SEEDING GENERATIONS

Transformative Solutions

Area 1 of 3
Reframing Interventions for People who Abuse

Report by **Purvi Shah**,
Consultant to the Interagency Working Group on
NYC's Blueprint for Abusive Partner Intervention (IWG)
and hosted by the Center for Court Innovation

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A report developed with wisdom from survivors of intimate violence and people who have caused harm, the Coalition on Working with Abusive Partners (CoWAP), Interagency Working Group on NYC's Blueprint for Abusive Partner Intervention (IWG), and tireless advocates in the field

With leadership from the project steering team and IWG members:

Liberty Aldrich, JD
Director, Domestic Violence and Family Court Programs, Center for Court Innovation

Kerry Moles, LMSW
Executive Director, Court Appointed Special Advocates of New York City

Hannah Pennington, Esq.
Assistant Commissioner for Policy and Training, Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence

Catherine Shugrue dos Santos, MSW
Co-Director of Client Services, New York City Anti-Violence Project

Manny Yonko, LMSW
Administrative Director, Office of Clinical Practice, Policy and Support, Domestic Violence and Policy Planning, Administration for Children's Services

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Graphic Design by **Samiha Amin Meah**, Center for Court Innovation

Copyediting by **Barbara Miller**, Independent Copyeditor

Report by **Purvi Shah**,
Independent Consultant
purviapip@gmail.com
I co-created this report, **Seeding Generations**, with collective wisdom but the findings presented here are my own.

With leadership from Interagency Working Group on NYC's Blueprint for Abusive Partner Intervention (IWG) members:

Bonnie Allen
New York State Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence

Joseph Alohan
New York Police Department

Tanya Apparicio
New York County District Attorney's Office

Amanda Beltz
New York Legal Assistance Group

Ana Bermúdez
Department of Probation

Mike Bobbitt
Department of Youth and Community Development

Marissa Brock
Chapman Perelman Foundation

Laurence Busching
New York State Unified Court System

Paula Calby
Department of Youth and Community Development

Alfreda Chinnery
New York Police Department

Addavail Coslett
Chapman Perelman Foundation

Marleni Crisostomo
Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence

Alexander Crohn
Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice

Maire Cunningham
New York State Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence

Liz Dank
Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence

Tandra L. Dawson
New York County Integrated Domestic Violence Court

Tracey Downing
Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence

Kaela Economos
Brooklyn Defender Services

Robert Eusebio
Department of Probation

Paul Feuerstein
Barrier Free Living

Bea Hanson
NYC Domestic Violence Task Force

Taryn Harris
Kings County Integrated Domestic Violence Court

Kristine Herman
Brooklyn Defender Services

Michael Hernandez
Administration for Children's Services

William Hogan
New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision

Beverly James
Administration for Children's Services

Mi-Haita James
Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Keston Jones
SCO Family of Services

Nazy Kaffashan
Children's Aid

Michelle Kaminsky
Kings County District Attorney's Office

Deborah Kaplan
New York State Unified Court System

Lawrence Lang
Power and Control Program

Joan Levenson
New York State Unified Court System

Sally MacNichol
CONNECT

Connie Márquez
STEPS to End Family Violence

Everett Miller
Staten Island Partnership for Community Wellness

Audrey Moore
New York County District Attorney's Office

Tuesday Muller-Mondi
Richmond County District Attorney's Office

Abraham Nelson
Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice

Cecile Noel
Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence

Enid Ocasio
New York Police Department

Lisa O'Connor
Safe Horizon

Kaylin Padovano
Children's Aid

Michele Paolella
Day One

Marie Philip
Human Resources Administration

Betty Pierre
New York State Office of Children and Family Services

Álvaro Pinzón
Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence

Raquel Pittman
Safe Horizon

Lisa Rachmuth
Human Resources Administration

B. Indira Ramsaroop
Administration for Children's Services

Jacqueline Reyes
New York Police Department

Liz Roberts
Safe Horizon

Terri Roman
Bronx Domestic Violence Complex

Audra Rossi
New York Police Department

Aurora Salamone
Department for the Aging

Danny Salim
Arab-American Family Support Center

Michael Scherz
Lawyers for Children

Saloni Sethi
Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence

Jenna Smith
Center for Court Innovation

Catherine Stayton
Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Audrey Stone
New York State Unified Court System

James Townes
Bronx Integrated Domestic Violence Court

Betsy Tsai
Sanctuary for Families

Ilana Turko
Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice

Ermira Uldedaj
Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence

Erica Willheim
Family PEACE Trauma Treatment Center

Michael Yavinsky
New York State Unified Court System

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May we collectively create change.

Warmly,
Purvi Shah

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FRAMING

> *Look at everything around us. It's economically depleted. You see these generations of violence. My father and my mom went through the same issues that me and my children's father go through. You have to understand community dynamics.* — **Lindsay**

> *Penmanship doesn't change because you change the pen. You might get away with abusing one person but what is going to happen when you get into another relationship? It's important for abusers to get help (counseling, group support, volunteer opportunities) that might be the only thing that can/will stop them from abusing someone again. That has the potential to change the pattern/trend of abuse and impact the way his generation is living.* — **Samantha Taylor**

We live in cultures where violence—from mass shootings to hate violence to interpersonal violence—surrounds us and infuses our communities, institutions, and how we live our lives. In the United States, the women's movement has made life-saving gains on recognition of gender-based violence and particularly in the need to support survivors of violence with services and criminal legal system responses.

Where we have fallen short is recognizing the power of reparative strategies and transforming the intersecting conditions that lead to violence. We have consistently invested in a crisis response frame while short-shrifting the long-term work of transformation.

With the collective wisdom of survivors, people who have caused harm, advocates, and community members, this Blueprint for Abusive Partner Intervention seeks to reframe our current frames of gender-based violence advocacy. By seeing abuse as a behavior instead of a person (i.e. person who causes harm vs. abuser) and utilizing the term "intimate violence" to include elder abuse, family violence, intimate partner violence, and women who use force, the Blueprint challenges conventional framings of gender-based violence while underscoring gender oppression and heternormativity in violence. The solutions presented here challenge the current narratives for survivors of violence including the imperative to leave to get services, the necessity of carceral solutions, and that intergenerational healing and wellness through breaking cycles of violence with people who cause harm is impossible.

There is a list of numbers for the victim. I haven't seen any services for the abuser so they can get help. I would like to see that being offered. It's so painful to see this is the norm. — **Iffat**

On a practical level, the solutions here connect people with each other—partners and chosen family, agencies and communities, professionals and community leaders, and survivor advocates and providers serving people who cause harm—with the knowledge that these categories overlap and our solutions need to work against such binaries and towards interdependence. The solutions here recognize that change is more than completion of a program, that people need to practice change and supports are vital for practice, and that prevention is part of intervention. The solutions here recognize that transformation happens in community and that programs must be accountable to survivors and culture change of violence.

The strategies here look to a liberation framework where people who cause harm have a stake and choice in their own growth, evolution, community connection, and liberation. This Blueprint envisions an architecture where stakeholders—not systems—lead the way.

With these complex solutions, the aim is not to sanitize violence or the real complexities of people's lives, systems, and behaviors. The goal is to acknowledge all of this and yet open up space to interrupt violence and cultures of violence. From this vantage, we can ensure connections of personal and systems accountability and transform the intersecting conditions that spur or enable violence.

To find transformation, we will need to go against the grain. I am personally grateful to have had my own assumptions challenged through the process of speaking with survivors, people who have caused harm, providers, and community members. In my 20 years of advocacy for survivors of violence—rooted in South Asian communities and communities of color—I too have advanced received wisdom such as mediation can't work, counseling can't work, batterers don't change. This year-long process of fostering participatory, transformative change has enabled me to re-examine such precepts and open up new strategies that give opportunity to heal from violence and be in healthy relationship and community.

Through the process, content, and format of this report, my frame is to enable reframings. My hope for this report—rooted in the power of transformative listening—is that it holds multiple realities and vantage points and keeps alive complexity. I aspire for this work to open conversations, facilitate concrete and actionable short-term solutions as well as enable visions where generations from now, we see an end to all kinds of violence. Working together, transformation is possible—and imminent.

Reframings on Abusive Partner Interventions and Ending Violence

Element 1: Transformative Solutions

- Fostering interventions for people who cause harm as a necessary part of supporting survivors and ending violence intergenerationally
- Mobilizing the wisdom of survivors of violence and people who have caused harm in fashioning solutions to ending violence
- Moving beyond carceral responses to localized, creative community solutions
- Resisting cultures of violence by addressing intersecting oppressions and cultivating culturally-specific, anti-ableist, anti-classist, anti-heteronormative, and anti-racist programming
- Focusing resources and evaluation measures on long-term culture shifts and prevention over short-term band-aids

Element 2: Holistic Services towards Transformative Justice

- Fostering a belief and a praxis that people can change and communities can transform
- Moving beyond punishment to accountability with healing
- Fostering wholeness through wrap-around services, whole family strategies, and re-entry programming
- Mobilizing innovations through trauma-informed, restorative, and motivational change practices
- Making space for voluntary services and peer mentorship models
- Investing in professionals and community members advancing this work through resources, training, and leadership opportunities

Element 3: Integrating Interventions towards Safety, Wellness, and Impact

- Fostering interdependence through team-based approaches and investments
- Investing in people, trainings, and collaborations
- Amplifying existing services through connection and integration

> *As important as it is to have a team dedicated to a survivor, it's just as important for that person who's perpetrating harm to have a team. They've been trying to do whatever it is they're doing—healing, harming, avoiding—on their own for so long. It's going to take a lot of different people to get through to them. Someone who perpetrates harm does not expect support.* — **Kimber**

METHODOLOGY

> *Programs need to have individuals running programs that are close to the problem. And we were talking about the fact that you have all kinds of people who want to do things to help deal with the problem but none of them experienced the problem. We need to have formerly incarcerated individuals running some of these programs and setting some of these policies. Policy is the big thing because policy sets where the money is gonna come from.*
>
> — **Anonymous**

As an independent consultant to the Interagency Working Group on NYC's Blueprint for Abusive Partner Intervention (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.

Because I wanted to ensure the voices of direct stakeholders—survivors of violence and/or people who have caused harm—I navigated a process for research approved by the Center for Court Innovation Institutional Review Board (CCI IRB). In 2017, I received approval both for interviews with direct stakeholders as well as non-profit and government staff. My IRB-approved research also included focus groups with non-profit and government staff to reach allied providers and include voices outside the IWG. Finally, I conducted program observations to ground my analysis in day-to-day work. As part of the research, I utilized American Sign Language interpreters for 2 research participants and a Spanish interpreter for 2 participants. All research participants selected how they would like to be identified—anonymously, by first name, by full name, and/or by name and title. In addition, research participants who requested review were sent their comments for inclusion in the Blueprint to ensure accuracy. Research participants will also receive a copy of this Blueprint if they indicated interest in receiving it. The collective wisdom of community stakeholders, practitioners, and program participants informs this Blueprint: it would not exist without their partnership.

Alongside the first-hand research, I led an interactive participatory change process with the IWG and members of the Coalition on Working with Abusive Providers (CoWAP). The topics of each meeting I facilitated are provided in the text box on the Blueprint Development Process. I am grateful to CoWAP and IWG members for your active participation and collaboration—you made this Blueprint visionary and actionable.

Finally, I worked to include voices at the table not always found in policy discussions—primary stakeholders, culturally specific service providers, and practitioners working in related advocacy and social justice arenas. My aspiration is that the Blueprint and recommendations gathered here will amplify a movement building and systems change approach and continue to center the voices of direct stakeholders and marginalized practitioners in order to transform systems and cultures of violence.

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

Blueprint Development Process

Element 1: Center for Court Innovation 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: Holistic Services towards Transformative Justice

- 4 visioning and action-mapping meetings with the IWG
  - Jan. 31, 2017: Mapping transformative interventions and linking prevention to intervention
  - March 30, 2017: Enhancing collaborations and coordinated response
  - May 18, 2017: Recommendations for abusive partner interventions
  - June 16, 2017: Recommendations for access & inclusion
- 4 visioning and action-mapping meetings with CoWAP
  - Feb. 21, 2017: Research on gaps in abusive partner intervention services in NYC, ways to fill gaps, and role of CoWAP
  - March 21, 2017: Mapping a story for abusive partner interventions
  - April 18, 2017: Enabling voluntary participants
  - July 18, 2017: Recommendations for abusive partner interventions

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

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.

Research Participant Overview

Element 1: Direct Stakeholders

- 31 research participants
  - 24 individuals who identify as survivors of violence
  - 5 individuals who identify as both survivors and people who have caused harm
  - 2 individuals who identify as people who have caused harm and who grew up with abuse/were bullied/faced community violence
- Borough representation included:
  - 10 based in the Bronx
  - 10 based in Brooklyn
  - 5 based in Queens
  - 4 based in Manhattan
  - 2 based in Staten Island
- Age ranged from 19-66:
  - 8 ranged from 19-29
  - 8 ranged from 30-40
  - 7 ranged from 41-50
  - 7 ranged from 51-60
  - 1 ranged from 61-66

Element 2: City and non-profit staff

- 74 research participants:
  - 12 from community-based organizations
  - 12 from government agencies working across arenas
  - 12 from legal and courts staff
  - 12 from non-profit agencies
  - 11 youth services providers
  - 8 abusive partner interventions practitioners
  - 2 elder services providers
  - 2 from law enforcement
  - 2 public health program clinicians
  - 1 clinician/researcher
- Borough representation included:
  - 6 based in the Bronx
  - 10 based in Brooklyn
  - 8 based in Queens
  - 2 based in Staten Island
  - 48 based in Manhattan including providers serving all boroughs

TRANSFORMING CULTURES OF VIOLENCE

For me it was more spiritual than anything. I think it was my faith in God and the individuals who are my teachers in that faith. A lot of my help came through them. And I also went to therapy for my acts of violence and the crimes I committed because I seriously believe something wasn't working right in my head for me to be that violent. Now granted, I grew up in a community and neighborhood where violence was prevalent. And it was at one point there that what I thought was going on in my community was the norm, when somebody would say, 'You shouldn't be doing that' but I would say, 'You don't live in my community. You don't understand how our community looks at that.' And then I looked around at my community. I recently took my granddaughter to one of my old neighborhoods that I had grew up at and I was showing her where we lived. As I was counting off where everybody, all my friends, lived at, I realized that all of us went to prison. That was in that community. Some of them are dead. Some of them are still alive. All of them had one thing in common: that we all ended up in prison at some point during our lives. Our community was set up from the beginning. A lot of us came from broken families, fathers who were drinkers, functional alcoholics. I saw a lot of violence growing up. I was exposed to a lot of street violence as well as violence in my own family.

— **Anonymous**

Violence emerges from violence, a spiral of intergenerational and community harms. In a web of connection, how do we explore the stitching of community violence, structural oppression, hate violence, intimate partner violence, and other manifestations of violence? And how do these explorations impact abusive partner interventions—and how we interrupt cycles of violence? How do we design programs and interventions for people who have caused harm based on an understanding of the connections between structural violence, state violence, community violence, and interpersonal violence? What would our interventions look like if we did?

The following Blueprint for Abusive Partner Interventions in New York City grapples with these profound questions by suggesting strategies that center survivors, long-term transformative solutions in addition to short-term crisis response, and community-led solutions focused on transforming behavior, norms, and human possibility. Part of the transformation strategy includes changing how we do the work: the strategies are all connected to community leadership in each borough. The solutions here seek to transform the relationships of communities to systems, inequity across and within boroughs, mobilize youth and community members over the long-term, and leverage media to foster access to services and culture change. The solutions here are hopeful—hopeful that we can serve more survivors and their families, hopeful that we can serve marginalized populations such as justice-involved survivors and LGBTQIA youth of color and deaf individuals, hopeful that we ourselves can see the work differently and make change in our own patterns of practice.

These strategies also acknowledge the deep contradictions of this work and still lead with a heartful humanity, envisioning that people have the power not only to change themselves but our communities, social structures, and entrenched norms. Joseph Maldonado, Men's Roundtable Co-Facilitator at CONNECT, explains, "Our socialization of boys and men and girls and women is really patriarchal and affirms men as subjects and women as objects. It's that socialization we have to interrupt. We know this country's history of genocide and structural racism. It's still a choice to abuse and that's really believing in the humanity of men. A choice to do or not to do. All of those different intersecting points of oppression are happening at the same time. Forms of oppression work in an interlocking way. To hold on to our humanity is to own every choice you make."

This is very important—the courts having an opportunity to exercise authority to mandate these kinds of programs which will make the abusers know beyond being told that they can't do this and they can't do that. That's just like a stop sign. But guess what? You just come to a stop sign for a second and then you continue down the road to the next stop sign. But in between those stop signs, they need to be forced, the court needs to mandate them to programs where they can begin to have a different kind of conversation about their own victimization that makes them abusers and to begin to see themselves outside of themselves in these scenarios. — **Ann**

Abusive Partner Interventions as Transformative Solutions

Element 1: Enabling expanded survivor services and responses to ending intimate violence

- Fostering survivor-centered solutions rooted in families and communities
- Minimizing systems violence such as incarceration
- Opening space for wholeness, connection, and community-led transformation of the conditions that lead to violence

Element 2: Shifting the questions—in addition to enabling safety, are we:

- supporting a survivor, family, and/or community?
- supporting accountability and healing for people who have caused harm?
- reducing violence across its forms?
- reducing oppressions?
- interrupting violence systemically, in communities, in families, individually, and/or generationally?
- enabling transformations?
- creating space for healthy relationships, connection, and love?
- fostering peaceful and healthy communities?

Element 3: Nurturing seeds

- Building connections among anti-violence advocates and providers of abusive partner interventions
- Nurturing connections with the gender-based violence movement to ending all forms of oppression
- Promoting healthy practices, envisioning peace, and reproducing wellness

I didn't have people to talk to about it but I don't think I had a sense of my own suffering.

I just had the numbness and the anger. I probably spent my entire 15th year contemplating killing my father, murdering him, like how can I get away with it? You know, which one of my friends could do this and they were on board. They were like, 'Just let us know when.' Because he was that kind of guy everybody hated and it was so hard because he gave me some of the most profound seeds I have ever had in my life.

So, there's this real, you know, just complete opposite ends of the spectrum—on the one hand, he probably instilled some of the most powerful values that I carry with me but on the other hand, caused some of the most horrific damage I've ever seen.

He instilled one of the most powerful seeds that I have to this day. The different seed—"you're different" for me shows up as responsibility, things that I can get to be responsible—to change the dynamics.

I get to be in that room. I get to have a seat at the table. I have all those experiences that I get to pull from and use with the men that I work with because I know that I'm not the only one sitting at that table that has a range of those experiences.

So how do I get to use my own experiences to forward other men and to call them to the forefront to be their higher self? To be there and to plant that seed of responsibility in them if they've never had it? And if they have had it, then how to identify it—how to see them.
— **Manny Yonko**, Administrative Director, Office of Clinical Practice, Policy and Support, Domestic Violence and Policy Planning, Administration for Children's Services

FOUNDATIONAL RECOMMENDATION:
RECOMMENDATION 1: CREATE 5 BOROUGH-SPECIFIC ADVISORY BOARDS ON ABUSIVE PARTNER INTERVENTIONS

> *Disabled people, trans people, gender nonconforming and non-binary people, people in poverty—when these peoples' voices get to make impact, change happens. It behooves service providers to listen to, and take into account, the lived experiences and needs of survivors of violence and oppression.*
> — **Deesha Narichania**, DV Coordinator at St. Luke's-Roosevelt Crime Victims Treatment Center

GAPS

A centralized, cookie-cutter New York City response to deliver abusive partner interventions has led to communities being left behind. An urgent need expressed uniformly amongst survivors, people who have caused harm, advocates, and community members is to go beyond a one-size-fits-all approach. Yet, how do we turn that urgency into reality? Systems are often set up to be uniform and consistent for the sake of efficiency. Such templates may facilitate scaling the work but have unintended impacts—including excluding many populations from services. "Most of the programs cost money and are in English only or sometimes Spanish. There's no access for people who speak other languages or who have hearing impairments," notes Kaela Economos, Community Office Social Work Director and former Social Work Supervisor, Family Defense Practice at Brooklyn Defender Services. When addressing intimate partner violence, elder abuse, and other violences, individual stories and needs matter—and a one-size-fits-all system cannot respond.

People living in boroughs outside Manhattan also suffer in the current template of services delivery. Jack Skelton, Relationship Abuse Prevention Program Coordinator at Day One, observes, "So many services are centralized in Manhattan." A borough such as Staten Island, with its geographic distance, has particularly been underserved—with no abusive partner intervention program currently available (this gap, however, will begin to be addressed in a new City contract that will be released in 2018). As a result of geographic isolation, individuals are forced to attend programs in other boroughs. "We're talking about defendants who can't pay a MetroCard. We're setting them up to violate a condition of their plea. This is a failure of the system," reflects Victoria Levin, Assistant District Attorney, Richmond County District Attorney's Office.

> *Any intervention has to be about developing leadership in the community stakeholders. That model is most successful. It can't be just after a problem has happened but before problems have happened. Create space so people will come.*
> — **Joseph Maldonado**, Men's Roundtable Co-Facilitator at CONNECT

The distinct needs from borough to borough and population to population can be more effectively addressed in a model where each borough has its own leadership, planning, and resources to address community needs. Even one program can have strikingly different populations depending on the borough. For example, the STEPS to End Family Violence Teen Accountability Program (TAP) classes in the Bronx and Brooklyn have group dynamics and needs that vary—linked to the economic and social context of the boroughs and communities living there. In the two TAP sessions I observed, each of the Brooklyn participants was in college or approaching it. The same educational access was not true for the Bronx-based participants. "What we know from doing this work is that we need a lot of different models in different communities. The problem is finding a model that's cost-effective, time-sensitive, and works. We tend to forget that most interventions have limited time in personnel and a high cost factor built in," summarizes one provider of abusive partner interventions. While this Blueprint advances an ethic of adequate investment in order to achieve results, it is also strategic to allocate limited resources and time by borough since a borough-based strategy enables different models while maximizing opportunities through being attuned to local needs and community strengths. In short, the work can be more effective—which also makes the investment meaningful. Furthermore, with the 5-borough Family Justice Center framework, the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence already has a parallel and organically-connected model. Additionally, the strategy here fosters borough-based community leadership with a mutual flow of ideas and information from community members to government and non-profit staff—allowing for deeper community involvement and say in services. Finally, through sharing strategies, promising practices, and resources, this community-led investment can deepen effective collaboration across boroughs and spur field-building in partnership with the citywide Coalition on Working with Abusive Partners (CoWAP).

A borough-based structure promotes the community connections that enable our ultimate long-term goal to end violence. By having the voice, investment, and leadership input of direct stakeholders, practitioners, and community members in each borough while coordinating promising practices across boroughs in partnership with CoWAP, a rigorous services provision framework can emerge alongside work to build community power and

transform cultures of violence. In this way, a borough-based strategy enables local needs to be addressed, specialized community-based services to be provided, and to foster creative, community-led solutions while facilitating coordination, collaboration, and promising practices. Such a mechanism can circumvent entrenched systems, a need that Christina Curry, Executive Director at the Harlem Independent Living Center, eloquently describes: "We can talk in creative ways. But the system doesn't think that way. It's entrenched. They are not hearing. They are not listening. They are following a path invented in the 60s and that's how they're investing. It doesn't work." The borough advisory boards offer a structure for listening, coordination, and actionable change based on the input of stakeholders.

This model of borough advisory boards setting priorities embodies more fully key values of community leadership, interdependence, and facilitation of multiple solutions. The borough-based strategy led by an advisory board comes closer to a framework of emergent strategy over mechanized professionalization. It is also a powerful bridge-building opportunity. As Sharlena from Voices of Women points out, "The courts should have more integration into actual community." A borough-based set of advisory boards could make such partnerships a reality—and begin to problem-solve services limitations more effectively.

Changing how we do the work—by enabling communities to lead—is also a fertile ground of innovation. Through the way this borough-based strategy is conducted—in collaboration with communities as well as agencies and providers—we can begin not only to work in crisis but to cultivate long-term solutions. "We want to prevent and challenge the social norms to end violence. We consider it part of our mission to end violence. If we can help change the patterns that lead to that violence, we should do that. And do that as a community," states an advocate and leader of TAP.

Finally, implementing a process for community and stakeholder involvement allows for voices not usually found at policy and decision-making tables. In order to enact meaningful access and relevant services, we need direct stakeholder voices and input. Furthermore, an advisory board process ensures services do not stagnate and that programs can be reviewed routinely for efficacy. In a city with

> *Just being a part of something that is so publicly needed, something that will shape lives, change lives. If you need me for anything, please call me. Anything.*
> — **SaSha**

rapidly changing demographics, resources, and needs, that capacity to be flexible is an asset and facilitates responsiveness to needs and emerging needs. The aim of this architecture is to provide an ongoing site and process for enhancement of interventions with people who harm—until we end violence. As Henry Algarin, Program Director at Brooklyn TASC, observes, "This has to be continuing. It's not going to be solved overnight. It's not going to be solved with your recommendations. It's just a start—planting a seed too."

STRATEGIES FOR RESPONSE

- Mobilize community leadership and community-led strategies with borough-based advisory boards
- Integrate field development, promising practices, strategies, resources, and collaborations through borough-wide participation in CoWAP
- Enable ongoing partnership, needs assessment, flexible programs, specialized and culturally specific services where no borough is isolated
- Ensure each borough's programming can be accountable to communities and advance promising practices for interventions while nurturing local innovations, solutions, and long-term strategies through ongoing advisory board input
- Facilitate the capacity for a credible messenger and community action team through involvement in the borough advisory board

RECOMMENDATION

- 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

RECOMMENDATION 2: ISSUE 5 RFPS FOR CITY-FUNDED PROGRAMS TO ENABLE 5-YEAR BOROUGH-BASED PROGRAMS FUNDING

> *We need realistic strategies working with these cultural groups where people want to keep families together. How do you work with couples who want to keep the family together? It needs to be culturally sensitive. They want more services for their partners. They want to stay together. There aren't enough programs in Queens. It really is difficult to get services in one's language.*
>
> — **Anonymous**

GAPS

"The competition for resources is just really damaging," reflects Michele Paolella, Director of Social Services and Training at Day One. In the movement to end violence, we know services for survivors are too few. We see the battles over funding for prevention versus interventions. We also encounter the framing of abusive partner interventions as "taking away" of resources from survivors. As Margarita Guzmán, Deputy Executive Director at Violence Intervention Program, Inc., explains, "It's a scarcity mentality. We don't want to lose resources. Which means we don't have enough responses."

A scarcity model does a disservice to all survivors who seek to have more solutions than separation and ending relationships. Furthermore, a scarcity model reinforces the marginalization already experienced by under-resourced populations. "My leaving mainstream intimate partner violence work and going into LGBTQ work made a shift in my thinking," shares Catherine Shugrue dos Santos, Co-Director of Client Services at the New York City Anti-Violence Project. "I had believed all the myths that they were batterers—that that's what they were. That we were throwing money down a hole if we funded APIPs and that it was dangerous. In a framework of exclusively patriarchy, that made sense. But I didn't fully understand privilege, power, and intersecting oppression. Yes, I understood how it impacted survivors, but not how it impacted abusive partners, too many of whom were experiencing oppression and trauma every day."

There are other ways to frame the need and funding for a variety of responses. "We need to absolutely address that issue head-on: this is not a cut in services for survivors and kids. We need to think of it as prevention and just a justice thing. How we should treat people and give

> *Government intervention shapes the work when it's really about transforming our behaviors. It appears that the City government is really trying to establish a structure and centralize the modality being used in the city, and move toward NYC certification of these types of programs. In doing that, we can lose a lot of creativity as well as cultural and community aspects needed, moving away from one-size-fits-all approaches. It can also endanger survivors and give them a false sense of hope and limit their autonomy on what accountability looks like. We need community models outside the criminal justice system. The Mayor's Office also represents money and resources to the field. A lot of that plays a role in the menu of options/alternatives we have available to interrupt and prevent these cycles of violence.* — **Quentin Walcott**, Co-Executive Director, CONNECT

them a chance to get better," remarks Liberty Aldrich, Director, Domestic Violence & Family Court Programs at Center for Court Innovation.

We have an opportunity here to deepen our contexts for justice—and efficacy. These false resource divides limit the spectrum of necessary services and approaches to ending violence. The false resource divide limits efforts to increase resources to all aspects of the work, keeping us in a state of constant crisis response and inability to sustainably innovate or address long-term needs—which would eventually reduce the level of crisis response needed.

One part of the work doesn't have to suffer for another to flourish: we can lift all boats by more strategic and amplified investments. The Blueprint funding strategy presented here offers opportunity for each borough to respond to community needs, seed necessary services and programs with community input, and enable medium-term funding in a 5-year model. In this vein, a borough can offer a range of prevention, intervention, and community-led solutions—and that mix can vary by borough to address local needs, stakeholder concerns, and resources available.

Separate borough-based RFPs for City-funded programs can address borough-specific needs and communities—such as the language diversity in Queens. An advocate from Garden of Hope, which serves the Chinese American community, indicates a dire need for language access in abusive partner programs, noting, "They couldn't find services in the community. They just sit there and stare at the presenter. They don't have language capacity."

Not only are certain boroughs sidelined but marginalized populations—including indi-

viduals who primarily speak languages other than English, LGBTQIA people, and disabled individuals—are not given adequate attention and resources to serve their communities. In a model where consistency and scalable structure is the norm, underserved populations do not have meaningful access to services. A funding model with a more decentralized structure allows for the most marginalized to provide leadership—as well as gives direct stakeholders an opportunity to shape services and programs based on community needs and values.

Paul Feuerstein, President/CEO of Barrier Free Living, speaks to the importance of culturally specific services, saying, "We attempted to start some services for deaf abusers but deaf people didn't want to talk about it. The level of abuse in the community is so great that it's hard to come to grips with it. Or for individuals who are deaf, the services don't exist. Having specialized services for the community is a priority."

In addition to specialized services, advisory board input in developing borough-based RFPs for City-funded programs can grow community partnerships as well as field coordination and collaboration through partnership with the Coalition on Working with Abusive Partners (CoWAP). Borough-based City funding streams can also foster space for partnerships with community-based organizations to deliver vital services and programs. Having community input and presence is also a community engagement strategy and assists in reaching populations. "We need local community organizations providing services—someone who's a reflection," indicates Gene A. Johnson, Jr., Mediator and Facilitator. With a borough-based funding strategy, we can build further programs that meet the needs of more communities while fostering increased capacity for sustainable long-term change.

STRATEGIES FOR RESPONSE

- Utilize the development process for RFPs for City-funded programs to foster community connections, integration of services, and connections between the work—prevention and intervention, mainstream and culturally specific, and survivor-centered and whole family approaches
- With input from the borough advisory board, release RFPs for new City-funded programs for abusive partner interventions connected to survivor safety, healthy relationships, and family wellness
- With input from the borough advisory board, release RFPs for City-funded programs unique to each of the 5 boroughs in order to address community needs and enable innovative programs and community partnerships

> *A social worker can't be everything in the community or outside the classroom. That kind of transformative change can't happen in half of one day of the week. We need to make an investment in that kind of change.* — **Kimberley Moore**

- With input from the borough advisory board, include guidelines for culturally specific and specialized services within each RFP for City-funded programs
- Foster sustainability with flexibility by enabling 5-year funding streams within each borough
- Integrate coordination and collaboration across boroughs by facilitating participation in CoWAP as part of each City-funded contract

RECOMMENDATION

- 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: FUND LONG-TERM AND COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION INTERVENTIONS

He cooks now. Either we'll cook together or he cooks before I get home or cuz he watches the kids in the house. And so, he'll do it before I get home or when I get home and he'll make sure they're bathed and make sure whatever they got to get done, they do, they clean up. He wants to spend more time with them now and do family outings and you know I try to tell him, 'OK, we're separated now so you could just take the kids and go. You don't need me there anymore.' And he doesn't like that. He still wants to do things together.

He's like, 'But I'm trying. I'm doing this and I'm trying to make you happy.' But when I see certain things happen—that he gets frustrated—and I still see a glimpse of the old him and I'm like, it's just going to take time to heal. It's just going to take time for him to learn how to really deal with it in another way besides suppression.

He took me out for my birthday on Sunday and he still wanted me to have sex with him and I had to really be firm with him. It took a lot from both of us because I really didn't want to do anything. He was trying to force me—I got a bruise on my hand because he was trying to force me to have sex with him. This is why I see you still have a long way to change. — **Janice**

GAPS

"The time frames in which we have to work are a drop in the bucket," expresses B. Indira Ramsaroop, Senior Policy Analyst, Office of Clinical Practice, Policy and Support, Domestic Violence Policy and Planning at the Administration for Children's Services.

One significant struggle in abusive partner interventions is the problem of time. How long should a program be? What happens after a program is finished? How do participants incorporate learnings or behavior modifications? And crucially: what is the environment that supports them in maintaining behavior changes?

Across the board, providers noted the current programming timelines are insufficient to the outcomes desired, including behavioral

I believe that even though harm is awful, that it is a part of life. But it is often said that change is a part of life. Therefore, I would hope that a person who perpetrates violence can overcome that desire to do something different. It matters to me because sexual violence has permeated my life not only as a perpetrator but also as a victim. I need to believe that it is possible to change. I have witnessed a lot of change in my life. But it's very insular. The change that comes from being your own support system is not very long-lasting. — **Kimber**

change and healing of trauma—and the healing of trauma that enables behavioral change. "You want to fix something that is profound and complicated and deep but you don't want to spend too much time and money on it. Twenty-six weeks is not enough to change behavior. It is enough to begin," observes Erica Willheim, PhD, Clinical Director, Family PEACE Trauma Treatment Center at New York-Presbyterian Hospital. "In other countries, there's no such thing as a 26-week group. There's a 2-year program in England. It really is that serious. You're changing a profoundly wired-in behavior. It's in the body. Trauma is remembered and repeated in the body so you have to practice being different. You have to practice every day."

While a number of interventions for people who cause harm are even less than 26 weeks, in New York City, a number of court-mandated 26-week programs exist. These programs predominantly serve heterosexual men of color, including individuals experiencing poverty or a lack of documentation status—a fact noted in one of the groups I observed, as a participant, looking around the table, commented, "I didn't know until I went through the system. It's a sea of brown and black and one white guy who's Russian. If you don't have capital in this country, you don't matter. If we had money, we wouldn't be here in this program." Quentin Walcott, Co-Executive Director of CONNECT, verifies, "Mostly poor people and people of color end up in the batterers programs. Others go to therapy and individual counseling." In addition to manifesting systemic oppressions, including racism and classism, current interventions for people who cause harm are not designed to include and be safe for queer, trans, and women participants.

In this particular program session I observed, a co-facilitator deftly moved the conversation to validating that reality of racial and socioeconomic inequity while reinforcing intimate partner violence is also a reason everyone is in the room. He also noted that the men in the room have an opportunity to heal themselves and repair their relationships, an opportunity to heal family dynamics and grow—forced or not. As another abusive partner interventions program facilitator describes, "You have them for 26 weeks. They're a captive

audience. It can be positive and it's up to us to take advantage of that. There is an opportunity for us to provide a safe space for 26 weeks. It's the beginning of transformation to see a healthy relationship. There are opportunities."

In the programs I observed with effective frameworks, revelations and transformation can happen within a session. But what happens when participants leave the room? Learning and incorporating learnings is not the same thing. As Sharlena from Voices of Women professes, "I feel that if somebody would like to have the choice to do, it should be an ongoing process—not something that's maybe eight hours. It should be at least 6 months to a year in order to make that a part of a lifestyle." Lifestyle change is crucial and difficult even in 26 weeks. "Twenty-six weeks is not long enough for behavior change. If we had funding, I'd love to have a second phase group. It provides them with a certain structure and safety they may not have another place," notes Nazy Kaffashan, Program Director at the Family Wellness Program at Children's Aid.

Outside of the complete lack of programs serving most marginalized communities, part of the structure missing in current abusive partner intervention programming is aftercare—or an extension of the services in a different format to help codify program take-aways and incorporate change. "Where is the place to continue having the conversation? Many want to seek help and change behavior but need the outlets. We are that community response to constantly hold them accountable and see themselves. But what happens when that reminder is gone? What side do you see again?" asks Albery Abreu, Abusive Partner Intervention Specialist, Family Wellness Program at Children's Aid. Walcott crystallizes, "For batterers groups, the community has to support it to truly work."

Change is a process—and practitioners underscore support is necessary. Enabling supports that can be sustainable and flourish in communities opens spaces for people historically marginalized or traumatized by systems including women who use force and disabled, immigrant, limited English proficient, queer, and trans people causing harm—including to elders, children, and relationships outside of intimate partners. "People actually need support to change. I wonder how can those services be more inviting and match the incident that took place," ruminates Essex Lordes, National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs Coordinator at the New York City Anti-Violence Project. "How would we have spaces for support in community? How do we have the services readily available to people who are not going to identify as an abuser or criminal? How do we have services not within the systems? How do we pull back the intervention and put it in more communities? How are you meeting the needs in communities?"

Some concrete strategies to ensure the abusive partner interventions New York City has can be effective are to 1) fund them fully (which also eliminates the need to charge participant fees); and, 2) enable longer-term programming such as aftercare and community-supported programming.

"As far as a buddy system, it would help out. A lot," Jamel Hooks Jr. articulates. "You're going to fail. It's not easy. You have to sit down and breathe and practice every day."

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The call for longer-term services in interventions for people who harm is inextricably connected to fostering community leadership in ending violence. Our goal is not to offer endless streams of services endlessly but to resource communities to address violence before it begins—even if that vision will take generations.

Community members can facilitate change in an everyday way that programs cannot. Going to a program once a week is not the same as living in a community day in and day out. And the work of engaging change from a community context involves knowledge, resources, and skills. One model relevant to the work to transform gender-based violence is Cure Violence, a violence prevention program that leverages young men of color as "credible messengers" to stem gun violence. The model has been proven to be effective in reducing violence while mobilizing economic, leadership, and community health gains. Gun violence, the violence of poverty, and gender-based violence are related. As Juan Ramos, Executive Director at Community Driven Solutions, Inc. underscores, "There is an epidemic in our community and we play a role in that and we can play a role in ending that. Violence against women is another symptom of men's violence."

In fact, community-based credible messengers can reach where mainstream programs and interventions cannot. "Community engagement work is just beginning to be more valued. It's a specialty and a skill set," notes Eric L. Cumberbatch, Executive Director at the Office to Prevent Gun Violence, Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice.

The transformation of enacting violence to coaching others to end violence is a profound strategy in ending violence. As Lindsay shares, "I live in the Bronx and a lot of times around my area, a lot of men are so gang-affiliated or aggressive or just not a positive role model. To be able to provide them with somebody who might be more level-headed and more responsible is a huge, huge thing."

Again, this transformation takes time. And volunteering—serving as a credible messenger—is itself a violence interruption strategy. Samantha Taylor offers, "There's always volunteering and that's great but then that's at the tail end of the experience. It is unwise for an abuser to volunteer when he/she has not passed the hump or the hurdle of understanding why they behave the way they do—what's the root of their abusive nature. Volunteering is definitely a good thing. It fills up an emptiness you feel inside based on my personal experience. When you go through something traumatic or when you cause something traumatic and you get the help that you need, it changes your life for the better. Counseling has the power to re-center you and plant your feet on higher grounds. There is a lot of power in understand-

ing who you are, why you did what you did, how to not do it anymore, and how to move from a dark or hopeless to a bright or hopeful place. When you've seen your personal growth and you gain understanding, you're giving the opportunity to say, 'You know what, I've either caused harm or someone harmed me. However, I'm alive and I'm improving daily and I no longer seek to hurt.' That reminds you of where you came from and motivates you. It also guides your thoughts and helps you to stand your ground—it prevents you from desiring to go back to that awful state of mind or relationship. In teaching and guiding others, you're teaching and guiding yourself too. It's a win-win situation: you're helping someone and you're helping yourself at the same time."

Fostering community leadership and enabling the development of credible messengers is itself an aftercare and long-term violence interruption strategy. Community involvement in ending violence creates a space for purpose, legacy, and intergenerational healing. "We don't ever outgrow the age limit of mentoring each other," Ramos remarks. "Men listen to other men. As men, we like to think about what legacies do we want to leave behind. We're concerned about your overall wellness and really grabbing men's hearts. Grabbing their hearts makes them see they too benefit from changing this. We also want to invest in your well-being. We want to build communities where healthy families exist."

Clinical interventions and formal abusive partner intervention programs are vital. And, if we want to end violence, we must transform hearts, spirits, minds, and community networks. As Cumberbatch shares, "We can't be scared to talk in a way that is more holistic. We're not connecting with people at the deepest level. I've seen what change looks like. It's a spiritual path. Healthy people will have a healthy neighborhood will have a healthy community."

STRATEGIES FOR RESPONSE

- Enable programming and interventions that build on current 26-week programs
- Foster community-based interventions and supports for participants who have finished programs as a short-term maintenance of behavior change as well as long-term prevention and transformation
- Mobilize community leadership and credible messengers to activate community change
- Invest in long-term, community-based prevention and social change responses that address the intersecting conditions that lead to all kinds of violence

RECOMMENDATION

- 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 FOR DEAF AND OTHER STUDENTS

The majority of people don't think that way of accessibility. I haven't seen much change—just the players change. Different location, same discussion. I cannot be the only deaf person in New York City and yet I'm the only one that's called to the meetings. There have to be others at the table. Deaf LGBTQ are not invited. I'm so pessimistic of getting noticed and invited. — **Christina Curry**, Executive Director, Harlem Independent Living Center

GAPS

We wait to address violence after it happens. We don't build out networks to involve more voices—and pool additional strategies and leaders to end violence. And we sideline populations including young, LGBTQIA, and deaf people.

We can address some of these gaps and both intervene with and prevent violence through augmented investments in the NYC school-based Relationship Abuse Prevention Program (RAPP). In particular, developing a program that works with deaf students would include a population that is unserved—and build bridges to other youth while setting up positive behavioral practices. There is a demand: as one RAPP coordinator informs, "Young people really want to know how to be in healthy relationships." Despite a significant curiosity, one social worker shares that social emotional learning opportunities are slim, saying, "We need to educate young people how to identify their emotions: our urban youth are not getting that."

More opportunities for youth-based services would correlate to early lessons in defining healthy relationships and behaviors. "Over 12 years of law enforcement, the one thing I've always noticed is it starts from home. There's a lack of positive guidance within many of the high recidivist cases that I held or had," New York Police Department Sergeant Joseph Alohan offers. "More has to be done on a teenage level: teaching how do I identify a healthy relationship or an unhealthy relationship—to set people up for the most successful nonviolent relationship possible."

Michele Paolella, Director of Social Services and Training at Day One, underscores that working with youth enables a proactive response to nip violence in the bud: "Looking at prevention and what that means is a gap. In that

there is a moment when power and control take root, there's a moment before that." Enabling additional RAPP spaces can help foster new norms preventing violence and embodied behavior towards healthy relationships.

The RAPP structure of support contrasts with school responses that may focus on discipline and suspension and contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline. Or school staff may work in a way that is not trauma-informed. "There's a lot of slut-shaming that happens. If teachers just say, 'You shouldn't be sending these pictures anyway,' it sets up an environment where students can't talk about experiences," one RAPP Coordinator at Day One relays. "Students feel validated in RAPP space. That's something they don't find within school or communities generally." Amplifying why a shame-based approach isn't effective, Jeimi Burgos, RAPP Coordinator at Day One, notes, "When you only focus on what someone has done with shame, it makes them learn to do things undercover. They're taught not to do things but not that they're doing things because something's wrong, that there's trauma still there." Colleague Jamila Hinton, RAPP Coordinator at Day One, concurs and notes that the intervention has to include relational frames: "Most staff-initiated interventions come from a place of shame. The basis of respect for a young person's agency is missing. Most of the interventions have to focus on inner/outer work instead of just behavior change."

RAPP is a vital space for much-needed support and intervention particularly for LGBTQIA youth beginning to explore relationships and their own sexuality—often in environments that squash openness and re-inscribe heteronormative relationships. "There are so few out queer and trans youth, there is a stranglehold to maintain relationships," notes Jack Skelton, RAPP Coordinator at Day One. Underscoring that marginalization leads to lack of mentorship, community supports, and vital interventions, Kimberley Moore explains, "There is a lot of voyeurism around queer and trans relationships. Young people in these relationships are not encouraged to be critical of patterns. There is more physical violence and less support."

In a parallel context, Burgos attests, "In a lot of cultures of color, there is a taboo of talking about relationships." Not only is RAPP a vital space for LGBTQIA youth and youth of color (and LGBTQIA youth of color), it is also a space where program participants may speak to abuse in the home—without automatically triggering court and law enforcement involvement. Paolella explains, "People are afraid to go get help without assurance of confidentiality. The relief and the shift is really palpable. For some youth, offering alternatives would increase help-seeking behaviors. There's more opportunity without requiring the criminal justice arm."

In fact, RAPP is a beautiful model of fused prevention and intervention work—which are often the same coin. "You're changing the nature of a violent society by individual work. It's a big internal struggle. As a clinician, I love to work through contradictions. I think that's

really powerful," attests Tao-Yee Lau, RAPP Coordinator at Day One. Part of the power of RAPP is its potential and demonstration of new strategies for intervening with and ending violence. "We need to have a container to incubate culture change," advises Essex Lordes, National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs Coordinator at the New York City Anti-Violence Project. "Schools are spaces to incubate alternatives. Culture change is super important and possible with youth."

Such school-based strategies could blossom further community-based responses and stem the pipeline to criminal legal systems. "Young men of color are institutionalized before services are offered or they are incarcerated—we need to learn how to invite before indicting. There could be interventions and preventive services offered in communities that signal zero tolerance or norm change before going to court—such as mandating going to a Wellness Center," observes Juan Ramos. Or as Skelton remarks, "Young people shouldn't be locked up. That shouldn't be an intervention." Paolella crystallizes, "We're talking about breaking down oppressions."

Opportunities for youth prevention and intervention can have immediate and life-long impacts as community members attest. "Starting young, starting with high school kids—I feel like what helped me a lot was my after-school program. If more kids had that, a lot of crime as a whole would be decreased—just having something, a place where you can go to and feel safe and be able to talk to people as well as make money to be able to afford to go to school every day. So that's a big plus—starting with them as young as possible."

STRATEGIES FOR RESPONSE

- Initiate abusive partner interventions for deaf communities through a RAPP program that works with deaf students
- Expand resources to enable further RAPP programs with attention to queer and trans youth and communities of color
- Foster community-based youth services to address violence without criminal legal systems involvement

RECOMMENDATION

- Expand Relationship Abuse Prevention Program (RAPP) in schools including a pilot program for a) deaf students as well as b) students of color, disabled students, immigrant students, LGBTQIA students, and/or girls

He went to like social work, therapy, couples therapy—he went to a lot but it was too hard because the ones that he went to, I guess they weren't like licensed *licensed. They were just people there that he could just run to and talk to but they weren't really helpful at that moment.*

He was like a femme type. He would wear a lot of feminine clothes. And they would not take him seriously. They would be looking at him like, 'Oh well, maybe if you stop dressing this way, maybe if you stop dressing that way, your family would accept you.' When I felt like that was the wrong thing to say. Like everybody has their own preferences—they should dress the way that they want, walk around the way that they want. And the counselor that we had was very homophobic so I felt like if he was homophobic, he should have just…I don't know. I just feel like if you know the place that you're going to work at there's going to be LGBT people there, then you should know how to treat them because they're already going through enough on the outside. And if you don't feel like you can treat them the right way, you shouldn't be working with them at all. They didn't take him so seriously. They felt like he was just kidding around until when he committed suicide. Then I went there and I was like, 'Do y'all think he was kidding?' They were like, 'No. We apologize. We wish we could have dealt with it in a better way.' But I said it was too late—it's too late to take whatever you said back. I feel like if they were more understanding and more cautious of the LGBT youth that he could have still been alive and still trying to do better. — **Shamel**

RECOMMENDATION 5: CREATE IMPACT EVALUATION PROCESSES AND DATA COLLECTION TOOLS TO CHART BEHAVIOR CHANGE, TRANSFORMATION, AND COMMUNITY WELLNESS

> *Even the detective said, 'Zebras don't change their stripes.' In the big picture, if we're saying abusers are not going to change, is that a constant? Is the responsibility then put on the abused instead? That's so weird. And I don't think anyone is immune from being an abuser or abused. There might be some predisposition but I don't think that there's a certainty. Just to know you can change is the big thing. There are times people told me I couldn't change. How destructive that thought process is. Obviously, it takes work and how great that there are services that can facilitate that.* — **Anonymous**

GAPS

We work in a field where there are life and death consequences. One intimate partner violence homicide is too many. As a result, many systems are focused on risk assessment and safety for survivors. Within the arena of abusive partner interventions, the commonly-held belief is that abusers can't change. This vantage has been informed by research but practitioners question the scope of the research and its framework. "The big barrier still out there is they don't work, they don't work," says one advocate. "It's frustrating. Everyone says they don't work. People don't even really understand how to look at the research. There's so much research to be done." A City employee concurs: "The research is really unsatisfying. You'll get a couple of papers on this topic and the subject goes dead and then basically makes the same criticism and not a lot of promising practices."

The focus on evidence-based practices has been narrow in scope, arising from concerns about lethality and measuring recidivism. Such an approach has put advocates and abusive partner intervention practitioners in a defensive stance. "The consequences of not acting are so horrifying that our ability to think creatively has been constrained," observes one City employee. "There is a hunger for understanding of evidence-based practices. There aren't a whole lot of interventions that point to a silver bullet."

In part, the research has often been a mismatch from community and movement-

building goals and criminal legal system and research models. "We don't have a quantifiable risk assessment that is structured in line with our values," states Catherine Shugrue dos Santos, Co-Director of Client Services at the New York City Anti-Violence Project. "The common risk assessments are focused on fatality and we're not only interested in lethality. Most have only been tested with cisgender women, predominantly in heteronormative relationships with cisgender men who have abused them." Furthermore, the goals of abusive partner interventions have focused on course completion and measuring recidivism, which does not actually measure a decrease in all kinds of violence, behavior change, or increase in wellness. "We have to look beyond recidivism rates because that's only physical violence—which is a disservice to survivors," observes Quentin Walcott, Co-Executive Director of CONNECT. Furthermore, practitioners indicate the research reflects programs with flawed design: "'People can't build empathy' is irresponsible to say as abusive partner intervention program providers," observes Manny Yonko, Administrative Director, Office of Clinical Practice, Policy and Support, Domestic Violence and Policy Planning at Administration for Children's Services. "You can't just put people in a chair and scream at them. I know that's putting a survivor at risk."

Practitioners in the field seek to have effective programs but gauge efficacy in different terms and timelines and in a format that considers the timespan of interventions, noting again the need for long-term behavior change supports. Furthermore, practitioners seek greater qualitative texture. "There are additional ways to do research like asking, 'How did that impact your life?'" observes Terri Roman, Project Director of the Bronx Domestic Violence Complex, adding that we also need to know why people did not finish programs. "The reasons people get terminated are important."

In bridging the desire for evidence-based practices and values of transformative, inclusive work, one City employee asks a crucial question: "How do you apply evidence-based practice models that are about honoring and validating the individual?" Practitioners have a few responses. "What's happening in that relationship? The first step is to have an actual assessment to see," remarks Rita Abadi, Clinician and Operations Manager, Sexual Assault and Violence Intervention Program at Mt. Sinai. Furthermore, advocates seek new measures focused on behavior change and resocialization: "We weren't measuring transformation. We need to resocialize ourselves to feel healthy and display emotions," notes Juan Ramos, Executive Director at Community Driven Solutions, Inc. "We don't give anything up by being this type

> *There is a point where you have to let go and a point where you have to run for your life.* — **Samantha Taylor**

of man." Outside recidivism, practitioners seek measures and research that connect to behavior change, health impacts and community belonging, and social transformation of gender norms.

We have an opportunity not only to design programs differently but invest in more meaningful evaluation. After all, recidivism measures are not only restricted to physical violence but are also usually captured in short time frames of 2-to-5 years. We need evaluation that will look at lifetimes and at intergenerational impacts. We need not only a numbers frame but an impact frame which would further long-term solutions. "We've all lost clients here to homicide and suicide. Everything is weighted towards identifying that risk," shares Margarita Guzmán, Deputy Executive Director at Violence Intervention Program, Inc. "The vast majority of DV relationships are so far from that and so destructive. The majority of homicides had little or zero criminal legal history. How do you even find them? If you're a community member, we need to build capacity for people to see."

Guzmán demonstrates the critical importance of community interventions alongside agency-based services. A diverse set of approaches, as well as measures, is necessary. As Michael Scherz, Director, Domestic Violence Project at Lawyers for Children, observes, "It's a tall order that generations of violence can be addressed by some folks in a room and a facilitator." We do need to measure program efficacy. And we need to align the measures with the program purposes while fostering a range of interventions—within agencies and communities. As a City employee suggests, "Everybody wants evidence-based programs. How do we know that's a good investment? We have to stick out our necks and say we're going to try something. We have to be evidence producers. As an Administration, that's the scary thing to do." The time is ripe to realign our practices and measures with our values—and become evidence-producers through new programs, strategies, and transformative solutions.

STRATEGIES FOR RESPONSE

- Foster assessment tools that, alongside risk, assess needs and strengths
- Expand risk assessment tools to attune to the needs and contexts of underrepresented communities including women who use force and LGBTQIA communities
- Foster evaluation systems that measure behavior change, community impact, and interruption of intergenerational violence
- Build out connections between agencies and communities in order to more effectively address risk and have community input on health and wellness measures

RECOMMENDATION

- 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

Programs can't afford evaluation. Most batterers intervention programs are not fully funded and yet we're applying this medical research model.
— **Juan Carlos Areán**, Program Director, Children and Youth Program, Futures Without Violence

RECOMMENDATION 6: FUND A MEDIA CAMPAIGN FOCUSED ON INTERRUPTING CYCLES OF VIOLENCE

> *So, we live in New York City. It's a lot of fast-paced things going on, a lot of entertainment media. I think relationships these days start much earlier than maybe other locations, even before the teenage years. And at that point, I feel we should address the community on a community level—just to strike that conversation of approaching what a relationship looks like—not what they might see or hear. And community organizing is key for that so other people can be involved—the elders can be involved cuz they import a lot of wisdom.*
> — **Sharlena** from Voices of Women

GAPS

We have had a number of public service campaigns targeted to survivors to reach out for services and to say there is no excuse for abuse. But a similar media strategy for people who cause harm is lacking. In addition, much of the messaging is shame-based while centering carceral responses and not pitched to inspire voluntary outreach for services. Not only is there a gap in interventions that focus on behavior change, there is a gap in advertising for interventions for people who harm. A media campaign could help contextualize violence happens, what it looks like, motivations for change, and the City resources available.

Furthermore, media often perpetuate the divides present in our society. "A lot of visuals and media are very white," notes Yumnah Syed, Coordinator of Evaluation & Training, Institute for Adolescent Trauma Treatment and Training at Adelphi University and former Youth Empowerment Advocate at Sakhi for South Asian Women. Additionally, the representation of communities of color—particularly black and brown men (the majority of individuals mandated for abusive partner interventions)—is often negative and racist. "Everybody has a boiling point. Being poor, racism, being disrespected in every form. You show up in

> *They misunderstand who they are outside of the media.* — **Jamel Hooks Jr.**

> *The key messages for a public service campaign are: 1) this happens and it's not as private and covert as we think it is; and, 2) there are ways you can get help within your context and conditions you are living in.* — **Quentin Walcott**, Co-Executive Director of CONNECT

the media always being portrayed as violent," explains one City employee. "Life can be really hard for the families we work with. It would be responsible for us to take the holistic approach to understand the whole context."

Outside of broad social messaging, the field of abusive partner interventions itself needs media support and information-sharing. "There's a nervousness to work with this population due to a lack of accessible literature. Since they don't see it enough, they can't envision it. We don't know what it looks like to work with men or services with abusive partners," observes Albery Abreu, Abusive Partner Intervention Specialist, Family Wellness Program at Children's Aid. Having more field tools and shared messaging on the work itself could open doors to more practitioners as well as range of responses.

Whether field materials or public campaigns, what is clear is we cannot ignore media and their impact. Not only are media connected to modes of abuse but media's power can overshadow our services. As Gene A. Johnson, Jr., Mediator and Facilitator, observes, "Social media is hard because it becomes an echo chamber and reinforces what you believe in." For this reason, one particularly productive strategy that STEPS to End Family Violence utilizes in its Teen Accountability Program (TAP) is analyzing media and engaging media as teaching tools. One TAP group session I observed utilized media tools—and participants were engaged in the lesson and able to identify issues of power and control and violence. Media provide a crucial platform for learning.

We can support creation and dissemination of media for utilization of services, intervening with people who cause harm, and creating messaging so youth inform and educate each other as a teaching tool among peers. As an advocate and leader at TAP states, "If there's a hope of ending violence, we need to work with these young men to educate them and challenge the social norms that lead to patterns of abuse and violence."

And we can also use media to create a community working together to end violence. Sarah Pantaleon suggests the City can foster media that promote open conversations: "Maybe some sort of a talk show—talking about family and relationships, how important it is and then you know, maybe at the end of the show, people could give the information for places that you could go and talk to someone in anonymity. You don't have to tell the name. You just have to call and talk to someone. Some of the people, at least in my ex-husband's case, he was trauma-

tized as a child. He never had the opportunity to get therapy. And he has a lot of shame—and that shame changed into anger. And although as a survivor myself and victim, it's hard to forgive him, I need to empathize because he's living in his own hell in his mind. So, maybe a radio show, a talk show. Maybe the City has some channel that they can have and people coming forward who have been a survivor or abuser who are very brave, who don't mind to tell their story and how they have overcome. They can come and talk and share their experience. Humans connect with each other through their own pain and problems so if someone who feel so much shame can see others, that he or she is not alone, maybe that will help them to reach out for help."

STRATEGIES FOR RESPONSE

- Foster a public service campaign connected to opportunities for anonymous, agency-supported, peer, and community behavioral change
- Frame media tools and products with a motivational change focus with the message that support is available and change is possible
- Foster youth and community-led media tools and campaigns to mobilize credible messengers and link prevention to intervention to intergenerational change

RECOMMENDATION

- 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

"I mean it's very important that the person recognizes that they need the help. Because you look at how long it took my husband to realize it and he was refusing to get to help because he didn't see himself that way—just because he didn't hit me and you know he just saw it as I wasn't a battered wife even though he has hit me. Since it wasn't often, he didn't see it as that situation. So, I think it is important for the person to first recognize that they have the problem because it's just like an addict. If an addict doesn't realize that they have a problem, they're not going to want the help or be open to it. So, I think that's the first step." — **Janice**

REFRAMINGS TOWARDS TRANSFORMATIVE SOLUTIONS

"People need support to be non-violent. Strangely the movement to end violence never talks about nonviolence…or peacebuilding. What if we all made a commitment to nonviolence. What if we actually studied the great teachers of nonviolence? Sadly the movement to end violence has replicated the violence of white supremacy/male supremacy and capitalism. We're so committed to power and control without realizing it." — **Sally N. MacNichol**, Co-Executive Director, CONNECT

"We have the power to change the nation behind something like this you know. I keep seeing younger and younger and younger people—both gay and straight—have to deal with domestic violence somewhere in their family. It's scary but it's still a reality. It's still very much prevalent in our communities. You know I go to an SRO every single day and cops are either leaving or coming from my building—someone has physically assaulted somebody, a couple fighting—and other than being in the system, there are no outpatient programs where somebody can learn their way. But if they set it up instead of incarcerating—because incarceration I believe only progresses a behavior, there really is no rehabilitation there—and when you allow a person to get to the bottom of those fears, things start to change. Things start to change."
— **C. Delaine Dixon**

"Being in this work saved my life or I would have been on the other side of the table. That is the thing I hold on to that lets me know behavioral change is possible." — **Manny Yonko**, Administrative Director, Office of Clinical Practice, Policy and Support, Domestic Violence and Policy Planning, Administration for Children's Services

"I want to consider the work in a liberation framework as opposed to just violence intervention. I want to think what does liberation look like and how can we adjust and reframe things to that goal as opposed to just make somebody safe—which is impossible. As opposed to investing in or supporting someone's liberation. I feel like we have such an investment in safety and violence interruption but why are we stopping at interruption? What does safety even mean? I think people think liberation sounds so much more unwieldy and non-definitive than safety but I don't think that's true. I don't think that's true. I don't know what it means to be safe but I do think I can know what it means to feel liberated and embrace the vulnerability in that process."
— **Margarita Guzmán**, Deputy Executive Director at Violence Intervention Program, Inc.

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