

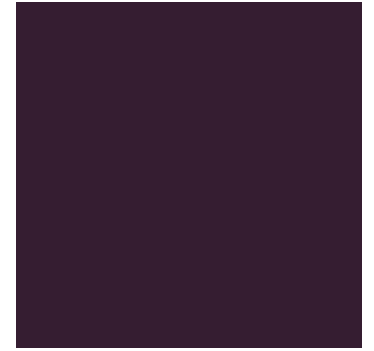
# Strategies for Assisting Survivors of Domestic Violence

**2013 TANF Regional TA Meeting**


Philadelphia, PA

September 18, 2013

# Presenters



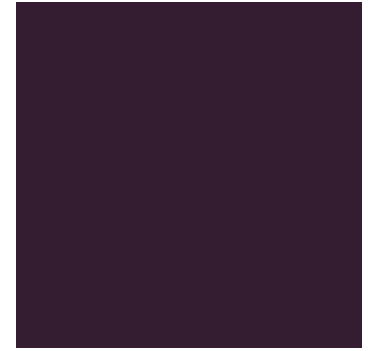
- **Jacquelyn Boggess, JD**  
Co-Director  
Center for Family Policy and Practice
- **Anne Menard**  
Executive Director  
National Resource Center on Domestic Violence
- **Kim Pentico**  
Economic Justice Specialist  
National Network to End Domestic Violence



# What do low-income domestic violence survivors say about safety and services?

*From: Safety and Services: Women of Color speak about their communities. Center for Family Policy and Practice (2011)*

# Context of Women's Lives



- Violence as experienced within the context of low-income African American and Latina women's lives
  - As members of families and communities
  - Who experience poverty and are socially marginalized
  - Who's relationship with a partner who has used violence may or may not end
    - Co-habiting, co-parenting, shared community, friends

# Listening Sessions



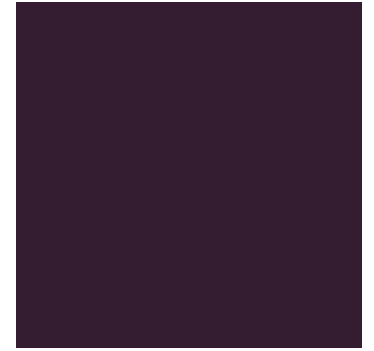
- Approximately 235 people (6 cities, 4 states)
  - Predominantly African American victims, survivors, and advocates
  - Latina victims, survivors, and advocates
  - Other service providers in the community
    - Hospitals (advocates, nurses), child protective services, mental health services, branches of criminal legal system
    - African American men: who provide services to other men; who participate in batterers' intervention programs; who are in a fatherhood program

# The Questions



- What services are available for women in your community?
  - That specifically address domestic violence
  - That specifically address poverty or economic (in)security
- What are outstanding needs for low-income women of color?
- What social welfare services are available for low-income men in your community?
  - What do you think about the idea of providing services for men?

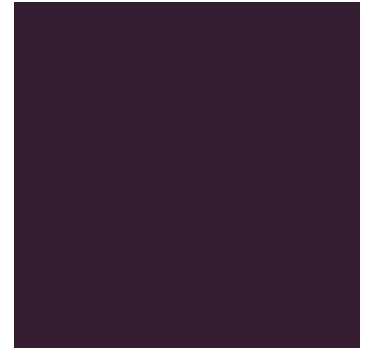
# Listening



- Low-income women of color would like to see additional social services for everyone in their communities.
- Social welfare services for men were viewed as beneficial for the whole community.
- Women expressed that we can figure out how to simultaneously provide services to men and attend to women's safety.
- Women thought services and support for men might decrease levels of community violence.

# Unmet Economic Needs

- Economic stability, security
  - Family sustaining employment
  - Safe, affordable housing
  - Food security
  - Reliable transportation
  - Child care
- Violence was often not expressed as the most pressing issue
- Service referrals
  - High need, long waiting lists





# Shared Needs



- Economic security, basic needs
- Trauma-informed services, including mental health and AODA
- Social justice
  - Poverty, discrimination
  - Men's contribution
- Increased safety – domestic and community violence
- Support and accountability
  - Community-based responses to violence, including the church as a site of opportunity
  - Norms change, prevention education

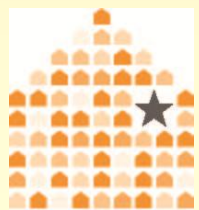


What have we  
learned about increasing  
economic security for  
domestic violence survivors?

# Domestic Violence & Poverty

- ★ 22% of all women have experienced DV in their adult lives
- ★ Women in poverty = 34-65%
  - Recent or current violence = 8-33%
  - High prevalence of childhood physical & sexual abuse

Lyon, E. (2000). *Welfare, poverty, and abused women: New research and its implications.*

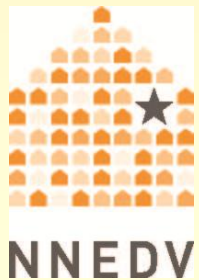


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# Why?

- ★ When Violence Occurs, What Are the Options?
  - Call Law Enforcement
  - Leave
  - Fight Back
  - Divorce / Separate



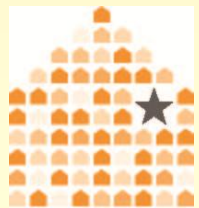
# Leaving

## ★ May Lose

- Job/Employment
- Housing
- Health Care
- Child Care
- Partner Income

## ★ Highest Risk of Injury or Violence

- Separating or Divorcing

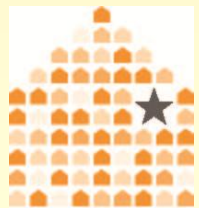


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# For Women In Poverty

## ★ What Are The Options?

- Call Law Enforcement
- Leave
- Fight Back
- Divorce / Separate



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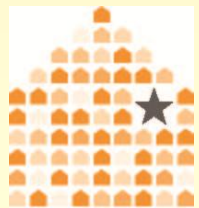
# The Reality

## ★ Poverty reduces options

- Doubling-up
- Shelter time limits

## ★ Access to resources increase safety

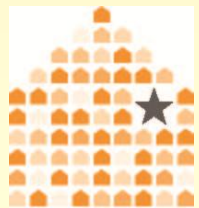
- Must help people before, during and after



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# Financial Education

- ★ Developed in partnership with The Allstate Foundation a curriculum specific to the needs of survivors of domestic violence
  - Safety Planning
  - Budgeting
  - Credit
  - Loans
  - Long-Term Planning

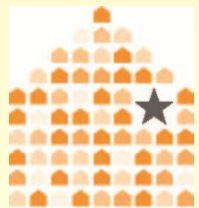


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# Safety Planning

- ★ What is Financial Abuse
  - Controlling how money is spent
  - Over-using credit
  - Forcing or not allowing to work
- ★ Explore how to set money aside safely
- ★ Pros/Cons to disclosure
- ★ Housing Search



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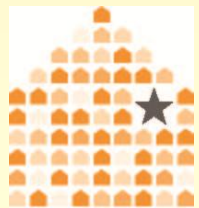
# What We Have Learned

## ★ Everybody has a learning curve

- We are not born knowing this
- We are not always taught it
- Many come with baggage

## ★ We must go slow

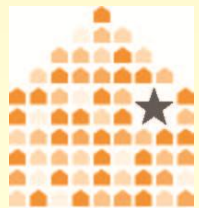
- Cannot 'budget' on 1<sup>st</sup> visit
- Talking about money is hard
  - Triggers



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# What Is Working

- ★ Thoughtful programing
  - Micro-Loan -> Credit Repair
  - Non-traditional Match Saving Programs
  - Make participation accessible
    - Food
    - Childcare
    - Transportation
    - Incentives
  - Celebrate Success



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Within the TANF Context,  
where are there opportunities  
and challenges to enhancing  
safety and economic security  
of survivors?

# Not Enough: What TANF Offers Family Violence Victims

*Findings from a national survey conducted in late 2009  
conducted by NRCDV and Legal Momentum*

[www.VAWnet.org](http://www.VAWnet.org) → Advanced Search: Not Enough

# The Survey

- Nearly 600 respondents, including individuals from all 50 states and Washington, D.C.
- The majority (78%) of respondents work at domestic violence or dual domestic violence/sexual assault programs. Also responding were staff from legal aid or other anti-poverty programs (13%) and from TANF/CSE agencies (5%).
- Most respondents (82%) provide direct services to victims.

# KEY RESULTS

- TANF is important to domestic violence victims (96% of respondents agreed).
- TANF can make a significant difference - when it works well.
- TANF can make a significant difference - when it does NOT work well.

## ***When TANF works well for survivors***

-

- Collaboration between DV and TANF and Child Support agencies
- Trained responders
- Flexible use of TANF funds
- Streamlined processes
- Benefits for immigrant victims



## ***When TANF does not work well for survivors -***

- Application process creates barriers
- Benefits too low and often delayed
- Screening is often inconsistent and ineffective
- Notification of FV specific waivers and services does not happen or is unclear, inconsistent or ineffective
- Disclosures do not lead to needed help
- Some responses make things worse = less safe
- Child support enforcement is inconsistent in addressing safety and financial concerns

# ***How to make TANF a more effective safety net for survivors***

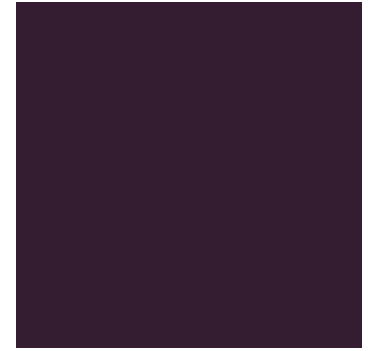
*(top ranked from 1st)*

- Employment services
- Expand access to affordable child care
- DV training for CS/TANF workers
- Relocation assistance
- Transportation resources
- Improve FV screening
- Increase TANF benefit levels

## *Other recommendations*

- Shorten application process/less documentation
- Flexible FV exemption and work requirements
- Access to mental health, substance abuse, and trauma services
- Onsite advocates, TANF workers
- Pre-sanction screening for domestic violence
- Improve confidentiality
- Remove barriers for immigrants
- More specialized services

# ***Let's Discuss!***



- What's working and why?
- What's still challenging and why?
- What would help you respond more effectively and consistently to survivors?