

Goal #3: A Safe Haven from All Forms of Violence and Abuse

Why is this Goal Area Important?

All forms of personal violence, including domestic violence, sexual assault, and child abuse and neglect, are unacceptable in any of our communities. During times of stress, people can be more vulnerable, and may need more support to handle situations without violence. Early intervention with individuals and families is critical to prevent additional physical and mental health issues. Counseling, legal, and financial assistance are just a few of the supports needed to help survivors of abuse heal. But equally important are efforts to educate the community on what strategies are effective to prevent violence from occurring in the first place.

What's Working?

- The Harborview Center for Sexual Assault and Traumatic Stress (HCSATS) offers telephone consultations, crisis response, advocacy, therapy, and sexual abuse evaluations. Many services are free of charge or can be paid for by Medicaid or Crime Victim's Compensation. HCSATS also provides community education to build skills and develop strategies to prevent sexual assault.
- LifeWire (previously known as Eastside Domestic Violence Program) offers emergency shelter, transitional housing, rental assistance, and other types of housing assistance. Also offered are advocacy-based counseling, the Crisis Line, support groups, legal advocacy, and a variety of children's services. Most clients who come into the program do so through the Crisis Line.
- King County Sexual Assault Resource Center (KCSRC) provides services for sexual assault victims and their families, including trauma focused therapy, legal advocacy, parent support and 24 hour crisis intervention services. In 2012, KCSARC provided 168 hours of prevention education, focusing on building multidisciplinary teams to assist communities dealing with returning sex offenders. Client outcomes for therapy

show that 90% of those receiving treatment "get better" with reduced anxiety, depression and PTSD. The 2013-2014 KCSRC focus includes trauma focused therapy, legal advocacy, parenting support and prevention services for homeless and potentially homeless youth in partnership with Friends of Youth (FOY)¹

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence (DV), sometimes called family violence, profoundly affects the lives of survivors as well as the entire community. Domestic violence incidents involve family or household members; traditionally the term has referred to altercations between spouses and former spouses, but legally it includes roommates with or without a romantic relationship, and parents or children. Individuals may be of the same gender. During the recent economic downturn, some experts theorize that women who are abused are staying in dangerous situations longer. The financial and human costs of domestic violence are staggering, and can negatively impact generations to come.

Prevalence

- According to the Center for Disease Control, Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is a significant public health problem in the U.S. Approximately 7 million incidents occurred among U.S. women ages 18 and older, and 5.7 million occurred among men 18 and older in 2010, the last year where statistics were available. The cost of IPV was an estimated \$8.3 billion in 2003, the last year where these statistics are available, which includes medical care, mental health services, and lost productivity.²
- The number of reported domestic violence offenses statewide decreased by almost 17% between 2010 and 2012, from 49,270 to 45,944. This reverses a comparable rise between 2008 and 2010.³
- It is extremely difficult to determine the exact annual number of King County domestic violence victims. However, it is es-

estimated that over 90,000 domestic violence incidents occur each year. The Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs reported 12,755 domestic violence offenses in 2012. King County's rate in 2010 was 497 per 100,000, slightly higher than 2009.

- As the chart below shows, after trending steadily upward between 1997 and 2002, the number of Bellevue Police Department (BPD) reports of domestic violence decreased slightly (7%) in 2003 (1,337 reports), then fell 11% in 2004 (1,196 reports). In 2005, reports increased again to 1,559, then dropped to 1,410 in 2006. In 2007, reports dipped by 15%, then stayed about the same in 2008. Reports remained relatively flat between 2009, 2010, and 2011 (1,366 and 1,350, 1377 respectively). In 2012 the numbers dropped to 1,214. These numbers reflect calls in which domestic violence was indicated, but were not necessarily assaults.⁴
- The Bellevue Police Department (BPD) works closely with and relies heavily on LifeWire's services. In all cases of domestic violence where the police are involved, an advocate works with the person identified as the victim, explaining the complicated justice system, providing them with information on no contact and protection orders, and planning for safety. The advocate accompanies the victim to court, works closely with the city attorney's office, and is in weekly contact with the prosecutor's office. The BPD Domestic Violence Victim Advocate averaged a case-load of 22 filed

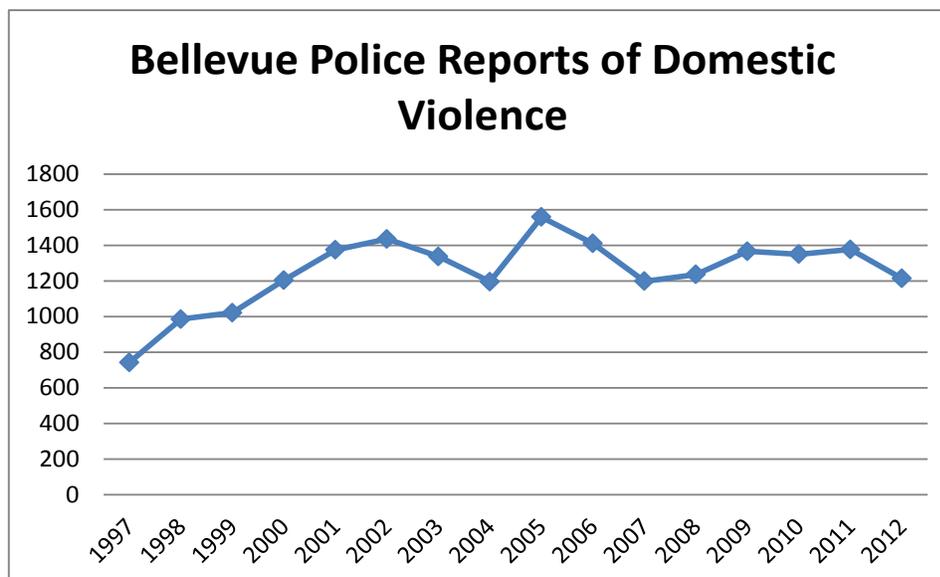
misdemeanor cases per month in 2007 and 24 in 2008. In 2009 and 2010, average caseload dropped again to 22, but for 2011, the average caseload increased to 25. For 2012, there were an average of 21 cases per month, and from January to May of 2013, an average of 19 cases per month. The biggest challenges are lack of shelter, affordable housing, and financial resources, as well as an increase in non-English speaking clients.⁵

Service Trends Accessing Services

- Only a small percentage of survivors access formal services. 2,019 women were recorded in King County's data system as receiving face-to-face community-based domestic violence services in King County in 2001, the last year this data was collected. This represents from 2% to 12% of the women who may be physically abused by a husband, partner, or boyfriend each year. However, reports from service providers continue to show that tens of thousands of additional contacts are made each year with unknown victims over the telephone.
- On the Eastside, LifeWire is the primary provider of comprehensive services to survivors of domestic violence and their families. Several other agencies also assist survivors and may offer specialized services. These agencies include Eastside Legal Assistance Program, Refugee Women's

Alliance, Jewish Family Service, CHAYA and Consejo. Additionally, Youth Eastside Services and Asian Counseling and Referral Service work with teens on dating violence.⁶

- LifeWire reports an increase of 30-40% in demand for emergency shelter services. The difficulty in finding employment makes finding affordable housing challenging for survivors.⁷



Housing

- Housing is a major concern for survivors and their families. According to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, DV is the leading cause of homelessness for women. In the 2012 One Night Count of homeless people in King County, 766 adults, which are 17% of the 4,403 individuals accessing shelter and transitional programs, had experienced domestic violence or abuse.⁸
- There are a limited number of shelter beds in all parts of the County (in 2011, East King County had 6% of available beds), but LifeWire is the only provider in the East sub-region offering confidential shelters.⁹ LifeWire has ten apartment units that serve as emergency shelter, transitional housing that serves up to ten families, and two to three confidential motel/hotel vouchers at any given time for up to two weeks. LifeWire is also able to provide rental assistance to families as well as transition to permanent housing through numerous programs to help prevent homelessness. One hundred percent of the families in their housing programs are homeless due to domestic violence, and 92% have no or low incomes.¹⁰
- The agency reports that their service levels are reflective of their capacity, not client demand, so the number of clients served has not increased significantly over time. LifeWire report seeing more immigrants and limited English-speaking clients. They also report a disturbing trend towards a higher number of overall turn-aways due to a lack of capacity: for every family requesting emergency shelter, 35 are turned away. Many of those turned away live in their vehicles if other organizations cannot help.¹¹
- The unavailability of transitional and permanent affordable housing, the decrease of Section 8 vouchers, higher costs of housing on the Eastside, and possible elimination of Disability Lifeline continue to be of particular concern in the area of domestic violence. Families have fewer options due to safety concerns and often must stay in shelters longer, resulting in more demands on limited shelter space.

DV Crisis Line

- In King County, the Crisis Clinic receives calls from domestic violence victims and refers them to services in their region. There has been a slight decrease in calls referred to LifeWire. This is in large part due to a new software system called “DayOne” which domestic violence shelters now use. They can now track who has bed space; clients do not have to make numerous calls.

Legal Assistance and Mental Health Counseling

- Legal assistance remains a primary need for survivors of domestic violence. LifeWire reports that many of their clients are not able to obtain adequate legal representation.¹² Eastside Legal Assistance Program (ELAP) provides pro bono legal services for low-income families and individuals residing in East/Northeast King County. Through its Domestic Violence Legal Fund project (DVLf), it also provides free emergency representation to low-income domestic violence victims residing anywhere in King County.¹³
- A recent economic study found that while shelter, hotlines, and counseling had no significant impact on the likelihood of abuse, the availability of legal services decreased the likelihood that women would be abused. Helping survivors legally pursue and obtain protection orders, custody, child support and other financial needs, gives them the physical safety and financial security that enable them to leave the abuser.¹⁴
- Included in the full range of services needed for survivors is mental health counseling. Providers report that many survivors are experiencing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and suicidal ideation as a result of their abuse. There is a lack of counselors who have worked specifically with this population, and inadequate funding to cover services. Due to funding from the Mental Illness and Drug Dependency (MIDD) sales tax passed in King County in 2009, mental health counselors were hired for each of the three regional domestic violence service providers, including LifeWire. At LifeWire, this full-time counselor works

with survivors and their children on-site, which increases access to early intervention, prevents more severe mental health issues later, and increases coordination between programs, including enhancing the team approach to serve individuals with multiple issues. Refugee Women's Alliance, which also serves East King County residents, received funding for two part-time staff to provide culturally specific mental health services.¹⁵

- Another issue for many survivors is substance abuse, which often affects both the perpetrator and the survivor. Drugs and alcohol are often used as a control issue by the perpetrator. Therapeutic Health Services provides on-site chemical dependency treatment to LifeWire clients at their transitional shelter, "My Friend's Place."¹⁶

Services for Children Who Witness or are Victims of Abuse

- In 2011, more than 5 million children lived in families in which partner violence occurred at least once in the past year, and 1 million children lived in families in which severe partner violence occurred.¹⁷ Recent research indicates that children who witness domestic violence show more anxiety, low self-esteem, depression, anger and temperament problems than children who do not witness violence in the home. These disturbances can impede healthy development, cause school difficulties, and continue to be a problem into adulthood.¹⁸ LifeWire has ongoing support groups for children while their mothers are in their support groups; these groups address self-esteem, conflict resolution, and safety. A group called "Voices" was started for teens affected by domestic violence in their families. This group addresses dating/friend/family relationships and empowerment.¹⁹

Older & Vulnerable Adult Abuse

- Although domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking affect victims in all age groups, older individuals who are victims face additional challenges in accessing services needed to enhance their safety. Appropriate interventions may be compromised by

misconceptions that older persons are not victims of these types of crimes, that domestic violence does not occur or lessens in later life, or that the abuse is an expression of stress associated with caring for an aging individual. Age or disability may increase the isolation of these victims and their dependence on abusers for care or housing. Also, these cases may go unnoticed because criminal justice system personnel may perceive a victim's injuries as arising from aging, illness, or disability instead of recognizing that the injuries may be attributed to violence in the home.²⁰

- No one knows exactly how many older Americans are being abused, but according to best estimates, between 1 and 2 million people age 65 and older have been abused, exploited or neglected by their caregivers. Incidence rates vary from 7.6 to 10%. It is estimated that for every case of elder abuse, neglect, exploitation or self-neglect, about five go unreported.²¹
- In Washington State, Adult Protective Services (APS) reported a steady increase in allegations of abuse between 2001 and 2009. In 2011, APS received 14,577 allegations of all forms of abuse. In 2011, Washington APS found 2,414 reports of elder abuse to be substantiated. Though these reports include vulnerable adults of all ages, 75% of the victims are 60 and older. In 2009, there were 5,136 reports of exploitation, making it the most reported mistreatment of vulnerable adults in Washington. More than 3,000 referrals reported neglect.²²
- In King County, there were 3,076 reports of all types of abuse and neglect to APS in 2009, the last year for which data is available, resulting in 2,909 investigations compared to 3,301 reports and 2,924 investigations in 2008, a 7% decrease in reports and a less than 1% increase in investigations. In King County, the Elder Abuse Project brings together members of the community from different jurisdictions and disciplines, such as law enforcement, prosecuting attorneys, DSHS Adult Protective Services, agencies such as KCSARC and hospitals. The Bellevue Police Department is an active member of this team and report overall increasing numbers of elder abuse

reports. There were 50 incidents of elder abuse in 2004, 105 in 2005, and about 100 each year through 2008. In 2011, there were 79 referrals to APS assigned for investigation, increasing to 81 in 2012 and 92 as of September 2013. Police believe this number is vastly under-reported because, like many types of abuse, the victims will not press charges against family member perpetrators. This is especially true for older adults.²³

- In 2012 the King County Prosecutor’s office started subcontracting with Aging and Disability Services to hire a coordinator to support and advocate for victims of elder abuse. The advocate investigates abuse and neglect cases and works on behalf of victims as a translator of the legal system.
- Research indicates that caregivers must care for themselves to avoid depression and possible abuse and neglect of those they care for. Direct assistance in providing care, such as respite care relief, as well as positive feedback from others, positive self-talk, and recreational activities are linked to lower levels of depression.²⁴

Refugees and Immigrants

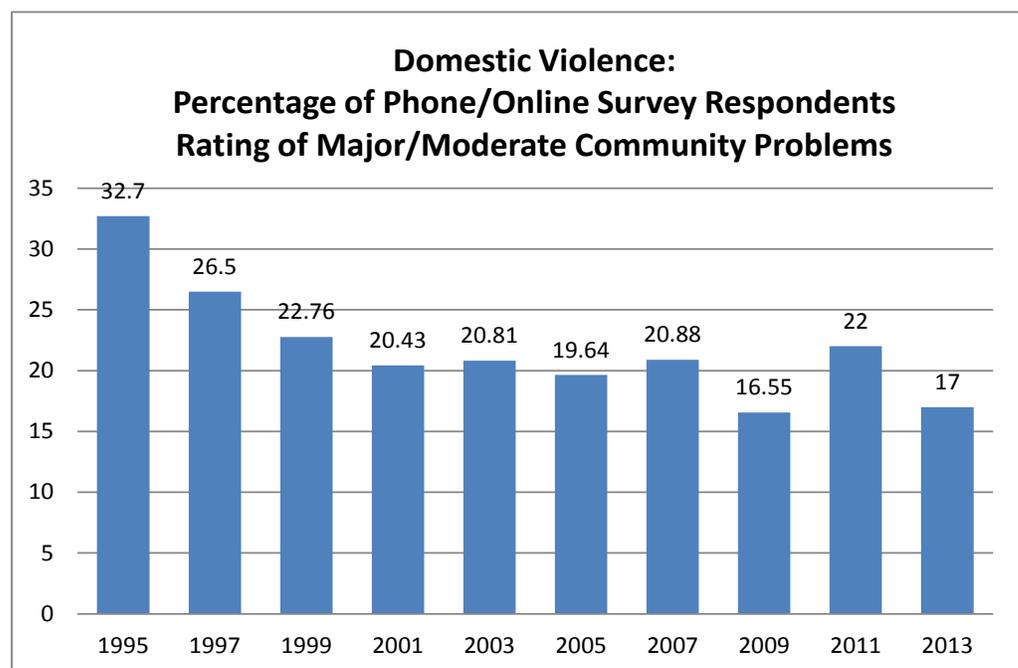
- Due to their immigration status, some immigrant and refugee women may face more barriers in escaping abuse and accessing services. King County’s rapidly changing demographics create even more urgency for services that are responsive to these communities. Gaps in access to services include multi-lingual information and support and awareness campaigns with linguistically and culturally appropriate messages and materials. Two

of the primary barriers to non-English speakers who are seeking assistance are a lack of information available in languages other than English and a shortage of bilingual staff members. Finally, undocumented survivors also lack access to services like housing, and often fear that if they call for help, they will be detained and deported.²⁵

- In 2012, LifeWire staff reported a dramatic increase in the number of limited English-speaking survivors seeking services. LifeWire has added specific programs in Spanish, Russian and Swahili in order to more effectively serve the immigrant community.²⁶ Consejo, a Seattle-based Latino agency, began providing a DV advocate in 2004 on the Eastside to help address additional needs. In 2009, Refugee Women’s Alliance began a survivors’ support group in Bellevue to serve Eastern European immigrant and refugee women who speak Russian, Romanian and Ukrainian. KC-SARC’s Dando Voz program is the only comprehensive sexual assault program for the Spanish speaking community.²⁷

Need for Affordable Treatment Programs for Offenders

- First-time domestic violence offenders are typically required to complete an intensive counseling program. These programs, all geared toward achieving victim safety,



hold DV offenders accountable for abusive behavior while teaching healthy behavioral alternatives. Low-income offenders can receive treatment in Bellevue at Sound Mental Health, which serves about 20 Bellevue clients annually. Staff works closely with the Bellevue Probation Department to ensure communication about the offenders' progress. Sound Mental Health is the only provider that provides DV treatment on a sliding scale or waived fee basis. Cost is a major deterrent to access for many clients.²⁸

Community Perceptions

- Over the past 16 years, phone/online survey results indicate that Bellevue residents feel domestic violence is not a significant community or household problem, as the chart on the previous page shows. The number of respondents rating it as a moderate or major community problem this year decreased somewhat, from 22% in 2011 compared to 17% in 2013.²⁹ Although underreporting of abuse is very typical on surveys, Bellevue Police Department statistics show steady domestic violence reportage through 2008, then increasing in 2009, and dropping back down in 2012.³⁰
- The 2013 consumer survey results also reveal that physical abuse in respondents' households is not considered a major or moderate problem. 86% rated this as not a problem.³¹
- Similar to past years, domestic violence was rarely mentioned as a community or household problem in the Community Conversations conducted in 2013.

Implications for Action

- The high cost of housing in Bellevue creates a serious challenge for survivors who want to remain in the community to maintain their jobs and support systems. More shelter beds as well as more permanent housing options with services are needed, especially as the economic downturn has resulted in increased demand for DV services.
- Next to housing, one of the largest gaps in services for survivors is for legal representation for child custody, protection orders, immigration, and financial issues. When

these services are unavailable, it becomes much harder for survivors to maintain their safety, return to employment, and become self-sufficient.

- Service trends and demographic changes in Bellevue indicate that the need for culturally relevant and linguistically appropriate services for survivors continues to grow. Appropriate services are needed to keep up with the demand.
- Children and youth who witness domestic violence are at risk of internalizing the abuse. Data suggests that child abuse occurs in approximately 70% of families experiencing domestic violence. Holistic programs including prevention and earlier interventions are needed to break the cycle of abuse for future generations.
- Services for older adult survivors of family violence need to be available to target the particular issues experienced by this increasing population.
- Community awareness and engagement efforts ensure that the issue of domestic violence gains public visibility. Coordinated strategies should not only include better programs and access to services, but also ideas to prevent neglect and create positive norms.

Child Abuse and Neglect

Child abuse is the physical, psychological or sexual mistreatment, or physical neglect of children by their parents or guardians. Neglect is the most common form of child abuse, but rates are hard to establish because neglect is often unreported.³²

Prevalence

- Nationally, an estimated 681,000 children were victims of child abuse or neglect in 2011. An estimated 1,570 children died due to child abuse or neglect according to the National Child Abuse and Neglect Database, an almost 11% decrease from 2009. In 2011, there were 77,882 reports of abuse or neglect in Washington State; of these, 37,992 received a response from Child Protective Services (CPS).³³ In 2012, CPS served 9,562 children 0-17 living in King County.³⁴

- Between 1995 and 2000 CPS annually averaged 300 accepted referrals for suspected child abuse and neglect in Bellevue and more than 1,000 in East King County. Consistent with state and national trends, the total number of accepted referrals from Bellevue decreased to 165 accepted referrals in 2001. This continued through 2002, with a total of 158 referrals accepted. However, in 2004, the total accepted referrals in Bellevue jumped sharply to 254, a 61% increase; CPS staff suspected that the increase was due to changes in their intake system, including a centralized after-hours intake line. In 2012, there were 271 accepted referrals from Bellevue zip codes to the Eastside office, including child abuse and neglect and child sexual abuse. This compares to approximately 275 accepted referrals in 2011.³⁵
- King County Sexual Assault Resource Center (KCSARC) provides legal advocacy for victims of felony child abuse. Unlike sexual abuse, child abuse tends to increase during challenging economic times.³⁶

Service Trends

Risk Factors

- Child maltreatment causes stress that can disrupt early brain development. Extreme stress can harm the development of the nervous and immune systems. As a result, children who are abused or neglected are at higher risk for health problems as adults, including alcoholism, depression, drug abuse, eating disorders, obesity, sexual promiscuity, smoking, suicide, and certain chronic diseases.³⁷
- A study of abused and neglected children found that they had lower grades, more suspensions and grade repetitions, and were more likely to drop out of school than their peers, independent of the effects of poverty.³⁸ Additionally, abused and neglected children are arrested 4.8 times more often for juvenile crimes and are twice as likely to be arrested as adults.³⁹
- Families with returning service members who are experiencing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and combat-related stress may also be at increased risk for child abuse.⁴⁰

Best Practices

- Kindering Center provides parenting classes for parents who are experiencing problems with childrearing, as well as child care for children with disabilities, medically fragile or abused children up to age three.⁴¹
- Healthy Start provides home visiting and support groups to young families with children birth to three years old. High quality home visiting programs increase the odds that children from at risk families will enter kindergarten ready to learn, and prevent child abuse and neglect by increasing parenting skills, parent-child attachment, and knowledge of child development.⁴²
- KCSARC provides Parent Child Interaction Training (PCIT) in English and Spanish to parents whose child was sexually assaulted or referred by CPS. KCSARC developed a specialized Parenting Enhancement Program (PEP) to assist parents “parent” their sexually abused child. The program provides 10 modules, which can be tailored to fit the unique needs of the family. PEP is provided in English and Spanish.⁴³

Community Perceptions

- In the 2013 phone/online survey, 9% of respondents rated physical abuse of children as a major or moderate community problem, a 7% decrease from 2011. The community perception of child neglect as an issue also decreased from 15% in 2011 to 8% in 2013. It also has been consistently low in previous survey years.⁴⁴
- In the 2013 Community Conversations, child abuse and neglect was not mentioned as a community or household concern.

Implications for Action

- Low income can be a contributing factor in child neglect. Parents and caregivers experiencing economic hardship have challenges in providing the basics for their children. The same can be true for child abuse, due to stress from lack of resources or war-related traumatic injuries. With the ongoing economic recovery, it is even more important to offer basic needs assistance to families with children, and provide outlets for stress

from unemployment and other issues to help prevent child abuse and neglect.

- Similar to children experiencing family violence, abused or neglected children also can bring those issues into the next generation when they act as they have been treated. These children need therapeutic care and opportunities to build trust and self-esteem to succeed in school and life.
- Programs that promote protective factors (like home visiting, which uses caring adults as role models and mentors to help nurture parenting skills), lessen the risk of child maltreatment.

“We have seen increases in the following populations: victims from the Hispanic communities, adult male victims and victims who have mental health problems separate from the sexual assault.”

Provider Survey, KCSARC

Sexual Assault, Rape and Child Sexual Abuse

Sexual assault and rape occurs in all communities and among all socio-economic groups. Approximately 73% of sexual assaults and two-thirds of all rapes are committed by someone the victim knows, not by strangers.⁴⁵ With child sexual abuse (rape or assault), about 44% of victims are under age 18, and about 15% are under age 12.⁴⁶

Prevalence

- There were 207,754 incidents of sexual assaults and rapes in the U.S. in 2012.⁴⁷ Most rapes and sexual assaults (almost 60%) are not reported to police.⁴⁸
- Washington State has seen a steady decline in rapes over the past four years: in 2005, there were 2,772 reported rapes, declining to 1,432 in 2012.⁴⁹ However, in the Office of Crime Victims study in Washington State, 85% of victims did not report their assault to law enforcement.⁵⁰
- Over the past 12 years, Bellevue Police Department’s annual rape reports have generally remained between 20 and 30. However, there have been some spikes: there were 38

in 2004, 42 in 2006, and 33 in 2008. There was a 60% decrease in reported rapes from 2009 to 2010, dropping from 25 to 10. The rate of reported rapes rose again in 2011 to 23.⁵¹

- There were nine accepted Bellevue child sexual abuse referrals in 2008, the most recent data available.⁵² This was a decrease from the late 1990s when CPS reported an annual Bellevue average of 40 cases of child sexual abuse. This mirrors decreases in East King County and State data. Eastside CPS staff speculated that the reason for this drop is similar to those previously cited for the increase in child abuse and neglect, the most significant being that CPS went to a statewide reporting system. This results in more consistent screening by policy without local office variations.

Service Trends

Long-term effects

- Adults abused as children who receive no treatment experience psychological distress many years after the abuse. These traumatic childhood experiences, also called Adverse Childhood Experiences or ACEs, become significant risk factors for serious dysfunction later in life (substance abuse, depression, suicide, parenting problems). Without intervention or help for the child, normal psychological development can be negatively affected.⁵³
- Additionally, adults who have been sexually assaulted or raped also suffer many negative health consequences. They are 3 times more likely to suffer from depression, 6 times more likely to suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, and 13 times more likely to abuse alcohol.⁵⁴

“Many survivors choose to live in their cars if we or others cannot provide housing services. They often do without mental health or physical health services if those services are not available or affordable.”

Provider Survey, LifeWire

Needs for Services

- Many agencies are encountering increased service requests from refugees and immigrants. In 2012, KCSARC's Bellevue caseload was approximately 33% people of color, with the Hispanic community most heavily represented. KCSARC's Dando Voz Program, where all services to victims and their families are provided in Spanish, is the only comprehensive sexual assault program for Spanish speaking victims and their families in the area. The program includes legal, medical and general advocacy, trauma focused therapy and specialized psycho educational programming to help parents support their sexually abused child.⁵⁵
- Harborview Children's Response Center (CRC), which is a program of Services for Sexual Assault and Traumatic Stress (HCSATS), had provided advocacy and counseling for child and youth victims of sexual assault as well as community-based prevention initiatives since 1985. They also provided services to children impacted by other forms of trauma and victimization (e.g. physical abuse, homicide domestic violence, internet crime). In 2012, the program reported serving 154 unduplicated Bellevue children/youth with ongoing counseling and/or advocacy services. This is an increase of over 100% from the individuals served in 2010. In late September 2013, CRC was integrated in HCSATS and KCSARC for an expanded partnership in East King County⁵⁶

"Many of our clients are low income and are struggling more than in the past, in terms of having basic needs met, such as having gas for vehicles in order to get to our services."

Provider Survey, Harborview Children's Response Center

- People receiving services at KCSARC report the major barrier to accessing services in the community is transportation, language, and not knowing where to find help.⁵⁷
- KCSARC reports that more of their clients need basic services like food and financial assistance. KCSARC reports in addition to therapy needs, they are seeing legal cases

take longer to go through the criminal justice system. Requests for legal advocacy have increased 10%.⁵⁸

- Sexual assault can lead to significant mental health problems, and downstream consequences - such as substance abuse or involvement in the juvenile justice or criminal justice system - are more costly to address. In 2008, funding from the Mental Illness and Drug Dependency sales tax in King County provided resources for community sexual assault programs to hire staff and fill this gap. In East King County, KCSARC and CRC each added counselors to increase on-site access for survivors. Using "best practice" interventions for children and adults, this coordinated effort is seen as a much needed systems-change approach.⁵⁹
- KCSARC is partnering with Friends of Youth to provide therapy, legal advocacy, parental support, and prevention programming around the issue of sexual assault prevention.⁶⁰ Asian Counseling and Referral Service staff facilitate a Teen Peer Advocate Program which offers a peer-to-peer support group of young women in order to discuss healthy relationships and the prevention of dating violence.⁶¹

Emerging Issues

Registered Sex Offenders in the Community

- Trauma focused therapy is being utilized more widely for victims of sexual assault. Clinical knowledge of the impact of trauma has grown over the past several years. Sexual assault programs (at KCSARC and HCSATS) use specific modalities and techniques to assist victims work through the trauma. As a result victims are able to reduce their depression, anxiety, PTSD and other debilitating symptoms in a relatively short time (typically 16-24 weeks) and reclaim their lives.⁶²

Women in the Military

- Military Sexual Trauma (MST), sexual assault and harassment that occurs in military settings, is identified more frequently by the increasing number of women now

serving in the military. Studies indicate that around 23% to 33% of female veterans report experiencing MST. 2-3% of male veterans are estimated to have experienced MST.⁶³ Research shows that rates of MST are higher during war than peacetime.⁶⁴ (Note: For more information about this issue, see the Veterans section in this report.)

Internet Safety

- Internet-based services are becoming increasingly important. KCSARC's website addresses how to help friends, how to approach post-traumatic stress, and other victim issues. KCSARC tracks website visits, unduplicated visitors, page views, and average site visit times which provides a more useful snap shot of web site usage. They had a 7% increase of website visitors in the first 6-months of 2013, compared to the previous year time period. KCSARC recently successfully piloted a program for foster parents who are fostering sexually abused children. The program, provided via Skype, was identified as a promising practice by the University of Washington.
- KCSARC's 24 hour Resource line continues to be an important source of information and services. They had a 9% increase of resource line calls from 2011 to 2012. This line is the 24 hour resource line for the Safe Schools Coalition and the after-hours line for Harborview Center for Sexual Assault and Traumatic Stress. There have been exploratory conversations with organizations involved with Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC) regarding the possibility of KCSARC's line being a first point of contact. While this decision has not been made, it's an illustration of the connection between sexual assault and trafficking.⁶⁵

Community Awareness

- KCSARC's education department gives priority to prevention programming, where the community can be engaged in addressing the problem of violence. Vehicles for prevention programming include dealing with bullying and harassment, teen peer education and sex offenders in faith com-

munities. Research shows that one-time presentations are ineffective at developing skills or reducing risk, so emphasis is on working with schools or other institutions that will sustain the work over time.⁶⁶

Human Trafficking

- Human Trafficking, which includes labor and sex trafficking, is a modern day form of slavery. Approximately 600,000 to 800,000 victims annually are trafficked across international borders and include women, men and children. Some victims are native born U.S. citizens, as well. Victims are coerced to prostitute or to work without pay and often subjected to physical and psychological dangers, such as severe beatings, rape, drug addiction and other forms of violence.⁶⁷ (Note: For more information about human trafficking, see the School-Aged Children and Youth and Refugees & Immigrant sections of this report).

Community Perceptions

- Neither the phone nor consumer surveys have questions related to sexual assault or rape, nor was the issue mentioned in any of the Community Conversations. This is not uncommon due to the sensitivity of the issue.
- In a survey conducted by KCSARC in King County in 2003, a high percentage (68-72%) of respondents indicated sexual abuse/assault is a significant issue in the community, yet only 30% of respondents would seek information and assistance if concerned about their own safety or someone they knew; fewer said they would seek help for themselves. Physicians and the Internet were identified as the first points of contact for these issues.⁶⁸

Implications for Action

- As more low income or uninsured individuals receive healthcare coverage with the roll out of the Affordable Care Act, the ability of individuals to receive services will increase. Individual and group counseling services for survivors and offenders will be more available as insurance coverage increases. Having services ready and avail-

able for this possible increase in demand will best serve those who need them. (For more information on this issue, please refer to the Affordable Care Act section of this report.)

- Survivors of sexual abuse often have multiple needs including treatment for substance abuse, parental support and childcare, legal aid, and transitional and permanent housing.
 - Sexual assault continues to be a public safety issue; in order for the community offenders to hold accountable, services must exist for those victimized.
 - Even during times of funding cuts, it is critical to support community education about sexual assault, rape and child sexual abuse, as decreased staff levels at many agencies may complicate finding and getting help.
 - Consent workshops for youth are rising in popularity among sexual assault prevention experts. Informing youth as to what sexual consent is, how to develop boundaries, and the legal definitions of assault can help them to make more informed choices as young adults
 - Several ongoing areas of concern in this service area that should still be monitored include Internet safety, on-line victimization of vulnerable youth, the potential needs of partners of returning veterans, or of women who are veterans, and exploited children and adults who are used for sex trafficking.
 - There is a strong connection between early, untreated child sexual abuse and homelessness and trafficking. Upwards of 40% of youth who are homeless experience sexual assault prior to becoming homeless. It is important that conversations about homelessness and trafficking include the issue of sexual assault.
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