

Safe Horizon's Lang Report:

# Beyond Shelter

## A Longitudinal Needs Assessment of Domestic Violence Survivors

Domestic violence takes a devastating toll on victims and their loved ones. Experiences of isolation, economic abuse, and financial dependence leave many victims without the financial and social resources to build a new life for themselves and their children.

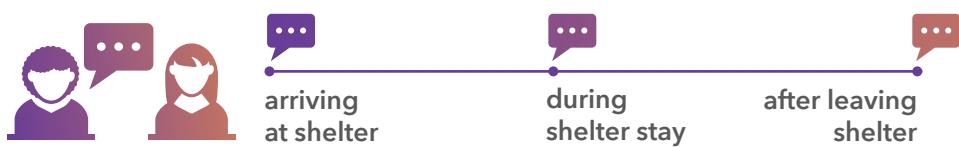
### GOALS

- To understand how Safe Horizon emergency shelters can better support residents to achieve self-sufficiency.
- To gain a better understanding of the after-care needs of survivors of domestic violence who have utilized Safe Horizon emergency shelters.
- To utilize findings to improve Safe Horizon's programming and inform policy changes.

### METHODOLOGY



INTERVIEWED 3 TIMES



**"Shelter is a safe, stable place for me to call home."**

-Lang Report Participant

For survivors in crisis, domestic violence emergency shelters offer a safe refuge. Shelters have been found to reduce the frequency and intensity of ongoing violence and to decrease depression.

### Did you know?



**25,000+** victims and their children are receiving emergency shelter services every day in the U.S. (NNEDV, 2014).



Every year **7,000** victims call the New York City Domestic Violence Hotline, operated by Safe Horizon, asking for shelter.



Safe Horizon operates 8 domestic violence shelters serving over **760** adults and **1,100** children every year.

# **Shelter works.**

But there is much more shelters can and should offer.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS AND FINDINGS**

### **1. Increase funding for shelter programs**

Shelter works. After entering shelter, 95% of participants experienced a decrease in abuse. In New York City, only 52% of hotline callers seeking shelter are linked to an emergency shelter space.

### **2. Improve access to trauma treatment**

Families need support in reducing trauma reactions. Upon entering shelter, 68% of participants met criteria for clinical depression. Upon leaving shelter, 56% of participants still met criteria for clinical depression. Upon entering shelter, 57% of participants met criteria for post-traumatic stress disorder. Upon leaving shelter, 37% of participants still met criteria for post-traumatic stress disorder.

- ▶ **Safe Horizon is enhancing mental health services in our shelter program through NYC's Connections to Care program, and by opening on-site mental health satellite clinics.**

### **3. Enhance financial literacy and job training**

Survivors need support to establish self-sufficiency. 81% of participants entered shelter unemployed. 71% of participants wanted a job or job training program.

- ▶ **Safe Horizon is piloting a brief trauma-informed financial literacy program in our shelters, and developing new partnerships with job training programs.**

### **4. Reduce barriers to affordable housing**

Survivors' number one concern is finding affordable housing. While 37% of participants were residing in their own home after leaving the emergency shelter program, 26% were living in homeless shelters.

- ▶ **Safe Horizon has hired a housing search coordinator who works with realtors and landlords to identify more affordable housing options for clients.**

### **5. Make it easier for survivors to maintain community and family connections**

Many survivors need and want to remain engaged in their families and communities. 67% of participants reported feeling emotionally distant or cut off from their support network.

- ▶ **Safe Horizon will advocate with city and state regulators to ease restrictive rules and pilot an open shelter model.**

## **Acknowledgements**

This project was made possible through the generous support of Safe Horizon Board Member, Joann Lang, her husband Todd Lang, and family.