Sojourn Services For Battered Women And Their Children
A project of OPCC

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Introduction to Sojourn

- 2nd oldest DV shelter in California
- Comprehensive services
  - Hotline
  - Shelter(s)
  - Legal/Welfare Assistance/Advocacy
  - Children's Program / Parenting
  - Support Services (Groups)
  - Education / Outreach
- Part of Los Angeles County continuum

Domestic Violence Defined

- Pattern of coercive control and abuse
- Physical / Sexual / Emotional-Verbal / Economic
- Clients often present with symptoms of trauma which include:
    - Substance Abuse
    - Mental Illness

- Affects all populations / all socio-economic
- Intimate Partner (includes same sex)
- Child Abuse (past or present)
- Elder Abuse
- Pet Abuse
- Sibling
- Child on Parent
- In-Law
- Prostitute
- Trafficking

OPCC

- One big DV agency
- Where did your life go off the rails?
- Which door did you enter?
- Sojourn is part of OPCC continuum

Statistics

- Differentiate between those who are homeless due to DV and those who are experiencing DV because they are homeless

- Domestic violence is one of the most chronically underreported crimes

LAHSA Homeless Count 2013

- 4.7% increase in those reporting DV as reason they are homeless

- In SPA 5, increase of nearly 47%

- In Supervisorial District 3, increase of 60%

NCADV

- The cost of IPV exceeds $5.8 billion each year, $4.1 of which is for direct medical and mental health services
- Annually, DV homicides and injuries cost $37 billion

SAMHSA (2011)

- Over 92% of mothers who are homeless have experienced severe physical and/or sexual abuse during their lifetime

- About two-thirds of homeless mothers have histories of domestic violence

Homeless Mothers

- Compared to low-income housed women, mothers who are homeless have:
  - Three times the rate of posttraumatic stress disorder (36%)
  - Twice the rate of drug and alcohol dependence (41%)
  - About 50% of homeless mothers have experienced a major depression since becoming homeless

Homeless Children

- Among homeless children, within a single year:
  - 97% move, many up to three times
  - 22% are separated from families
  - 25% witness violence
  - Children who are homeless experience higher rates of emotional and behavioral problems than low-income housed children

Safety First

- Assess to differentiate between:
  - Battered woman/children in danger of being killed if they leave
    - Reason DV shelters are in confidential locations
    - And there are lots of safety protocols
    - Batterers stalk and kill
    - Batterer will shoot everyone on the way to the battered woman
  - Woman with violent partner who won't care if she leaves

How DV Affects Housing

- Homeless women choose their area – don't want to move
- Many homeless people don't want to be in a shelter
- Women whose housing is in jeopardy because of batterer
- Women who have housing only because they hooked up with batterer
- Women stay with batterers to avoid homelessness
- Homeless women (on the street) choose to stay with violent partners as protection from everyone else

Scenario

- OPCC client presents with domestic violence AND
  - Homelessness
  - Mental Health Issue
  - Physical Health Issue
  - Substance Abuse Issue
- Assess what is the most pressing need?
- Consult with Sojourn
- Refer

Barriers to DV Shelters

- Location
- Time Limit
- Lock Down
- MH/SA
  - Current? (Meds?)
  - May be too severe
  - Lay staff working alone / Children in shelter

- DV victims cannot be entered into HMIS or any comparable data collection system

Empowerment Model

- Victims of Crime
- Trauma-informed
- Voluntary Services
- Client expected to accommodate funder
  - Full-time job / Permanent housing / Children's grades
  - Provider penalized for what client did not do
  - Historically oppressed/controlled, antithetical to empowerment model

Ancillary Services

- Support Groups
- DV 101- Knowledge=Power

Legal Issues

- Can get restraining order for homeless client
- Restraining order can be enforced
- Violations can be prosecuted

When There Is Nothing You Can Do

- Continue to monitor
- Communicate among staff and WITH client
- Other OPCC Projects can work with the batterer