



Featured in this issue: Domestic Violence Shelters

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From the Executive Director

As someone who has worked in this field for more than 30 years, I have had the privilege to watch residential and non-residential services develop and evolve into full-service, holistic programs committed to the empowerment of all victims of intimate partner abuse.

Despite those circumstances, a strong commitment to inclusion and cultural competency prevailed. Domestic violence programs in our state are leaders in this work, standing out across the nation as responsive to the needs of all victims and continuously transforming to ensure that inclusivity remains a priority.

This issue focuses on domestic violence programs and shelters, through the feature article Looking Back, Looking Forward, by Catherine Hodes, and a Q&A exploring the creation of Domestic Violence Shelters in New York State by OPDV Staffer Deborah Vogel.

Although much has changed over the past several decades, what remains, regardless of time or place, is the reality at the heart of OPDV's vision: that all people should be free to live with equality, dignity and respect, and to feel safe in their intimate and family relationships.

As always, I thank you for your continued partnership. I wish you a safe and wonderful fall and a peaceful start to the upcoming holiday season.

Signature of the Executive Director

New York State Domestic and Sexual Violence Hotline Data

Funded by OPDV, the New York State Domestic and Sexual Violence Hotline is staffed by trained counselors who provide crisis intervention, supportive counseling, information and referrals, and technical support to callers: victims, service professionals and concerned family and friends.

Hotline staff does not collect identifiable information, but they do track general data to ensure that services and resources are meeting callers' needs. OPDV summarizes and shares key data points annually. The 2016 data sheet details some of the services and requests the hotline responded to last year.

The hotline number is: 1-800-942-6906. Deaf or Hard of Hearing callers should dial 711.

1 Hotline staff responds directly to Spanish speaking callers. For all other callers of limited English proficiency, staff uses LanguageLineSolutions to provide interpretation services.

1-800-942-6906
NYS Domestic & Sexual Violence Hotline

Confidential • 24 HRS/7 DAYS
English & español, multi-language
Accessibility
711: Deaf or Hard of Hearing
In NYC: 311 or 1-800-621-HOPE (4673)
TDD: 1-800-810-7444



SUNY's Got Your Back

SUNY's Got Your Back is an initiative of the State University of New York (SUNY) that provides backpacks filled with personal items and information about domestic violence resources to survivors of domestic and sexual violence.

Did You Know...

In 2015, a total of 34,430 adults and 6,313 children received non-residential domestic violence services, while residential programs served 5,678 adults and 5,907 children.

Source: 2015 NYS Domestic Violence Dashboard.

# Looking Back, Looking Ahead

[Catherine Hodes](#), former supervisor/director of [Safe Homes Project of Good Shepherd Services](#) in Brooklyn

## In the Beginning

When I began in the field of domestic violence, the battered women's movement had been in full swing for 20 years. There was a well-established network of shelter beds, though not as many as needed, and survivors were helped with safety planning, advocacy and counseling. Empowerment was the lens through which assistance was provided: because women often experienced judgment and blame, this was a radical and righteous framework for service delivery.

In the early '90s, advocates began openly challenging the laws and policies that created obstacles for women trying to escape abuse. They lobbied for Mandatory Arrest; the necessity of considering a history of domestic violence during custody disputes; the ability of Family Court to provide orders of protection for unmarried partners; and the importance of reducing "failure to protect" charges against battered mothers. Survivors were empowered to take actions that included testifying in court, advocating for more fair and equitable treatment, and protesting at city and state levels.

## Lessons Learned

Looking back on those years, though, I now recognize pieces that were missing and see the ways in which the movement suffered from certain myopic views. We must acknowledge this so that we may continue to work against all forms of violence, making our movement stronger, more inclusive and more just. As a white woman, a social worker and a survivor, I brought a particular lens to my work. Over the years, I broadened and expanded my view with the guidance of some insightful mentors and life lessons.

## Inclusivity

Domestic violence intervention, especially emergency shelter, has always focused on the needs of women and children fleeing abusive and controlling men. This made sense and was based on well-documented statistics and the reality of the patriarchal system. Few acknowledged, however, that the inherent misogyny fostered homophobia and transphobia, and same-sex, queer and trans people targeted by abusive partners remained invisible and underserved. Even as awareness grew through the national advocacy efforts of LGBTQ anti-violence projects, providers were unsure of how to create more inclusive services and sometimes resisted such expansions, worried that these changes would compromise their work with women. While intimate partner violence is related to the abuse of power in the context of gender, expanding the lens to include those who fall outside of that dominant paradigm does not dilute our feminism or detract from our services. Quite the contrary, in fact: It is now gratifying that many providers are increasing their skills and capacity to serve diverse survivors, providing more accurate assessments and appropriate services today than they did 10 years ago.

## Intersectionality

In addition to issues of gender identity and sexual orientation, providers have developed a better understanding of intersectional feminism, which results in a deeper ability to grasp the causes of abuse in a society that still disenfranchises women and communities of color. Intersectionality teaches us that "Woman" is not a universal concept. Women have different experiences based upon intersecting aspects of identity, such as race, class, and sexual orientation. As a result, their experiences as abused women also are vastly different. Intersectionality also teaches us that "Survivor" is not a universal concept. We cannot assume that all survivors of partner abuse can call the police, leave their relationships or enter shelter. Not all survivors seek the same interventions or need the same kinds of support. There remains a great deal of work to be done, especially for people from communities who have been and continue to be marginalized. As advocates, we must aim to meet the needs of immigrant, poor and LGBTQ survivors, and others who have historically experienced multiple barriers to accessing safety.

## Beyond Shelter

We understand that our work cannot be limited to the need for shelter alone. Lack of affordable housing, living-wage employment, access to higher education and universal healthcare negatively affect the well-being of entire communities, and survivors of abuse in particular. We need change and justice to see real empowerment, safety and healthy outcomes for couples, families and communities. The advent of Family Justice Centers in several counties in New York State represents an effort to address the many interrelated advocacy needs that survivors have. Family Justice Centers can co-locate legal, housing and case management services under one roof, but it is through our work in communities as survivors and activists confronting all forms of abuse and injustice, that real and lasting change can be achieved.

*Ms. Hodes was the supervisor/director of Safe Homes Project of Good Shepherd Services in Brooklyn for 23 years. She recently moved to Western Massachusetts. She can be reached at [catherinehodes@gmail.com](mailto:catherinehodes@gmail.com)*



## Equinox Domestic Violence Services (Albany County)

Since 1989, Equinox Domestic Violence Services has operated Albany County's only comprehensive domestic violence services program, focusing on client-centered and trauma-informed progressive direct services. Equinox operates a 24-hour hotline and a 30-bed emergency shelter, and offers counseling, advocacy, support groups and post-shelter housing services. Equinox serves women and men and their children and strives to meet the special needs of victims of marginalized populations.

Equinox also provides elder abuse case management and education and has an advocate assigned to Albany County Child Protective Services to consult with CPS workers and provide information and referrals to victims and assist them with preparing victim impact statements. The agency is an active member of the Capital Region Anti-Trafficking Task Force, which is charged with creating a collaborative and coordinated response to human trafficking in the region. Equinox and the Center for Disability Services (CFDS) also partner to improve the services and systems for victims and survivors who have a disability or are Deaf.

Equinox has been a leader in expanding domestic violence services to LGBTQ victims and survivors, and trains all program staff on these issues and sensitivity. In 2008, Equinox was the first program in the region to provide LGBTQ inclusive shelter services after recognizing there was a gap in services for victims within this community. After a deep programmatic inventory, planning and transformation, the agency made its services open and available to all victims of domestic violence, regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation. As domestic violence programs across the state began undergoing similar processes, Equinox was called upon to provide information, guidance and technical support to assist shelter programs in developing inclusive services.

Equinox Domestic Violence Services are available at several locations: Non-residential services are located at



102 Hackett Blvd. with a satellite office at 188 Washington; an emergency shelter, located at a confidential address in Albany; and at Albany County Family Court. The agency also has a formal presence in other city and town courts in the county to provide advocacy to victims. The agency also operates a 24-hour hotline for victims and survivors, family members and governmental and community service providers seeking information, referral, safety planning, and access to services.



## Barrier Free Living (BFL) (New York City)



Now that she's living in a safe home of her own, Barrier Free Living Apartments' resident Shanika can focus on her most important life goal: strengthening her relationship with her 14-year-old daughter.

A survivor of domestic violence, Shanika was living at a shelter in Brooklyn, working with her case manager to reclaim her life and find a permanent home back in 2014. In addition to healing from years of abuse and trauma, she was learning to understand and manage her life as a bi-polar person.

"It was challenging living in the shelter," she says. "I am a very private person. At times I felt like I was spiraling. My case worker helped me focus on my goals."

Shanika learned about the soon-to-open Barrier Free Living apartment complex in the Bronx and believed it was the next right step for her.

"It was new. I was so excited, thinking I'd love to live in a building like this," Shanika says. "I was like, 'Wow!' When I saw the front desk security I felt good, to know safety is important here. Even when you don't think you need it, that is when you need it most."

Shanika moved into her new home at BFL Apartments in 2015. Since then she has joined the BFL Apartments' tenants advisory committee and joined the garden club, which is led by tenants. She plans to work in real estate and is preparing this spring to take the licensing exam.

"I work with the psychiatric nurse here to feel my feelings and I use art therapy. I wrote an article for the tenant community newsletter about mental health and that's coming out soon," says Shanika. "And now my main goal is to really work on my relationship with my daughter. That's what matters most."

# Q&A: Domestic Violence Shelters in New York State

This Q&A was conducted with Deborah Vogel, Bureau of Law and Public Safety at OPDV

## Q What are the origins of domestic violence shelters in New York State?

**A** In the early 1970s, shelters and hotlines for victims of domestic violence were staffed and supported primarily by volunteers dedicated to helping abused women and children find safety and begin to heal from the violence in their lives. Many were survivors themselves.

As the women's rights movement of the 1960s and 70s moved forward and rape crisis centers started opening nationwide, there was a growing acknowledgement that another form of violence against women - domestic violence - was not a "private family matter," as it so often had been regarded, but that abuse was grounded in attitudes toward women and their role and value in society. As a societal problem, communities and governments could, and should, have a role in addressing domestic violence.

Then, two significant upstate incidents occurred: a shelter was forced to close because it could no longer afford to provide services, and a domestic violence homicide occurred. Service providers called on the NYS Legislature to help programs keep their doors open so they could continue to serve victims.

## Q How did the State respond?

**A** State legislators, the NYS Department of Social Services, Governor Mario Cuomo's Commission on Domestic Violence, the New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NYSCADV) and the domestic violence advocacy community drafted the New York State Domestic Violence Prevention Act of 1987 (DVPA). Even though everyone was focused on helping victims and children, we all had our own perspectives on how to best meet the needs of victims and children.

## Q What were some goals and challenges?

**A** The initial challenge was to take suggestions from the domestic violence community and craft a law that would meet the needs of survivors and shelters without burdening the programs. In defining "victim

of domestic violence," we had to determine what relationships would be included. That definition served as a template for other subsequent domestic-violence related laws. We also defined services, established approval procedures and determined how financial support could ensure the fiscal health of the shelters. A per-diem system was also included in the law, with temporary grants provided until the new system could be established. The local counties were tapped to join the state in financing the per diems, with a federal share included.

Ultimately, the focus was on funding shelters to keep them open.

## Q What was included in the Domestic Violence Prevention Act?

**A** The new law:

- Established a definition of domestic violence for the purposes of receiving services;
- Created definitions for residential and non-residential programs;
- Required established licensing for residential programs and an approval process for non-residential programs;
- Established stable funding through the per-diem system for residential programs;
- Created a list of required services to standardize services across the state;
- Established reporting requirements so the state could track the number of women and children served, and the number of shelter denials and reasons for those denials; and
- Required counties to contribute to the funding that the state and federal government would provide to shelters.

## Q How were programs defined in the New York State Domestic Violence Prevention Act (DVPA)?

**A** Two types of programs were created:

*Non-Residential Programs:* Not-for-profit organizations providing telephone hotline assistance, information, referral, counseling, advocacy and community education and outreach services; 70 percent of those served by the program must be

victims of domestic violence.

*Residential Programs:* New York State Regulations (18 NYCRR 452-455) define four types:

- Domestic Violence Shelter - congregate facilities of ten or more beds for victims and their children only;
- Domestic Violence Program - similar to shelters except that up to 30 percent of residents may be other than victims of domestic violence;
- Safe Dwelling - self-contained units of nine beds or fewer for victims and their children only; and
- Safe Home Network - clusters of private homes coordinated by a not-for-profit organization that provides emergency shelter and assistance.

## Q How was the DVPA implemented?

**A** As with many new laws, interpreting the language and translating it into action was challenging. It took time to establish what services must be provided to receive the funds, and how to meet the safety standards for state-funded or regulated emergency housing. As a result, specific rules and regulations had to be established by the Department of Social Services to implement the DVPA.

Balancing what survivors needed, what programs could realistically provide with the funds and what requirements the Department of Social Services considered essential was at the heart of implementation meetings. Legislative and Department staff and programs from around the state met for more than two years to draft the new regulations. We focused on identifying, discussing and negotiating many issues including staffing, safety, state oversight and confidentiality.

Despite the challenges, I believe the law has helped save lives. While government plays an essential role by providing funds consistently and promoting safety, it is still the commitment of domestic violence program staff and volunteers, and community advocates, who make a difference for survivors and their children every day.

# Legislative Update

In addition to a law requiring orders of protection to be [translated](#) into multiple languages, several other laws passed during the 2017 legislative session.

## Mandatory Arrest

The mandatory arrest provision for family offenses was extended for two more years, until Sept. 1, 2019.

The law that increases the maximum length of criminal court orders of protection – eight years for a felony conviction, five years for a misdemeanor and two years for all other offenses/ violations – also was extended until Sept. 1, 2019.

## Forced Marriage

To prevent forced marriages, New York State banned marriage for those under 17 and strengthened procedures for courts to give consent to 17-year-olds. The law also required judges to conduct private interviews with each party and provide legal representation and educational information to those who are 17.

## Non-physical Injury Crimes

Several non-physical injury crimes were added to the list of offenses eligible for certain crime victim compensation. These crimes include second- and

third-degree menacing; fourth-degree criminal mischief; and first-, second-, and third-degree robbery. This change takes effect Oct. 17, 2017.

## NYS Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team and Advisory Council

The State's Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team was expanded to include a representative from the State Office of Victim Services. In addition, a representative of the New York State Police was added to the OPDV Advisory Council.

# “Shine the Light on Domestic Violence” Marks 10th Year

This October marks the 10th anniversary of OPDV's [Shine the Light on Domestic Violence campaign](#). Over the past decade, communities, organizations and individuals across New York have helped raise awareness about domestic violence by shining purple lights on buildings and landmarks, wearing purple clothing, displaying and distributing purple ribbons and hosting events and programs that feature purple materials, resources and even foods.

## Why Purple?

According to [Rose M. Garrity](#), board president of [National Coalition Against Domestic Violence](#):

*“The women’s suffrage movement utilized purple, white and gold in the early 1900s as those were the colors of the National Women’s Party. The colors started over in England and symbolized purity, hope and*

*loyalty. On July 9, 1978, nearly 100,000 advocates marched on the capitol in Washington, D.C. in support of equal rights. Many of them wore lavender. “Battered women chose purple as an evolution of the lavender from decades past.”*



Photo credit: Emily Cotlier. Creative Commons, noncommercial license.

To celebrate the 10-year mark, we encourage all New Yorkers to be as creative as possible. Need inspiration? Check out OPDV's Shine the Light [toolkit](#). New this year are Social Media tools to help you spread the word. And don't

forget to [send us](#) your captioned photos and videos so we can share them, too.

## Save the Date

This year's “Wear Purple Day” is Thursday, Oct. 19, but we encourage you to wear purple all month long and to start a conversation about domestic violence.



# Upstate Training for Homeless Shelter Staff

OPDV is collaborating with the [New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance](#) Homeless Shelter Program to offer five trainings for homeless shelter staff across New York State.

## Locations

The trainings, which will occur in late 2017 and early 2018, will be offered in Albany, Erie, Nassau, Onondaga and Westchester counties, and will be open to all homeless shelter programs within those counties.

## Training Goals

The target audience for these trainings is general population homeless shelter staff, many of whom have limited knowledge of domestic violence and are unclear about their role in assisting victims and their families.

## Training Focus

OPDV trainers will help staff understand the dynamics and historical perspective of domestic violence and discuss:

- How and why safety planning is essential for victims and shelter staff;

- How to respond if an individual self-discloses domestic violence; and
- How to identify and seek available community resources for victims and family members.

For more information about this joint initiative, please contact OPDV Program Administrator [Vanessa Owens](#).

NYS Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence [www.opdv.ny.gov](http://www.opdv.ny.gov)

Please send any comments or content ideas to: [opdvbulletin@opdv.ny.gov](mailto:opdvbulletin@opdv.ny.gov)

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