now separated from your children and the family court trails the criminal case. All these months and parents are marginalized. How do we do something before rather than cause more harm than good?"

Voluntary programs are a strategy for reducing incarceration and including economically marginalized individuals in intervention

while also focusing on enabling genuine change. Furthermore, members of the Coalition on Working with Abusive Partners (CoWAP) identified at least three populations that could benefit from voluntary services: people in crisis, teens and young adults, and fathers. Such services could address parenting, healthy masculinity, healthy relationships, relationships beyond the gender binary, and culture change toward healthy communities. At the very least, voluntary services could ensure we don't miss out on vital opportunities for interrupting violence and fostering change. As Johnson notes on a teen accountability group, "Because classes are open to the court-mandated only, we lost out on someone who is reaching out for help. But you can't get help until you're arrested. The best solution is always prevention."

## STRATEGIES FOR RESPONSE

- Develop robust assessment tool based on input from IWG and CoWAP as well as affiliated providers
- Ensure culturally specific assessment frameworks for communities including LGBTQIA individuals, immigrants, people of color, women abusers, and youth
- Train providers on use of differential assessment tool
- Formalize a process of conducting differential assessments and then enabling wrap-around services and case management with a registry of affiliated providers including mental health and substance abuse professionals

- Cross-train and enhance programs and collaborations that address mental health, substance abuse, and violence response
- Train clinicians, therapists, anger management group facilitators, and mediators in responsible intervention services for survivors and their families
- Foster voluntary programs to enable preventative services and interventions outside systems

### RECOMMENDATION

- Fund a service for pre-intervention individual assessment (which could include differential, risk, survivor / family / community input, etc. as needed) to enable responsive, inclusive interventions and wrap-around services that are trauma-informed and focus on behavior change

## RECOMMENDATION 2: FUND FULL-TIME STAFF MEMBERS AT LIVING WAGE LEVELS FOR CURRENT AND NEW ABUSIVE PARTNER INTERVENTIONS

*We don't pay people to do the work.* — **Kerry Moles**, Executive Director, Court Appointed Special Advocates of New York City

### GAPS

In general, the work to end violence is under-resourced. As part of the gender bias of social services delivery—within the larger minimization of social services themselves—we see that advocates and providers are underpaid, overworked, and sometimes in the same or near-same financial conditions as people they serve. This lack of resources for infrastructure and staffing is true for current programs providing abusive partner interventions as well. Many of the City's innovative programs—from CONNECT to the Family Wellness Program to STEPS to End Family Violence—operate abusive partner interventions without stable funding streams and adequate resources to do the work.

This dearth of resources results in gaps in staff professional development as well as burnout. Part of the inability for abusive partner interventions to evolve in New York City has been the lack of a stable workforce that can grow and sharpen the work and their practices collectively. This work is complex: holding accountability with healing requires constant learning, connection to the larger anti-violence movement,

and adequate supervision and self-care. We are stifling people in the work as well as the field itself by not facilitating adequate resources.

Importantly, this under-resourcing in staffing has a direct impact in the goal to achieve behavior change and interrupt violence. “Peer support, supervision, self-care for workers is very challenging. Stability and small caseloads is the key,” notes one practitioner. “Even with a few clients, it's going to be very stressful. For this population to open up, you need a lot of flexibility. We will need continuous services. You can't have turnover and breaks. This is likely very long-term work. People work with clients for years. It's not the type of thing you can just do in a few sessions.” If we are looking to have impact, we need to invest in resources that facilitate full-time staff who can enable an arc of transformation with individuals, families, and communities.

The severe under-resourcing of this work has also led to an earned revenue model where participants are forced to pay for the operation of many abusive partner interventions—

particularly the programs that have little behavioral impact and may even put survivors and families in more harm. “Anyone can hang up a shingle and say I’m doing batterer intervention. The courts and legal and social services agencies will make referrals to those programs, because they need somewhere to send abusive partners, but they have no guidance about who is doing the work in a way that’s responsible,” explains Kerry Moles, Executive Director at Court Appointed Special Advocates of New York City. Part of the pop-up abusive partner interventions programming—particularly in neighborhoods where the City has not invested resources or programming—draws upon a vulnerable population to line its own coffers. To meet court expectations, individuals have to go somewhere, often going to programs unaffiliated with the Coalition on Working with Abusive Partners (CoWAP) and uninterested in the larger work to end violence.

Programs—particularly court-mandated services—for abusive partners should be free. “Paying is a horrible idea. That means that a program is being run off the payments of the participants,” observes Erica Willheim, PhD, Clinical Director, Family PEACE Trauma Treatment Center at New York-Presbyterian Hospital. “That set-up undermines facilitators and adds a whole extra dynamic to the group process. Having participants pay may be a ‘consequence’ but what does it mean when you live in poverty?” This payment dynamic of economic exploitation—rather than fostering accountability—is part of a framework that feeds into

participants’ sense of themselves as victims. This is not to say that people who cause harm cannot make restitutions, deliver on child support, or be financially accountable to their partners and families. They simply should not be bank-rolling the salaries of the people in charge of supporting their accountability with healing.

We see this kind of economic exploitation in other contexts in non-profit work, particularly in relationship with community-led solutions and informal social services providers. “People take advantage of faith communities and make them do all this stuff for free,” notes one provider. If we are to activate communities to work towards ending violence we must invest in the people doing the work—particularly the staff from whom we expect so much.

Furthermore, having a core group of full-time staff engaged in abusive partner interventions will allow the work to evolve and for people to benefit from ongoing training—and put it into practice. In particular, work in New York City is informed by the robust principles of CoWAP—but these principles are not regulated (<https://cowapnyc.weebly.com/core-principles.html>). Guidelines of practice, including promising practices, should be developed by the new Mayor’s Office to Combat Domestic Violence staff recommended by this Blueprint.

## PROMISING PRACTICES

Without adequate staffing, maintaining promising practices is difficult. In order to facilitate survivor safety, programs must be staffed at a level to enable sufficient attention to safety

## Promising Practices for Abusive Partner Interventions

### Element 1: Liberation framework and accountability structure

- Fostering an environment where participant has own stake in accountability, growth, community connection, and liberation
- Ensuring API services operate in connection to survivors and/or survivor advocacy to further accountability and safety
- Holding space for trauma-informed behavioral change over time—with a focus on transformative healing in order to repair harm and interrupt generations of violence including historical oppressions and generational trauma
- Integrating differential and risk assessments to align safety considerations with interventions responsive to each individual causing harm
- Enabling case management and wrap-around services to support and maintain behavioral change

### Element 2: Facilitation and group structure

- Co-facilitation with gender and gender expression representation relevant to the population served
- Relationship-building with participants with respect and honoring dignity
- Allowing space for diverse learners while drawing upon fundamentals of adult learning or teen developmental frameworks depending upon population served
- Enabling use of scenarios, role plays, and activities that enable practice for embodying transformation of behaviors
- Utilizing a combination of individual, pair share, small group, and large group teaching modalities to deepen participation and ways of learning

### Element 3: Ensuring access and inclusion

- Free programming
- Transportation reimbursement
- Geographical access
- Flexibility in timing with services on evenings and weekends
- Curricula which are tailored to populations with culturally-specific frameworks (i.e. countering heteronormativity, biphobia, transphobia, and enabling range of gender expressions in LGBTQIA groups)
- Providing meaningful language access

### Element 4: Fostering community connection

- Linking to community networks to enable behavior change maintenance
- Fostering peer accountability and leadership towards becoming a credible messenger over time

and accountability. In particular, this work must be done in conjunction with advocacy for survivors. As Sally N. MacNichol, Co-Executive Director at CONNECT, observes, “People who only work with men miss on a deep level the consequences of the abuse, the impact of the abuse, the suffering.”

A lack of connection to survivor and family impact facilitates a hollow accountability without recognition of harm or need for behavior change. It leads to irresponsible interventions such as groups Michelle Kaminsky, Chief, Domestic Violence Bureau at the Kings County District Attorney’s Office, describes as follows: “From what I’ve heard, the groups are often men exchanging war stories. It’s a joke to them. They’re goofing around in there. They know there’s really no meaningful sanctions of the misdemeanors here. We use them in misdemeanor cases. We use them not because we believe they do anything but we have very few options on misdemeanor sentencing—jail at Rikers, probation, or abusive partners program, or nothing. What is the sanction? What is the consequence? There really isn’t anything so we use these programs. We don’t want to imply to survivors that they’re safe. There’s no guarantee his behavior will change.”

Indeed, some programs count taking accountability as change—but accepting one’s actions is vastly different than stopping abusive behaviors. We need to be guided by survivor, family, extended family, and community input in assessing accountability. Nazy Kaffashan, Program Director, Family Wellness Program

at Children’s Aid, states, “How do we know someone is accountable? I can’t speak to anything other than what I see in the room. This shows the importance of the partner contact and hearing from the person they were abusive to. Their voice guides how we engage abusive partners and keeps us informed about safety of the survivor and their children. We need to do a better job at prioritizing that. That’s where I’m challenged at times but it’s such important information to have and it’s responsible practice.”

We need to foster accountable practices—and we need approaches that open up accountability not only by lecturing on power and control but by engaging healing as part of the accountability process. As Manny Yonko, Administrative Director, Office of Clinical Practice, Policy and Support, Domestic Violence and Policy Planning at Administration for Children’s Services, explains, “When you haven’t shared your lived experience, there’s no ability to empathize.” For individuals experiencing multiple oppressions while causing harm, being seen is crucial to opening space for accountability and transformation. As Catherine Shugrue dos Santos, Co-Director of Client Services at the New York City Anti-Violence Project, shares, “The LA LGBTQ Center has had an abusive partner intervention program for years, and they learned early that they have to start with the abusive partner’s own experience. First, you ask, ‘What’s happening to you?’ When they weren’t doing that, they couldn’t get them to sit still long enough to focus on accountability.”

Fostering space for generational reflection—

particularly in therapeutic contexts—is useful for engaging historical trauma and the impacts of structural oppressions. As Larry D. Edwards, LMSW, Founder & Director of Edwards Mentoring and Social Services, advises, “Programming staff should not sum-up individuals in one conversation (the intake); we need to get the greater story, sometimes requiring going two or three generations back. This is where the history of oppression and racism informs how I work with a client.”

Promising practices include connecting individual behavior to other forms of violence—and offering culturally rooted practices of healing. As Vanessa Nisperos, Young Adult Social Worker at the Red Hook Initiative, describes, “Of the interventions that an abusive partner may be mandated to, such as anger management and group counseling, the interventions focused on individual behavior change don’t get to the root of the problem, which can often be intergenerational family violence and PTSD. There are some interesting programs that focus on rites of passage and redefining manhood. These programs are often rooted in the red road and sweat lodge traditions in the Native American community and other spiritual traditions. While those seem to be transformative experiences, the challenge is those strategies are hard to adopt on a large scale or in an institutional setting.” Despite the difficulty of incorporating such transformative modalities institutionally, we do have national models of rites of passage approaches include the Alma Center, Inc. and National Compadres Network.

### **National Model for Intergenerational Healing: National Compadres Network**

<http://www.nationalcompadresnetwork.com/about/mission-and-purpose/>

- Lifetime involvement with a culturally rooted framework and intergenerational transformation aim
- Continues traditions and indigenous practices of Chicano, Latino, Native, Raza and other communities of color as the path to honoring all relations and lifelong well being
- La Cultura Cura (Transformational Healing) recognizes that within an individual’s, family’s, and community’s authentic cultural values, traditions, and indigenous practices exist the pathway to healthy development, restoration, and lifelong well being
- Linked to a Comadres Network with rites of passage curriculum for girls that addresses dating violence
- Over 2,000 men—grandfathers, fathers, sons and grandsons—have attended the yearly Hombres Retiros in Jolon

In addition to trauma-informed programs, these groups help to motivate participation and reframe the context of abusive behaviors in a way that doesn’t deny accountability. The Family Peace Initiative, a Kansas-based organization working to end family violence, is fostering a reframing by shifting terms from speaking on abuse to cruelty—and the need to

behave with respect. Such a reframing gives new language to understand the harms of violence and opens entry points for behavior change in accountability with healing. It also addresses a problem Joseph Maldonado, Men’s Roundtable Co-Facilitator at CONNECT, points out: “If you want to get the most unattended group in the world call it a batterers group.”

By reframing interventions, fostering promising practices, and having adequate staff to carry out innovative interventions for people who cause harm, we can foster safety, wellness, and accountability with healing. We will better be able to connect providers working with people who cause harm to advocates supporting survivors. We will be better poised to achieve the short-term impact of behavioral change and the multi-generational vision of ending violence. Or as Ann suggests, “I think what’s also key is to give them tools not when they’re angry, but when they are in the best version of themselves—even in that experience, when they feel like they are at their best place of coping to give them tools. So, encouraging them to be part of the solution. They already know there’s a problem. It’s the elephant in the room that they want to act like is invisible, right? Because they just don’t have the language, they don’t have tools—and taking the elephant and saying, ‘Yeah, it’s here.’”

## **National Model for Spirit-Based Healing: Alma Center, Inc.**

<http://almacenter.org/>

- Use of trauma-informed and spirit-based approach with organizational operations modeling behaviors
- Trauma includes wounds inflicted by growing up in a culture with a deep and unresolved history of racism, sexism, gender, and ethnic oppression
- Fosters an alternate narrative, changing the question from ‘What is wrong with you?’ to ‘What happened to you?’
- Completion of Men Ending Violence Program reduces domestic violence recidivism by 86 percent
- The Wisdom Walk to Self Mastery Program offers healing with ritual and shaman-informed practices

*Program facilitators are not full time. That's definitely a disadvantage. You're not as rooted in the domestic violence community. A good minority of facilitators are hourly or part-time consultants: how do you support the program? — Gene*

**A. Johnson, Jr.,** Mediator and Facilitator

### STRATEGIES FOR RESPONSE

- Invest resources in current promising programs serving people who cause harm in order to enable full-time staffing
- Invest resources in full-time staffing of new pilot and community-based programs in order to realize desired outcomes
- Invest in professional development and field-building opportunities so that interventions for people who cause harm can be accountable to survivors and families and evolve promising practices and interventions
- Fund programs sufficiently so they can primarily operate outside an earned revenue model and do responsible work

### RECOMMENDATION

- Fund full-time staff members at living wage levels at current as well as new abusive partner interventions and programs doing innovative behavior change, trauma-informed, holistic work

## RECOMMENDATION 3: IMPLEMENT AN ANONYMOUS HELPLINE

*I was quite taken aback about two things: the extent of trauma by caregivers and the extent of trauma by oppression of systems especially if they've been incarcerated. The second thing that stood out to me is the volume of men who disclosed that they were sexually abused as children. During the assessment process, they would respond 'yes' to this question and many hadn't told anyone before. The style of engagement, if you really want to help someone, is that you're open to hearing them. You can say something they did was wrong without passing judgment. A history of abuse is not an excuse for what's going on in their life today but it helps us understand what's happening. We don't give men permission to be vulnerable. There is such shame and emasculation when someone says they've been hurt. No one talks about this stuff—their trauma and pain. And as men get older and older, they're carrying this unresolved hurt with them. The only thing people can show is the anger. The response is, 'I'm going to show you who's in charge.'* — **Nazy Kaffashan**, Program Director, Family Wellness Program, Children's Aid

### GAPS

While guilt, shame, and trauma may not excuse violence, they are powerful forces for denial and avoiding services. Publicly, we have so few models of stories of change—of people causing harm to loved ones and transforming behavior. As Kimber reflects, “There’s a lot of public messaging around people who are violent—there seems to be a lot of shame-based advertising and not necessarily strengths-based advertising. Unfortunately,

it’s a difficult demographic to really engage because most people believe that men are the people who are violent. And so the advertising we see is a reflection of how that demographic would benefit most.” Current abusive partner intervention services, which run off court mandates often center shame rather than transformation, and also operate within a heteronormative paradigm. Opening space for all populations of people causing harm

*It's very difficult to find services—not to say impossible. The most important thing is that the person needs to acknowledge that they have a problem and most of the time, they don't acknowledge they have a problem. And if they do, they feel shame and therefore they don't reach out for help. So, making services available and advertise those services in places of community, in churches, in places like that, will be helpful because in talking about it, it's going to become less taboo and less shameful. Talk about accountability, but also talk about ways to heal and ways to find in coping and understanding oneself. So that way you can avoid hurting others. — Sarah Pantaleon*

to come forward—including trans women and women who use force—will require new messaging and resources. We can find that in an anonymous helpline offering resources and referrals for behavior change to people who cause harm.

The opening of a space that affords anonymity will enable providers to meet people where they are. While it cannot offer the in-depth services of counseling or a formal program, it can lead individuals to these services. An anonymous helpline will promote help-seeking behaviors rather than widening spaces of silence and suppression. Anonymity can be powerful as a starting place for engaging services. Grace suggests the City provide “something anonymous where they can go in there and not everyone knows where they’re going. That would be a good step.”

In a profound question for how we as providers engage the work of transformation, Deesha Narichania, DV Coordinator at St. Luke’s-Roosevelt Crime Victims Treatment

Center, asks, “What would it look like for disclosures of violence to be affirmed rather than shamed?” If our ultimate goal is behavior change and interrupting violence so we can end it, answering this question offers a potent starting place in re-imagining our approaches.

As we seek to open space for more people causing harm to come forward, an anonymous helpline would be an asset. Moreover, the City and various direct services providers already operate domestic violence helplines. We could either integrate services for people who cause harm through these helplines and/or create a dedicated new line. An anonymous helpline can be a beginning for a journey of accountability with healing and transformation.

*Having a hotline—maybe they wouldn't want to directly speak to somebody at the agency cuz they may feel like people are watching them but have them anonymously call in there. — Anonymous*

### STRATEGIES FOR RESPONSE

- Integrate abusive partner intervention referrals and crisis response in current helplines, hotlines, and/or textlines serving survivors of violence
- Create a new anonymous helpline for people who cause harm
- Integrate program and counseling referrals and next steps to follow-up on the potential for behavior change and transformation
- Promote messaging for strengths-based services including for communities facing oppressions such as individuals who are LGBTQIA, immigrants, people of color, and cisgender women abusers

### RECOMMENDATION

- Augment NYC Domestic Violence Hotline and other government and agency hotlines/textlines with capacity building and training to intervene with and provide referrals to people who cause harm or implement a new anonymous helpline targeted to people who cause harm

## RECOMMENDATION 4: FOSTER A PEER MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

*What I would like to see is something similar to a 12-step program based on spirituality and that's right from the beginning—not waiting for the second time they hit somebody. It should be introduced right away. The first time that an abuser strikes out and gets caught doing it, you have better chances of getting to family history of his past than waiting for years down the road.*

— **Theresa Sullivan**

### GAPS

Even in structured abusive partner intervention programs, peer response is pivotal. It can make the difference between a group fostering accountability versus reinforcing violent behaviors and cultures of violence. “It’s more powerful when a peer challenges them instead of the facilitators,” observes Nazy Kaffashan, Program Director, Family Wellness Program at Children’s Aid. Facilitators play a key role in holding space for such challenges—and this framework and skill-set is crucial. Yet, how can we mobilize peer models of interrupting gender-based violence including development of credible messengers and 12-step frameworks?

A peer mentorship model with a curriculum or practices informed by survivors, people who have caused harm, and practitioners would open spaces for additional interventions—and offer a self-sustaining platform of behavior change engagement and response. In sharing the transformation of violent behaviors in one

of her relationships, Lindsay shares, “Mentorship is a huge part. If somebody’s successfully transitioned and not re-offended and is utilizing the services to the fullest extent, they should definitely advocate for some of the newer members just to know that they have somebody—a peer. Because you know what, there’s strength in experience and you don’t know how that will positively impact the person just coming in to say, ‘Hey I’ve been where you’ve been.’ You know, a lot of times, let’s be honest—with guys especially, it’s the peer pressure. It’s the bravado. It’s the male unity and to see another man who might have gone through that, it’s like, ‘Hey, dude you can do it.’ You know, I feel like a lot of times guys don’t get the same kind of emotional encouragement from each other as we receive cuz when I was going through my circumstance, my friend, she let me stay with her for a week. She did all this stuff. She built me up so good, you know, and I don’t think that

it's like that for guys. A lot of times I noticed that my children's father's friends were so passive when it came to his actions and just to hear somebody else saying, 'You know, maybe Lindsay doesn't deserve it. Maybe Lindsay's upset because of this.' And it's so funny because the thing that switched the way that he interacted with me a lot was the fact that he spoke with his sister."

Community—whether family members or neighbors—have reach in interrupting violence in that everyday and repetitive contact—as well as a basis of relationship to foster accountability with healing.

And yet, current models of peer mentorship are not inclusive—particularly to the experience of trans women. As Kimber explains, "I've been trying to engage a 12-step program of recovery called Sexual Compulsives Anonymous. Those groups are very dominated by men and I don't ever see any other trans women in these spaces. Every once in a while, I see one other woman.

In that environment, I encounter a lot of challenges just trying to relate with other people. Sometimes I have a breakthrough, someone will say something that I actually can hear and it's like 'Oh, that is something that I've experienced.' But more often than not, it feels alien. And right now, I'm not going to any meetings because of challenging interactions with my former sponsor who wasn't accountable to his misogynist behavior. He expected that I should be able to accept that as a part of our daily relationship." We need to recognize that peer models can replicate the dynamics of larger society—including reinforcing the oppression of marginalized individuals and communities. As with any intervention, we have to be mindful of misogyny and structural inequity, demonstrating again that we will need multiple peer mentorship models, curricula, and formats instead of a one-size fits all approach which can inevitably revert to ableist, heteronormative, and oppressive contexts.

*Allow them a space to breathe—sort of like an Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous situation where they can come and they can vent and they can see people like them and recover from it. We shouldn't just chastise and throw these people away because sometimes it's not always that they have the education and/or knowledge that they're doing something wrong. And I myself was never that empathetic to anyone until I myself was a victim sitting in a recovery program. So, I know that these things worked and that there are people out there who care enough to nourish somebody—support like that when they need it. — C. Delaine Dixon*

*It's really hard to make change and you need to be in community with people supporting that change. — Anonymous*

Peer mentorship models do offer another opening for popularizing interventions and facilitating access to services—including formal interventions through referrals. In addition, peer models can be a space for voluntary involvement without the label of batterers groups—while still holding to accountability and behavior change. As Robina Niaz, Founder and Executive Director at Turning Point for Women and Families, elucidates, “This is much harder because it requires the perpetrators to take a hard look at themselves. That’s what Alcoholics Anonymous, Gamblers Anonymous do—they focus on behavior modification that results from self-awareness and a need for members to recognize and believe that they are the ones who can change their behavior. This requires an understanding that it is their behavior that needs to be modified and can only happen when they take responsibility.”

Peer mentorship mobilizes community response and builds our capacity as a society to interrupt violence. As one provider shares, “I just want to see the day when what we call domestic violence, there’s a heightened sense of awareness of the issue from neighbor to neighbor, house to house, barbershop to barbershop, hair salon to hair salon.” Ultimately, a peer mentorship model would activate new spaces to address violence and enable participants to connect with their own stakes in transfor-

mation while fostering networks of care at a scale service providers could not match. Peer mentorship models put change in participants’ hands—a connection to accountability with healing towards personal growth.

### STRATEGIES FOR RESPONSE

- Foster community leadership development to enable credible messengers as well as peer mentorship models of response to gender-based violence
- Create and/or integrate tools including anti-patriarchal and anti-oppressive precepts, curricula, and referrals into the resources kit for credible messengers and peer mentorship groups
- Ensure accessibility to multiply-marginalized groups including queer and trans individuals who cause harm through specialized peer mentorship groups

### RECOMMENDATION

- In partnership with the community leadership development and credible messenger teams, pilot a peer mentorship program with models that may include 12-step programs

## RECOMMENDATION 5: PILOT 3-YEAR COMMUNITY-BASED RESTORATIVE JUSTICE INTERVENTIONS

*There's no restorative justice model, you know. It's all criminal justice and it's really so much deeper than that. In other words, even if a crime is committed or the law is broken, without charges or a conviction, there's no record and the perpetrator is regarded as non-criminal. There are so many layers of abuse that have profound lifetime consequences on children and families that haven't begun to be considered in the practice of law. — Anonymous*

### GAPS

Restorative practices work to foster accountability outside a punishment model. Drawing upon ideas—often rooted in indigenous traditions—of repair and restoring wholeness between individuals, families, and communities, restorative practices allow for more active participation of survivors and people who have caused harm in a journey towards accountability with mutual healing.

A January 2017 roundtable hosted by the Office on Violence Against Women gathered practitioners to discuss restorative practices. “The participants came from diverse backgrounds, having practiced what goes by several different names—tribal peacemaking, restorative justice, transformative justice, community-based advocacy and more,” the meeting summary states. “Presenters noted that many survivors choose not to contact law enforcement for a myriad of reasons, so alternatives are needed. They emphasized that instead

of relying entirely on law enforcement to solve the problem, these community-based restorative approaches offer an opportunity for communities to take responsibility for safety and for survivors to take an active role in co-creating that safety. This approach addresses the need for increased survivor agency in the outcome, as well as the longer-term importance of changing community norms to support victims of violence.” (<https://www.justice.gov/archives/ovw/blog/expanding-options-pursuing-safety-accountability-and-community-engagement>)

As this meeting summary notes, interest in restorative practices comes from multiple vantages: fear of law enforcement and legal systems as well as fostering deeper meanings of accountability and repairing harm. In particular, restorative practices reframe accountability beyond punishment. “Punishment takes away a sense of dignity and then people feel like a victim of the system and do not have

the opportunity to reflect on harm caused,” observes Mika Dashman, Founding Director at Restorative Justice Initiative, adding, “We have to move away from the victim-offender paradigm. The reality of human condition is that we will all cause harm, and we will all be harmed. People who have caused great harm also have to be given opportunity to reflect on where they learned the behavior.” In a way that only conversation can—especially in a held space for tough conversations—restorative practices can offer in-depth understanding of harm at a profoundly human level.

Indeed, one of the abusive partner intervention groups I observed began with a round of men sharing why they were there—with an individual saying the action that brought him to the group was “self-defense.” Group participants continued to discard accountability through the session with little to no pushback

### **National Model: Impact Justice**

<http://impactjustice.org/restorative-justice-project/>

- Restorative practice approach with youth
- Using restorative justice to reduce racial disparities in juvenile justice
- Successfully implemented a restorative juvenile diversion program in Alameda County, CA, that keeps up to 100 youth out of the juvenile justice system
- Exploring restorative justice approaches to addressing child sexual abuse

from the facilitator. Certainly, restorative practices would foster greater accountability than such a closed-door group.

Restorative practices also confront the narrative that abusers can’t change, admit accountability, or grow. “With restorative justice (practices), we’re acting out of the vision that is counter cultural, starting with the assumption that everyone has a true self that is good, wise, and powerful and that no human being should simply be thrown away—outside the circle,” frames Sally N. MacNichol, Co-Executive Director at CONNECT.

Concerns on restorative practices have included ensuring equal conversation and not enabling power and control dynamics—though we can also see that abuser manipulation already occurs within systems responses with profound impacts. Restorative practices are indeed complex and require resources, skilled facilitators, and clear agreements—as do all interventions.

In addition, we may need to build community capacity to hold such a practice—a strong argument for utilizing restorative practices in schools to begin a process of culture-building and change. Paul Feuerstein, President/CEO of Barrier Free Living, expresses community concerns for restorative practices, saying, “How do we create a restorative justice model for people who live here? The community is saying it’s not acceptable. They’re not ready to take the step. How do we create a community response?”

A deaf survivor elaborates on these concerns, noting, “When it comes to the Deaf com-

*I think that if restorative justice were used in schools across the board in younger grades, it would have a noticeable impact on violence. It builds community, empathy, and listening skills. We live in a society where violence is pervasive. Gender-based violence is pervasive. Sexual violence is pervasive. What we have to think about is changing our culture. The principles and practices of restorative justice can point us in the right direction in terms of a culture shift toward ending violence.* — **Mika Dashman**, Founding Director, Restorative Justice Initiative

munity, I have learned to be careful because, you know, there's a lot of deaf people out there but then everybody knows your business. In my apartment building is a lot of deaf people. It gets a little backstabbing so I kind of keep to myself. I don't really hang out a lot with other deaf people because I feel like it's too much of a risk—just too small of a group always talking about each other and so I just keep to myself. I don't really do a lot with other deaf people. I just try to keep to myself because it's safer that way. Now that I have my own apartment, I'm nervous. Sometimes I get paranoid. I get worried or I get depressed or I get nervous about what could happen like it happened with my husband. We argued all the time. I don't know because there's no programs or anything. There's nowhere to go really.”

With a lack of sufficient services and supports, we have isolated deaf community members. This again may mean building restorative practices slowly as part of community-building generally. Furthermore, beginning with deaf students in schools may again promote practice

in the practices—which also fosters ease and reduces fear of an unknown process.

Advocates also point to issues of shame, intimate partner violence as a taboo topic, and a lack of family and community support—especially for immigrants isolated from family members. As Reshmi Sengupta, Director of Programs at Sakhi for South Asian Women, explains, “Transformative justice—many of our survivors are not ready for that since they don't have a family / community support system.”

Such concerns are valid—as are concerns for every intervention in our toolkit. The goal of this Blueprint is to enable solutions that open doors while rejecting a one-size-fits-all approach. Enabling 3-year restorative practices pilot programs based in the community would foster a space aligned with the needs of multiply-marginalized communities including LGBTQIA communities and communities of color.

Implementing a restorative practices pilot in the community could parallel a nascent initiative at the Manhattan District Attorney's Office and offer learnings for scale and strategic implemen-

tation. It also fosters a ground for community response to violence—a necessary strategy in ending abuse. As Quentin Walcott, Co-Executive Director of CONNECT, explains, “For restorative justice to work, going in, the resistance to it must be acknowledged. Communities (defined by the parties involved) play a big role in how effective it can be in maintaining safety for those harmed and accountability with compassion for the responsible party. The compassion piece is where understanding and transformation happens; it is not to rationalize the harm that was done, but more to account for the roots of violence, including structural forms that are drivers of violence historically in communities

and can exacerbate violence in relationships and families. If the community was activated, the abuse may not have happened.”

## STRATEGIES FOR RESPONSE

- Build support for a practitioner group committed to restorative practices in order to foster a network of practice and support
- Engage schools, particularly in partnership with the Relationship Abuse Prevention Program (RAPP), in incorporating restorative practices as a school-based option for response to harm
- Partner with culturally specific organizations to enable community and family support, including from chosen family, for restorative practices
- Foster restorative practices trainings and practicums with credible messengers and community leaders
- Resource further community-based strategies to ending violence

### **Criminal Legal System Restorative Justice Approach in Development: Manhattan DA’s Office (DANY)**

<http://cjii.org/request-information-abusive-partner-intervention-restorative-justice/>

- Goals of holding abusive partners accountable and supporting survivors in healing
- Solicited information in November 2016 about potential use of restorative justice (RJ) principles as part of a treatment approach for abusive partners
- Requested information about how RJ principles could be integrated into abusive partner intervention program design in Manhattan
- Will help inform DANY on whether and how to support development of such an intervention

## RECOMMENDATION

- Pilot 3-year community-based restorative justice interventions inclusive of and/or focused on communities of color, disabled individuals, people causing harm to elders, low-income communities, immigrant communities, individuals who are Limited English proficient, LGBTQIA communities, veterans, women abusers, and/or youth

## RECOMMENDATION 6: INCREASE FUNDING FOCUSED ON INCARCERATION-BASED SERVICES BY COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

*One, to acknowledge the problem and the reason why you in there and feel safe to do so without having to think of the consequences of court and other repercussions that come by you expressing this to your lawyer or the judge. One-on-one will help in there cuz being in jail as a whole is very stressful and alone. You feel alone in this situation so just having that little bit of time to be able to talk to someone hundred percent about how you feel—it makes the process of being in there less stressful than it has to be and makes you feel like you have more support. If you have just that one person to speak to while you're in there and you can genuinely trust them, you feel like you have someone on your side. With group therapy, it's so many different people in there—some people you don't want to talk to you as well. You just don't want to. As far as one-on-one services, that would help. — **Anonymous***

### GAPS

We often lock people up and forget about them. “The prison system does not rehabilitate,” notes Yumnah Syed, Coordinator of Evaluation & Training, Institute for Adolescent Trauma Treatment and Training at Adelphi University and former Youth Empowerment Advocate at Sakhi for South Asian Women.

And yet survivors of violence are often hopeful that abusive partners will emerge from jail or prison reformed. In our current paucity of incarceration-based services, such transformation is highly unlikely—and the incarceration

experience can serve to augment violent behaviors rather than diminish them.

Men of color are disproportionately targeted for incarceration. In addition, of women who are incarcerated, we find a significant population of survivors of violence. As the Correctional Association of New York states, “The overwhelming majority of women in prison are survivors of domestic violence. Three-quarters have histories of severe physical abuse by an intimate partner during adulthood, and 82% suffered serious physical or sexual abuse as

children. But whereas efforts to recognize and address domestic violence in the community have made some progress, public support too often stops when survivors defend themselves or their children from an abuser's violence" (Retrieved October 6, 2017 from <http://www.correctionalassociation.org/issue/domestic-violence>).

Justice-involved survivors, as with other multiply-marginalized populations, have needs that our social services systems are not fully equipped to address. STEPS to End Family Violence is one of a handful of New York City domestic violence providers of formal services to justice-involved survivors. Supporting survivors includes amplifying resources to serve incarcerated survivors. In particular, one-on-one and group interventions in jails and prisons can enable incarcerated individuals to reenter communities—and relationships—with transformed behaviors, interrupting cycles of harm.

Furthermore, fostering additional incarceration-based services or services to incarcerated individuals will enable accountability with healing. For incarcerated

individuals, this space is rare. "Through the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA), CVTC offers a hotline for incarcerated rape survivors to receive phone counseling and advocacy," explains Deesha Narichania, DV Coordinator at St. Luke's-Roosevelt Crime Victims Treatment Center. "Two things must be noted here: 1) The vast majority of reported rapes are not perpetrated by other inmates, but by prison officials, and 2) Many inmates call to process not a recent adult rape, but childhood sexual abuse which they never got to process earlier because of lack of access to services in their communities." While the ideal scenario is to enable services so that communities have an abundance of off-ramps before entering the criminal legal system, providing services for incarcerated individuals will enable us to stem violence from continuing. In short, expansion of current services for incarcerated individuals and addition of new services will further our goal to build capacity for healthy relationships and end intergenerational transmissions of violence.

*I tell people that don't think—that therapy is only for rich people or for people who have real serious issues. The majority of people need some type of therapy. And us who are coming out of prison after long stretches of time, we definitely need some kind of therapy to re-acclimate back into communities and come back into society. Therapy does help. It gives you the opportunity to talk to someone, to have someone in your life you can share with as well.*

— **Anonymous**

## STRATEGIES FOR RESPONSE

- Augment funding for current providers of services to incarcerated individuals to enable accountability with healing
- Foster new programs and services for incarcerated survivors of violence, including LGBTQIA survivors and survivors of color
- Integrate services for and work to support justice-involved survivors more fully in intimate violence advocacy
- Augment alternatives to incarceration and foster additional off-ramps and preventative services in communities subject to disproportionate legal surveillance in order to reduce the flow of mass incarceration

## RECOMMENDATION

- Increase funding to existing programs and foster new community programs focused on incarceration-based services for justice-involved survivors and/or abusive partners to enable individualized services that can be continued after release in order to increase safety, accountability with healing, and wellness as well as enable transforming behavior and community reintegration

## RECOMMENDATION 7: FUND WHOLE FAMILY PROGRAM MODELS AND SERVICES

*There was something going on at Children’s Aid Society that they were doing that I asked for, and it didn’t even make it into the courtroom that I wanted my son’s father to go. And had he been held accountable at that point in time, my child might have had access to his family and know who his family was, for one thing. I don’t feel that he would necessarily have acknowledged his abuse but if he had been court ordered to go, it would have at least made a statement. The damage is now irreversible. It’s no consolation to me because it’s my only child but I know that there are stories that are so much worse. I know that. — Anonymous*

### GAPS

“In our work, there’s no individual here,” notes Michael Scherz, Director, Domestic Violence Project at Lawyers for Children. As an advocate for children experiencing abuse, Scherz speaks to the complex dynamics in families—where not only are parents involved but other family members, including grandparents who may mitigate or amplify violence. Given that intimate partner violence, elder abuse, and child abuse is about relationality, it is strange that as a field we predominantly focus services on individual survivors. Indeed, many culturally specific services have noted a need for interventions of extended family and/or chosen family members. Furthermore, our definitions of family have often relied not only upon Western individuality and nuclear family

constructs but also heteronormative frames that deny the actual constellations through which LGBTQIA communities and people experiencing poverty and oppression actually survive and connect.

In general, as a field, we have not focused on the ecosystem of relationships. In New York City, we have only a few whole family programs for intervening in violence. In part, this comes from a hesitation that they augment safety concerns. One City employee shares, “If it’s the same organization that provides those services, my big concern there is about coercion. My instinct is that there should be a firewall. I just worry so much about victims and children being manipulated in a way that takes away their autonomy and agency.” This standard

of separation is maintained not only in heteronormative contexts but often queer and trans services-focused agencies as well.

On the other hand, are we limiting our services predominantly to survivors who seek separation? And, if so, are we serving communities as we need to be? Are we having the impact we want both in terms of serving survivors and transforming communities?

Lisa O'Connor, Chief Program Officer at Safe Horizon, speaks to the need to create space to heal the relationship as its own entity. "We need to engage people through their relationship. Our goal is that everyone in the family feels responsible for the safety of the family. Whether together, apart, or connected—everyone owns their role. How do we have a different conversation about the damage to the family? This breaks the silence and takes it out of the shadow and secret. It's another way to engage community by taking away secrecy and silence around hurt in the family." In such a framework, O'Connor shares that we can address violence beyond intimate partner relationships, such as child-on-child violence, and recognize the crucial role played by children, extended family, and elders while enabling services for survivors seeking accountability and repair in relationships.

In general, we need to be more attentive to the goals of survivors, particularly in relationship to families. "In some cases, survivors want to keep their families, want the abuse to stop, and the family to reunite. In other words, many survivors express that they want to hold

abusers accountable but give them another chance," explains Danny Salim, Anti-Violence Program Director at the Arab-American Family Support Center. "When they make that choice, it's vital to support them, empower them, and respect their decision."

The vast majority of systems-based services for survivors of violence are predicated on them leaving their partners or family members causing harm. As a result, survivors have to do a lot of work to be safe, keep their children safe, and carve out a new path for themselves. Yet, a vast swath of survivors of intimate partner violence and/or elder abuse seek to stay in relationship

### **National Model for Whole Family Anti-Violence Services: Caminar Latino**

<http://caminarlatino.org/>

- Domestic violence agency that incorporates working with the whole family
- Programs include Women's, Men's, Youth, and Parenting services
- Men's Program is a 24-session family violence intervention group class certified by State of Georgia and includes critical-consciousness and education focusing on domestic violence with a substance abuse education component
- Success measures include 90% of families with a Men's Program participant will report cessation of physical violence and removal of firearms within 2 weeks of entering program

with abusive partners or family members. Not enough services exist for survivors who seek abuse to stop while staying in relationship.

It is also difficult for anyone to make abuse end. And yet, our inability as a field to address survivors' longings for such interventions and our creation of systems focused on separation as the predominant mode for safety reflects our own stake in quick, cookie-cutter solutions—and the lack of resources offered for more complex options that would ultimately be more meaningful for survivors and advocates. To enable deeper relational-based solutions, we need to open options and resource these options.

John Montero, Senior Court Clerk at the Manhattan Integrated Domestic Violence Court (IDV), speaks to the lack of long-term planning and mapping with survivors of abuse and their families, asking, "What's the permanency plan? There's no thought of what this is going to look like. Is it reunification? Foster care? What is the plan? What services would we put in place if we looked at domestic violence and begin with the

end in mind?" He adds that our current systems also prevent families from escaping the domestic violence label: "Once an IDV family, always an IDV family. They have to come back to modify. Even if you don't have domestic violence anymore, there's still a label attached." In our quest to offer access, we may unintentionally have mapped domestic violence as a condition as opposed to an experience. Unintentionally, we may be limiting the scope of transformation for families by always linking them to a past history. Raquel Pittman, Strategic Plan Project Manager at Safe Horizon, reflects on the harms of labeling, saying, "I realize our international partners are way ahead of us. They have another alternative that's not criminal justice-focused. America needs to catch up. You have to have safety—still be victim-centered and also create an environment respectful to the person who's caused harm. Sometimes the label continues to perpetuate the monster syndrome." Safe Horizon is in the process of developing a program to incorporate work with abusive partners and as

*My family could be back together cuz I feel like all they do is just, 'Let's throw the man in jail. Let's get the girl on welfare. Let's drag her through the mud.' And you know, she's part of a statistic. Like, 'Yeah, she's lying. She just wants an apartment.' Because that's how they treat you. And nothing gets resolved—you end up bitter and angry and hurting and they end up dead or in jail or trying to kill you because you gave an order of protection. So, I feel like if the services would help people get their families back together, it would help. But yeah, my family would be back together. Like mentally healthy. Because you can be with someone and not be healthy mentally. — **Kierra Coll***

one of the core staff members leading this program development process, Pittman indicates that a whole family approach “gives the system itself a new way of responding. This is critical to reducing long-term violence. Healing, change, and transformation—one family at a time.”

A whole family approach would also open access to families experiencing elder abuse—where parents are often reluctant to access punitive systems responses. “A mother doesn’t want their child prosecuted: they want help,” says Aurora Salamone, Director of the Elderly Crime Victim Resource Center at the NYC Department for the Aging. “There’s a bond there that’s different than intimate partners. You’re going to protect no matter what. We’ve heard this so many times about trying to get help for the offender, especially if the offender suffers from a mental health issue. Our feeling is if we don’t help this abuser, we’re going to have a hard time providing services to the senior victim. You can’t just call the police or get an exclusionary order. Often the offender’s dependent on an elder. We need to look at the whole family even though our specialty may be elderly, children, or young women. We have to be able to look at the whole family because everyone in that house is affected.”

A youth homeless services provider concurs that many youth experiencing child abuse also seek supportive services rather than criminal legal interventions for their family: “I want them to get help not in trouble.” The provider adds, “We need to recognize it’s going to take time to work with this family. We can’t fix just by saying

this is the law.” One of the fears of criminal legal and systems interventions is that these interventions may spur separation within the family. In speaking to forced separations—for example, a mother and child in one shelter and the father in another—Joshua Rotkin, Queens LEAP (Legal Social Work Elder Abuse Program) Director at JASA, explains, “You are creating two families out of one.” All populations, but especially elders and youth, face barriers of transportation, housing, and access to community networks—making interventions beyond separation and whole family services an urgency.

In another systems-based intervention, for many survivors, orders of protection have been a vital mechanism for accessing safety. And yet, the inability to customize orders has also led to negative impacts on survivors’ desires for their relationships. As one attorney notes, “Often the victim says, ‘Listen I really want to work on it.’ The DAs’ and judges’ fall back is full order of protection which could harm a process that brings a family forward.”

Larry D. Edwards, LMSW, Founder & Director of Edwards Mentoring and Social Services, observes that an order of protection cannot repair harmful relationships and that exclusionary orders can also increase the anxiety and toxic dynamics in abusive relationships. He observes, “That timeframe where there is no communication between the couple as a result of an order of protection, both seem confused regarding what the other is thinking and what’s happening with the children emotionally and financially.”

## Data on Abuse for Deaf People, Elders, and Youth

- “Data from an eight-year survey of college students at Rochester Institute of Technology indicates that Deaf and hard of hearing individuals are 1.5 times more likely to be victims of relationship violence including sexual harassment, sexual assault, psychological abuse and physical abuse in their lifetime.” (Source: <http://www.thehotline.org/help/deaf-services/abuse-in-the-deaf-community/>)
- “Overall the study found an elder abuse incidence rate in New York State that was nearly 24 times greater than the number of cases referred to social service, law enforcement or legal authorities who have the capacity as well as the responsibility to assist older adult victims.” (Source: p. 2 of <http://ocfs.ny.gov/main/reports/Under%20the%20Radar%2005%2012%2011%20final%20report.pdf>)
- “There were 686,000 child maltreatment victims or 9.2 per 1,000 children in 2012. Of those children who were victims of maltreatment in 2012, in 36.6 percent the mother was the perpetrator, in 18.7 percent of the cases the father was the perpetrator, and in 12.0 percent of the cases someone other than the parent was the perpetrator.” (Source: pp. 17-18 of [http://victimsofcrime.org/docs/default-source/ncvrw2015/2015ncvrw\\_stats\\_children.pdf?sfvrsn=2](http://victimsofcrime.org/docs/default-source/ncvrw2015/2015ncvrw_stats_children.pdf?sfvrsn=2))

Victoria Levin, Assistant District Attorney, Richmond County District Attorney’s Office, notes the need for additional services focused on repair and restoration. “Many of these people are going to stay together. They need to move forward together,” Levin remarks. “We will often plead cases out to have some sort of program. Part of their plea may be entering a counseling program with a counselor. We need programs. Whatever therapeutic method, there’s not enough focus into reintegration into family life and rehabilitation.”

In addition to counseling and programs offering services for survivors and people causing harm, some services that would support survivors’ longings while increasing safety include services for **co-parenting, supervised visitation, and therapeutic visitation** as well as bolstering the **cohesion of fatherhood services with survivor-centered advocacy**.

## CO-PARENTING

*“I’ve come to realize that a lot of the guys who I’ve been with have never seen a healthy family model in front of them and I think it’s really important that there could be something that addresses that because you don’t always have to be in a relationship to be co-parenting with each other, to be interacting as a family unit. And I definitely think that something that could be reiterated is just the impact of—when it’s safe and I want to emphasize that when it’s safe to preserve what a family is—how to parent effectively. I think a lot of guys want to know that.*”

*I think communication between families and services is really important because he knows what's going on. He's able to speak with my worker: 'Look, Lindsay's going through this, that, and the third and it's not right and I don't like it and I didn't realize what was going on and how can I help?' Even him being in the loop kind of helps." — Lindsay*

*"The parenting piece was phenomenal. I have two children. How can I say what happened to my daughter and son? This is what happened but this is not who I am.*

*I started to see my daughter. I saw her have a tantrum. Her behavior was a mirror. I saw myself. I got to be a positive role model and it starts through my actions." — Jamel Hooks Jr.*

Co-parenting services are vital to enable support for survivors, people who cause harm, and children even as they offer a route to interrupting generational trauma and cycles of violence. "Learning to co-parent separately is extremely hard and may lead to hostility towards the absent parent. Co-parenting therapy can go a long way towards making the process easier," observes Jamie Burke, Supervising Attorney, Integrated Defense Practice at Brooklyn Defender Services.

In many situations, kids do not understand what is happening in their families and survivors also do not have clarity on how to communicate with or make requests and demands of the co-parent. Heather Lothrop, Staff Attorney, Domestic Violence Project at

the Urban Justice Center, notes that the court context can add barriers and siphon extended family supports. "Even for the survivors who want to co-parent, there's a lot of safety planning that needs to be done. Many times, the family is a supportive and a valuable resource until the court system is involved. For many people, losing the support and resources of the family is difficult and can make them less safe." Enabling interventions outside the court system and co-parenting services that enable the widest scope of safety planning will advance our goals to enable healthy relationships, families, and communities—and enable opportunities for family bystanders to become upstanders without threat of systems backlash. One provider reflects, "With survivors, we help them parent better and interact with children in a healthy way. I hope to see this with perpetrators too."

## SUPERVISED AND THERAPEUTIC VISITATION

*"I think he used to visit social worker with my son on weekends. That was because I met that social worker and I believe that was also helpful during our custody and during visitations. My son's behavior was calmer than before when he used to come back. My son used to go overnight or two days to him. That helped him a lot. And, also when we went to see each other in the precinct because of the involvement of social worker, a third-party, I saw his aggressiveness was in control. Like he used to pass comments, negative comments when I used to be there but I feel when he used to see the social worker—I*

*don't know what was the reason—but he was calmer and not using those negative comments or showing those gestures, behavior which was really making me scared even when I was in the precinct. The social worker helped a lot also. It was really comforting to me that the visit has gone so well—there was no inappropriate words that were told to my son or anything. Also, I believe that social worker was a really good social worker in this sense she was educating my husband at that time.” — Razia*

Survivors routinely praised supervised visitation as a valuable service that put their hearts at ease and safeguarded their children and themselves. Scherz, an attorney for children, notes a child might say, “I want to see my mom but I want both cameras and a guard there so I know I can be safe.” Despite the value of supervised visitation, the services are under-resourced. Amos Cohen, Senior Staff Attorney, Integrated Defense Practice at Brooklyn Defender Services shares, “One of the biggest issues we struggle with is reunification. There are not anywhere near enough resources with supervised visitation and the only possibility is to work with limited agencies. Clients are being delayed which is unfortunate and sad and ultimately compromises clients in court.” The impact on children can also be profound. Burke notes, “The supervised visitation wait list can last any time from 30 days to 6 months. During that time, children often feel like their father abandoned them.”

Economic inequity often dictates what visitation services are possible. Scherz speaks to the usefulness of parent coordinators during a divorce process as well as supervised visitation that run through weekends and extended holidays. He observes, “Right now, only people with money can access that. People with means can get supervised visitations.”

Nazy Kaffashan, Program Director, Family Wellness Program at Children’s Aid, underscores the role therapeutic visitation—another under-resourced and rarely-available service—can have in facilitating repair and healing. “There’s always so much reparative work you can do to support the healing process of the parent and child relationship. It can be done with the survivor too,” she notes. “That service can be really valuable to a family in mending relationships. It allows for further communication where we can support the parent and child with talking about their experience.”

Or as colleague Albery Abreu, Abusive Partner Intervention Specialist, Family Wellness Program at Children’s Aid puts it: “I’ve worked with children who still want a relationship with their fathers. Moms are so overwhelmed. It’s hard to have a conversation of why dad is not around. A lot of his anger is why I can’t see dad. No one is talking to him. What are the healing opportunities there?”

Bridging these gaps in services for supervised and therapeutic visitation would enable our City to address inequity while offering meaningful whole family solutions in safely addressing violence.

## Local Model for Whole Family Anti-Violence Services: Family Wellness Program

<http://www.childrensaidociety.org/family-support/family-wellness-program>

- Provides comprehensive services to parents and children affected by domestic violence or relationship abuse with services for survivors, parents, and children
- Abusive partner interventions include assessment, case management, and groups to learn about dynamics of abuse, effects of witnessing violence on children, and how to interrupt cycles of abuse and repair damage caused to children
- Group co-facilitation model with a cisgender woman and cisgender man demonstrates healthy relationships in a heterosexual framework

## FATHERHOOD AND PARENTING PROGRAMS

*“To keep the family safe—and together at the same time. It depends on what kind of damage the person be doing. If the person is still active, the person finish a program, and he give a good testimony after years. Give us, the survivor, keep reminding us that we have to be focused. Because you see couple of months that he doing good. Don’t give the address still. A few years. At least 3 years. When you see very good testimony—like real testimony. So, the family can be safe and together at the same time.*”

*You feel good when you have your family. Children grow more healthy. Cuz even the mother give love and take care of the children, it’s different when they have a father. Female and male is different. The girl need that. I say because of myself. I didn’t grow up with my father and I know that girls need that. So, I think that’s really going to benefit the family.” — Fey*

In New York City, a host of fatherhood-specific programs exist including the abusive partner interventions provider Family Wellness Program, Neighborhood Health Action Centers, and Department of Youth and Community Development Fatherhood Initiative. Services can include parenting classes, counseling, and mentoring. As with parenting programs generally, fatherhood programs can play a key role in fostering trauma-informed behavioral change—if there is intentional connection to accountability with healing.

“If they’re in a place to acknowledge abusive behavior, they ask, ‘Could you get me anger management? If I had that, this wouldn’t happen,’” shares Genna Marku, Clinical Manager at Midtown Community Court UPNEXT Fatherhood Engagement and Workforce Development Initiative. She elaborates that deeper interventions are challenging, noting, “When I try to explore healthy masculinity, there’s push back. It’s easy in a fatherhood program for men to come together and reinforce ideas of masculinity.” Without an accountability frame, it is easy for any group to become an echo chamber. Marku notes that

not having access to any orders of protection or other information means that fatherhood programs could unintentionally reinforce gender bias and patriarchy. She asks, “Are we being safe if we’re only getting their picture?” Because fatherhood programs often operate in silos, a larger approach on challenging intimate partner violence is missing.

Also missing is a responsiveness to the wrap-around and in-depth services participants may require. “As the Director, I often had a lot of fathers in my office needing to talk about deeper issues. The program was neither designed nor equipped to do necessary solution-based case work,” notes Edwards. “We need to build strong families, not a façade of strong families.” Building an approach on addressing intimate partner violence in parenting contexts will open up a new population for services—and for addressing cycles of violence. Indeed, fathers themselves seek resources. “They reflect a lot on their own fathers and their own childhoods: ‘What do I need to do to keep breaking those chains and cycles?’” Abreu observes.

The available services do not reach deep enough—nor far enough. Paul Feuerstein, President/CEO of Barrier Free Living, notes that the deaf community could benefit from a Caring Dads program. In addition to reaching underserved populations, we can further explore roles folks outside the family can play. One City employee points to family group conferencing as an excellent model and asks, “With the family’s consent, how do we engage the whole family or faith institutions and

community members close to them? How do we fold them into our planning?” To do so would deepen accountability while making behavior change sustainable—and open access to supports for change such as chosen and extended family pivotal for deaf people, immigrants, LGBTQIA individuals, and people of color. Or as Kimber states, “Accountability is a lot more than just the two immediate people involved—it’s about all the people who are affected by it and that’s an easy thing to leave out of the equation.”

## STRATEGIES FOR RESPONSE

- Pilot programs to serve queer and trans survivors who seek to stay in relationship with their partners
- Enhance programs addressing elder abuse with services targeting behavior change for family members causing harm
- Increase resources for programs utilizing a whole family approach particularly programs that are voluntary and enable participation prior to systems involvement
- Foster a process to better connect respondents on civil orders of protection to services including through use of a new differential assessment service
- Foster the development of new programs with a whole family model in collaboration with survivor advocacy and ensure inclusivity of extended and chosen family supports to further access to services for deaf people, immigrants, LGBTQIA individuals, and people of color

- Increase elder abuse trainings, information, and workshops in senior centers, public housing, and faith communities
- Foster co-parenting services with safety and accountability frameworks
- Increase resources for supervised and therapeutic visitation
- Build capacity of parenting programs to address intimate partner violence and collaborate on safety, accountability, and whole family services delivery
- Incorporate intimate partner violence screening in parenting groups
- Develop groups for parenting after violence
- Foster foundational training in intimate violence with Fatherhood programs and parenting group facilitators

## RECOMMENDATION

- Fund whole family program models and services that foster safety and wellness such as supervised and therapeutic visitation as well as approaches to address co-parenting skills and parenting after violence including capacity building and training to address abusive behaviors in fatherhood programs and services

## REFRAMINGS TOWARDS ACCOUNTABILITY WITH HEALING

*“It starts with self-love. You have to love yourself to change. No one can change for you. You have to want to better yourself. It has to come from your self-worth. You can’t have someone running your head for you. Only you getting in trouble so you might as well make those choices for yourself.”— **Anonymous***

*“If you were abused, there is a consequence for this. I’m trying to be compassionate here and understand but then so go to therapy and treat yourself. The chain can be stopped at any moment if you decide to do it.”— **Carlos***

*“I could say the only way to change is to believe in yourself that you could change—just believe in yourself. And maybe you could change—not maybe could, you would change. Just got to give yourself time and you will change.”— **Shamel***

*“I believe in certain moments that he felt more vulnerable, he would agree to go—especially when we used to talk about his abuse as a child. Maybe not in the heat of the moment when he was attacking me—of course not. But there are ways to reach out to people. I totally believe that you can touch a person’s heart.”  
— **Sarah Pantaleon***

*“More outlets to participate in like free outlets like yoga, stress-relievers to help get through the problem. For example, yoga is one. Contact sports as far as kickboxing and boxing to work off the stress in a different manner versus getting into a physical altercation or verbal altercation. Just like more free activities to alleviate violence as a whole.” — **Anonymous***

*“They have the services for survivors but for the abusers they need something like a boot camp and then something to follow up with—like with the Milagros Day Worldwide they have a Transformation Academy for the women. So, they would need something like that to help them along with their transition.” — **Janice***

*“Like my family members, they’ll call me or sometimes they’ll say, ‘Don’t mentor me.’ I’m not going to stop until I help everyone.” — **Kierra Coll***



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Mayor's Office to  
Combat Domestic  
Violence

# SEEDING GENERATIONS

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## **Integrating Abusive Partner Services for Safety, Wellness, and Impact**

Area 3 of 3  
Reframing Interventions for People who Abuse

Report by **Purvi Shah**,  
Consultant to the Interagency Working Group on  
NYC's Blueprint for Abusive Partner Intervention (IWG)  
and hosted by the Center for Court Innovation

Seeding Generations Booklet 3 of 3: Services for Safety, Wellness, and Impact



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Executive Summary on Reframing Interventions for People who Abuse

### BOOKLET 1: Transformative Solutions

**AREA 1** Transforming cultures of violence towards healthy relationships and healthy communities

- **Recommendation 1:** Create 5 borough-specific advisory boards on abusive partner interventions
- **Recommendation 2:** Issue 5 RFPs for City-funded programs to enable 5-year borough-based programs funding
- **Recommendation 3:** Fund long-term and community mobilization interventions
- **Recommendation 4:** Expand Relationship Abuse Prevention Program (RAPP) in schools for deaf and other students
- **Recommendation 5:** Create impact evaluation processes and data collection tools to chart behavior change, transformation, and community wellness
- **Recommendation 6:** Fund a media campaign focused on interrupting cycles of violence

## **BOOKLET 2:** Innovations in Accountability with Healing

**AREA 2** Fostering holistic services, behavior change, and program innovations towards accountability with healing

- **Recommendation 1:** Fund a service for pre-intervention individual assessment
- **Recommendation 2:** Fund full-time staff members at living wage levels for current and new abusive partner interventions
- **Recommendation 3:** Implement an anonymous helpline
- **Recommendation 4:** Foster a peer mentorship program
- **Recommendation 5:** Pilot 3-year community-based restorative justice interventions
- **Recommendation 6:** Increase funding focused on incarceration-based services by community programs
- **Recommendation 7:** Fund whole family program models and services

## **BOOKLET 3:** Services for Safety, Wellness, and Impact

## FRAMING

*Look at everything around us. It's economically depleted. You see these generations of violence. My father and my mom went through the same issues that me and my children's father go through. You have to understand community dynamics. — Lindsay*

*Penmanship doesn't change because you change the pen. You might get away with abusing one person but what is going to happen when you get into another relationship? It's important for abusers to get help (counseling, group support, volunteer opportunities) that might be the only thing that can/will stop them from abusing someone again. That has the potential to change the pattern/trend of abuse and impact the way his generation is living. — Samantha Taylor*

We live in cultures where violence—from mass shootings to hate violence to interpersonal violence—surrounds us and infuses our communities, institutions, and how we live our lives. In the United States, the women's movement has made life-saving gains on recognition of gender-based violence and particularly in the need to support survivors of violence with services and criminal legal system responses.

Where we have fallen short is recognizing the power of reparative strategies and transforming the intersecting conditions that lead to violence. We have consistently invested in a crisis response frame while short-shrifting the long-term work of transformation.

With the collective wisdom of survivors, people who have caused harm, advocates, and community members, this Blueprint for Abu-

sive Partner Intervention seeks to reframe our current frames of gender-based violence advocacy. By seeing abuse as a behavior instead of a person (i.e. person who causes harm vs. abuser) and utilizing the term "intimate violence" to include elder abuse, family violence, intimate partner violence, and women who use force, the Blueprint challenges conventional framings of gender-based violence while underscoring gender oppression and heteronormativity in violence. The solutions presented here challenge the current narratives for survivors of violence including the imperative to leave to get services, the necessity of carceral solutions, and that intergenerational healing and wellness through breaking cycles of violence with people who cause harm is impossible.

*There is a list of numbers for the victim. I haven't seen any services for the abuser so they can get help. I would like to see that being offered. It's so painful to see this is the norm. — Iffat*

On a practical level, the solutions here connect people with each other—partners and chosen family, agencies and communities, professionals and community leaders, and survivor advocates and providers serving people who cause harm—with the knowledge that these categories overlap and our solutions need to work against such binaries and towards interdependence. The solutions here recognize that change is more than completion of a program, that people need to practice change and supports are vital for practice, and that prevention is part of intervention. The solutions here recognize that transformation happens in community and that programs must be accountable to survivors and culture change of violence.

The strategies here look to a liberation framework where people who cause harm have a stake and choice in their own growth, evolution, community connection, and liberation. This Blueprint envisions an architecture where stakeholders—not systems—lead the way.

With these complex solutions, the aim is not to sanitize violence or the real complexities of people's lives, systems, and behaviors. The goal is to acknowledge all of this and yet open up space to interrupt violence and cultures of violence. From this vantage, we can ensure connections of personal and systems account-

ability and transform the intersecting conditions that spur or enable violence.

To find transformation, we will need to go against the grain. I am personally grateful to have had my own assumptions challenged through the process of speaking with survivors, people who have caused harm, providers, and community members. In my 20 years of advocacy for survivors of violence—rooted in South Asian communities and communities of color—I too have advanced received wisdom such as mediation can't work, counseling can't work, batterers don't change. This year-long process of fostering participatory, transformative change has enabled me to re-examine such precepts and open up new strategies that give opportunity to heal from violence and be in healthy relationship and community.

Through the process, content, and format of this report, my frame is to enable reframings. My hope for this report—rooted in the power of transformative listening—is that it holds multiple realities and vantage points and keeps alive complexity. I aspire for this work to open conversations, facilitate concrete and actionable short-term solutions as well as enable visions where generations from now, we see an end to all kinds of violence. Working together, transformation is possible—and imminent.

## Reframings on Abusive Partner Interventions and Ending Violence

### Element 1: Transformative Solutions

- Fostering interventions for people who cause harm as a necessary part of supporting survivors and ending violence intergenerationally
- Mobilizing the wisdom of survivors of violence and people who have caused harm in fashioning solutions to ending violence
- Moving beyond carceral responses to localized, creative community solutions
- Resisting cultures of violence by addressing intersecting oppressions and cultivating culturally-specific, anti-ableist, anti-classist, anti-heteronormative, and anti-racist programming
- Focusing resources and evaluation measures on long-term culture shifts and prevention over short-term band-aids

### Element 2: Holistic Services towards Transformative Justice

- Fostering a belief and a praxis that people can change and communities can transform
- Moving beyond punishment to accountability with healing
- Fostering wholeness through wrap-around services, whole family strategies, and re-entry programming
- Mobilizing innovations through trauma-informed, restorative, and motivational change practices
- Making space for voluntary services and peer mentorship models
- Investing in professionals and community members advancing this work through resources, training, and leadership opportunities

### Element 3: Integrating Interventions towards Safety, Wellness, and Impact

- Fostering interdependence through team-based approaches and investments
- Investing in people, trainings, and collaborations
- Amplifying existing services through connection and integration

*As important as it is to have a team dedicated to a survivor, it's just as important for that person who's perpetrating harm to have a team. They've been trying to do whatever it is they're doing—healing, harming, avoiding—on their own for so long. It's going to take a lot of different people to get through to them. Someone who perpetrates harm does not expect support. — Kimber*

## METHODOLOGY

*Programs need to have individuals running programs that are close to the problem. And we were talking about the fact that you have all kinds of people who want to do things to help deal with the problem but none of them experienced the problem. We need to have formerly incarcerated individuals running some of these programs and setting some of these policies. Policy is the big thing because policy sets where the money is gonna come from.*

— **Anonymous**

As an independent consultant to the Inter-agency Working Group on NYC’s Blueprint for Abusive Partner Intervention (IWG), over the past year, I have had the joy of partnering with amazing community members, devoted service providers, and talented government and non-profit staff to arrive at a new, visionary NYC Blueprint for Abusive Partner Intervention.

Because I wanted to ensure the voices of direct stakeholders—survivors of violence and/or people who have caused harm—I navigated a process for research approved by the Center for Court Innovation Institutional Review Board (CCI IRB). In 2017, I received approval both for interviews with direct stakeholders as well as non-profit and government staff. My IRB-approved research also included focus groups with non-profit and government staff to reach allied providers and include voices outside the IWG. Finally, I conducted program observations to ground my analysis in day-to-day work. As part of the research, I utilized American Sign Language interpreters for 2

research participants and a Spanish interpreter for 2 participants. All research participants selected how they would like to be identified— anonymously, by first name, by full name, and/or by name and title. In addition, research participants who requested review were sent their comments for inclusion in the Blueprint to ensure accuracy. Research participants will also receive a copy of this Blueprint if they indicated interest in receiving it. The collective wisdom of community stakeholders, practitioners, and program participants informs this Blueprint: it would not exist without their partnership.

Alongside the first-hand research, I led an interactive participatory change process with the IWG and members of the Coalition on Working with Abusive Providers (CoWAP). The topics of each meeting I facilitated are provided in the text box on the Blueprint Development Process. I am grateful to CoWAP and IWG members for your active participation and collaboration—you made this Blueprint visionary and actionable.

Finally, I worked to include voices at the table not always found in policy discussions—primary stakeholders, culturally specific service providers, and practitioners working in related advocacy and social justice arenas. My aspiration is that the Blueprint and recommendations gathered here will amplify a movement building and systems change approach and continue to center the voices of direct stakeholders and

marginalized practitioners in order to transform systems and cultures of violence.

The following NYC Blueprint for Abusive Partner Intervention emerges from the collective wisdom of everyone who participated in the first-hand research, interactive meetings, and year-long process with me. As the report author, I have pooled, organized, architected, and elaborated these recommendations for the

## Blueprint Development Process

Element 1: Center for Court Innovation IRB-approved first-hand research

- 31 interviews with direct stakeholders (survivors of violence and/or people who have caused harm)
- 47 interviews with government and non-profit staff
- 6 focus groups with 29 government and non-profit staff
- 6 observations of current abusive partner programming

Element 2: Holistic Services towards Transformative Justice

- 4 visioning and action-mapping meetings with the IWG
  - Jan. 31, 2017: Mapping transformative interventions and linking prevention to intervention
  - March 30, 2017: Enhancing collaborations and coordinated response
  - May 18, 2017: Recommendations for abusive partner interventions
  - June 16, 2017: Recommendations for access & inclusion
- 4 visioning and action-mapping meetings with CoWAP
  - Feb. 21, 2017: Research on gaps in abusive partner intervention services in NYC, ways to fill gaps, and role of CoWAP
  - March 21, 2017: Mapping a story for abusive partner interventions
  - April 18, 2017: Enabling voluntary participants
  - July 18, 2017: Recommendations for abusive partner interventions

Element 3: Field input (selected)

- January 2017 The United States Department of Justice Office for Victims of Crime and Office on Violence Against Women National Roundtable on Programs for DV Offenders
- Spring 2017 NYC Domestic Violence Task Force
- August 2017 First Lady of NYC Community Conversation on Abusive Partner Intervention Programs

IWG's review and consideration for adoption. This Blueprint of my crystallized recommendations envisions three arenas for progress: transformative solutions; concrete innovations in accountability with healing; and, integration of services towards safety, wellness, and impact. Through the gathering of collective wisdom, the recommendations are bold, specific, actionable, and compelling.

## Research Participant Overview

### Element 1: Direct Stakeholders

- 31 research participants
  - 24 individuals who identify as survivors of violence
  - 5 individuals who identify as both survivors and people who have caused harm
  - 2 individuals who identify as people who have caused harm and who grew up with abuse/ were bullied/faced community violence
- Borough representation included:
  - 10 based in the Bronx
  - 10 based in Brooklyn
  - 5 based in Queens
  - 4 based in Manhattan
  - 2 based in Staten Island
- Age ranged from 19-66:
  - 8 ranged from 19-29
  - 8 ranged from 30-40
  - 7 ranged from 41-50
  - 7 ranged from 51-60
  - 1 ranged from 61-66

### Element 2: City and non-profit staff

- 74 research participants:
  - 12 from community-based organizations
  - 12 from government agencies working across arenas
  - 12 from legal and courts staff
  - 12 from non-profit agencies
  - 11 youth services providers
  - 8 abusive partner interventions practitioners
  - 2 elder services providers
  - 2 from law enforcement
  - 2 public health program clinicians
  - 1 clinician/researcher
- Borough representation included:
  - 6 based in the Bronx
  - 10 based in Brooklyn
  - 8 based in Queens
  - 2 based in Staten Island
  - 48 based in Manhattan including providers serving all boroughs

## INTEGRATED SERVICES

*I saw a change in my husband's behavior after attending these mandatory anger management classes. It was helpful. And it helped me also because I attended workshops, classes, and support groups. It was helpful to me too. I believe that if there would not have been this help, this support, the situation would be totally different as it is today. I feel my life is more stable. I am more happy than I was before and it helped me. It helped my husband too even though he passed away—but it helped him a lot too. — Razia*

In the lives of many survivors of intimate violence, there is no dissonance between receiving services themselves and having their loved ones get support in transforming behaviors simultaneously. As most advocates have heard, survivors often want the abuse to end but not the relationship. Or as Beverly James, Associate Commissioner, Child Welfare Support Services at the Administration for Children's Services, distills, "Mom doesn't want the services: she wants the services for her partner. We need to do more to provide support." Especially for survivors who seek to remain in relationship—by choice and/or necessity—having whole family interventions and options in services is vital. In addition to expanding services, it is crucial to integrate interventions for people who cause harm into the field of survivor advocacy—especially to ensure interventions are responsible to survivors and children.

Survivors underscore a need for integration across services. Theresa Sullivan shares, "Even after having eight stitches in my head, all he

received was a rehab center because he blamed it on drugs." It is vital to address substance abuse as part of abusive partner interventions, but in so doing, a context of intimate violence cannot be erased. As Sullivan explains, a long-term, deep engagement is necessary to address abusive behaviors: "I would like to see something develop more. I just don't feel it's intense the way it should be. The batterer escapes all the time without a complete scenario done. I'm hoping that one day it'll be more like a Therapeutic Community where they go away and really learn about domestic violence and how it's caused and get to the root of their problem." While residential services for abusive partners may be a long-term future goal, we can immediately ensure interventions for people who cause harm are integrated into other social services.

Not only must we integrate advocacy for survivors with services for people who cause harm but we must also integrate wrap-around services alongside assessments for intimate

violence in other contexts, such as substance abuse counseling, therapy, and schools. One City employee speaks to integrating services such as annual check-ups at school clinics in order to have another entry point to address abuse, underscoring, “It’s an opportunity to integrate sectors, services, and fields.”

Integration of services will not only require new structures but deeper, more long-term interventions. Vanessa Nisperos, Young Adult Social Worker at the Red Hook Initiative, explains the opportunity for more extensive screening as well as services reach. “One objective of the Connections to Care partnership is to cast the net wide, screening a broad section of the community for early detection of mental health and substance use issues. But even in the process of screening, things are getting by undetected,” Nisperos shares. “For example, our screening tools, while they do screen for PTSD, anxiety, and depression, don’t screen for intimate partner violence. It’s only through ongoing service provision and rapport-building that a young person will build trust to disclose that information. Basic screening misses intimate partner violence, even though almost half of our population screen positive for mental health disorders.” Nisperos adds that

the work involves connection to immediate services as well as long-term culture change: “The goal is to have all of those participants who screen positive, or who self-select, connected to supportive counseling services. We’re looking to reduce the stigma of counseling and help-seeking, not only for those in counseling but for all of our young people.”

As Nisperos demonstrates, integrating interventions enables us to address immediate needs while striving for culture change. As part of ending cycles of violence, we can integrate services and community responses as off-ramps for abusive behaviors. Speaking to gun violence in marginalized communities, Eric L. Cumberbatch, Executive Director at the Office to Prevent Gun Violence, Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice, explains that “off-ramps” are important to give people options to circumvent violence. “A lot of people don’t have ways out of a situation: at what point can you get out of that situation and still save face and have relationships intact?,” Cumberbatch asks. Cumberbatch’s question shows the importance not only of individual services but wider culture change to promote contexts that support and reinforce behavior change.

*I want a big garden of programming not affiliated with the criminal legal system and heteronormative, binary gender structures. Our work has to be through an intersectional lens to support all survivors, and those who cause harm.*

— **Catherine Shugrue dos Santos**, Co-Director of Client Services at the New York City Anti-Violence Project

Given the connection of toxic masculinity to gender-based violence, the question of community support and off-ramps is vital for people causing harm in intimate relationships as well. Gene A. Johnson, Jr., Mediator and Facilitator, explains that the resocialization work in abusive partner intervention programs is a small segment of a participant's whole life. "For the rest of their lives they're being bombarded with messages on what it means to be a man," he states. "You're fighting an uphill battle. Some of their hyper-masculinity is a mechanism for survival in the environments they live in. Whether hyper-masculinity is wrong or right, they may need to be gang-affiliated to walk home on their block."

Opportunities such as healthy relationship programs, advocate-informed mediation, and whole family services can create off-ramps and spaces for supported behavior change. Furthermore, we can foster a coordinated community response that involves services and the community itself. As James observes, "We fall short. We don't utilize community in an effective way. We still see it as a private family matter. We can get community involved in educating and providing more support. If you can educate a community in what DV looks like, then you can get more support for a family." To be effective in supporting survivors and ending violence, we need to integrate abusive partner interventions with survivor advocacy, holistic services, community solutions, and innovations in services, accountability with healing, and approaches to culture change.

## Core Arenas for Integration of Abusive Partner Interventions

Element 1: Connecting to survivor-centered advocacy

- Integration with the anti-violence movement
- Integration with other movements to end violence such as movements to end gun violence, hate violence, and white supremacy
- Whole family approaches

Element 2: Integration of services

- Coordinated case management and wrap-around services
- Enabling culturally-specific and responsive services
- Connecting to services across the age spectrum
- Connecting services such as substance abuse/mental health/counseling to abusive partner interventions
- Communication across systems and advocates

Element 3: Integration with communities

- Increased awareness of existing services
- Fostering community off-ramps and non-systems solutions

Element 4: Integration with innovations

- Fostering motivational, restorative, and liberatory practices
- Measuring behavior change and transformations
- Linking intervention to prevention and prevention to intervention
- Approaches that center intergenerational healing

Understanding a larger context of violence—and the connections across structural and community and interpersonal violence—can help integrate a wider approach to interventions for people who cause harm as well as identify new partners necessary in the work. Our field silos—survivor services vs. abusive partner interventions—do not reflect the complexity of people’s experiences. For instance, women who use force or justice-involved survivors embody experiences—of being a survivor and someone who has caused harm—that systems turn into irreconcilable either/or binaries. Going beyond a binary of abuser/victim and other field silos such as prevention vs. intervention and direct services vs. community change will not only address the lived complexity of relationships but also respond to needs people have. Furthermore, a practice of going beyond binaries will help us create space for services to underserved populations including queer and trans communities not served by a gender binary. Furthermore, integration of abusive partner interventions will bring us closer to addressing the roots of abusive behaviors and interrupting cycles of violence.

Integration enables us to keep voices of survivors front and center, supports efforts with abusive partners through wrap-around services, and cross-trains across criminal legal responses and community solutions. We will better reach people—and further capacity for change. “We did couples counseling. It was helpful to talk about it with someone. It was at the LGBT

Center so that made it more comfortable. We did that and I must say it did help,” shares Grace. “But the eye-opening was the police saying that they would arrest both of us if they had to come back again so that reinforced us to get some help like ‘Hey, there is a problem here. Let’s do something about this.’” By integrating systems, we can move beyond identifying abuse to furthering solutions that can lead to behavior, relationship, and community change.

Or as James crystallizes, “If we partner the right way, we can make an impact.”

## FOUNDATIONAL RECOMMENDATION:

### RECOMMENDATION 1: FUND 2 FULL-TIME STAFF MEMBERS FOR ABUSIVE PARTNER INTERVENTIONS WITHIN THE MAYOR'S OFFICE TO COMBAT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

*We can set up the best programs and if there's no support around implementation and replication, we will be in the same place in two years. — Liberty*

**Aldrich**, Director, Domestic Violence and Family Court Programs at Center for Court Innovation

#### GAPS

In general, the work to end violence is under-resourced. Our city does not have enough shelter beds, advocates and agency staff to meet needs for all families affected by violence, or community partnerships to foster transformative solutions. For example, the City shelter system does not provide meaningful access to single women, older women, and anyone who does not identify as a cisgender woman. Ronndolyn Black explains, “When I went into the shelter system, I felt like there were services provided for families like women with children, younger women, but it’s like there weren’t really that many services—well, I couldn’t find anything for a single woman like myself, an older woman that was looking for help. The shelter I went to told me they didn’t know anything about domestic violence and they didn’t provide any kind of services at all. Everything that I found out was through word of mouth or asking and searching on my own.” Within this context of

genuine need for more resources for survivors, interventions for abusive partners have been sidelined—based on concerns such interventions could siphon resources from survivors, even when the interventions could support survivors and their families.

The lack of investment of resources in interventions for people who cause harm has left a mark in furthering one-size punitive responses. “There’s not enough services for offenders in my opinion. It’s kind of like a revolving door,” indicates New York Police Department Sergeant Joseph Alohan. “We keep doing the same thing.”

A cookie-cutter approach for interventions with people who cause harm has meant contracts for the work are confining. As one provider attests, “The slightest change becomes a big issue. It doesn’t allow you to put in place the other services people need.” Manny Yonko, Administrative Director, Office of Clinical Practice, Policy and Support, Domestic Violence

and Policy Planning at the Administration for Children’s Services, speaks to one abusive partners intervention program noting, “We had to do groups as large as 28 because of contracts. It really isn’t conducive and it’s not healthy for staff or clients.”

The rigid one-size-fits-all approach without community-based responses has also meant disproportionate attention across the City. Most current abusive partner programs are centered in the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Manhattan. While these programs are not adequately resourced, Queens has few options and Staten Island has none. As Victoria Levin, Assistant District Attorney, Richmond County District Attorney’s Office, explains, “Staten Island is so removed. We’ve been sending people to other counties.” This gap in services creates transportation, time, and financial burdens for individuals—and perpetuates a systemic inequity in access.

Even where there is limited response, the response is not attuned to local needs. As one Queens-based advocate observes, “We have a large foreign-born population. Many of our families want to stay together and that’s the reality

of it. We need to look for alternate ways. They’re very limited options for abusers who are coming from different cultures. It’s disheartening.”

Part of the limited set of options includes very little language access for services outside of Spanish—which itself is under-resourced. A structure that enables local, borough-situated responses could address community needs and contexts and allow for culturally-specific neighborhood-based responses which involve community leadership—while fostering City-wide promising practices and practitioner support. In addition to leaving staff isolated, a lack of resources and attention has led to silos and stagnation in the work. Terri Roman, Project Director of the Bronx Domestic Violence Complex, amplifies this analysis, sharing, “You can get kind of stuck doing the same thing over and over again. As Project Director, one of my goals is to have a sense of what’s happening in other counties and be a part of the conversation. I was feeling a little isolated. I would like to make connections with other people and programs. It’s important for growth.”

*Another big obstacle is that we don’t give the work the time it needs. Behavior does not change unless consciousness changes and that requires patience, persistence, and a belief that people can indeed change. It’s labor intensive and there is no quick fix—like a 26-week or even a 52-week group—without ongoing and consistent support. It has to be consistent. It has to be supported institutionally. And, we need to be able to hold the contradictions and complexity. We aren’t there yet. — Sally N. MacNichol, Co-Executive Director, CONNECT*

Having a one-size-fits-all approach has meant potential innovations in responses to violence are left unrealized—including the slow, community-building work that could transform cultures of violence. “Part of the problem has been keeping everything large. We need to have smaller community responses,” notes Margarita Guzmán, Deputy Executive Director at Violence Intervention Program, Inc.

A more local, community-specific approach can actually lead to deeper efficacy and behavior change for people who cause harm. As Guzman elucidates, “There is no true accountability when there’s no connectivity to both individuals and their communities. I care so much what my neighbor, co-parishioners, cousin, thinks of me—all those people need to be involved in holding me accountable. You can’t do that cheaply, at a large scale. Building meaningful relationships takes a lot of resources.”

What is also expensive is City and program responses that don’t work or fit needs. Christina Curry, Executive Director at the Harlem Independent Living Center, explains, “You identify a gap and they say, ‘Oh that costs too much money.’ Right now, they’re just throwing money into the fire.”

Decision-makers can often be isolated from stakeholder needs. While the United States gender-based anti-violence movement has been spearheaded by survivors, the voices of deaf, LGBTQIA, and poor survivors, as well as survivors of color, have not been centered. Speaking to communities of color facing community violence, Eric L. Cumberbatch, Executive Director

at the Office to Prevent Gun Violence, Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice notes, “There’s an imbalance of who’s creating the policy that impacts this population. We need to get people that reflect the community and policy people from that background, not just knowledgeable of it. The toughest part is restructuring agencies to see how they contribute or help stabilize the situation.”

The distance of policymakers to many direct stakeholders—and the impact of ineffective policies on real people’s lives—is a reason some advocates hesitate to have more government coordination of services. “It’s a pro and con,” observes Quentin Walcott, Co-Executive Director of CONNECT. “It’s important that the City looks at people that do harm and programs exist. Moreover, it has to be part of an overall strategy that has the buy-in from the most impacted by these interventions, at the very beginning, not as a side note. For the City, it’s crucial to have transparency and accountability.”

Such accountability can be facilitated by having more community stakeholders and a structure that enables community leadership in setting priorities, funding, and definitions of success and wellness. Furthermore, a decentralized but structured approach with borough-led solutions could foster productive partnerships—whether they’re with substance abuse coalitions, community boards, or faith institutions. Levin speaks to the importance of the Richmond County District Attorney’s Office’s partnership with Sauti Yetu Center for African Women: “Sauti Yetu is really, really good at helping to

find a common ground. We're not considered part of that community so they keep it in-house first. How do you make yourself accessible, relatable so people will come to you? It's helpful to have someone who can bridge the gap."

Not only do we need interdependence with communities to address abuse and transform cultures of violence, but we need support within

our agencies and from peers and colleagues. In order for the vision of this Blueprint to succeed and to have effective implementation of the recommendations so there is impact, we need staff members coordinating the work. And hiring one person only would be creating a role that one person cannot take on effectively and with adequate support. As one practitioner

## Needs for Coordination

### Element 1: Why?

- Families deserve our best
- Healing for communities
- To address abusive behavior from a holistic approach where every system that encounters abusive partners is held accountable
- To provide options
- To create programs that work
- To maximize potential for success
- To avoid burnout trying to do too much
- Nobody knows it all
- To reach a common goal

### Element 2: How?

- Funding that requires coordination/ interdisciplinary work
- Being responsible and accountable to each other in this work
- Men need to use their male privilege to challenge sexist systems as allies
- Respect for other people's time (individual or agency)
- Openness to change and honesty
- Willingness to work together

### Element 3: Solutions

- Build in human resources: paid citywide coordinators as critical supports to any reform
- Build structures for coordination
- Implement systemic policy to the commitment of collaboration
- Strengthen partnerships
- Provide flexible opportunities
- Collaborate for funding (instead of competing) to enable partnerships & ability to refer out
- Open space for feedback

### Element 4: Results

- Efficient, Time-sensitive, Solution-based, Intra-personal focused, Trauma-informed Collaborative Care
- Proactive vs. reactive
- Violence reduction and prevention

explains, “This work has to be done in a team approach or it’s overwhelming.” For these reasons, bringing aboard multiple coordinators simultaneously when shifting a systemic and community engagement structure is key: not only is there more work to be done here than one person can manage, but the time-consuming work of building relationships and fostering positive structures of coordination is the basis for effectiveness and the impacts we want to see.

Or put another way by B. Indira Ramasroop, Senior Policy Analyst, Office of Clinical Practice, Policy and Support, Domestic Violence Policy and Planning at the Administration for Children’s Services: “We can’t change someone overnight. Change is a process. We need different things to pick from. It’s an ongoing process. We need funding for all this. Working with abusive partners should not take away from survivors—we need to have resources to do both.”

Recognizing that change is a process and we have been locked in by one-size-fits-all approaches, the time is ripe to foster localized, long-term responses. In addition, by enabling leadership within boroughs, we can bring together more stakeholders and partners as well as foster responses that are eventually sustainable in communities. Such an approach requires us to surpass adversarial, scarcity-based mindsets. Or as Roman pinpoints, “People have to let down barriers of agency and role and be open-minded. It would be helpful—the better coordination of services—so that survivors and their children can get what they need.”

## STRATEGIES FOR RESPONSE

- Foster borough-based, neighborhood-based, community-based programming to serve new populations, engage relationship building and long-term work, and advance multiple strategies simultaneously
- Enable partnership-building with community stakeholders and programs through a borough-based strategy that can also provide a feedback loop and accountability for systems and programs
- Enable a team and team-building approach with the infrastructure for concrete outcomes by hiring two full-time abusive partner interventions staff members within the Mayor’s Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV)—a strategic investment that can also facilitate sharing of work within and across agencies, building jointly for impact, and fostering self-care while coordinating visionary incremental change
- Facilitate consistency and structure for abusive partner interventions without exacting uniformity that impedes addressing local needs, creative interventions and useful non-traditional services, and building community power to transform cultures of violence
- Nurture the connections to survivor-centered advocacy and abusive partner interventions as part of the work to support survivors, families, and communities through engagement with community stakeholders as well as anti-violence advocates, including through liaisons with the NYC Domestic Violence Task Force

## RECOMMENDATION

– Ensure implementation of recommendations in this NYC Blueprint for Abusive Partner Intervention as well as integration of interventions for people who cause harm into all current and future recommendations of the NYC Domestic Violence Task Force by a) Funding 2 full-time staff members for abusive partner interventions within the Mayor’s Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV); and b) Mobilizing on current and future opportunities to integrate abusive partner interventions into NYC Domestic Violence Task Force recommendations. With the two new staff members, 1 position would focus on a) coordination of Queens and Staten Island including borough stake-

holders, advisory boards, and programs funded in these boroughs through the City solicitation; b) practitioner training, promising practices guidelines development, and impact assessment around behavior change and transformative solutions; and, c) enabling community solutions, while 1 position would focus on a) coordination of Bronx, Brooklyn, and Manhattan including borough stakeholders, advisory boards, and programs funded in these boroughs through the City solicitation; b) assessments and systems coordination; and, c) enabling community solutions. Both staff members will liaison with the NYC Domestic Violence Task Force to connect abusive partner interventions with survivor-centered advocacy

*No one has to feel they’re taking on the whole thing. — Catherine Stayton, Director, Injury and Violence Prevention Program, Bureau of Environmental Disease and Injury Prevention, New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene*

## RECOMMENDATION 2: BUILD SUPPORT FOR THE COALITION ON WORKING WITH ABUSIVE PARTNERS

*One of the things CoWAP has accomplished is to allow people to have a dialogue about this issue and help support the next generation of service providers. CoWAP provides a mechanism for sharing best practices. — Kerry Moles, Executive Director, Court Appointed Special Advocates of New York City*

### GAPS

The Coalition on Working with Abusive Partners (CoWAP) emerged out of the silence around abusive partner interventions in New York City. It has created a crucial space to talk about the complexity of the work and to get feedback in a non-judgmental environment. CoWAP—and its committed members—has been a key force in the development of this Blueprint and will continue to be crucial in fostering a successful field shift. CoWAP is an essential partner, resource, and visionary in the work of engaging people who cause harm.

Practitioners find space within CoWAP to have conversations sidelined in other contexts. In particular, CoWAP has been a crucial force for examining new modalities for interventions while attending to survivor-centered advocacy. In addition, CoWAP has nurtured a brave space for peer supervision. “My hope and my goal is to really build that up. We’re doing work in the trenches and there are so very few of us,” attests Albery Abreu, Abusive Partner Intervention Specialist at the Family Wellness Program at Children’s Aid. One key question

practitioners can raise is their own safety and growth by asking: How do you feel and stay safe working with people who have caused harm? How are you holding yourself accountable for your growth? Sharing her journey of shifting from providing support to survivors of gender-based violence to working with their partners, Program Director at the Family Wellness Program at Children’s Aid Nazy Kaffashan offers, “When I first co-facilitated an abusive partner intervention group, I was really anxious about it. Will I know how to engage them properly? Would my anxiety come off as being intimidated? Would I be able to be who I am? Supervision is so important because your own stuff comes up. You need the space to talk about it. I think it’s important.” Another practitioner offers, “You have to do spiritual work on yourself. You have to take care of yourself. It’s easy to get hard-hearted.”

CoWAP has been a “moral compass” for the work, notes Catherine Shugrue dos Santos, Co-Director of Client Services at the New York City Anti-Violence Project and CoWAP co-chair.

Given that most abusive partner interventions are targeted to heterosexual men, CoWAP has also been a pivotal space for ensuring abusive partner interventions go beyond a gender binary. And it can continue to do so.

Deesha Narichania, DV Coordinator at St. Luke's-Roosevelt Crime Victims Treatment Center, observes, "There is a paucity of understanding and services for trans and non-binary survivors, and this boils down to rampant transphobia. We need to treat transphobia and all systemic violence as seriously and sensitively as we do sexual assault of the nice white blond lady." CoWAP has been a vital voice for access to services and can continue to be a fierce leader in expanding interventions to marginalized communities within an anti-oppression frame that centers culturally specific and specialized services.

Having effective services for communities facing structural oppressions includes ensuring input from and space for community stakeholders and practitioners with community expertise and skill. "That's my fear with the City. It has to be one type of professional that facilitates these groups—clinicians. This can eliminate a lot of effective people with the analysis and practice that can be as or more effective," advises Quentin Walcott, Co-Executive Director of CONNECT, a leader in community-rooted interventions. CoWAP can help to level the playing field so as not to reinforce hierarchies and to ensure that community experts and practitioners are helping to set the agenda for services and transformation.

## **Growth and Self-Care for Providers of Interventions for People who Cause Harm**

### Element 1: Peer Supervision

- Enable effective and responsible work
- Enable services to intersect with populations beyond heterosexual men
- Enable safety including reducing burnout
- Enable cross-discipline collaborations including with credible messengers, community stakeholders, and certified professionals
- Enable ongoing trainings and promising practices for interventions
- Enable retreats for deeper reflection and provider wellness

### Element 2: Gathering Resources

- An online presence /listserv—similar to the Acquiring Qualitative Understanding of Intervention Leading to Advocacy (AQUILA) national working group but dedicated to New York City—for any practitioner to utilize

### Element 3: Building Allied Field Capacity

- Support trainings in fields such as social work, therapy, and criminal justice
- Advance relationships within the City, State, nationally, and internationally to push local interventions and share out local promising practices

While there is much to be done in abusive partner interventions and the work to end violence, CoWAP provides a seasoned hub of practitioners with the direct practice and wisdom essential to policy efficacy and services impact. As Rebecca Stahl, Social Work Supervisor at Day One observes, “Policy moves so much slower than reality. Also, CoWAP has much larger context of folks on the ground. We should do work together to make change.” Through resources, partnership, and collaboration, such

change is actionable. Liberty Aldrich, Director, Domestic Violence & Family Court Programs at Center for Court Innovation offers, “I could get overwhelmed too because it seems so far to go to bring in the level of expertise needed to support people doing the programs. But in fact, we have a lot of systems and support in place to get it to work.”

As a City, through building support for CoWAP, we are poised to invest in and build on that infrastructure.

## Roles CoWAP Could Play

Element 1: Field resource and guide

- Becoming a membership organization
- Reviewing evidence-based and promising practices
- Making recommendations for NYC practice (which may need to be different than other parts of NYS)
- Offering opportunities for continuing education formally and informally
- Operating as a governance board for abusive partner intervention programs across the City to standardize practice, which could include a) vetting programs; b) giving referrals to programs part of CoWAP only; and c) helping to mentor and hold accountable programs not doing responsible work (some of which do not seek to be involved in CoWAP)

Element 2: Convener

- Bringing all agencies and systems into the room to evaluate and re-evaluate interventions
- Reaching out to abusive partner intervention programs and other programs to coordinate work and wrap-around services (this could include Employee Assistance Programs, the Young Men’s Initiative, etc.)
- Engaging entry points outside the criminal legal system, such as public libraries, hospitals, community centers, etc.

Element 3: Trainer

- Leading in doing the work while training practitioners new to work
- Training for frontline staff on promising practices for working with people who cause harm
- Training across systems and sectors (such as Family Courts, hotline responders, etc.)
- Enabling mutual growth with credible messengers and community stakeholders

## STRATEGIES FOR RESPONSE

- Build support for CoWAP to support successful on-the-ground execution of this new Blueprint for Abusive Partner Intervention
- Build support for CoWAP to facilitate spaces for peer supervision, skill-sharing, and staff development with stipends to enable participation by contract/per diem practitioners
- Build support for CoWAP to deliver trainings including on trauma-informed services for all levels of staff (which could incorporate experiences, such as walking into a building and/or space, as well as services design)
- Build support for CoWAP to engage multiple disciplines and systems, include agency staff working with families
- Build support for CoWAP to build out collaborations on abusive partner interventions

including with credible messengers and community stakeholders as well as agencies such as the Department of Youth and Community Development and the Human Resources Administration

- Build support for CoWAP to identify programs working with abusive partners currently, explore efficacy of models being utilized, and/or provide recommendations where service gaps or policy and practice changes are necessary to improve services and impact

## RECOMMENDATION

- Build support for CoWAP to provide trainings, supervision, practitioner retreats, and field-building & integration activities as it sees fit

*What does the actual practice work look like? There seems to be a resistance to having those conversations. And often there's a lot of judgment in the work—at times, I've presented and felt like I'm in front of a firing squad. We need to create space and room for progressive work especially since New York doesn't have standards. We need to hold what gave birth to CoWAP—folks getting together to ask, 'Are we doing the work right in terms of honoring survivors? Am I being accountable to survivors and keeping people safe?' — **Manny Yonko**, Administrative Director, Office of Clinical Practice, Policy and Support, Domestic Violence and Policy Planning, Administration for Children's Services and CoWAP co-chair*

## RECOMMENDATION 3: RELEASE NEW CITY CONTRACT FOR TRAINING ABUSIVE PARTNER INTERVENTIONS PRACTITIONERS

*When a person is so brave and goes to the police to make a report, a social worker should be there to help connect people to the right organizations. That never happened. I remember the social worker in my precinct was very callous, was very cold. She didn't help at all. She didn't offer support and it was very mechanical with her. She didn't want to be there doing her job and that's not—if you're dealing with people like that, you're not helping. In terms of that individual, that was her, her reaction or her behavior in that moment. But in general, precincts need social workers that can connect people to the right organizations so that they could get help. The same way that organizations who are representing survivors and representing abusers need to have connections with good organizations who have social workers and who get the support.*

— Sarah Pantaleon

### GAPS

We know that the work to end violence is under-resourced. Not only is part of this under-resourcing a lack of interventions and staffing, but we also encounter a paucity of opportunities for in-depth and systematized training, professional development, and collective reflection for community members, advocates, and service providers responding to violence. This gap in training—a vital infrastructure support—reduces efficacy, contributes to staff burnout, and ultimately affects survivors, people who cause harm, and families.

Because of the scarcity of interventions for people who cause harm and the marginalization of such interventions within mainstream anti-violence work, we will need training simply to cultivate new, effective practitioners for abusive partner interventions. Kerry Moles, Executive Director at Court Appointed Special Advocates of New York City, speaks to the essential information-sharing needed to challenge myths related to abusive partner interventions. “For example, we were taught that we shouldn't allow men to talk about

domestic violence they witnessed or experienced as children because they would use that to manipulate,” she relays. “That doesn’t make any sense. At Family Wellness, we did hundreds of intakes and what we learned is almost every single abusive partner we worked with had a history of trauma. I learned these people weren’t all demons. They wanted to talk about it—the history of abuse and victimization, police brutality and incarceration. They would say, ‘I’ve never told anyone about this because no one has asked.’ The other myth that we learned was false was that ‘You can’t do therapy with them.’ I repeated these myths many, many times before I realized they weren’t true. And not survivor-informed.”

Training on fundamentals of interventions for people who cause harm is also essential for expanding access to communities currently shut out of services. Noting that little abusive partner interventions research has been done in populations outside heterosexual men perpetrating violence, Catherine Shugrue dos Santos, Co-Director of Client Services at the New York City Anti-Violence Project, states, “I am committed to changing the narrative out there. Citing only certain research is controlling the narrative, but it’s not in the best interest of survivors. It only perpetuates a false heteronormative binary gender paradigm that makes LGBTQ survivors and abusive partners invisible.”

In addition to engaging new practitioners of interventions for people who cause harm as well as opening access to marginalized populations, training with practitioners would

enable alignment with survivor advocacy, resources-sharing, and implementation of promising practices. Furthermore, training with key systems actors could enable smoother integration as well as program utilization. Albery Abreu, Abusive Partner Intervention Specialist, Family Wellness Program, Children’s Aid, observes that judges may not have information useful in sentencing. He shares, “We’ve offered to meet with judges to talk about programs—our aims and goals. A lot of times participants are given different messages. There’s just not enough communication on goals of our programs.”

In a parallel vein, one Assistant District Attorney remarks, “It would be nice for the Citywide judiciary to have additional education on intimate partner violence. It’s tricky for the lawyers to know more. If judges had more complex knowledge, they would act differently.”

Abreu notes that law enforcement could also receive training informed by effective abusive partner interventions that would enable different responses to calls and completing intimate violence domestic incident reports.

In addition to enhancing systems responses and enabling efficacy, trainings are also a vital space for addressing systemic violence. Deesha Narichania, DV Coordinator at St. Luke’s-Roosevelt Crime Victims Treatment Center, speaks to law enforcement violence faced by trans women. She observes that trans women are often criminalized for survival sex work (or sex worker status is exploited and used by police as an excuse to rape) or when

calling in an intimate partner violence situation hear, ‘Well you’re actually a man. Why didn’t you fight back?’ Narichania adds that trans women understandably fear to go to the police because doing so makes them vulnerable to more violence. Training is essential to ensuring access across systems—and reducing all kinds of violence.

In general, training for judiciary, law enforcement, and attorneys would enable more effective understanding of current abusive partner interventions, shifts in the field and approaches, and opportunities for engagement. Such systems integration would respond to crucial gaps in understanding that impede program utilization as well as offer a new grounding in current intervention options. Importantly, training not only enables field evolution but, through cultivating services designed to enable support and safety, ensures we are engaging without furthering harm.

Luckily, as Catherine Stayton, Director, Injury and Violence Prevention Program, Bureau of Environmental Disease and Injury Prevention at the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, notes, “Training for the workforce is a worthwhile investment. That can be low-hanging opportunity.”

## STRATEGIES FOR RESPONSE

- Provide ongoing trainings for practitioners providing interventions for people who cause harm as well as allied providers in order to support promising practices, field evolution, and alignment with survivor advocacy
- Provide ongoing trainings for courts, police, and legal staff interacting with providers of interventions for people who cause harm in order to ensure effective responses and referrals without furthering systems-based harm
- Provide ongoing trainings with practitioners, allied providers, criminal legal system staff, and stakeholders on expanding capacity to work with marginalized populations and to work with current populations more holistically, effectively, and transformatively

## RECOMMENDATION

- In consultation with CoWAP, issue a City solicitation to fund training proposals that include ongoing training provision for practitioners of abusive partner interventions, borough advisory board members, credible messengers, intimate partner violence service providers, elder abuse service providers, and relevant stakeholders. The solicitation should include training on facilitation and promising practices in interventions with people who cause harm as well as how to responsibly engage allied providers and responders

## RECOMMENDATION 4: TRAIN ALLIED PROVIDERS ON ABUSIVE PARTNER INTERVENTIONS

*I used to work in a substance abuse facility. The executive director started this program in one room on top of a church and his slogan was ‘God loves addicts too.’ God loves abusers too. He loves us all. Everyone deserves a shot. Everyone deserves help. Everyone deserves another chance. Whether it’s a second chance or tenth chance. You know we all have the potential to change regardless of what we do. And a lot of times abusers don’t know another way to relieve anger and stress than to hit and bruise. They need to know that there are other ways to handle any kind of situation, anything that they’re going through. Churches play a big role in the community today—they always have. Churches are our community so maybe some spiritual growth can help, spiritual guidance.*

— SaSha

### GAPS

Our work to end violence and interrupt abuse is hindered by not having entry points in the community and workplaces. To reach more diverse populations—and foster community-based networks for intervention—we need to build capacity to engage people beyond the confines of a courtroom or intimate violence agency. Faith-based leaders are a natural go-to in times of crisis. “People won’t go to the police but who they will go to is a spiritual leader. Spiritual leaders getting formally and informally trained on what to do in terms of accountability and responsibility will create new spaces for response,” notes Joseph Maldonado, Men’s Roundtable Co-Facilitator at CONNECT.

While faith-based leaders can be part of a cohort of allied responders beyond the criminal legal system, training of faith-based leaders—and partnership with advocates—is crucial. In particular, training is vital so that faith leaders do not perpetuate victim-blaming or amplify tactics for manipulation and perpetrating abuse. As Robina Niaz, Founder and Executive Director at Turning Point for Women and Families, clarifies, “The imams can provide spiritual guidance but they’ve not been trained as social workers. This work takes deep knowledge on dynamics. It is very deep work and requires deep understanding.” Niaz does underscore the importance of engagement with faith leaders,

noting, “I don’t think an intervention with Muslim men can happen without the intervention of our faith communities.”

People who have caused harm emphasize the importance of faith-based and community access points to transforming behaviors. One individual reflects, “Now today looking back, I would say that, for me, one of the things I think would be very important is seeking therapy, speaking to a clergy, somebody from the church, a pastor or imam, whatever the faith might be. I think those things—and just picking people who are in the community who has some status that could speak to a young man about the situation and what he was going through and why he was acting out the way that I was.”

Beyond faith-based institutions, other entry points include community health centers and community counseling providers. Furthermore, employers and employee assistance programs could be strong arenas for engagement of people who cause harm and ongoing interventions outside the criminal legal system. As Sharlena from Voices of Women suggests, “In order to have a healthy community, a healthy environment, it would be great for employers to look into this as well. Because then they have employees who are receiving some other level of support that they can work better at the jobs that they’re doing and and just grow a healthy family.”

Allied providers—whether substance abuse counselors or employee assistance programs—and community responders—whether faith-based leaders or community stakeholders—can be vital supports for interrupting cycles of

violence and transforming behavior. By supporting training, we can open up spaces for people causing harm to transform in environments where they can build on connection and belonging. Margarita Guzmán, Deputy Executive Director at Violence Intervention Program, Inc., emphasizes the value of opening approaches, observing, “People want to change given options and opportunities. They didn’t believe they deserve more. Asking, do you think there’s any behavior you’d like to change? Exploring response to be a healthier person: what would you imagine would be helpful to you?” Building capacity through training in allied and community spaces can bolster avenues for effective and sustainable behavior change.

## STRATEGIES FOR RESPONSE

- Provide ongoing trainings for faith-based leaders, community stakeholders, and employers as well as social workers, substance abuse counselors, community health workers, and other allied providers on engaging people who cause harm and collaborating on interventions

## RECOMMENDATION

- Through the Mayor’s Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV), develop and implement trainings for service providers and allied responders (i.e., social workers, substance abuse counselors, faith-based leaders, etc.) in order to find new entry points for abusive partner assessments and voluntary interventions

## RECOMMENDATION 5: INTEGRATE ABUSIVE PARTNER INTERVENTIONS WITH NYC HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP TRAINING ACADEMY SERVICES

*What do healthy relationships look like? Teaching young boys early on and for women—what does it look like to exert yourself? — Anonymous*

### GAPS

In 2016, the New York City Healthy Relationship Training Academy conducted a total of 737 healthy relationship workshops with 11,500 youth, parents, and professional staff participants as noted in the Mayor’s Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV) Fact Sheet (<http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/ocdv/downloads/pdf/ocdv-fact-sheet-2016.pdf>).

With a robust infrastructure for trainings, OCDV is poised to incorporate new resources, referrals, and strategies for intervention with people who cause harm into the Healthy Relationship Training Curriculum. Integration of lessons from this Blueprint—and the resulting shifts in funding and practice—would be a powerful addition to the current Healthy Relationships Training. As Vanessa Nisperos, Young Adult Social Worker at the Red Hook Initiative, notes, “A lot of times young people will disclose family violence at home before parents do.” Integrating interventions for people causing harm into Healthy Relationships Trainings will ensure resources are available for youth and parents who might need them as

well as enable new entry points for supporting families and youth in schools, foster care, and other vital spaces.

Furthermore, integrating information and resources on interventions for people who cause harm can deepen links between prevention and intervention services. Joseph Maldonado, Men’s Roundtable Co-Facilitator at CONNECT, observes, “We don’t have a lot of services focused on prevention. Our systemic and community response is when abuse happens. We have a deficit model. There’s no support for healthy relationships.” In integrating information on interventions for people who cause harm into Healthy Relationship Training, we can embolden preventative approaches as part of interventions. In so doing, we acknowledge that prevention is part of intervention and that intervention can lead to prevention through transforming cycles of violence.

For example, healthy relationship workshops offer space to re-examine masculinity and gender socialization—a key aspect of transforming cultures of violence. Maldonado shares, “Our socialization of boys and men

and girls and women is really patriarchal and affirms men as subjects and women as objects. It's that socialization we have to interrupt." Through integrating information on interventions for people who cause harm into Healthy Relationship Training, we can both amplify models for healthy relationships while advancing that behavior change is possible—and that unhealthy relationships can transform through commitment, work, and services. In so doing, we can build capacity to simultaneously foster healthy relationships, nip unhealthy relationships in the bud, repair harm, and transform cycles of violence.

### STRATEGIES FOR RESPONSE

- Integrate youth-related data and strategies shared in the Blueprint into the current Healthy Relationship Training
- Integrate information on promising practices, innovations in accountability with healing, and transformative interventions with people who cause harm into the current Healthy Relationship Training
- Engage with youth who demonstrate interest in being a peer mentor or peer leader for possible service and voice on a borough advisory board for abusive partner interventions

### RECOMMENDATION

- Integrate information on and resources for people who cause harm as part of the NYC Healthy Relationship Training Academy

## RECOMMENDATION 6: INTEGRATE ABUSIVE PARTNER INTERVENTIONS WITH NYC FAMILY JUSTICE CENTERS SERVICES

*I myself was a victim of domestic violence for almost 8-9 years. And that time when I came here, USA, I was not knowing anything about help and I had never been abused at my home by anybody. It was really a very painful experience for me. And then my child was born and I was seeing him watching that behavior and it was very, very concerning to me. And then I feel it is very important that besides helping the victim, it is also helpful if the abuser gets help too because that way maybe these abusers may change their behavior. — Razia*

### GAPS

In 2016, there were 62,644 client visits to the Family Justice Centers (FJCs) across New York City with a 6.5% increase in new clients (including clients at the Staten Island FJC which opened in 2016) as noted in the Mayor’s Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV) Fact Sheet (<http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/ocdv/downloads/pdf/ocdv-fact-sheet-2016.pdf>).

While more and more survivors reach out to the City through the FJCs, similar go-to sites are not known for people who cause harm. As a result, interventions for abusive partners are harder to pinpoint and unheard of in many communities. Furthermore, survivors of violence often reach out to staff at FJCs for supportive services and referrals for their loved ones causing them harm.

By integrating information on and referrals for interventions for people who cause harm, our City can serve a wider swath of survivors. “Right now, everything is about the police and Family Court protection orders. Most survivors I serve don’t want either of those solutions,” articulates Catherine Shugrue dos Santos, Co-Director of Client Services at the New York City Anti-Violence Project, adding, “Who are we to decide survivors cannot get what they are asking us to give them? Who are we to limit their solutions?”

Indeed, survivors speak to the value of non-judgmental spaces of support for both survivors and their loved ones causing harm. Grace shares, “You know LGBT individuals, we’re always abused. In public, people degrade us. Right now, I have my pride colors on. I love my

colors. I'm comfortable in my own skin but it's not my job to make you comfortable because I am who I am. I'm not going to change for anyone. If you serve a different type of religion, that's important as well. Everyone needs to be comfortable. That's the whole point. If you're in a comfort zone, you can be more open-minded to people that can assist you. The goal is to get the help so you can stop the behavior or you can stop the behavior from happening to you. Redirection."

Some survivors even envision joint services-delivery. "It will be centers all over the City for both abusers and survivors. You could walk in and get help, not necessarily thinking that it's going to put you in a financial position that you can't make it—because some of the therapy costs a lot of money," offers Sarah Pantaleon.

The current FJC model may take time to address safety concerns and offer whole family services. Yet, given many survivors seek information on services for their partners, the FJCs are poised to productively incorporate new resources, referrals, and strategies for intervention with people who cause harm into FJC trainings, referrals, and policies. Integrating information on and referrals for abusive partner interventions will enable new approaches to supporting survivors engaged with FJCs.

Furthermore, for people who cause harm reaching out for City resources, the FJCs could offer vital information and referrals for accessing interventions towards behavior change and healthy families.

### STRATEGIES FOR RESPONSE

- Integrate information on promising practices, innovations in accountability with healing, and transformative interventions with people who cause harm into FJC trainings and ongoing professional development activities
- Develop FJC referral processes and protocols for survivors seeking interventions for their partners and/or family members causing harm
- Provide feedback on interventions for people who cause harm to service providers and community members in order to enable integration, survivor safety, and further analysis on impact and behavior change

### RECOMMENDATION

- Integrate trainings on abusive partner interventions and resources into the training programs at NYC Family Justice Centers (FJC) in order to enable referrals, support promising practices, and successful integration of abusive partner interventions

*How can we be a lifeline of change? If someone transformed their life, it's not because we did it but supports were provided. — Paul Feuerstein, President/CEO, Barrier Free Living*

## RECOMMENDATION 7: INTEGRATE ABUSIVE PARTNER INTERVENTIONS WITH NYC FAMILY JUSTICE CENTERS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

*I do feel like a lot of Muslim men and women, they were reluctant to seek help. Some also thought, 'I'll be deported if I report this.' For Muslims, Friday prayers are very important to us. If the city can take a step and go to Friday prayers with that information, it would help a lot of these families. If that information is taken to a big gathering, then it is not really directed to a person but the community. The services can be passed around, not targeted. Those people may know someone who needs the help. The services need to be offered in schools, masjids, big community events. Sometimes the people who cause harm don't take the services because abusers don't want to be known as that and singled out. This is one way to reach out so that other people will not know, 'I'm one of them.'* — **Iffat**

### GAPS

Especially in the current feverish climate of xenophobia, Islamophobia, transphobia, and attack on all marginalized communities, community engagement is crucial for ensuring access to services. While community members may hesitate to engage with government agencies, going into communities can make a difference in fostering channels of communication and information-dissemination. Furthermore, as Iffat astutely offers, sharing information on resources around abusive partner interventions—even in a format of passing the material on to others—may open more entry points for access.

Additional community entry points for services are vital, particularly because many services are closed to people who have caused harm. One provider observes, “A history of domestic violence excludes people from services which is a barrier to access. This may escalate violence when people are trying to change.” Through information-sharing during NYC Family Justice Center (FJC) community engagement activities, we can simultaneously enable referrals for people causing harm while furthering survivor safety and advocacy.

In addition, community members—including youth—are searching for such spaces.

New York Police Department Sergeant Joseph Alohan shares, “Students who were probably the victimizer said, ‘I didn’t realize I was being that way.’ I’m a police officer. They didn’t have to share that with me. We need a safe place for people to engage.”

Joseph Maldonado, Men’s Roundtable Co-Facilitator at CONNECT, emphasizes that a community approach furthers belonging while enabling behavior change and transformation. Speaking to CONNECT’s work with people who identify as using abusive behaviors as well as those who don’t, Maldonado notes, “People will show up to these groups because of community and wanting to be part of a human family. They will get to their growth edge. From that space, we can address the issues. It grows that way and becomes part of that community’s culture. That’s a gap in our individualistic society. Our responses are very much designed to work in community.”

In particular, alongside City staff, FJCs host community-based organization staff who are poised to foster innovations in community engagement. “How do we support each other when harm is happening? How do we draw folks’ own experiences and develop folks into leaders?” asks Essex Lodes, National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs Coordinator at the New York City Anti-Violence Project. Responding to such questions and having culturally specific community engagement and services for immigrant, Muslim, queer, and/or trans communities can open doors community members may not go through otherwise due

to fear of state surveillance, deportation, hate violence, and/or incarceration.

Furthering community engagement and information on interventions for people who cause harm can create more community-based solutions. As one community stakeholder offers, “For any type of program, you’re going to have to have individuals who’ve actually been through that. I think it’s important to have individuals who can share their own private situation, what they was going through and how they became an abuser, and what changed, what help did they receive about it.” Not only will enhancing FJC community engagement with abusive partner intervention resources provide new entry points, it will enable community leadership through credible messengers and stakeholders—and foster spaces for cultivation of further community leaders in ending violence.

## STRATEGIES FOR RESPONSE

- Integrate community solutions and stakeholders, particularly the borough advisory boards and credible messengers, into FJC community engagement practices
- Integrate information on enhanced and new abusive partner interventions into current FJC community engagement and information-sharing
- Engage with community members who demonstrate interest in being a peer mentor or peer leader for possible service and voice on a borough advisory board for abusive partner interventions

*People don't know the services. The information is not out there in certain communities.* — **Henry Algarin**, Program Director, Brooklyn TASC

## RECOMMENDATION

- Building on recommendations from the NYC Domestic Violence Task Force, FJCs should partner with the borough advisory boards and credible messenger teams in neighborhood-based roundtables, forums, and community engagement on intimate violence

## RECOMMENDATION 8: INTEGRATE ABUSIVE PARTNER INTERVENTIONS WITH NYC DEPARTMENT FOR THE AGING SERVICES

*They won't want to put them out on the street. They keep contacting us asking what can we do. — Cheryl Lee, Previous Director of the Brooklyn Legal/Social Work Elder Abuse Program (LEAP), JASA*

### GAPS

While the strategy of separation in order to access safety is ill-suited for many intimate partner violence survivors, it is particularly unhelpful for many survivors of elder abuse. Most elders facing violence from their children or grandchildren will not engage punitive systems—but they will often request supportive services for their loved one who is harming them.

Aurora Salamone, Director of the Elderly Crime Victim Resource Center at the NYC Department for the Aging, speaks to an elder abuse survivor who refused services unless they included their loved ones, saying, “We could have done something for the mother but she wanted something to happen for her daughter or she wouldn’t work with us.” Given this context, whole family services and other innovations in accountability with healing are crucial for supporting survivors of elder abuse.

In addition, older survivors of intimate partner violence struggle to be seen. Salamone explains, “We don’t think domestic violence victims are older women or men. They are at the

periphery. They’re invisible.” Moreover, elder queer and trans survivors of intimate partner violence are further isolated. “It’s more stigmatized to a degree. There’s more of a stigma,” notes Joshua Rotkin, Queens LEAP (Legal Social Work Elder Abuse Program) Director at JASA.

Furthermore, elder survivors may themselves be affected by health challenges and/or disabilities or be in relationship with a partner with mental and/or physical health issues and/or disabilities—age-related or otherwise. “If someone becomes abusive with cognitive decline, can a domestic violence awareness program help in that context?” Salamone asks. Cheryl Lee, Previous Director of the Brooklyn Legal/Social Work Elder Abuse Program (LEAP) at JASA, amplifies the challenges of conventional intimate violence services by asking, “If the abuser has dementia, where can they go?” For both elders and children causing harm who cannot afford NYC rents and independent living, options for off-ramps are limited. As Lee states succinctly, “Housing is getting worse. Housing is a crux of issues.”

Moreover, Salamone points to how perceptions of disability affect response to intimate violence with elders. Speaking to the minimization of violence, Salamone explains, “He’s wheelchair-bound, so in Family Court people say, ‘How abusive can he be?’ Our perception gets distorted.”

Given these barriers to accessing support, it is crucial that services for survivors of elder abuse and interventions for people causing harm to elders are inclusive across culture, family formation, language access needs, and identity including ability, ethnicity, gender identity, race, and sexual orientation as well as economic, HIV, housing, immigration, and mental health status.

Given survivor isolation, by integrating information on and referrals for abusive partner interventions, the NYC Department for the Aging (DFTA) can enable new approaches to supporting survivors engaged with DFTA, particularly through the Providing Options to Elderly Clients Together (PROTECT) program which, in partnership with the Weill Cornell Institute of Geriatric Psychiatry, provides therapy to survivors. Aligned with the City’s focus on furthering mental health access, PROTECT embeds mental health practitioners within elder abuse services response in order to address depression and other mental health needs so that survivors can more fully benefit from other services. Furthermore, given the partnership with Weill Cornell Medical Center, there are potent possibilities for drawing upon the innovative therapeutic models in the Blueprint in order to explore referrals and/or expansion

of services to people who are causing harm. This Blueprint offers vital information for accessing innovative interventions focused on accountability with healing and can enable DFTA and its partners to develop deeper responses to people who harm elders.

### STRATEGIES FOR RESPONSE

- Integrate information on promising practices, innovations in accountability with healing, and transformative interventions with people who cause harm into DFTA trainings and professional development activities
- With OCDV interface, develop PROTECT referral processes and protocols for survivors seeking interventions for their family members and/or partners causing harm
- Provide feedback on interventions for people who cause harm to PROTECT service providers in order to enable integration, survivor safety, and further analysis on impact and behavior change

### RECOMMENDATION

- Building on recommendations from the NYC Domestic Violence Task Force, the Mayor’s Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV) and the NYC Department for the Aging (DFTA), along with partner Weill Cornell Medical Center, should coordinate on integrating abusive partner interventions into PROTECT policies, trainings, on-the-ground practices, and referral pathways to respond to survivors while providing referrals to people who cause harm

## RECOMMENDATION 9: INTEGRATE ABUSIVE PARTNER INTERVENTIONS WITH SERVICES AT THE NYC ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN’S SERVICES

*I hate ACS to be honest. They’re so nasty or so mean instead of like ‘Let’s help you. We’re trying to help you. We’re going to make sure whatever situation’s going on is going to help you or keep your kids.’ Not automatically just put you down and make you feel like, ‘Oh, you should have known better. No one told you to have kids’ type of thing. I mean the lady actually told me that.”*

— **Kierra Coll**

### GAPS

Though crucial shifts at the Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) have occurred over the past decade, ACS is still seen as a punitive system with many youth and adults wary of any encounters. The fear of removal of children and separation is still at the forefront of survivors’ minds and hearts.

Administrators at ACS understand survivors’ fears. Providing a history of ACS approach, Beverly James, Associate Commissioner, Child Welfare Support Services at ACS, explains, “We rely solely on the mothers to make the changes needed for the family. We rely too heavily on the mom because that’s the system we built. The child welfare system relies on the mom. We started the work in the wrong way.” James adds that engaging people who cause harm is necessary for the vital agency goal of safety, noting, “In protecting mom, we’re protecting children. But we need to get the dad involved and under-

stand his role in the process. The safety plan is not a robust comprehensive plan when we haven’t taken abusive partners in consideration.”

In particular, deaf parents have faced a number of challenges engaging child welfare services particularly in relation to meaningful language access. Christina Curry, Executive Director at the Harlem Independent Living Center expresses the emotional trauma deaf parents often face with ACS involvement, saying, “Everything’s on hold for a day or three until we get an interpreter. The person is feeling bad. There’s no communication. There’s no language. It’s ACS and children are removed.”

Furthermore, advocates for Deaf communities still report the use of children to interpret. “ACS is really good for showing up without an interpreter and using the child to communicate,” Curry observes. “It goes back to failure to protect. Yet ACS will do the same thing.

*We're really working on engaging survivors better. How can we offer support not only as a parent but as an individual? — B. Indira Ramsaroop, Senior Policy Analyst, Office of Clinical Practice, Policy and Support, Domestic Violence Policy and Planning, Administration for Children's Services*

No matter where they start.” Paul Feuerstein, President/CEO of Barrier Free Living, concurs, underscoring the threat of permanent separation from deaf parents: “Systems gravitate to the hearing person to get the story. What we see as well is the parentification of children who will end up being interpreters. There’s a fast track to adoption and smaller chance they’ll get their kids back.”

Given these barriers to accessing support, it is crucial that services for survivors with children and interventions for people causing harm within families are inclusive across culture, family formation, language access needs, and identity including ability, economic status, ethnicity, gender identity, race, and sexual orientation as well as HIV, housing, immigration, and mental health status.

Child welfare workers often have significant caseloads and need training and resource supports to navigate all these barriers to access. Moreover, each family’s situation may be complex and difficult to quickly assess. James emphasizes, “Should you be back in the home? That’s a really hard decision to make.”

Nonetheless, removal of children can become a de facto decision from fear of making the wrong decision or not having enough time and resources to address complex situations. In

order to better serve families, new approaches are needed within ACS. For example, James suggests, “We need more in-home services because what I need to see, I need to see in the home, in the home life.”

In addition to in-home services, the development and use of whole family services as well as interventions with people who cause harm that enable accountability with healing can enable more effective ACS practice. Speaking to the need to engage abusive partners, James notes that with current services, “We haven’t gotten to the underlying reason why he feels the way he does. It’s just very complex and I know it can be very expensive. But I know if we want to make changes, it’s where we have to start. We have to get to the underlying reasons.”

Many survivors would also like to see a focus on addressing underlying causes. “I believe that hurt people hurt people and I don’t think that when anyone is born that they decide that they want to be an abuser—certainly no more than I believe that anybody that becomes a victim decides it when they’re born, that’s what they would be,” Ann remarks. “I believe that the abusers learn how to become abusers in their unresolved and unhealed wounded places. And my belief is just as much as the people that are victimized, in order to really change this para-

digm and really resurrect as healers in our own lives, we have to go into those wounded places.” Lisa O’Connor, Chief Program Officer at Safe Horizon, echoes the benefit to interventions with people who cause harm focused on accountability with healing: “By healing trauma, they can be full participants in their lives.”

Getting to underlying causes could not only lead to healing but could interrupt cycles of violence. Similarly, additional services are needed to support children in challenging intergenerational violence. “Sometimes we provide services for the parent but not the child,” James explains. “That’s where we get the angry child, the teenager acting out. That’s where we are struggling in a big way—specialized services for the child. Even if it seems like there’s no behavior change yet, we make a referral—even if it’s for play therapy.”

Given the need for new family-centered approaches and specialized services, ACS should strive to develop and amplify a preventive services strategy and whole family approach. Integrating information on and referrals for abusive partner interventions will enable new approaches to supporting survivors engaged with ACS, particularly through piloting and developing preventive and whole family services. Such innovations could lead to healthier families. Or as B. Indira Ramsaroop, Senior Policy Analyst, Office of Clinical Practice, Policy and Support, Domestic Violence Policy and Planning at ACS, offers, “Success would be more stable families and healthier kids and children who don’t witness violence.”

## STRATEGIES FOR RESPONSE

- Integrate information on promising practices, innovations in accountability with healing, and transformative interventions with people who cause harm into ACS trainings and professional development activities
- Integrate meaningful language access and specialized services to ensure appropriate response to all communities
- With OCDV interface, develop ACS referral processes and protocols for survivors seeking interventions for their partners and/or family members causing harm through a whole family approach
- With OCDV interface, develop ACS capacity to provide healthy relationships information to youth and parents engaged with ACS in order to break cycles of intergenerational violence
- Provide feedback on interventions for people who cause harm to ACS staff in order to enable integration, survivor safety, and further analysis on impact and behavior change

## RECOMMENDATION

- Building on recommendations from the NYC Domestic Violence Task Force, the Mayor’s Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV) and the Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) should coordinate on integrating abusive partner interventions and work with whole families into ACS policies, trainings, on-the-ground practices, and referral pathways to services at community-based organizations and FJCs

## RECOMMENDATION 10: INTEGRATE ABUSIVE PARTNER INTERVENTIONS WITH THE NYC DOE RESPECT FOR ALL PROGRAM

*Bullying. That experience shattered me. Going to the school counselor—that’s not going to stop that bully from taking your lunch. Bullying shows up as scars.*

— **Jamel Hooks Jr.**

### GAPS

With new vantages in abusive partner interventions focused on accountability with healing, we have an opportunity to link bullying and later violence—and create new spaces for healing. In speaking on participants of the Teen Accountability Program (TAP) at STEPS to End Family Violence, one TAP advocate and leader observes, “They’re often victims of many types of abuse. Like bullying, abusive behaviors can become patterns.”

Through the Respect for All program at the NYC Department of Education (DOE), we can make links across the spectrum of violence—and proactively support strategies for harm reduction, use of services, and healing. Respect for All, through a staff liaison, annual school plan, professional development, and implementation of age-appropriate curriculum, strives to prevent and address bias-related behavior and bullying in order to promote interpersonal and inter-group respect within school culture. Emerging as a response to the rise in hate violence after 9/11, Respect for All also addresses bullying and hate violence faced by LGBTQIA students in schools.

### Data on Youth Violence

Compiled from: <https://www.dayoneny.org/statistics>

- 1 in 3 teens report experiencing some kind of abuse in their romantic relationships, including verbal and emotional abuse
- The New York City Domestic Violence Hotline receives an average of 1,400 calls from teenagers every month
- 50% of people age 14-24 have experienced digitally abusive behavior
- Forty-two percent (42%) of the males and 43.2% of the females who reported abuse stated that this abuse occurred in a school building or on school grounds

Linking dating violence and other intimate violence to Respect for All activities would enable transforming cultures of violence. Jeimi Burgos, Relationship Abuse Prevention Program Coordinator at Day One, emphasizes, “I think DV is a big issue in the same way you’re targeting bullying and racism.” Connecting the work

of Respect for All liaisons with school Sexual Harassment liaisons as well as school staff would root interpersonal respect across a range of relationships. In addition to building Respect for All program connections with healthy relationships workshops and Relationship Abuse Prevention Program, many advocates suggest incorporating age-appropriate workshops on consent starting from elementary school.

By connecting dating violence and intimate violence to bullying, we can create more avenues for disclosure of violence and seeing a more whole picture of an individual who has caused harm. Moreover, we can interrupt cycles of violence in and beyond school contexts. As a TAP advocate and leader shares, “We have a critical opportunity to teach them—that would allow them to make positive decisions in the community.”

### STRATEGIES FOR RESPONSE

- Integrate youth-related data and strategies shared in the Blueprint into the current Respect for All program
- With OCDV interface, integrate information on promising practices, innovations in accountability with healing, and transformative interventions with people who cause

harm into trainings, policies, and practices for Respect for All liaisons, Sexual Harassment liaisons, and school staff

- Through Respect for All liaisons and school staff, engage with adults and youth who demonstrate interest in being a peer mentor or peer leader for possible service and voice on a borough advisory board for abusive partner interventions

### RECOMMENDATION

- Building on recommendations from the NYC Domestic Violence Task Force, the Mayor’s Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV) and the Department of Education (DOE) should coordinate on training Respect for All liaisons, Sexual Harassment liaisons, and school staff who address bullying and sexual harassment, including youth dating violence, on abusive partner interventions and resources so as to provide multiple responders and entry points across manifestations of violence

*Girls who dress traditionally are being attacked as part of the Islamophobia. They find it difficult to speak up especially if, in their homes, they are being abused.*

*The repercussions and impact go way beyond even the services providers’ imaginations. — Robina Niaz, Founder and Executive Director Turning Point for Women and Families*

## RECOMMENDATION 11: INTEGRATE ABUSIVE PARTNER INTERVENTIONS WITH THE NYC DOE-RECOMMENDED COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH EDUCATION CURRICULUM

*Why are we not talking about domestic violence in school but we're talking about sex in school? It doesn't make any sense to me. And if you probably look at the numbers, you're probably realizing and seeing a lot more younger girls and gay guys have physical issues at school age. So, I think in school, it should definitely be on the top of the list. We're talking about bullying—I think domestic violence goes right hand-in-hand. — C. Delaine Dixon*

### GAPS

School is a setting ripe for learning as youth are curious about healthy relationships—and it is information that students can put to use as they navigate relationships.

As described by the NYC Department of Education (DOE), “In New York State, all students at all grade levels must receive comprehensive health education that builds decision-making, goal setting, relationship management, communication, and other important skills across lesson topics that focus on: violence and injury prevention; emotional and mental health; physical activity and nutrition; alcohol, tobacco and other drug prevention; and HIV prevention. The New York City Department of Education requires all students in grades 6-12 to receive sexual health education as part of comprehensive health education. Sexual health education must be age appropriate, skills-based,

and medically accurate” (<http://schools.nyc.gov/Academics/Wellness/WhatWeTeach/HealthEducation/default.htm>).

In addition to creating new spaces for support and intervention, incorporating information on abuse, healthy relationships, and interventions can help support a culture of intervening and seeking to disrupt violence. Furthermore, expanding models presented in the recommended curriculum would ensure going beyond a gender binary as well as Judeo-Christian moral frameworks. Moreover, adding skills-building on how to break up in healthy ways could interrupt and prevent violence. In this way, the DOE can support crucial information-sharing with students, inclusion of LGBTQIA and other marginalized students, and a larger process of culture change towards ending violence.

## Data on Youth Education and Violence Reduction

Compiled from: <https://www.dayoneny.org/statistics>

- In a 2008 study, young people who received comprehensive sex education used significantly fewer acts of violence toward a dating partner by the end of Grade 11
- Teaching young people about healthy relationships and ways to avoid physical dating violence can reduce physical dating violence and sexual dating violence by 60%

## STRATEGIES FOR RESPONSE

- Integrate youth-related data and strategies shared in the Blueprint into the NYC DOE-recommended Comprehensive Health Education Curriculum
- With OCDV interface, integrate information on promising practices, innovations in accountability with healing, and transformative interventions with people

- who cause harm into trainings, policies, and practices for NYC DOE Health Educators
- Through NYC DOE Health Educators, engage with adults and youth who demonstrate interest in being a peer mentor or peer leader for possible service and voice on a borough advisory board for abusive partner interventions

## RECOMMENDATION

- Building on recommendations from the NYC Domestic Violence Task Force, the Department of Education (DOE) should include information on abusive partner interventions and resources as part of the City's Comprehensive Health Education recommended curriculum, guidelines, trainings, and resources

*In school, we are taught a lot of things. A whole bunch of stuff—some we use, some we don't use. I do believe that if at the high school level, girls are taught or given advised on what love looks like, it would be helpful. Let me not say girls alone because there's men who've been and is being abused too. So, I want to say at the high school level, if students are taught about the dynamics of love: what love looks like, what a healthy relationship looks like, what is abuse, how to define it—it would be helpful. — Samantha Taylor*

## RECOMMENDATION 12: TRAIN PARENT COORDINATORS AND PARENT LEADERS IN NYC SCHOOLS ON ABUSIVE PARTNER INTERVENTION RESOURCES

*One of the only way to reach out to the undocumented would be the schools. I think school should have a domestic violence talk or sort of a workshop once a month for abusers and victims. And maybe those workshops, people can feel empowered to come and listen—just listen, you know. We don't have to call it abuse or domestic violence. We don't have to call it domestic violence workshops. And then in the workshop, we could talk about the abusers and the victims and survivors, how to move on, how to get help, how to get the services. I think the school more than the churches and community centers are more reachable because everybody goes to school—and most of the undocumented people have children in schools. So that's a good way. — Samantha Taylor*

### GAPS

In addition to being a ripe space for youth, school can be a nexus for parents and community members. The school environment can provide a non-punitive setting for gaining tools and resources to access services without shame. In addition to creating new spaces for support and intervention, incorporating information on abuse, healthy relationships, and interventions in the toolkit for Parent Coordinators who work at individual NYC Department of Education (DOE) schools as well as parent leaders in communities can help support a community-based culture of intervening and seeking to disrupt violence.

As described by the NYC Department of Education (DOE), “Parent coordinators are

an important part of your school community. They are responsible for: creating a welcoming school environment for parents; working with the principal to address parent issues and concerns at the school; conducting outreach to engage parents in their children’s education; and, strengthening parent involvement in their children’s education. As a member of the school staff supervised by the school principal, the parent coordinator partners with and supports the work of their Parent Association/Parent Teacher Association, School Leadership Team, community groups, and parent advisory councils.” (<http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/FACE/ParentCoordinators/MeetPC.htm>)

For example, NYC DOE Parent Coordinators and parent leaders can work to integrate healthy relationship workshops for youth and adults as well as resources for people who cause harm with an anti-bullying framework that supports LGBTQIA students who may be unsafe at home due to family members' biases. Furthermore, NYC DOE Parent Coordinators and parent leaders, in partnership with community-based organizations, can bolster community networks and solutions to interrupting cycles of violence. In this way, DOE can support crucial information-sharing with students and parents as well as a larger process of culture change towards ending violence.

## STRATEGIES FOR RESPONSE

- Integrate youth-related data and strategies shared in the Blueprint into learning tools for NYC DOE Parent Coordinators and parent leaders
- With OCDV interface, integrate information on promising practices, innovations in accountability with healing, and transformative interventions with people who cause harm into trainings, policies, and practices for NYC DOE Parent Coordinators and parent leaders
- Through NYC DOE Parent Coordinators and parent leaders, engage with adults and youth who demonstrate interest in being a peer mentor or peer leader for possible service and voice on a borough advisory board for abusive partner interventions

## RECOMMENDATION

- In partnership with the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV), the Department of Education (DOE) should train school Parent Coordinators and Parent Leaders as well as other community members on abusive partner interventions and resources

*I became highly aware that those who survive heinous harm also perpetuate harm. And we don't have the space to talk about that without judgement and legal consequences. The way we've been doing the work hasn't been transforming communities. Schools are a vital entry point. — Kimberley Moore*

## RECOMMENDATION 13: INTEGRATE ABUSIVE PARTNER INTERVENTIONS WITH NYC DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

*You know, it's the little things that you benefit from. That aspect of communicating better, like it doesn't start with a hit. It starts as a phone call, a date, a courtship. How do you take a girl out? How do you value her worth or his worth? From there, then you actually build a sense of care for that person and you really don't want to harm people you care about. Along with self-esteem and self-worth, teaching a loving relationship.*

*If I had somebody or an organization that would have let me know ahead of time, then that would be a big help in preventing what happened to me. I mean, thank God, I'm okay. Some people unfortunately die. So yeah, I think that prevention early on about healthy relationships is very important.*

— **Samantha Taylor**

### GAPS

With a number of its programs, including after school programs, youth community centers, fatherhood programs, and youth employment programs, the NYC Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) accesses youth and communities at points where prevention can mean never needing intervention and where intervention can lead to prevention.

DYCD programs, including Beacon and Cornerstones, offer skills-building and activities including at New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) Community Centers throughout the five boroughs. In addition to enabling more informed decisions, integrating information

on abusive partner interventions into Healthy Relationship workshops can open arenas for gathering resources, support, and services outside the context of punitive systems. Furthermore, such integration of information can foster community-based responses and a larger arc towards culture change.

One additional way DYCD can amplify its impact with people who cause harm is through emboldening its employment programs for youth between 14 and 24. Many advocates speak to the demand for these programs—and that current program access is too limited. Cheryl Lee, Previous Director of the Brooklyn

Legal/Social Work Elder Abuse Program (LEAP) at JASA, notes that children causing harm to elders would benefit from career opportunities. Lee remarks, “Everyone should get a shot at youth employment.”

## STRATEGIES FOR RESPONSE

- Integrate youth-related data and strategies shared in the Blueprint into the current Department of Youth and Community Development Healthy Relationship workshops
- With OCDV interface, integrate information on promising practices, innovations in accountability with healing, and transformative interventions with people who cause harm into the current Healthy Relationship workshops
- Expand youth employment opportunities and foster linkages to wrap-around services
- Engage with youth who demonstrate interest in being a peer mentor or peer leader for possible service and voice on a borough advisory board for abusive partner interventions

## RECOMMENDATION

- Building on recommendations from the NYC Domestic Violence Task Force, the Mayor’s Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV) and the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) should coordinate on integrating information on abusive partner interventions and resources into healthy relationship workshops offered through DYCD-funded programs

## RECOMMENDATION 14: TRAIN NYC EMERGENCY FIRST RESPONDERS ON ABUSIVE PARTNER INTERVENTIONS

*What would really get to me is like in the case of my husband, after he hit me with the remote control, he tried to convince me that he didn't do that. Like everything is all in my mind, you know like, 'Oh I didn't hit you. What are you talking about?' Like they try to make you think like you're the crazy one, you imagined it, or whatever. I feel like that a first big step is just to admit, 'Yeah you know I did do this' and then after that we can work on why did you do this.*

— **Ronndolyn Black**

### GAPS

Even as we build capacity for community-based responses to address violence, we know emergency first responders will interface with community members who may never approach an agency or community-based organization. We should cultivate emergency first responders to enable productive referrals and to engage individuals in resources outside the context of punishment.

While admitting to harm is a vital first step in change, we need to create opportunities for people to repair harm. Kaela Economos, Community Office Social Work Director, former Social Work Supervisor, Family Defense Practice at Brooklyn Defender Services, observes, “People who cause harm should be treated as whole individuals. We need to understand where their behavior comes from and why. We need to make room for them to be empowered to repair some of the damage they’ve done.”

Furthermore, given that individuals in crisis are more likely to be amenable to resources, engaging emergency responders could be a productive entry point in access to services fostering accountability with healing for people who cause harm. Engaging emergency first responders in information-sharing could offer one more gateway for behavior change and transformation.

### STRATEGIES FOR RESPONSE

- Provide ongoing trainings for NYC emergency first responders on engaging abusive partners and providing information on interventions
- With OCDV interface, develop linkages between anti-violence agencies and emergency first responders in order to more effectively collaborate on assessment and appropriate interventions for people who cause harm

*I just would like to say something about abuse which abuser causes on his family whether it is wife, children, or anybody in the family: it hurts and it is so difficult. — Razia*

### RECOMMENDATION

- Building on recommendations from the NYC Domestic Violence Task Force, the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV) and the Fire Department of New York (FDNY) should coordinate to further capacity and training for firefighters, paramedics, and EMTs to respond to and provide referrals to people who cause harm

## RECOMMENDATION 15: INTEGRATE ABUSIVE PARTNER INTERVENTIONS WITH THRIVENYC PROGRAMS

*My psychologist didn't understand trauma. She didn't understand domestic violence—even in a clinical field. I was in an uphill battle to get it recognized even within the clinical field. — Anita*

### GAPS

As with specialized training for judges or school staff or faith-based leaders, therapeutic practitioners need support in understanding dynamics of intimate partner violence, cultural contexts, oppression impacts, and promising practices for intervening with someone who is causing harm. The opportunity to mobilize the Thrive NYC network of programs could not only provide new entry points for interventions but could also create a base of providers that would support aftercare and maintenance of behavioral changes and transformation.

Jamel Hooks Jr. underscores the important of therapeutic methods in an accountability with healing framework. “Anger management wasn’t enough. I needed emotional management. Filling a cup of water—eventually you have to stop. I didn’t know how to manage it,” he shares. “It took one-on-one conversation. I had to open up to that dark place. I learned that feelings are temporary. How do you manage that to where you remain leveled? You can do more. You can do better. I was at a low place. Behaviors don’t just sporadically happen. They’re rehearsed. I’ve learned so much. If I

was able to have someone to talk to, my life would be in a different place.”

Unfortunately, not enough therapeutic interventions are available to stem violence, maintain behavioral change, or foster wellness. Culturally specific and responsive interventions are also needed to ensure access. C. Delaine Dixon relays, “We did discuss couples therapy, but a very large number inside of the Black and Latino community don’t believe in therapy and counseling. Some of this stuff is culturally-accepted behavior. You know what his instinct was? His instinct was that this was okay, this was just a part of our relationship—it being physical cuz if it wasn’t physical, we didn’t love each other. This is what he really believed.”

Given these barriers to accessing support, it is crucial that interventions for people causing harm are inclusive across culture, family formation, language access needs, and identity including ability, ethnicity, gender identity, race, and sexual orientation as well as economic, HIV, housing, immigration, and mental health status.

Moreover, involvement of therapeutic workers opens up larger conversations on

wellness that can be culturally-informed, nuanced, and generative. Framing the work to meet someone's services needs therapeutically shifts the frame, language, and role of the provider to being a support in the journey for transformation. With a focus on wellness—and the capacity of individuals receiving services to define their own wellness goals and contexts—collaborations with ThriveNYC programs could enable participant-motivated change, avenues to wholeness, and healing across generations.

### STRATEGIES FOR RESPONSE

- Integrate information on promising practices, innovations in accountability with healing, and transformative interventions with people who cause harm into trainings and professional development activities for ThriveNYC programs
- With OCDV interface, develop ThriveNYC program referral processes and protocols for survivors seeking interventions for their partners and/or family members causing harm

- With OCDV interface, develop ThriveNYC program capacity to provide therapeutic services to people causing harm in a framework that enables accountability with healing
- Provide feedback on interventions for people who cause harm to ThriveNYC practitioners in order to enable integration, survivor safety, and further analysis on impact and behavior change

### RECOMMENDATION

- Building on recommendations from the NYC Domestic Violence Task Force, the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV) and the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) should coordinate on integrating abusive partner interventions into ThriveNYC programs, including through trainings, assessments, on-the-ground practices, and referral pathways to respond to and provide resources to people who cause harm

*There is an abundance of emotional and wellness practices—not just Western. There are tons of entry points for all sorts of healing practices. — Margarita Guzmán, Deputy Executive Director, Violence Intervention Program, Inc.*

## RECOMMENDATION 16: INTEGRATE ABUSIVE PARTNER INTERVENTIONS WITH ASSESSMENTS ACROSS CITY AGENCIES AND CITY-FUNDED PROGRAMS

*All of these young men should not be in the same class—a young man who threw a phone once versus someone who is like, ‘Women are nothing.’ We can’t treat all these cases the same.* — **Gene A. Johnson, Jr.**, Mediator and Facilitator

### GAPS

*“I feel like a lot of times people perpetrate acts of violence because of a multitude of reasons. And you know, when you look at it like the social services umbrella, if some of them abuse when they’re under the influence, they may be more predisposed to do that under the influence. Or they might have some mental health issues or some trauma-related issues themselves that might need addressing. And I feel like it would be really important to provide the services and maybe find out—you know, I’m not saying it’s possible to change everybody who perpetrates acts of violence but there’s a multitude of reasons why it happens and I feel like those services might directly impact the way that a person who perpetrates violence might be less inclined to do so in a different circumstance provided with those tools and those resources. You might have these things that society is not directly addressing and you know if you’re just treating for the anger and for the abuse part but if you’re just kind of neglecting the mental health issues or substance*

*abuse issues, you’re putting a band-aid. You’re not healing it—you’re just putting a band-aid over it.*

*Because there’s a lot of layers to why people abuse and why people hurt other people. It’s really in all different brackets. I mean you know, we used to argue about relationships and even having a communication class or family therapy or something of that nature would help. Because I’ll be real—my children’s father and I have never had an order against each other but a lot of girls I know, and in the past when I did have an order, he was my only support (the guy who did not take use of the services, that I was with before, not my children’s father but the guy I was with before)—he was my only support. And you know, he went for the batterers classes. He went for the fatherhood program but he didn’t—there was so much more going on mentally with him. There was so much more going on than just taking those classes. And you know I ran into him and just to see he hadn’t changed was just—you know his partner started behaving the same way*

*I did. Which was defensive and combative and 'I got to show him how tough I am so he won't hurt me.' And it just broke my heart to know that he's doing the same things over and over and over and over and over again. So, like intensive services and just not anger management but address the different brackets." — Lindsay*

Assessment can be a vital safety tool—and it can also simplify the complexity of people's lives. As many LGBTQIA advocates have noted, existing risk assessments are often modeled to heterosexual relationships and do not thoroughly engage patterns of abuse and primary aggression. As a result, new tools need to be created that reflect relationships across the spectrum of sexual orientation and gender identity.

In addition, providers seek to go beyond assessments of physical violence only. "We need the whole picture," one provider articulates. "For example, violence within a couple and family may decrease physical abuse but increase other violence such as emotional or financial. We need to look at the quality of life and well-being for the whole family."

Furthermore, many advocates search for risk-need-responsivity tools that will enable pathways for transformation of abusive behaviors. One Assistant District Attorney asks, "What do we do for people so we don't see them again? We have tons of cases with a son with a drug problem. That kind of case comes up over and over again. Those people are family forever. She is not going to just cut him off. We need treatment with a safety perspective." Or as

Jamie Burke, Supervising Attorney, Integrated Defense Practice at Brooklyn Defender Services, amplifies, "The current system makes it frustratingly difficult to get to the root problems of domestic violence."

Advocates request risk assessments connected to differential assessments as well as tools that reflect structural oppressions and systemic violence. One City employee seeks to know: "What are the environmental issues impacting these issues? How are racism and prejudice and uneven access to services impacting? How does all this come together in terms of intimate partner violence? How can we create global interventions that address micro issues yet also the environmental issues? For men of color or a black male who's been abused by the system or criminalized?"

Similarly, assessments may not capture contexts important to survivors, families, or communities. The work to incorporate additional input into an assessment process will make the picture more whole and enable interventions that both honor safety needs and the voices of the people affected by systems interventions. Such a process for gathering input also clarifies success measurement informed by participants and community members and fosters a broader vision for impact and transformation.

## STRATEGIES FOR RESPONSE

- Integrate information on promising practices, innovations in accountability with healing, and transformative interventions with people who cause harm into trainings and

professional development activities into trainings and professional development activities across City agencies

- With OCDV interface, develop cross-agency tools for gathering survivor, children, family, and/or community input on assessments
- With OCDV interface, develop cross-agency capacity to provide resources that enable wrap-around services and support behavioral change
- With OCDV interface, provide feedback on interventions for people who cause harm in order to enable integration, survivor safety, and further analysis on impact and behavior change

## RECOMMENDATION

- Building on recommendations from the NYC Domestic Violence Task Force, the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV) should coordinate across City agencies on integrating intimate violence risk assessments that include survivor, children, family, and community input when needed and enable linkages to comprehensive assessment services in order to ensure wrap-around services and appropriate interventions to people who cause harm

## RECOMMENDATION 17: INTEGRATE ABUSIVE PARTNER INTERVENTIONS WITH NYC DEPARTMENT OF PROBATION DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAMS

*You have to be around positive people. You have to be in a structured place where you're doing things to enhance and enrich your life. I have a very stern probation officer and that's what I need. She keeps me on track. I am honest. I get angry and frustrated. My probation has been a good thing.*

*I want to be a role model for the kids. The whole situation is beyond my control. Authorities make these decisions for you. Probation—they have my freedom — **Anonymous***

### GAPS

Probation services are a systems-rooted response based on mandates and coercion. And yet, even as participants often lament a loss of freedom, the structure of individual and group services can enable engagement, commitment, and change. Probation officers are at the front-lines—within an often-punitive criminal legal system—of enabling accountability with healing. In part, this is possible due to a recognition of intersecting oppressions and a commitment to community engagement. With the expansion of programming and a pilot project in Queens, the NYC Department of Probation (DOP) has an opportunity to continue to innovate with abusive partner interventions.

Furthermore, with the development of new frames for abusive partner intervention, DOP can continue to conduct comprehensive risk-need-responsivity and differential assess-

ments within 30 days in order to offer interventions tailored to each individual as well as foster participant relationships with community organizations and facilitate warm hand-offs to aftercare and long-term services. Through developing strong referral relationships, this systems intervention could embolden community responses to transforming cultures of violence.

### STRATEGIES FOR RESPONSE

- Integrate information on promising practices, innovations in accountability with healing, and transformative interventions with people who cause harm into DOP trainings and professional development activities
- With OCDV interface, develop DOP connections to community programs to enable long-term services and maintenance of behavioral changes

- With OCDV interface, provide feedback on interventions for people who cause harm to DOP staff in order to enable integration, survivor safety, and further analysis on impact and behavior change
- Engage with program participants who demonstrate interest in being a peer mentor or peer leader for possible service and voice on a borough advisory board for abusive partner interventions

### RECOMMENDATION

- Building on recommendations from the NYC Domestic Violence Task Force, the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV) and the Department of Probation (DOP) should coordinate to ensure that DOP's specialized domestic violence programming includes and fosters wrap-around services, aftercare, and community program participation for people who cause harm

## REFRAMINGS TOWARDS ACCOUNTABILITY WITH HEALING

*“In most neighborhoods that have people of color who are poor, there is a lack of funding for certain things. There’s not the after-school programs. We no longer have the places where the kids can go in the summer and use the schools as recreation places for the kids so now they have to be in the street. We need to have more services for our youth. We need to catch our youth at a very young age because the violence starts at a very young age as well. Schools to me is a major place to start at because that’s where you have the majority of kids going to be.” — Anonymous*

*“I believe that self-care should be taught in schools. And I think that coming from my circumstance of sexual violence, I think that having consent workshops in schools would be a huge thing because that was not a framework for me—I didn’t have that.” — Kimber*

*“Police still profile and target LGBTQ people. It’s more important to have services in the community. Trans women are getting profiled as sex workers. Because queer people are so targeted in the world, we need to have services reflective of the communities.” — Essex Lordes, National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs Coordinator, New York City Anti-Violence Project*

*“What policies are driving the work? How do we streamline? We need to have a holistic view and not get stuck in what someone’s role is. There has to be some degree of collaboration and feedback. At the other end is a family. I’m so hopeful we’re on our way to doing something great.” — B. Indira Ramsaroop, Senior Policy Analyst, Office of Clinical Practice, Policy and Support, Domestic Violence Policy and Planning, Administration for Children’s Services*

*“This work has shaped my life, my thinking. The shift I’ve made in doing this work is that a lot of these men come from communities of color where domestic violence is also part of the trauma. Men didn’t understand the violence they were perpetuating was like violence they witnessed as a child. Some men actually recreate experiences they lived through as children. They were actually re-living something.”*

*We need to change the mindset. We can create a safer environment for women and girls in our society. It’s not easy. Men have been given messages. It can’t change overnight.*

*Where does it come from? How can we intervene? How can we prevent? How are we teaching and restoring humanity? We need to inspire young people to think about themselves and relationships.” — Juan Ramos, Executive Director, Community Driven Solutions, Inc.*

