



YOU CAN DO IT!

SUPPORTING DV SURVIVORS IN HOUSING
AND HOMELESS PROGRAMS

Objectives

- Identify dynamics of domestic violence and safety strategies to support survivors
- Identify housing strategies to support survivor safety and stability
- Articulate the basic state and federal housing protections for DV survivors

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?!
(Y)OUR PEOPLE ARE
(Y)OUR PEOPLE



Funders (HUD and Commerce) Care!

- **CoC NOFA requirements:**

CoCs must demonstrate local efforts to address the unique needs of persons and their families fleeing domestic violence that includes access to housing and services that prioritizes the safety and confidentiality of program participants.

38%

of all domestic violence victims become homeless at some point in their lives.

Source:

Baker, C., Cook, S., & Norris, F. (2003)

Among mothers with children experiencing homelessness, more than **80%** had previously experienced domestic violence

Source: Aratani, Y. (2009)

In a California study, women who experienced interpersonal violence in the last year had almost **4 times the odds** of reporting housing instability than women who did not experience interpersonal violence.

Source:

Pavao, J., Alvarez, J., Baumrind, N., Induni, M., & Kimerling, R. (2007)

How does DV/SA lead to homelessness?


- DV is a leading cause of homelessness for women and children (families) in the U.S.
 - Survivors often must leave housing to escape DV
 - May be evicted due to abuser's behavior
 - DV interferes with ability to access housing - bad credit, poor rental histories, safety needs
 - Abusers may sabotage survivor's economic stability - trouble paying deposit, rent and utilities
- Disproportionate number of survivors of color among the homeless

The Stress of Housing Instability

- Homelessness is only one end of a continuum of housing problems faced by DV survivors
 - Missed or late payments for rent/utilities
 - Compromises: selling belongings or skipping food to make payments
 - Ineligibility for housing services due to credit, landlord, or criminal justice problems

Don't Forget the Children

- More than half of DV survivors live in households with children under 12
- 47% of homeless school-aged children and 29% of homeless children under 5 have witnessed domestic violence in their families
- Exposure to violence significantly impacts development, behavior, education, health, mental health, and increased risk-taking behaviors as adolescents and adults



RECOGNIZING DYNAMICS AND RESPONDING TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic Violence: The Dynamics


What you need to know

DV: Pattern of power and coercive control – includes much more than physical abuse

Abusive person's behavior - and anticipating it - often dominates survivor's choices and behavior – both to increase their own safety and to resist/cope

Survivors typically very isolated from supports

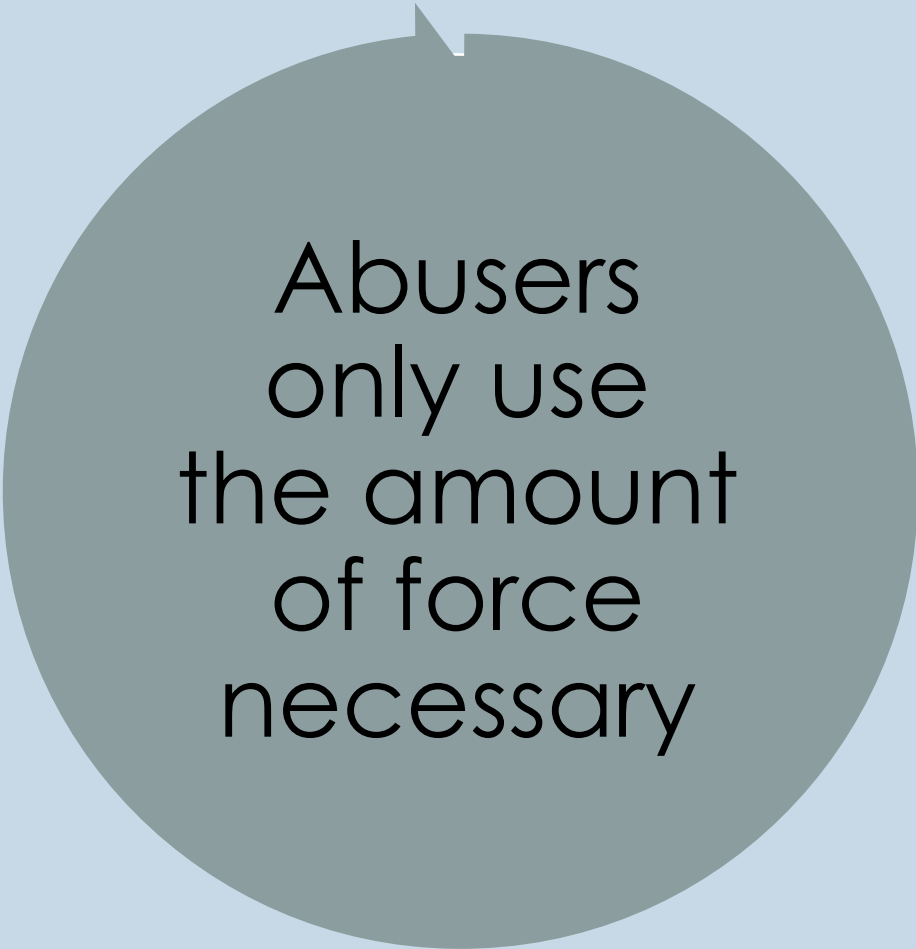
9 things to know about DV/SA



Coercion
and abuse
is about
power and
control

- Coercion and abuse is purposeful and intentional. Listen for that context!
- **Fundamental harm of abuse is losing control over your autonomy.**

9 things to know about DV/SA



Abusers
only use
the amount
of force
necessary

- They just use the amount needed to gain compliance.
- Partners are often manipulative and violent in ways that do not include physical violence.
- The behavior may look subtle to an outsider, but the tactics are deliberate.
- Any time we question a survivor's story, it gives the abusive person even more power.

9 things to know about DV/SA



Survivors
are the
EXPERTS

Your best
resource for
figuring out
what works
and what
doesn't


9 things to know about DV/SA



Past
abuse
MATTERS

- Impacts current decision making
- May have been worse than what she is experiencing currently
- Person causing harm may have seen father being abusive—behavior is normalized.

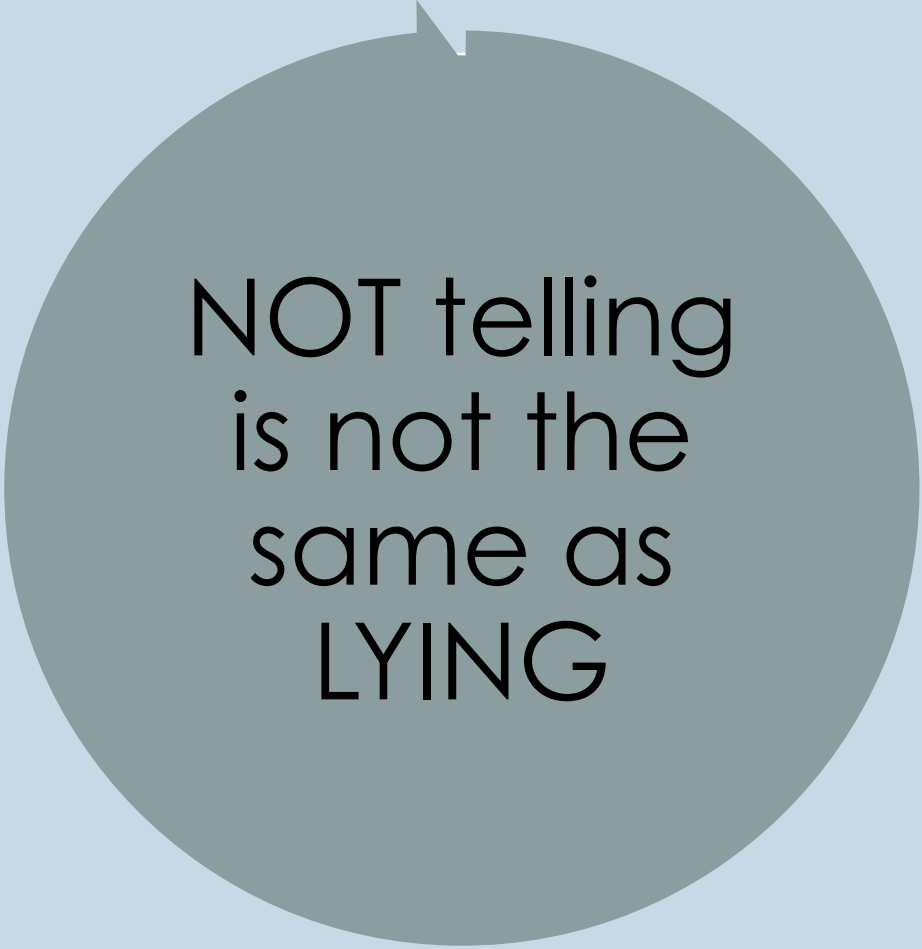
9 things to know about DV/SA



Forced sex
may be
the only
ABUSE

- Too shameful or embarrassing
- Believe that sex is owed/obligated – not see forced sex as abuse
- Gives in so something worse doesn't happen, or to keep partner pacified
- Abuse can be pressuring a partner to have sex to prove their commitment to the relationship

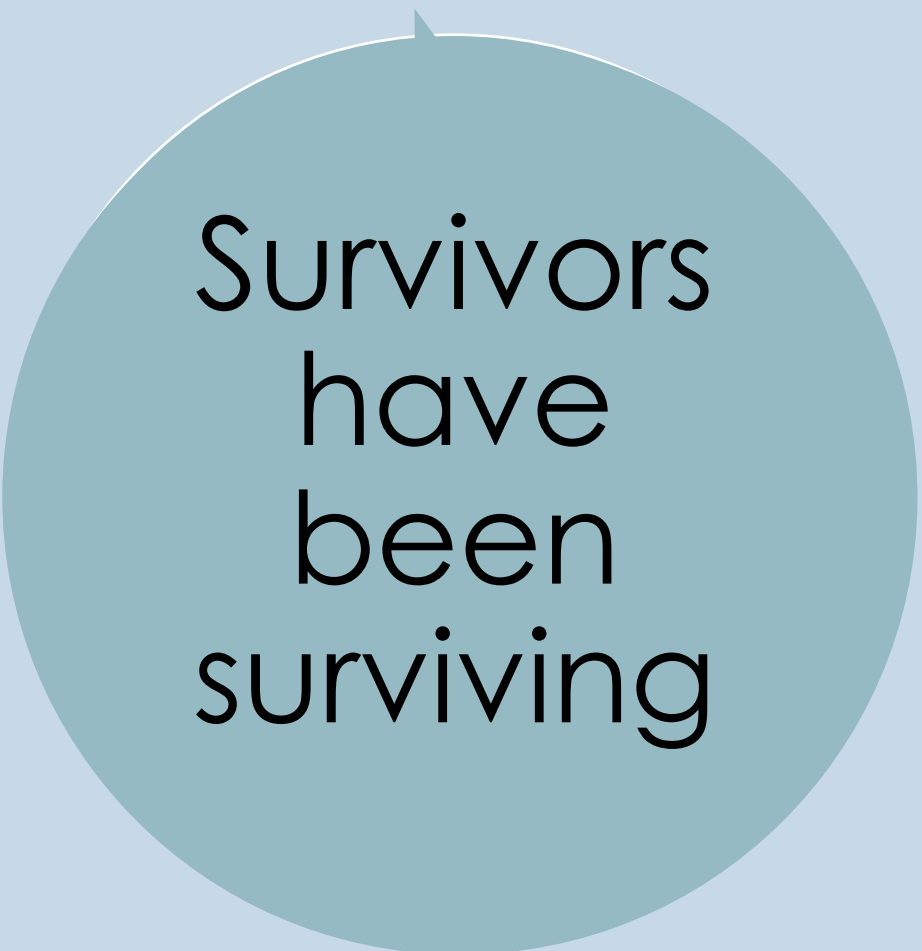
9 things to know about DV/SA



NOT telling
is not the
same as
LYING

- What is the benefit of telling you everything?
- What will you do with the information?
- Will the abuser find out what was said?
- No control over the information

9 things to know about DV/SA



Survivors
have
been
surviving

- Before we met them
- When we really listen to and believe a survivor's experience, we take power away from the abuser.

9 things to know about DV/SA



The best way
to SUPPORT
CHILDREN is
to SUPPORT
PARENTS

Resiliency research states that the best way to build resilience is to support the parent and child—to see them as linked.

9 things to know about DV/SA



Leaving
doesn't
equal
safety

Is having no
option to
leave making
a decision to
stay?

Start the Relationship

- Listen to the survivor and ask what s/he needs
- If the abusive partner is also a resident or housing applicant, do not have safety-related conversations with him/her present
- Remember that the survivor may use violence—in self defense or to regain control over their life
- Utilize your DV agency partnership—either as a referral or for consultation

How to make referrals?

- Support the survivor in making informed decisions by exploring all of the options available
- Encourage rather than require participation with a DV/SA agency
- Offer to facilitate making a connection
- Check in with the survivor consistently about their experience
- Advocate for the survivor as they request
- Be proactive and reach out to DV/SA agencies. Actively seek information and ask questions.

How to work together?

- Educate yourself about DV/SA
- Know your community resources & the various systems that impact DV survivors
- Understand confidentiality and information sharing constraints
- ROI
 - Make sure your ROI is current. Know that a survivor can revoke a signed ROI at any time.
 - Keep in mind that the DV/SA Advocate might not have an ROI signed. In which case they can only speak in general terms.
- Build relationships before you need them... reach out today!

What about landlords?

- Survivor-driven: where would they like to live, what do they want to disclose, what terms might be negotiable
- Flexible Financial Assistance can help! Possible to cover repairs or pay larger deposit.
- Community Engagement: relationships in culturally specific communities and with faith communities



SAFETY PLANNING

Understanding the Abuser's Role

- Does s/he have visitation?
- Was s/he the primary babysitter/transportation, etc.?
- Support vs. safety vs. isolation
- Is s/he sabotaging their efforts?



How Can Your Program Help with Safety?

- Have policies in place with your DV agency partner for emergent needs—build your relationships before you need them!
- Help the survivor with other safe housing resources within your program or another program
- Help the abuser with resources if s/he becomes homeless due to exclusion from the unit
- Don't judge or restrict the level of contact they might need to have with each other

Safety planning flow (a process not a product)



Conversations

- Safety planning is a process, not a one-time event or check list.
- Safety planning is tailored to the survivor's life and daily activities—each day may even be a little different.
- Ask the survivor what the abuser's power and control tactics are.
- Survivor activities and abuser's tactics will guide the safety planning process.



Reducing violent & coercive behavior is the priority

- Leaving may be a *strategy* but not *the* only strategy
- Understand the survivor's perspective and priorities
- Working with survivor to strengthen her safety plan
- Connect with dv/sa advocates for consultation, complex safety planning and help navigating systems



Housing Case Manager role and the safety planning process

The survivor's
perspective &
risk analysis
drives the
safety
planning

**Strengthen their
safety planning
by learning
what they do
now; what has
worked in the
past**

Build Trust

- Relationship Matters
- Understand risk
- Learn about external fears
- Identify opportunities to engage



Listen Differently



- See their risks
- Understand their priorities
- Reflect on their actions
- Check your understanding

Safe/Safer

Safe

No violence

Basic Human Needs
Met

Social and Emotional
Well-Being

Safer

Less violence

Reduced level, less frequent,
less control

Economic Stability
Increased

Fewer gaps in meeting basic
needs, more financial
resources

Well-Being Strengthened

More resilience to effects of
violence, emotional healing,
increased social supports,
reinforced cultural strengths

What makes children safer?

Violence
Prevention
and
Reduction

Economic
Stability and
Educational
Opportunity

Well Being
Strengthened

Capable
Caretakers

- Battered parent safer and supported
- Battering parent less harmful and more helpful

Survivor's risk analysis of relationship

• Abuser-Generated Risks

- What is life like with him?
- What is it like for the children?
- Who handles the money?
- Do you have access to a car?
- Do you have your name on the lease/house?
- Does he know how to use systems against you?

• Life-Generated Risks

- What is life like in the neighborhood?
- Can you make ends meet?
- Do you have access to healthcare insurance?
- What is transportation like?
- How much safe, affordable housing is available?
- Are there supports in your community?

Leverage Moments with Person Causing Harm

Follow their lead—
Should the
conversation
happen?

If yes

- Establish, Build & Maintain Rapport
- Identify supports
- Listen for shared goals

Do No Harm

- Whatever you say to the person doing harm may be used against the survivor
- Reduce isolation and build connections for survivor
- If possible, work with the person causing harm to mend or build relationships.
- **Your goal is to reduce violent and coercive behaviors.**



SCENARIOS!



HANDOUTS

HOUSING PROTECTIONS
PROTECTIONS FOR IMMIGRANTS
AND REFUGEES

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