

SEEDING GENERATIONS

Supporting Survivors, Breaking Cycles

An Executive Summary
on Reframing Interventions for People who Abuse

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Seeding Generations: Executive Summary



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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).

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

- o Fostering an environment where participant has own stake in accountability, growth, community connection, and liberation
- o Ensuring API services operate in connection to survivors and/or survivor advocacy to further accountability and safety
- o 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
- o Integrating differential and risk assessments to align safety considerations with interventions responsive to each individual causing harm
- o Enabling case management and wrap-around services to support and maintain behavioral change

Element 2: Facilitation and group structure

- o Co-facilitation with gender and gender expression representation relevant to the population served
- o Relationship-building with participants with respect and honoring dignity
- o Allowing space for diverse learners while drawing upon fundamentals of adult learning or teen developmental frameworks depending upon population served
- o Enabling use of scenarios, role plays, and activities that enable practice for embodying transformation of behaviors
- o 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

- o Free programming
- o Transportation reimbursement
- o Geographical access
- o Flexibility in timing with services on evenings and weekends
- o 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)
- o Providing meaningful language access

Element 4: Fostering community connection

- o Linking to community networks to enable behavior change maintenance
- o 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

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

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

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

— 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

— 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

— 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

— 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

— 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

– 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

– 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

– 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

– 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

– 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

– 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.

— 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

— Recommendation 2

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

— 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

— 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

– 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

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

– 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

– 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

– 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

– 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

– 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



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