Housing and Domestic Violence: Support Options for Survivors of Domestic Violence

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- ICADV was founded in 1978 by 12 domestic violence organizations.
  - Today, there are 53 member agencies throughout Illinois.

- Our Mission:
  - Provide statewide leadership as the voice for survivors of domestic violence and the programs that serve them;
  - Change fundamental societal attitudes and institutions that promote, tolerate, or condone domestic violence;
  - Ensure that women and children have knowledge of and access to all services and opportunities endeavoring to provide these services locally.
What is Domestic Violence?

- Domestic violence is a pattern of coercive control that one person exercises over another.
  - The abuser seeks control in whatever form(s) it takes
    - Physical violence
    - Verbal abuse
    - Emotional abuse
    - Economic abuse

- The Cycle of Violence

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Homelessness and Domestic Violence

- Domestic and sexual violence are the leading causes of homelessness nationally, especially for women.
  - Up to 100% of homeless women have experienced domestic or sexual violence at some point in their lives.
  - Life Generated Risks vs. Abuser Generated Risks

- Housing issues for victims: safety, housing discrimination, credit and employment issues.
  - Barriers for leaving an abusive relationship
Safety Planning: Increasing Safety for Victims in Homeless Shelters

- Listen to victim concerns
- Is this person safe in your facility?
  - Refer to a domestic violence shelter
- Are you serving the victim and the perpetrator?
- Are you able to assist in designing a safety plan?
  - Increase safety, reduce risk, and prepare for future incidents
  - Do not place responsibility for future violence on the victims
  - Keep plan updated
Domestic Violence and Confidentiality

- Illinois Domestic Violence ACT (IDVA) and confidentiality
  - Releases of Information
- Ethical concerns around Confidentiality
- Safety Concerns
Screening for Domestic Violence

- Dedicate an private area for screening (if possible).
  - Clients may be afraid, embarrassed, or angry
  - Privacy and confidentiality are key
- Look for “Red Flags”
- Create normalcy – “because we understand abuse often effects our community, we ask everyone coming in about domestic violence.”
- Be patient
Screening for Domestic Violence

- Ask culturally competent, non-judgmental questions
- Examples:
  - Within the past year, have you been hit, slapped, kicked or otherwise physically hurt by someone?
  - Does your partner threaten or control you?
  - Has anyone forced you into sexual activities that made you feel uncomfortable?
Domestic Violence
Exclusion from HMIS

- Domestic violence agencies that receive HUD funding do not enter client information into HMIS.
  - Agencies use ESNAPS
  - Special accommodation for victims of domestic violence
  - No personal/confidential information is entered

- Information through Infonet

- An abuser may stalk and track their victim through technology
  - Using relatives and friends or local agencies
Continuum of Care
Coordinated Assessment

- What is required? How do we make it safe?
  - Each COC needs to create a Coordinated Assessment System (CAS)
  - Victims are not excluded from this system: consideration should be given to keep them safe
    - Includes: domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and/or stalking
  - Domestic violence agencies are not required to use HMIS
Continuum of Care
Coordinated Assessment

- Considerations when creating CAS
  - Safe assessment options
  - Immediate, secure shelter in an emergency
  - Screen for domestic violence
    - Training for staff
  - Survivor friendly
  - Domestic violence agencies working with homeless assistance providers
Illinois Safe Homes Act

- This law was enacted in 2008, with an additional Amendment in 2010.
  - Ending a lease early
  - An emergency lock change on a rented property.
  - Challenging an eviction if the eviction
  - “A credible, imminent threat of harm”
  - Seek assistance with Legal Aid
 Illinois Safe Homes Act

- In central Illinois, a victim of domestic violence was able to use the Safe Homes Act to break her apartment lease.
  - Sharing an apartment her physically and verbally boyfriend
  - She sought help and moved into a new apartment on her own, signing a year lease
  - Her found out her location and started harassing her by driving by her apartment
  - She no longer felt safe in the apartment
  - She was able to end her lease early by giving a written notice to her landlord
Violence Against Women Act 2013

- VAWA 2013 maintains VAWA 2005’s housing safeguards, expands the housing programs to which the law applies, and adds new protections.
  - Survivors of sexual assault and LGBGTQ survivors
  - Evictions and subsidy terminations
  - Safety moves with Section 8 vouchers
  - Permits lease bifurcation
    - If not possible, the landlord must give the tenant reasonable time to find new housing
  - Expands documentation options
  - Addresses what landlords may do when there are conflicting certifications
**Programs covered in VAWA 2005:**
- Public Housing, Section 8 vouchers, Project-based Section 8, Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly, Section 811 Supportive Housing for People with Disabilities

**Programs added with VAWA 2013**
- Section 236 Multi-family rental housing, Section 221d3 BMIR, HOME, HOPWA, McKinney-Vento, Rural Development MultiFamily, Low-Income House Tax Credit (LIHTC)

**Documentation**
- Self-Certification
- Police, Court or Administrative
- Statement from third party
Evictions and terminations
- Cannot be based on being a survivor
- Crimes against the survivor “directly related” to the abuse are not grounds for eviction
- Evictions that demonstrate “actual and imminent threat”

VAWA covers people who are subject to:
- Domestic Violence
- Dating Violence
- Sexual Assault
- Stalking
- “Affiliated Individual” of the victim
Connecting with Your Local Program

- Partner with the domestic violence program in your area.
  - Training opportunities for you and your staff
  - Create a screening tool in conjunction with your local program
  - Visit [www.ilcadv.org](http://www.ilcadv.org)
    - A list of programs available
References & Contact Information

- National Housing Law Project
- National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty
- National Network to End Domestic Violence
- National Alliance to End Homelessness

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