

MEETING THE NEEDS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SURVIVORS IN DANE COUNTY

Domestic Abuse Intervention Services (DAIS) collected information in 2015 that assessed the needs of domestic violence victims and survivors in Dane County in order to inform strategies for community collaboration and program planning. Feedback from three main stakeholder groups (domestic violence survivors, community partners, DAIS staff and volunteers) was gathered from a total of 216 individuals through one on one in-person and phone interviews, focus group, and written and online surveys.

DAIS is among a fabric of organizations seeking to address the needs in the community and will continue to fulfill its mission in advocating for social change by connecting with others in order to provide a continuum of care to those affected by domestic abuse in the Dane County community.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT KEY FINDINGS

- Dane County is meeting many of the most highly ranked pressing needs facing victims and survivors.
- In-person support is needed immediately in a crisis as well as on an ongoing basis.
- The need for basic needs assistance outpaces the availability of these resources.
- Language access is an essential component of the community's ability to meet the safety and support needs of survivors.
- Housing access is a community-wide issue that remains the largest barrier to safety for victims and survivors of domestic violence.
- Strategic communication throughout the community on domestic violence and resources available is needed to reduce the highest barriers to accessing needed services.

SURVIVORS SERVICES AND SUPPORT NEEDS:

Survivors were asked to identify the most important support services that they needed to achieve safety immediately after experiencing domestic abuse or to achieve long term healing. The greatest needs indicated were:

1. Support groups for adults
2. 24-hour domestic violence help line
3. Legal advocacy services
4. In-person support and safety planning
5. Emergency shelter

ADDITIONAL POINTS OF INTEREST:


- The emotional toll of domestic violence, as well as societal pressures and the community's lack of understanding of the issue were identified as the top barriers to survivors when reaching out for services.
- Findings from the needs assessment indicate that there is a need for an advocate to be immediately available to provide intensive support to victims and help navigate the numerous systems during a crisis.
- Results from all three stakeholder groups indicate that emergency shelter, transitional shelter, and low income housing are all resources in which need outpaces availability in Dane County.

WHAT'S NEXT:

The new DAIS building, open since August 2014, has already provided opportunities to work more effectively with community partners on site at DAIS to make services easier to access on site at DAIS to make services easier to access for the victims with whom we are working.

As DAIS moves forward, it continues to build an organization that operates from a position of strength and stability. DAIS is developing a service continuum to help victims become free of violence in their lives. DAIS is enhancing the cultural competence of our organization and prioritizing the hiring of bilingual staff. DAIS is also expanding prevention programming to promote a nonviolent community.

It is not up to one agency to end the epidemic of domestic abuse. It is crucial that the Dane County community continue the conversation around domestic abuse to ensure information is available about services and so it is realized that fear and stigma are still strong barriers to victims as they consider reaching out for help.



"I cannot express enough thanks to each of you for the years of support. I am the woman I am today because of you."