

For Immediate Release

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“I learned how much I'm worth and my rights as a person and a woman,” said one domestic violence survivor in Illinois. “I have a better life together with my kids, and we live in peace and harmony.”

Contact:

Audra Fullerton
KCSDV Communications Coordinator
afullerton@kcsdv.org
o: 785-232-9784 c: 785-409-2006

Brian Namey
National Resource Center on DV
bnamey@nnev.org
202-251-9039

New National Report Unveiled: Local Domestic Violence Programs Address Comprehensive Needs of Survivors

Topeka, KS, February 16, 2012 – A new report released today documents that local domestic violence programs are meeting the needs of survivors.

“We are encouraged to find that local domestic violence programs are meeting the needs of the vast majority of those who seek their services,” said Dr. Anne Menard, executive director of the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence and co-author of the study. “This report affirms that local programs are having an important, positive impact but also that they need further support to respond more fully to what victims are looking for when they reach out for help.”

Meeting Survivors’ Needs through Non-Residential Domestic Violence Services & Supports: Results of a Multi-State Study was conducted by Menard in collaboration with Dr. Eleanor Lyon and Dr. Jill Bradshaw of the University of Connecticut School of Social Work with joint support from the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Highlights of the study results include:

- After seeking and receiving help, 95 percent of survivors were more knowledgeable about planning for their safety and more hopeful about the future.
- More than three out of four of the nearly 1,500 domestic violence survivors who used support groups, counseling, supportive services and legal advocacy found these services to be “very helpful.” The vast majority of other survivors using these services found them to be “helpful.”
- High correlation between services and supports “wanted” and those “received” suggesting that programs are meeting the needs of survivors in many areas; but there is room for improvement in meeting economic needs, legal advocacy needs, and supports for children.

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The study also found the state of the economy continues to have a negative effect on survivors. About 45 percent of the survivors reported experiencing financial difficulties, including many not being able to pay their bills.

“A struggling economy does not create domestic violence but clearly can exacerbate the severity and frequency of abuse, thereby increasing the demand for services at the local level,” said Lyon. “While domestic violence programs are often themselves facing financial hardship, they are clearly creating positive changes in the lives of survivors and their children.”

The researchers collaborated with programs across 4 states – Alabama, Illinois, Massachusetts, and Washington -- and with 4 culturally-specific national organizations and their associated programs. A total of 90 domestic violence programs distributed the survey to survivors who had two or more contacts with them over a 9-month period from April to December 2010. All participating programs provide services to women and men. While only 4% of the survivors participating were male, they identified similar needs and short-term outcomes as females.

This new data is in accord with the 2007 Kansas study, *Domestic Violence Victim Services Awareness, Use and Satisfaction Report*, by the Docking Institute of Public Affairs at Fort Hays State University which found that:

- About 91% of victims in Kansas indicate that their situation improved after receiving domestic violence services
- About 86% of victims indicate that the amount of violence decreased after receiving domestic violence services.
- Three areas in which Kansas women felt domestic violence services helped them most included: helping them to be ready to make changes to improve their situation (92.3%), feeling safer because of help received (91.3%), and using skills learned to improve her situation (91.1%).

A copy of the 2007 Docking Report may be found at www.fhsu.edu/docking/reports .

“The depth and breadth of services provided by Kansas programs and by programs across the nation is astounding,” says Joyce Grover, KCSDV executive director. “It is rewarding to know survivors are receiving quality services and the kind of services they need.”

A copy of the data released today including Study Executive Summary, Full Report, Fact Sheet and other materials can be found on VAWnet.org, the NRCDV’s online resource center, at www.vawnet.org/research/MeetingSurvivorsNeeds.

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Founded in 1982, the purpose of KCSDV is the prevention and elimination of sexual and domestic violence through a statewide network of programs providing support and safety for all victims of sexual and domestic violence and stalking, with primary focus on women and their children; direct services; public awareness and education; advocacy for victims; comprehensive prevention; and, social change efforts. Learn more at www.kcsdv.org.