








EMPOWER

OUR

FUTURE

**A Vision to
End Domestic
Violence
In Minnesota**

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Domestic Violence

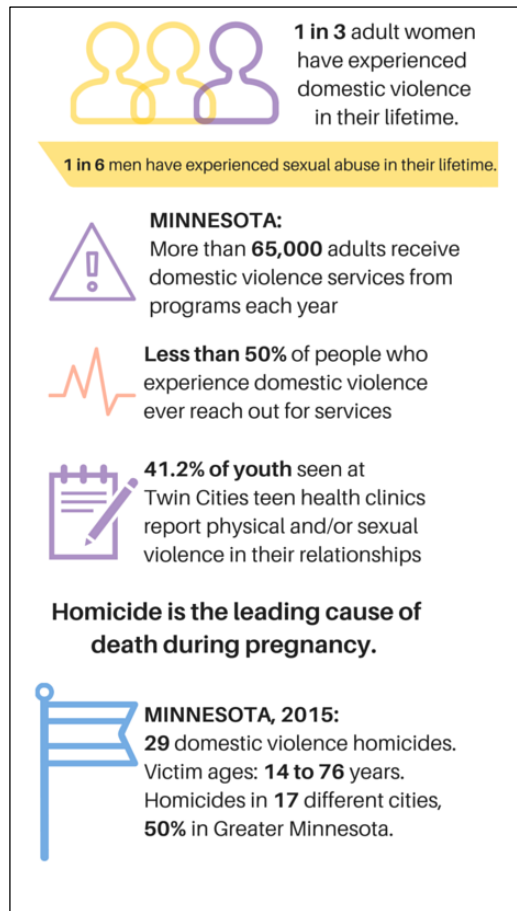
Domestic violence is defined as a pattern of abusive behavior in an intimate relationship that is used by one partner to gain or maintain power and control over another partner. Domestic violence can be physical, sexual, emotional, economic, or psychological actions or threats of actions that influence the other person. This includes behaviors that intimidate, manipulate, humiliate, isolate, frighten, terrorize, coerce, threaten, blame, hurt, injure, or wound someone.

Domestic violence can happen to anyone regardless of race, age, sexual orientation, religion, or gender. Domestic violence affects people of all socioeconomic backgrounds and education levels. Domestic violence occurs in both opposite-sex and same-sex relationships and can happen to intimate partners who are married, living together, or dating.

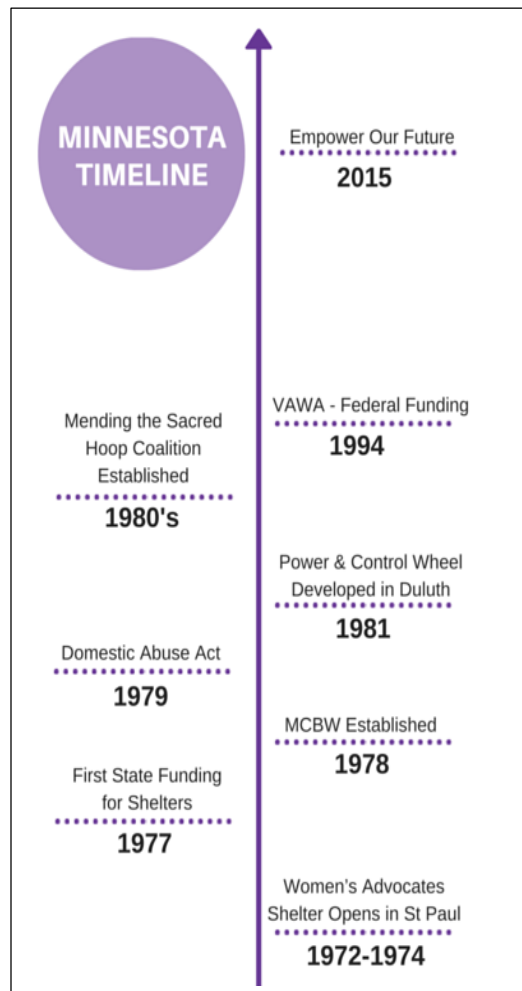
Domestic violence is pervasive and endemic. The statistics on the rate and prevalence of domestic violence are overwhelming. From the Center for Disease Control, we know that one in three adult women will experience domestic violence in their lifetime. The rates of victimization are higher for women of color with Native women and girls experiencing the highest rates of domestic and sexual violence.

When we look at what is happening in Minnesota, the statistics are equally bleak. Each year, between 20 - 40 Minnesotans are killed due to domestic violence. Indeed in 2015, at least 29 people ranging from 14 - 76 years of age, coming from 17 different cities have been killed. More than 65,000 adults and 7,500 children receive services each year from domestic violence programs. At the same time, we know that less than 50% of the people who experience domestic violence ever reach out for services. The future does not promise change. 41.2% of the youth seen at Twin Cities teen health clinics reported physical and/or sexual violence in their relationships. Homicide remains the leading cause of death during pregnancy.

We look at these numbers and know that domestic violence is part of our common experience, and we have come to expect it. That does not mean that the work we have done is without value. The current domestic violence movement is just over 40 years old. What has been accomplished in those years is amazing.



For more than 40 years, Minnesota has been a leading innovator in the field of domestic violence. Minnesota is the site of one of the country's first domestic violence shelters. Women's Advocates Shelter began in 1972 with the housing of victims in volunteers' homes and the shelter itself opening in 1974. Minnesota has some of the strongest



government support in the nation and is often the first state to enact protective legislation – an example being the Domestic Abuse Act passed in 1979. Minnesota has also created various models that are being used nationally and internationally including the Power & Control Wheel, The Duluth Model of coordinated community response, and the Blueprint for Safety.

Minnesota has more than 83 domestic & sexual violence programs providing an array of services in every county in the state. The types of services provided include 24-hour crisis lines, transportation to safety, protective order assistance, support through legal proceedings, housing and childcare assistance, community outreach and education, access to hospital and clinic care, support groups, children & youth services. Emergency shelters, community based advocacy, legal programs, and programs within hospitals and clinics provide these services.

Domestic violence programs work tirelessly to respond to the needs of domestic violence victims and their families. The individuals and programs working on domestic and sexual violence issues are a committed, talented, experienced and passionate group. The potential for Minnesota to continue to

be innovative leaders in the field has not been fully realized. Programs are struggling under economic strains and under the increasingly complex family situations that they encounter. With the constant demands to respond to crisis situations, programs find themselves without the resources they need to meet those needs. At the same time, everyone doing crisis intervention work also wants to be able to do the work to end the violence through prevention. As critical and essential as intervention services are, they are only part of the solution.

Empower Our Future **MCBW's Vision Plan**

Why did MCBW start the Vision Plan process?

In 2013, many of MCBW's programs were struggling -- struggling to deal with multiple years of reduced funding, struggling to deal with a general acceptance that domestic violence will always happen, struggling to deal with ever more complex issues. The general mood among programs was one of being overwhelmed and pessimistic. Programs were working hard to just get by, to keep their doors open, to meet the individual needs in their local communities.

The Butler Family Foundation presented MCBW with the opportunity to engage in an intentional dialogue process facilitated by Minnesota Assistance Project for Non-Profits (MAP). This initial dialogue process was called the Impact Initiative and brought together people in the domestic violence field for three days of directed and intentional discussion built on the premise that:

- We do not anticipate an influx of new resources for this work; and
- We are not willing to accept a model of doing more with less.

What that meant was we needed to come together and rethink how and why we do our work around domestic violence.

The initial dialogue process sparked ideas and energy and laid the foundation for MCBW to take on the process of creating the Vision Plan. Starting in the fall of 2014, and for the next year, MCBW's Board of Directors, staff, Women of Color & Native Women's Leadership Project, and member programs worked to create Empower Our Future – an ambitious plan that has a bold vision and multi-layered strategies to move us toward the vision.

Overall Question Guiding the Plan

Based on where the field is today, what needs to be addressed in order to end domestic violence in Minnesota?

Priority Topics

The MCBW Vision Plan focuses on five areas that need to be effectively addressed in order to end domestic violence in Minnesota. The five areas are:



Anti-Oppression: A World of Justice & Equity

Anti-Oppression: We have long understood that domestic violence is more than the physical acts of violence but involves power and control over another person. Oppressions exist along many lines (e.g. race, gender, class) and intersecting oppressions impact the safety of those being battered. Addressing oppression is the foundation for domestic violence work. While we have always talked about the connection between oppressions generally and domestic violence specifically, we need to find ways to reconnect and refocus on authentic anti-oppression work.



Complex Unity: Both/And/All

Complex Unity: Domestic violence is not experienced in isolation from other life events but is interwoven in people's lives in complex ways. Many different systems must be engaged in the work to end domestic violence. We must retain the uniqueness and expertise of the different areas of our work and still come together in unity to move forward. This complexity embraces different areas such as sexual assault, domestic violence, and trafficking and different systems such as healthcare, criminal justice, and education. It also recognizes differences of culture and geography, the differences between individual and system advocacy, and prevention and intervention.



Social Norm Change: Equality – A Natural State of Being

Changing Social Norms – Primary Prevention Work: While there is a critical need for intervention work, we are not only concerned with providing services to individuals or changing systems to better provide those intervention services. We also want to change the social norms that promote and support domestic violence. Domestic violence will end when we meaningfully address the structures that promote and support the violence and not just respond to the needs of those who have experienced violence.



Economic Justice

Housing: A Basic Human Right

Economic Justice: Having economic security is a necessary foundation for having safety. For individuals and families, poverty and economic uncertainties are linked to their safety. Economic security includes having the financial means to support yourself and your family, having housing resources as well as the resources to provide for basic needs such as food, clothing, medical care, and education. We need to think beyond emergency shelter and look at the full range of housing needs and housing options. We also need to look at whether our housing models are limiting our work with those who choose to stay in their homes and/or stay in their relationships.



Evaluation: Telling our Story

Data Collection & Evaluation: We want to effectively tell our story, to understand the needs of domestic violence victims, and to evaluate our work in meaningful ways. Better data and research should inform our work -- the policies we pursue, the work that is funded, and the way that we provide advocacy and services. This information should ultimately demonstrate whether we are effective in the work that we do to end domestic violence.

Process:

The Vision Plan involved two years of work. Hundreds of individuals and organizations contributed to the plan. While MCBW's board, staff and the Women of Color & Native Women's Leadership Project led the process, the content of the plan is the direct result of the experience and wisdom of the many individuals who do the work and have lived experiences with domestic and sexual violence. The specific steps in this process included:

Sept 2013: MCBW Annual Meeting

Introduced the Impact Initiative, a directed dialogue process, to membership and decided to engage in this work.

A steering committee was formed. The steering committee worked with outside facilitators to select the Impact Initiative discussion group and create an agenda for the Impact Initiative discussion.

February 2014: Day 1 & 2 of the Impact Initiative

May 2014: Day 3 of the Impact Initiative

Three days of directed dialogue occurred. The discussions were documented and resulted in the identification of the priority issue areas for the plan.

September 2014: MCBW Annual Meeting

Impact Initiative outcomes were presented to membership. Membership discussed the issue areas and ways to move the discussion into a plan for the field.

Following the annual meeting, workgroups were convened around each topic area. There was limited success in a monthly workgroup format.

MCBW's board and staff worked on the plan. A decision was made to convene a full membership meeting/discussion to create the strategies and action for the plan. MCBW worked with facilitators to create the retreat agenda.

April/May 2015: MCBW Membership Retreat

The two-day membership retreat had broad participation from MCBW member programs and generated specific strategies for the Vision Plan.

MCBW worked with facilitators to create the Women of Color & Native Women's retreat agenda – a time for specific input and refinement of the plan.

July 2015: Women of Color/Native Women's Retreat

A day-long retreat was held with MCBW's Women of Color and Native Women's Leadership Project. The retreat discussions were documented and resulted in refinement of the Vision Plan.

September 2015: MCBW Annual Meeting

Vision Plan draft presented to the MCBW membership.

December 2015: Summit presenting Vision Plan to public

Funders, government agencies, policy makers, and allied organizations invited to attend the public presentation of the Vision Plan. Additional presentations of the plan are forthcoming.

2016 and Beyond:

Implementation of the Vision Plan through MCBW's board, staff, and Leadership Project as well as through member programs and system, funding, and community partners.

Who is the Audience for the Plan:

Advocacy is at the core of the Vision Plan. The plan was created with advocacy being central to the plan. In order for the Vision Plan to be successful there must be an understanding and embracing of the role of advocacy.

What do we mean by Advocacy?

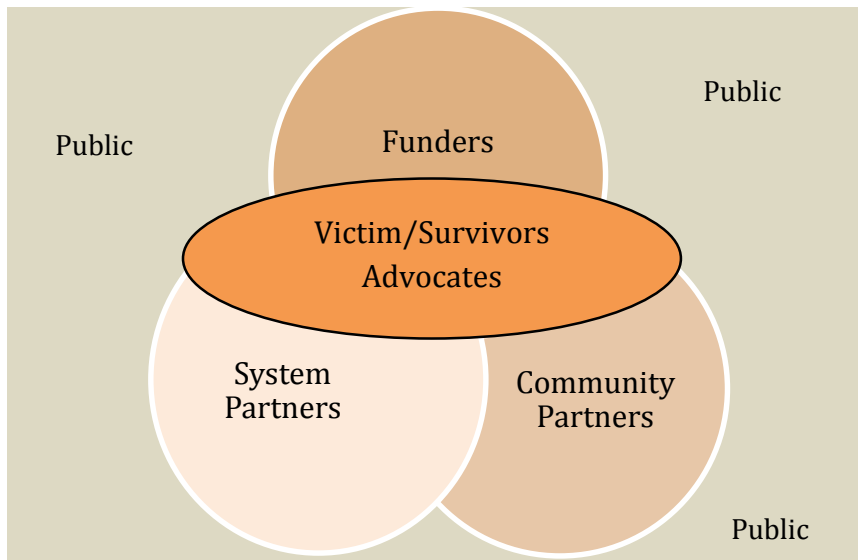


Advocates are those who stand with and lift up the voices of those who have experienced domestic violence. The action of advocacy is focused on changing circumstances both for the individual who experiences violence but also broader institutional and societal change to address the conditions that create and support violence. The work of advocacy happens simultaneously on different levels --work with the individual who experienced violence and work with the broader systems. Advocates work within systems and still maintain the ability to monitor, evaluate, and critique systems from the outside.

Creating the Vision Plan with the advocacy lens in no way makes this a plan exclusively for advocates. The success of the Vision Plan is dependent on having **broad community involvement**.

The work to end domestic violence is the work of everyone. That said, not everyone's work is the same. Everyone within programs, systems, and communities has a role to play in preventing and intervening in domestic violence. Those roles include:

- Advocacy – by programs and by individuals;
- Funders – government, foundations, business/corporations, individuals;
- System Partners – legal, educational, medical, social service;
- Community Partners – neighborhoods, community groups, faith groups, businesses;
- Public – individuals.



While there are a variety of roles involved in doing this work, everyone should understand the role of advocacy while embracing their unique role.

The plan is meant to promote **exchange and interaction**. The intention is that the Vision Plan will be used by all who are interested in ending domestic violence. The Vision Plan cannot be effective if it only results in domestic violence advocates talking amongst ourselves. Exchange and inclusion is critical for this plan to be effective. Exchange is not a one-way process.

- It is not just advocates/service providers doing things for victim/survivors;
- It is not just funders providing money and direction to non-profit organizations;
- It is not just advocates telling systems and institutions what to do.

An exchange is learning from each other, informed by our different roles and experiences.

Roles for Implementation:

This is a vision plan for the field, for our movement to end domestic violence.

The Vision Plan is a document created by MCBW. MCBW is the statewide domestic violence coalition comprised of more than 80 member programs providing advocacy services to domestic violence victims and their families in all 87 Minnesota counties. MCBW and the member programs engage in advocacy work with individuals and with systems to improve system responses to individuals and to the general issues impacting domestic violence. MCBW and the member programs advocate not only in response to domestic violence but also to address the conditions that allow for and support domestic violence. MCBW is working on prevention and intervention, working with individuals and with systems. The Vision Plan was created looking at various levels of the work.

The Vision Plan was created by MCBW because the Coalition has knowledge and expertise on domestic violence. MCBW will be taking up the implementation of the Vision Plan broadly -- the Plan will be the guiding document for MCBW's work in the years to come. This means that MCBW's staff and Board of Directors will use the Vision Plan as the basis for the agency's strategic and work plans. MCBW will provide assistance to member programs as they take up parts of the plan and will gather information on how implementation is working.

The Vision Plan is not just for MCBW (i.e. the Coalition staff and our member programs). The Vision Plan is a document for anyone interested in effectively addressing domestic violence. The expectation is that different individuals/entities will take up different parts of the plan. There are strategies in the plan that are most appropriately addressed by entities with specific knowledge, resources or access. For example, there are strategies addressing data collection that involve government departments, strategies specific to funders, and actions that should be taken up by healthcare providers or educators.

Domestic violence is so embedded into our society, into our institutions, and into our individual identities that to end this violence we need complex, multi-layered strategies, and we need many players to be in this work. While MCBW and our member programs will use this Vision Plan to guide our work in coming years, we invite everyone in Minnesota to join us in this process. Read this plan, take up the pieces that make sense for you and your organization. We invite you to partner with us in putting this plan into action.

The Plan as Living Document:

The Vision Plan is meant as a **living and growing document**. The Plan is the result of many hours of discussion, reflects many years of diverse experiences. Still there are shortcomings in this plan. Most notably the plan would be a better and even stronger document if we had engaged victim/survivors directly into the plan development process. While our first discussions did have individuals who participated specifically from the experience of being a victim/survivor of domestic violence, this was not nearly enough.

Many who contributed to the plan have experienced and survived violence but they came to the Vision Plan discussions through their professional role, their advocate role or through their role with a specific association. MCBW will work to more directly engage within victim/survivors through focus groups, through individual conversations, and through the creation of victim/survivor advisory groups. MCBW fully anticipates that this engagement will alter and enhance the Vision Plan.

Throughout the Vision Plan process, we have worked to engage diverse groups and individuals -- looking at diversity of geography, culture and experience. Despite the intentional work to look at diversity, we know that the more marginalized voices within our state need to be continually sought out and lifted up. We know that the plan reflects more voices from metro area programs and more mainstream versus culturally specific organizations.

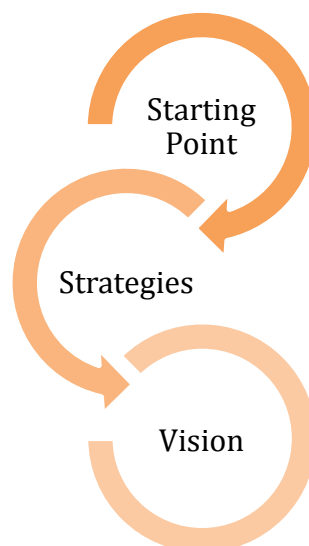
As strategies are taken up and implemented, we expect to learn what is effective, what else is needed, what makes a given strategy most effective, and for whom this strategy is most effective. We will work to capture this knowledge and enhance the Vision Plan as we move forward with implementation.

Reading the Plan:

For each priority topic, we asked ourselves three things:

- 1) Identify our current position on the topic as a movement;
- 2) Create a vision of what would be an ideal state for this area; and
- 3) Develop short and long term strategies to move us from where we are toward the vision.

The vision is the focus for our work; it guides what we will do. We know our starting point, we have a vision for what we want, and we have strategies to help us pivot in the right direction, toward the vision.



The plan first lays out the vision and the starting point within each area. Following the vision and starting point, are recommendations and strategies that can help us pivot toward the vision. The strategies are both long and short term. Some strategies can be taken up by individuals or individual organizations and others require broad collective action. No one entity can take up all of the strategies and no one can start all of them at once.

Cautions



This is a plan that is meant *for use by* many different individuals and agencies/organizations and is meant *to work for* many different individuals and agencies. It is important to remember how a strategy that is intended to effect positive change might have unintended negative consequences. These cautions are reminders to think carefully as to whether the strategy will work well for the specific situation.

1. Putting the needs of “victim/survivors” at the center of our work. We must meaningfully partnering with victim/survivors in ways that do not exploit or re-victimize the individuals. The safety (i.e., physical, psychological, economic, and spiritual safety) and autonomy of victims should not be compromised. For example, increasing our use of victim/survivor information must be done in ways that protect victim confidentiality.
2. Supporting survivors is about an exchange and a partnership. Our work is with survivors, not only for survivors. We are not only identifying barriers, vulnerabilities and risks of/for victims/survivors but also focusing on their strengths. We have as much to gain as to give in our partnership with survivors. We often say that a victim is an expert on her own experience. We must keep that in mind and learn from the victims/survivors.
3. “All communities” – Full inclusivity language should not be used in ways that forgets about or loses the diversity of the individuals and individual groups that we seek to include. We know that it is impractical to list out all of the various groups that we mean by using phrases like “all communities”. We know that using broad, inclusive phrases negates the unique characteristics of individual communities. We acknowledge that broad inclusive language can make specific populations/communities invisible. There are times when we should name the individual communities. We must also recognize the ways that identifying specific cultural communities makes multi-racial and/or multi-cultural people invisible as well. Naming and the use of labels can help us organize, but can alienate and isolate people.



Vision Plan – General Guidelines

All of the planning, discussions, and work on the plan followed these guidelines:

1. We put the needs of victim/survivors at the center of our work together.
2. We need curiosity and flexibility to keep our field responsive and dynamic.
3. We acknowledge and listen for differences in viewpoint and recognize the need for multiple and diverse approaches in the field (not one-size-fits all).

In order for any work, any plan, any approach to be effective in addressing domestic violence, two things must be kept central:

1. Voices of survivors are core. Whatever is done must be informed by and responsive to victims/survivors; and
2. The full spectrum of our communities must be involved. Whatever is done must be informed by and responsive to all of the diverse and differing communities and their specific needs and resources.

Vision Statement



Anti-Oppression: A World of Justice & Equity

Our differences and our diversity are celebrated.

- ❖ Every person enjoys the basic human rights to healthy food, clothing, housing, education, healthcare, freedom of speech/movement/ideas, self-determination, and safety.
- ❖ Authentic, open communication fosters curiosity, interconnectedness, respect and community-building.
- ❖ There is no domestic violence and no interpersonal violence.
- ❖ No system of government supports or otherwise perpetuates oppression.
- ❖ There is no violence from the state.
- ❖ Abuse of privilege does not exist.

A world free of oppression is where the vast potential of humanity will be realized.

Oppression language is used throughout the Vision Plan and holds the following meaning: Oppression is the experience of repeated, widespread, systemic injustice. It need not be extreme and involve the legal system (as in slavery, apartheid, or the lack of a right to vote) or violent (as in tyrannical societies). The term includes the everyday processes that systemically deny the rights of certain people.

Social oppression is a concept that describes a relationship between groups or categories of people in which a dominant group benefits from the systematic abuse, exploitation, and injustice directed toward a subordinate group. The organization of social life enables the dominant group to oppress the other group.

Oppression is embedded in unquestioned norms, habits, and symbols, in the

assumptions underlying institutions and rules, and the collective consequences of following those rules. It refers to the vast and deep injustices some groups suffer as a consequence of often unconscious assumptions. It refers to reactions of well-meaning people in ordinary interactions that are supported by the media and cultural stereotypes as well as by the structural features of bureaucratic hierarchies and market mechanisms.

Relationships between groups and social categories should not be confused with the oppressive behavior of individuals. For example, a heterosexual, European American, middle-class man may not himself actively participate in oppressive behavior directed at indigenous people, LGBTQ individuals, families receiving food stamps, or women, but he nonetheless benefits from the general oppression of these people simply because he is a heterosexual, European American, middle-class man. He has more access to opportunities, education, adequate healthcare, employment, safe and affordable housing where he wants to live, higher pay for the same job, and personal safety. In this sense, all members of dominant and subordinate categories participate in social oppression regardless of their individual attitudes or behavior.*

* The definitions on oppression are a melding and revision of definitions from The Blackwell Dictionary of Sociology; Deutsch, M. (2006). A framework for thinking about oppression and its change. *Social Justice Research*, 19(1), 7- 41; Webster's Third International Dictionary; Gil, D. G. (1994). *Confronting social injustice and oppression*. In F. G. Reamer (Ed.), *The foundations of social work knowledge*. New York: Columbia; and Freire, P. (1981). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Chapter One pages 27-37. NY: Continuum.

What is our starting point? In order to develop strategies that will move us toward the vision, we need to identify our current position as a movement on anti-oppression issues. If we know our starting point and have a vision for what we want, we can then identify the strategies that will help us pivot in the right direction toward that vision.

Starting Point - Anti-Oppression

We have long understood the complexities of people's lives and how intersecting oppressions impact safety for those being battered; therefore we need to address oppression in all of its forms in order to end intimate partner violence.

We have done work to address oppressions with some successes and some spectacular failures. We can learn from both.

We have *fear* around honestly and effectively addressing oppression issues -- fear of loss of control, of anger, loss of funding, loss of power. We also fear success, fear alienating partners within systems, fear criticism from our communities.

There is much *hurt and pain* around anti-oppression work.

There is a feeling of being *overwhelmed* by the enormity and the entrenched nature of oppression.

As the domestic violence movement has shifted to more social service provision, we see less responsiveness to people's complex needs. Historically, when we have attempted to honestly and effectively address oppression and inequity, we were met with resistance, alienation, criticism, and co-optation from systems, funders, and our communities.

We have many different experiences and different approaches to addressing oppression issues and not very many good ways to bridge differences and work together effectively.

Despite being overwhelmed by the enormity and entrenched nature of oppression, we have *hope* and believe that change is possible through processes of trust and innovation.

Vision Statement



Complex Unity: Both/And/All

We remember **the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. We value the complex greater whole and the individual parts.**

We have many shared core values that include doing this work with an understanding that it is anti-oppression based and needs to be survivor centered. At the same time, there are unique things that each area brings to this work.

- ❖ Not everyone is an expert on every issue but all have enough familiarity to support survivors and make a “gentle transfer” to someone with expertise in a needed area.
- ❖ Victim/survivor voices are included at all levels of our unity.
- ❖ We have as much courage as victims/survivors have to identify, talk about, and deal with the issues that make working together complicated.
- ❖ There is ongoing receptiveness to new frameworks, approaches, and ways of doing our work.
- ❖ We ask enough people the “right questions” and we listen with the intent to learn from each other.
- ❖ We examine how privilege impacts and defines our work.
- ❖ Our value-based dialogues include complex topics such as gendered-based analysis, transgender issues, inclusivity, being left out, culturally specific trauma-informed work, and balancing evidence-based methods with an openness to creativity and new learning.
- ❖ We support initiatives that connect with our core values and support each other’s work.
- ❖ We leave space for grace in our joined journeys.

There are many paths to achieve our visions - not either/or, but both/and/all.

Starting Point - Complex Unity

Domestic violence work and our formal organizing grew up separate from other anti-violence against women areas -- sexual assault, sex trafficking, tribal work. We have had different initial funding, different ways of organizing, and different ways of thinking about the issues.

We have fear about loss of control, loss of resources, loss of visibility of “our” issue if we collaborate, co-work, merge.

Past histories of working or not working together continue to influence current abilities to work together.

Understanding the overlap and intersections of various issues and work has grown and changed over time. We don’t have many models of working well together.

We understand the increasing complexities and intersections of our work but have little time, space, or practice of effectively working together.

As we look at new connections and partnerships, a starting central question we must always ask is: “What is our purpose for coming together?” Identifying our strengths and commonalities is the place from which we start the work.

Moving forward, with a common understanding of the complex and intersectional nature of our work, we can intentionally join together to increase our influence.

Vision Statement



Social Norm Change: Equality – A Natural State of Being

Equality is a natural state of being and has been institutionalized through policies and laws.

- ❖ Community members look out for each other and consider what is best for everyone when creating societal or policy changes.
- ❖ We value women and children equally with all other people.
- ❖ There is equal pay for equal work - living wages for all.
- ❖ Equity is the norm and replicated at all levels of government through legislation, public policies, and protocols.
- ❖ Government entities require organizations and corporations/vendors to have policies institutionalizing women’s equal rights and equity, prior to entering into a contract or collaboration with them.
- ❖ We invest resources in educating each new generation about the values and mechanisms that sustain a community free of domestic and sexual violence, where every individual is valued and cherished.
- ❖ Equity is part of every program’s vision, mission, and value statements - every domestic violence program has a social justice worker.
- ❖ Communities do not tolerate interpersonal violence or inequity.

Equity, freedom from domestic and sexual violence, exploitation, and all other forms of oppression, is a natural state of being.

Starting Point - Social Norm Change

Changing the social norms that promoted and supported domestic violence was a central principle at our inception as a movement over thirty-five years ago.

We incorporate ideas around prevention in how we talk about the work.

Funding and programming has focused heavily on intervention, providing advocacy and services after an assault has occurred. While emergency crisis intervention is critical, it can overwhelm our ability to do prevention work.

It is difficult to define and explain prevention work and find resources to dedicate to this work. The work of prevention, without dedicated funds/resources, gets overtaken by crisis and intervention needs.

Vision Statement



Economic Justice

Housing: A Basic Human Right

Housing is a basic human right recognized as such by all members of society.

- ❖ Every person has a right to a full range of safe and affordable housing options, including sober housing, co-operatives, long-term subsidies, healing housing, single family, co-housing, supportive services, planned communities, and more.
- ❖ Every person has a right to access this full range of housing options, regardless of their immigration status, age (minors and youth aging out of foster care/elders with special needs for independent or assisted living), mental health, gender identity, state of addiction or recovery, relationship status, income source/level or absence thereof, sexual orientation, abilities, criminal history, religion, creed, spirituality, ethnicity, culture, and/or family configuration.
- ❖ Barriers to housing no longer exist.
- ❖ Responsible, non-judgmental landlords with high standards of integrity, will be the societal norm.
- ❖ There is no stigma in receiving housing assistance or other support services needed to remain in one's home.
- ❖ There is an abundance of available housing in all geographic areas and neighborhoods.

No one is forced to remain in a violent relationship because of a housing need.

Starting Point - Housing

Historically, domestic violence funding and housing work has focused on emergency shelter housing. We have expanded our emergency shelter service work to include:

- Emergency shelter *for all survivors* of domestic violence and sexual exploitation.
- Emergency shelter options include safe houses and short-term hotel/motel stays.

We have had some expansion into other types of housing – e.g. transitional housing, supportive housing, rapid rehousing models. Some people are working with developers to dedicate housing to survivors or to influence providers and housing advocates to prioritize domestic violence survivors. This includes work to secure rental assistance and other dollars.

Despite expansion, there continues to be many housing challenges including:

- Barriers to accessing housing - e.g. required deposits, a one-day hotel stay means a person no longer fits the “homeless” definition in order to access various programs;
- A housing funding system (i.e. HUD and local government) that is non-responsive to the specific needs and family configurations of survivors;
- Increasing obstacles to securing safe housing due to reduced housing stock and a highly competitive rental market.

Homelessness and the threat of homelessness can be tools of power and control.

Domestic violence is a leading cause of housing instability. The number one unmet need for domestic violence survivors is housing. For domestic violence survivors whose housing needs are unmet:

- 58% return to their abuser;
- 16% become homeless;
- 6% end up living in their cars. *

* Information from the 2013 NNEDV Minnesota Census Count Data. Domestic violence programs reported on cases where housing needs could not be met. For 20% of the cases, programs did not know what the victim did



Caution: The Vision Plan process focused primarily on the economic justice issue of safe, affordable, and appropriate housing that meets the needs of individuals and their families. The full range of economic justice issues must also be addressed and are linked to the ability to effectively address housing issues. For example, without access to living wage jobs, childcare, and transportation, victim/survivors are unable to maintain appropriate housing.

Vision Statement



Evaluation: Telling our Story

We tell our story effectively using data whose parameters and collection methodology have been defined by the domestic violence field.

- ❖ We use methods that are synergistic with social justice advocacy and culturally appropriate for specific peoples and communities.
- ❖ Victims/survivors inform the development of evaluation methods and tools.
- ❖ Outcome measurements are pertinent to both how we do our work and its complexity.
- ❖ We allocate an abundance of resources to the development of evaluation tools.
- ❖ Domestic violence programs will have free access to new evaluation resources, and technical assistance.
- ❖ Evaluation happens in real time so as to stay relevant and maximize the potential for service and program improvements.

The field of domestic violence works in partnership with funders to ensure that the evaluation process and requirements are in sync with the needs of victims/survivors and programs.

Starting Point - Evaluation

We primarily do evaluation that is defined and required by funders.

We do some focus groups with those directly impacted and do exit interviews with those who use our program services.

We have directed and conducted some research based evaluation when we are able to secure research/evaluation dollars.

We have some research information compiled by national organizations, and universities.

There are limited resources designated for research, data collection, or evaluation.

Recommendations

Identifying the critical areas for focus, understanding where we are starting from and being clear about what we envision for the future laid the foundation for deep discussion and concrete planning. What steps can we take to pivot the work to move us toward the vision?

What follows is not a plan to be picked up and implemented. Rather the plan is to guide everyone working to end domestic violence. What specific implementation work any entity does should be guided by this plan but the actual steps for implementation will be tailored to the specifics of the entity. The overarching principles should guide everyone's work; the detailed strategies are a beginning point.

Three **overarching principles** should guide all of our work to end domestic violence. These principles grounded domestic violence work when we began as a movement and we need to reconnect with those principles now if we want to be successful in our work moving forward. Those principles are:

1. Focus on the victim experience:

Put the needs of victim/survivors at the center of our work. All strategies must be focused on the person most directly affected. The survivor experience must be believed, heard, and must reflect the full diversity of survivors. This includes survivors of all ages, cultures, religions, and genders.

The need to place the victim/survivor's experience at the center is critical for those working most closely with survivors and their families but it is also necessary for everyone who is part of this work.

The guiding question is: "Is this approach informed by and responsive to victim/survivors?"

During plan development, some specific ways to engage meaningfully with survivors were identified:

- Collect and hear survivor stories in the voice they use to tell their story.
- Use accessible mediums to hear from survivors.
- Create larger audiences that will hear the survivor experiences.
- Have victim groups evaluate the services provided to/for them. Provide incentives and/or compensation for this work. Provide plenty of space and support for survivors to provide feedback and suggestions.
- Require the incorporation of survivor defined/informed measures into evaluation tools.

- Create survivor advisory groups within each discipline and have a cross-convening of the advisory groups once a year.

2. Focus on the full spectrum of our communities:

- Promote data collection & evaluation based on specific communities.
- Evaluate the barriers and the costs of serving specific communities (e.g. communities of color, deaf community) and develop strategies to overcome the barriers.

3. Advocacy communities will guide the work:

Advocacy is informed by the survivor's experience. The role of the advocate is not to dictate or decide for survivors but rather to inform, partner with and guide survivors. The role of the advocate goes beyond the work with individuals and includes work to improve and change systems and community structures and responses. The reason the advocate must guide this work, is precisely because the advocate's work is to lift up survivors and the advocate's role is that of an outsider -- outside of the system.

Specific Strategies

Within each of the priority topic areas (Anti-Oppression, Complex Unity, Social Norm Change, Economic Justice/Housing, and Evaluation), six key strategies were identified:

1. Communication: Language & Messaging
2. Relationship Building
3. Training & Education
4. Policy & Legislation
5. Research & Evaluation
6. Funding & Resources

Within each of the approaches, there are many action ideas identified. The strategies are both simple and complex, include small steps and bold changes. Many of the strategies impact all of the priority topic areas while others focus on just one. The priority topic area icon is placed by the strategies that focused on a specific priority topic. Remember this is a living, developing plan. Not all strategies intersect with all priorities. Each strategy does not have fully defined action steps.

No one will be able to take up all of the strategies, but strategies should not be viewed in isolation from each other. Many of these strategies work together; the effectiveness of the strategy comes when it is coupled with other strategies. For example, training strategies are most effective when coupled with evaluation strategies to monitor changes in behavior based on the training.

Strategy 1. Communication: Language & Messaging

The **language** that we use and the messages that we promote matter.

Language

We need to change the language we use to be more inclusive of victims' identities, communities, and the realities of domestic violence. Much of the language that is used is based on an understanding of domestic violence that has since expanded and/or is language that is less relevant in the current environment.

We need to engage in this work with language, analysis and action that is inclusive of all gender identities but we must do so with the understanding that male privilege continues to be a core part of oppression. We began this work talking about battered women, meaning heterosexual women who were abused by their male partners. Our understanding of gender identities and our understanding of who domestic violence impacts has greatly expanded. We need language (analysis and action) that is more expansive and inclusive.

We are not advocating for gender *neutral* language and analysis. Male privilege within gender hierarchies is a core part of all domestic violence that everyone must understand and address.

Action Step:

- Examine the language that we use within our programs/services/agencies. Look at the program name, mission, common language to communicate what we do, the information given to victim/survivors:
 - What are we communicating?
 - Who is included and excluded?
 - Why are we using this language?
 - What might be different language?
 - What are the benefits and detriments for current and changed language?



We need to communicate about the intersections of oppression with violence and the intersections among types of violence. We need to stop all violence. Violence anywhere promotes violence everywhere.

Action Steps:

- Talk about sex trafficking as a form of domestic violence, as oppression of women and children.
- Track where violence of any nature is happening within your community. What language is used? Where are the connections? (e.g. non-domestic violence crimes, suicides, bias/hate actions)



It is important to connect with other anti-violence work outside of the domestic and sexual violence context. As we engage with and work with other anti-violence organizations, we will be stretched and changed. We need to be clear about our core values.



Reframe the issue as violence against women/gender-based violence versus domestic violence or sexual violence or trafficking. Naming the oppressions and social norms that support the violence is important. Our language should not reinforce the notion that this is an individual problem. Domestic and sexual violence takes place within a societal context that supports and reinforces the violence.

Action Steps:

- Look at those doing human rights and civil rights work. Analyze what language/messaging they use and see where it fits with our domestic and sexual violence work.
- Create time for dialogues to examine the language we use. Promote reading and learning from other organizations that are looking at social norm change.



Define & promote success measures from within the movement: what we are trying to accomplish and whether we are successful in our work needs to be discussed and clearly defined. This discussion must be done working across all types of domestic and sexual violence programs, with survivor input and ultimately in partnership with policy makers, communities, and funders.

Action Steps:

- Work with domestic and sexual violence programs and with survivor input to define goals and success in concrete, delineated terms.
- Once we have an understanding of what we internally are defining as success, meet with lawmakers, communities, and funders to share information so that we define success in the same ways.

Messaging

Language is about how we talk about the work and define measures. Messaging is how we communicate to those outside about the work.



Define core values and principles across fields - what unites us should be defined. If we want to build new relationships and partnerships to expand the influence of our work, we need to be able to clearly communicate what we are about and why we do our work.

Not every organization is the right partner. If we are to build complex unity and embrace the other priority areas, then we must build relationships upon a mutual analysis of anti-oppression factors. We are in competition with systems of oppression, not each other. If we

can recognize our commonalities and embrace them, we can then work together for change.

Action Steps:

- Promote cross-discipline dialogues. Identify forums for dynamic dialogues that will draw people into the conversation.
- Improve communication between disciplines/issues. Intentionally develop working groups across disciplines and issues and create structures for communication & information sharing.
- Open up lines of communication – do not hoard information. Identify places where information can be shared without negative consequences. Build trust through information sharing.
- Promote awareness on shared strategies and align efforts to end violence.



Develop messages that expand the understanding of the interconnectedness of economic issues and domestic violence.

Action Steps:

- Increase and polish messages around homelessness and domestic violence that target different audiences, from the general public to specific policy makers. Public messages such as, “No one should have to choose between safety and a home.”
- Communications should highlight the research on housing and domestic violence and the impact that economic issues have on domestic violence survivors.
- Where agencies or programs are failing to address the concerns and needs of survivors, create effective messaging that bring scrutiny to the problem.
- The focus is on housing advocacy versus housing provision. Not every domestic violence program provides housing but every program should be able to advocate with survivors around their economic and housing needs. Looking *internally* for domestic violence programs, because every domestic violence program needs to develop their housing and economic justice advocacy. Every advocate should see themselves as a housing advocate. Every program should have a housing specialist.



Media

Media, traditional and social media, is a powerful tool. Media messaging is shaping how people understand domestic and sexual violence and violence broadly. We must both counter negative/harmful media messages and promote positive/useful messages.

Action Steps for Media Accountability:

- Create a media monitoring system to identify harmful and useful messages, identify allies within media, and identify platforms that reach different audiences.
- Hold media accountable around oppressions they present/promote. Develop ways to counter harmful/negative messages.
- When dealing with subject matter that might “ruffle feathers”, have people/programs from various fields write letters to the editor.

Action Steps for Media Campaigns:

- Create social media campaign across disciplines.
- Create media messaging campaign for use with all types of media that can be used statewide (e.g. No More or Live Violence Free).
- Change media messaging to refocus on perpetrator’s actions versus victims, present information from the victim’s perspective.
- Address the connection between media (and/or everyday language) and violence against women.
- Promote social media campaigns on anti-oppression initiatives.

Strategy 2. Building Relationships

Domestic and sexual violence are endemic. The pervasive nature of violence means that every system, every community, and every organization is impacted. The work to end domestic and sexual violence can only happen with the work of full communities, broad collaboratives and partnerships. We have a history of strong collaborative relationships and we must build from those relationships expanding with whom we work and expanding the type of work we do together.

With Whom to Build Relationships



Promote connections and collaborations to close gaps and create focal points for the work; work with those who are currently engaged in domestic and sexual violence work. Bring victim agencies within a geographic region of the state together to strategize how to work together better and to educate communities on how they work together.

Action Steps:

- Bring the conversation to the local level; do organizing work (dialogue and/or work projects) within local communities.
- Mobilize grassroots action working with and organizing with survivors to drive and improve system response.
- Create a statewide network of youth agencies from across disciplines (domestic & sexual violence organizations, faith groups, parks, schools, youth serving organizations, etc.).
- Identify national partners and engage with them on complex unity reaching out to new and different partners on the national level.

Make connections between different programs and communities; reach out to those who have not historically worked directly on domestic and sexual violence issues.

Action Steps:

- Focus on connections with underserved communities. Go to those working within a specific community and discover who are the various leaders, partners, and organizations (e.g. Deaf & hearing impaired, undocumented, youth).
- Intentionally build complex unity across disciplines to improve a system's handling of cross-issues (e.g. law enforcement with sex trafficking & domestic/sexual violence).
- Connect rural and urban programs together on specific projects to highlight different aspects of problems/solutions and to enhance outcomes.
- Hold individual meetings with key people and organizations in geographic and/or cultural communities to increase understanding and to build a foundation for joint work.

- Think outside the box for new ideas and ways to build relationships with “unusual suspects.” Identify who is not at the table and invite them into the conversation.
- Incorporate other movements not always associated with domestic and sexual violence or trafficking (e.g. Economic Justice, Indigenous People’s Rights, Racial Justice, Environmental Justice, Reproductive Rights, Maternal Health & Wellness, Disability Rights).
- Create “speed dating” style networking opportunities for services and people to get to know each other, get to know what work is being done, and to start the process for people/organizations to connect.
- Address subjects/issues individually versus taking a global approach toward all issues; dealing comprehensively with issues can be overwhelming and can stop a partnership before it begins.
- Have other disciplines/agencies promote your agency and its services to reach different audiences and/or to be heard in new ways.
- Keep abreast of other’s services and initiatives through frequent “Check-ins”, (e.g. brief phone calls to see what is new and how things are going, regular date to check each other’s website/calendar of events, designate a staff contact whose job it is to keep in touch with a program). Use technology to enhance connections but don’t underestimate the importance of in-person connections.

Why We Build Relationships



Support change and leadership development within our domestic and sexual violence organizations and the movement. If we are to speak with any level of authenticity and integrity on issues of violence, oppression, economic justice, and social norm change, we must look within our movement, within our domestic and sexual violence programs, and hold ourselves to account on these issues.



As the work expands to more intentionally embrace the full range of work -- we focus on social norm change/prevention as much as we focus on intervention -- we need to increase the numbers of people who see this as their work. We need to foster new leaders within this work and we need to embrace ways to support the people doing this difficult work.

Action Steps:

- Create mentorships for those embarking on change.
- Promote self-care for better service provision.
- Invest in current employees.
- Have a day off for “fun”, something to relieve compassion fatigue.
- Challenge each other in supportive ways to remove our personal lenses or filters based on our biases and histories, and be open to other viewpoints, values, realities, worldviews, and solutions.



Promote cross-conversations and learning between domestic violence and housing people, including housing developers. There is a history of working, organizing and problem solving separately. We need to understand each group/field and promote opportunities for collaboration.

Action Steps:

- Bring together domestic violence and housing expertise to address problems at the state and federal level as well as in local communities. Create domestic violence housing teams to analyze “case studies” to improve and expand housing options. Teams could be available to work with local programs to address specific problems.
- Looking *externally*, every housing and economic justice workgroup or task force should have at least one designated domestic violence representative. That representative should actively participate with the clear purpose of being the voice for survivors and raising concerns specific to survivors. Where appropriate, survivors may be the best representative to be on a workgroup.
- Create shared advocacy agendas between the Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless & MCBW.
- Look for opportunities to create collaborative working relationships at all levels – federal, state, local.
- Develop local community based solutions. Challenge and support local communities to create solutions to their housing stability issues. Rely on the local expertise to explore innovative approaches to issues. Having local programs and individuals developing the solutions has the side benefit of having local buy-in.



The work to address oppression is enormous. To be effective, we must increase the engagement in this work. We need to bring new people into the work, welcome diversity, and broaden the types and numbers of people with whom we engage. As we welcome new people into this work, we must do so in ways that challenge people to see differences and truly celebrate those differences, while at the same time energizes people to do this work.

Action Steps:

- Involve youth in community groups that promote diversity and challenge the status quo.
- Promote walks/marches to end domestic violence.
- Facilitate survivor’s participation in social action around issues that directly affect them (domestic violence, poverty, racism).
- Be involved in community action such as missing women searches and protests to end violence against women and children.
- Establish collaborative partnerships with other movements with common social justice issues.

- Engage broadly with men and boys and sports.
- Get allied organizations to gather information on domestic and sexual violence (e.g. MN Student Survey).

How to Build Relationships:

The discussion expanding and strengthening partnerships was focused on the who and why (with whom to partner and why we are partnering) but also focused on the how. What are things that we need to be aware of as we build relationships? What are better ways and what are new ways of building partnerships?

To increase access, particularly when wanting to include survivors and broadly diverse communities, it is important to think through specific strategies.

Action Steps:

- Be flexible for meeting locations and times.
- Go to community members/professionals sites to connect and do training, rather than asking them to come to a centralized location.
- Promote holistic models for this work that respond to the full spectrum of issues and full diversity of communities.
- Simply ask “how can I help” versus focusing on an issue.
- Celebrate each other’s successes. Have annual awards or recognition for special partnerships.

Keep conversations flowing and think carefully about actions that may alienate partners.

Action Steps:

- Invite multi-disciplinary groups to a lunch/coffee to discuss what is needed, to initiate discussion and possibly training.
- Host informational meet and greet at least once or twice a year for programs including new staff to get to know each other and build relationships.
- Keep inviting and sending information to those who are being resistant.
- Engage in conversations with interested persons/ organizations.
- Promote tours of your community.
- Mobilize grassroots action to drive and improve systems responses to victims.

Strategy 3. Training & Education

If we are to change and enhance the ways that with do our work, it will involve learning. This strategy focuses on the people/systems with which we train, the topics and issues on which we train and the methods we use to engage in learning.

Training within Domestic and Sexual Violence Programs:



To promote deep education and learning, we must first look internally at our domestic and sexual violence programs. We must be willing to evaluate our own structures and organizations and identify the policies and practices that maintain/reinforce oppression. Then we must create organizational change from within.

Action Steps:

- Seek survivor input on responses and environments within our programs that are oppressive or that perpetuate oppression. Ways to elicit input from survivors can range from individual evaluations to focus groups to formal evaluation processes where survivors participate. The goal is not to understand what victim/survivor's learned about resources but rather to gain information on how our program structures address issues of inequity and oppression.
- Provide anti-oppression training/discussions at MCBW meetings/events. (E.g. Annual Meeting).
- Promote cross-training between main stream and culturally specific programs. Develop an advocate exchange program where advocates swap programs for 3 to 6 months. The swap could be between rural and urban programs, with a culturally specific program, or between a shelter based and community based program. By embedding ourselves in a different program, cross learning will be much deeper.
- Create a section on MCBW's website for peer-to-peer training. The section would include a list of member agencies, contact information and information on the type of training that they do. Focus on training BY advocates FOR advocates. Include information on specific training topics (e.g. predominant aggressor, criminal justice intervention, risk & danger assessment, training relevant to specific communities).
- Create space for authentic movement wide dialogue on privilege and its impact on our work. Help people with privilege understand what they gain by surrendering that privilege.
- Review program policies and practices to see how they support or hinder the work outlined in the Vision Plan. Understand through conversation the basis/reason for current policies in order to explain why and how they need to change. Develop an understanding of the negative impact of the policies.

- Support each other in this work. Promote self-reflection; make time to reflect on personal oppression, beliefs/attitudes, and how we work to change.
- Provide ongoing training for domestic and sexual violence programs on evaluation models.

Training with Systems:



We must also engage in systems change work with a specific understanding of oppression/privilege and how it intersects with domestic violence. We need to mentor/train/teach advocates to do this type of specific systems change work. This is training on how to build relationships with system people and develop the skills they need in order to do institutional change work. Institutional change work includes work to identify and change/improve responses to racism, classism, sexism, ableism. This is work to change and improve policy and practices that embed oppression into our institutions and systems.

Action Steps:

- Seek out survivor input on how to improve responses and environments within systems.
- Train law enforcement (and other systems) on anti-oppression issues and use the training as an avenue to build trusted relationships with law enforcement (e.g. train law enforcement on immigration issues with an anti-oppression focus, educate policy makers on the intersections of issues).
- Create experiential education on cultural barriers faced by victims.
- Educate immigrant and refugee communities to understand the various systems in the United States to increase access to resources, address issues of distrust and to create a basis to share information.
- Educate interpreters about domestic violence and the systems where victims interact.

Training with the Community:



We know that a significant percentage of those who experience domestic and sexual violence never connect with advocacy or interact with a system regarding their victimization, thus it is imperative that communities are involved with the work of ending domestic violence.

Action Steps:

- Identify multiple avenues in the community for training and discussion (e.g. ECFE classes, neighborhood events, and community park and recreation activities).

- Create awareness and referral resources that speak to specific people within the community (e.g. parents, youth, coaches, elders).
- Attend community events and get to know community leaders. Seek their advice on how to engage in conversation with the community.

Topics for Training:



The training and education is needed around specific topics and issues. Train on the intersection between economic justice and domestic violence.

Action Steps:

- Create education and learning around domestic violence’s impact on economic security and housing, including:
 - HUD’s Coordinated Entry process and how that impacts domestic violence programs and survivors.
 - Specific trauma-informed responses to domestic violence victims.
 - Increased awareness across homeless service and social service agencies and policy makers that domestic violence is a common denominator for many homeless and housing insecure women.
 - Educate local communities about domestic violence, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, and housing needs and the impacts on all class of people. Focus on reducing/eliminating the attitudes around homeless people as being outsiders.
 - Public education on the connection between housing and violence prevention.
 - Create education and learning on domestic violence specific laws, rules, and provisions, including:
 - VAWA Housing Protections
 - Confidentiality statutes
 - Public nuisance ordinances



Promote early childhood and school based learning.

Action Steps:

- Develop and implement early intervention and screening for youth who exhibit the signs of power/control; focus on risks of perpetration not solely on risk of victimization.
- Create and implement a solid social justice based school curriculum on the oppression of women and the intersections with other oppressions.
- Establish uniform curriculum for prevention efforts in schools for all ages. Create messages in school curriculum based on best practices that address human rights, healthy relationships.



Train, on an ongoing basis, on complex unity topics at all state, regional, and national movement conferences.

- Create complex unity manuals/training materials to promote competency training for all identities at all organizations.
- Promote complex unity discussion in schools at all levels.
- Invite other programs to train your staff about their work/program.
- Engage community organizations in training programs.
- Educate youth and listen to youth. Value youth's input into what their world looks like.
- Have training/technical assistance specific for multi-service organizations.

Strategy 4. Policy & Legislation

We need policies with a clear and deep understanding of domestic and sexual violence in order to change practices. Policy work needs to happen at every level (local, state, national), through every organization/entity (agencies, school boards, hospitals, courts), and through all public policy channels (legislative, administrative, legal). Within each of the priority issue areas, policies need to be addressed at all of these levels.



Look at policies and analyze the impact based on various issues, not solely domestic or sexual violence. Use complex unity - based relationships to mobilize and promote policy change.

Action Steps:

- Strive for system change regarding accessibility to scarce services.
- Create program standards for multi-services programs – standards based on movement principles.
- Create training guidelines for domestic and sexual violence organizations.
- Improve policies within Homeland Security and ICE.
- Work to pass comprehensive sex education legislation that addresses abuse and healthy relationships.
- Re-visit and rework protocols in light of cross-field work.



Change definitions and reframe issues within the housing/homeless regulations, laws, and guidelines that reflect the realities of survivors. Currently there is a basic mismatch between the definitions that guide housing work in government and the ways in which domestic violence survivors experience housing instability. Rather than finding ways to make domestic violence survivors fit into current housing definitions and criteria, the definitions and criteria should be altered to address the lives of survivors.

Action Steps:

- Influence policy within housing entities to better respond to domestic violence survivors.
 - Promote ways to engage landlords/developers to provide more housing for domestic violence survivors (e.g. tax credits or incentives).
 - Developers pay a fee that goes for low-income housing for survivors.
 - Promote housing vouchers that allow for shared housing (e.g. granddaughter can stay temporarily with grandmother).
- Influence policy within domestic violence entities to better respond to the economic and housing needs of survivors.
 - Make shelter dollars more flexible (e.g. can use for emergency or transitional housing).

- Promote policy that emergency stays can automatically be longer than 30 days.
- Dedicate new funding to promote a fuller range of housing options and housing advocacy within domestic violence programs.
- Influence legislative and administrative policy on federal, state and local levels.
 - HMIS database, federal and local policy, that meets data collection and confidentiality needs.
 - Meet with key policy makers (legislative and administrative) and advocate for affordable housing for survivors.
 - Advocate within the legal system for increased financial assistance to domestic violence victims so they can remain in the home after filing for a protective order.
 - Change “homeless” and “fleeing domestic violence” definitions.
 - Adapt assessment tools used to qualify for housing services to be responsive to domestic violence survivors.
- Focus on prevention of homelessness and housing instability through:
 - Education of landlords on domestic violence and the resources available for individuals and on alternatives to eviction.
 - Policy change to address local ordinances that allow for fines and/or eviction for calls to law enforcement.
 - Programming expansion to create programs to help people with criminal histories work with landlords to maintain housing and for advocacy within domestic violence programs directed to prevent evictions.
- Focus on the housing needs of specific populations. Housing options must be culturally appropriate and provide the full range of housing options to all populations. Specific populations include sex trafficked victims, youth, survivors who are undocumented, who are elderly, who are chemically dependent and/or face mental health issues.
- Housing must be available where survivors are living. Relocation is difficult and not possible for many. Housing options must exist in all communities and in rural areas.
- Housing options must allow survivors the ability to live in environments where they have personal agency and dignity. For example, survivors need to have the ability to be housed with their pets or with multi-generational family groupings.



Make anti-oppression work part of all of our programming work and change the policies and practices to reflect that focus. This means that our programs must be set up and be responsive to specific communities (e.g. deaf, LGBTQ, immigrant).

Action Steps:

- Add anti-oppression work into prevention methods and education.
- Focus on policy makers. Educate and empower advocates on how to work with policy makers on anti-oppression issues including methods of communication.
- Become the policy makers. Promote policy makers from within the movement and hold policy makers accountable to the movement.
- Hire people that reflect the communities where we work.
- Create policies that require anti-oppression learning for various licenses/certifications (e.g. education, law enforcement).
- Create policies requiring analysis of cost of domestic violence in Minnesota (e.g. healthcare, law enforcement, prisons, courts)
- Promote policies for collection of relevant data on domestic and sexual violence.
- Improve income parity for women and minorities so they may enjoy the same opportunities as the privileged.
- Create equality/fairness within our programs (e.g. living wages, equality).
- Promote stronger consequences for batterers, looking beyond the criminal justice system.
- Change organizational policy to reflect the social justice issues we are working towards.

Strategy 5. Research & Evaluation

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of any of our work, we must define what we are doing and define what we consider to be success. The defining of the work and what is considered success must originate from within the domestic and sexual violence movement and must be informed by and responsive to victim/survivors. The work of evaluation entails collecting good data, conducting research, promoting promising practices/models, and doing relevant and robust evaluation.

Data collection

Action Steps:



- Influence current data collection tools,
 - Impact the Wilder Survey and the HUD Point in Time Count, as they define priorities.
 - Increase participation in the NNEDV Census Count as a source of information from domestic violence programs.
 - Look at other current data collection and see how domestic violence and housing information collection can be improved/expanded. (e.g. HMIS, MN Student Survey).
- Create, adapt, promote consistent data & evaluation across disciplines and systems.
- Consider asset mapping; all programs do inventory of their assets.

Research

Action Steps:



- Research best practices for dual programs.
- Actively seek out information from various disciplines on what additional information is needed and ways to meaningfully gather the information (e.g. research needed on domestic and sexual violence victims and homelessness).
- Promote research models that are addressing anti-oppression issues.
- Establish radical research arms to each of our agencies.
- Promote research to have information for promoting social change (e.g. Define the cost of DV/SA to make the case for prevention).

Promising Practices/Models

Action Steps:



- Explore co-advocacy models between mainstream and specialized agencies that work with underserved communities.
- Share best practices, promising approaches for anti-oppression work.
- Influence newly created or adapted tools (e.g. ViSPDAT).
 - Explore other state models for housing (e.g. Washington State's work on domestic violence and housing).



- Learn from other social change work models. Expand and promote this work. Find ways to evaluate our success based on these models. (e.g. Eight Methods for Social Change or Andrea Dworkin's five pillars that keep widespread violence against women in place – 1. Hierarchy, 2. Submission, 3. Objectification of women, 4. Lack of accountability, 5. Horizontal hostility).



- Analyze best practices models and ensure that they are responsive to specific communities and to current practice.
- Share information; learn from others; do not re-invent the wheel!

Evaluation

Action Steps:



- Have clearly defined, survivor centered, measures of success.
- Provide/facilitate yearly assessments that gauge service gaps.
- Create good ways to track where victims receive good and poor services.
- Develop evocative reporting models (that don't use personally identifying information or exploit victims' stories).



- Create evaluation for systems change and policy work, evaluation models that everyone can use to tell the story of system change work.
- Create, adapt, and promote consistent data & evaluation across disciplines and systems.



- Use the power of stories to show the complex and layered nature of work. Promote this method of evaluation among funders.
- Collect survivor's stories as part of any evaluation. Look at a variety of ways to collect those stories including video.
- Create a matrix that looks at strengths and weakness of each program to help programs with procedures and programmatic issues.
- Advocate for both qualitative and quantitative data collection and evaluation.
- Examine best practices in evaluation from other fields.
- Define short, medium, and long-term outcomes.




Strategy 6. Funding & Resources

In order to do the work of ending domestic violence, resources are needed. We know that in order to sustain the work, funding is critical. We also know that funding influences what is done. Current funding restrictions have limited the work (e.g. most government funding prohibits prevention work and general domestic violence funding prohibits research and limits evaluation). What is needed goes beyond the money; partnerships between funders and those in the field need to be robust.

The needed resources are not only support from traditional funders and are not only money.

Funding

Action Steps:

- Create a common website for programs to share information on what they do and their approaches and encourage funders to learn about the full range of programming that is happening. Find ways to create funding streams for the work that programs are doing rather than have programs changing to fit what funders want.
-  ○ Requiring partnerships for ALL funding, not just government grants. Collaboration promoted through grant opportunities. Having financial support and financial commitments between organizations creates deeper partnerships.
- Promote funding approaches that recognize the diversity of programming and the need for a variety of ways of doing the work.
-  ○ Promote demonstrated services that are culturally competent and serving diverse communities, including but not limited to people's gender identities, sexual orientations, trafficking history, and/or differing abilities.
 - Ensure services for the underserved populations.
 - Ensure services for sexually exploited individuals.
 - More childcare assistance.
- Explore what is needed by funders to allow use of money as general operating funds and/or to have greater flexibility with funding dollars.
- Dedicate money for communication, information sharing, and evaluation (e.g. equipment, databases).
-  ○ Create best practices evaluation models across the domestic and sexual violence field that are then presented and promoted, as a unified group, to funders.
- Through reporting and sharing of information the anonymous and confidential nature of the work must be understood & respected.
- Educate funders that under-performance on a projected outcome does not always mean we have failed. There are a lot of variables and experimentation is necessary.

- Engage federal funders/organizations in discussion and work in order to assure common views regarding measurement and evaluation.
- Be part of the discussion with funders before funding priorities are set and/or RFP are drafted.
- Find ways to get meaningful evaluation to happen.
 - Create funding sources for evaluation.
 - Fund evaluation work through each agency/program.

Resources:

Action Steps






- Increase the housing resources available for survivors and promote innovation and experimentation to meet survivors' needs.
 - Develop creative communal housing solutions for people to pool resources and not be alone.
 - Target substandard housing and secure money to rehab vs tear down.
 - Increase rental assistance, Section 8, etc.
 - Locate housing dollars that are available but not dedicated or earmarked for domestic violence victims.
 - Prioritize domestic violence victims for housing options (e.g. public housing lists, Section 8).
- Develop good screening and assessment tools for housing providers to use.
- Promote alternative housing models.
 - Foster/mentor homes for DV families to teach housing skills.
 - Tiny house or container/micro housing communities.
 - Flexible housing funding.
 - Communes – families together in community.
 - Promote multi-generational housing models.



- Create tools.
 - Develop tools and technical assistance for anti-oppression work.
 - Create a toolkit around social norm change for programs to use within their program and with systems.
 - Create and promote assessment tools to examine policies and practices in line with the Vision Plan.
 - Provide technical assistance to build understanding and capacity within programs and systems as outlined in the Vision Plan.



- Deliberately choose to mentor/teach how to make institutional and policy change – make this part of the work of domestic and sexual violence programs.
- Expand services to meet currently unmet needs.

- Expand services for sexually exploited individuals.
- 
 - Join together to inspire the development or adaptation of a low cost database that is secure and relevant to domestic and sexual violence work that programs could individually use.
 - Need consistent funding across all programs for the database.
 - Every domestic and sexual violence program could use the same database and also customize for individual needs.
 - The system should assure the same level of access to both small and large programs.
 - Have a database support team, a centralized technology/database/IT resource who can be IT for all programs and can customize databases to each organization's needs.
 - Provide assistance in data interpretation.
- 
 - Create clearinghouse with data collection and evaluation tools, research, measures that could be accessed by all doing this work.
 - Promote joint data collection and evaluation.
 - Create better ways to share short/medium/long term evaluation information.
 - Embrace the value that data and outcome information belongs to ALL.
 - Create a section of MCBW's website for peer-to-peer form sharing. Any program could send documents. Avoid recreating materials. Categories could include:
 - Shelter intakes
 - Criminal justice intervention procedures and forms
 - Evaluation forms
 - Peer review/evaluation
- 
 - Share outcome data across the field, with funders and with others.
 - Seek out culturally diverse tools.
 - Compile current evaluations from all organizations/programs – don't recreate the wheel, make this free, coordinate feedback to funders, identify funder patterns.
- Use partnerships to create resources.
 - Establish partnerships between programs and colleges/universities to create evaluation models for programs that look at systems & survivors and can be provided to programs at no cost.
 - Partner with higher education institutions for research.

Next Steps

The release of Empower Our Future is an important step in the work to end domestic violence but it is only a step. We have spent many days in discussion and planning, only a portion of that work is reflected in this document.

MCBW will continue to share the information from the Vision Plan and will promote the work of implementation. MCBW will use the plan as the foundation for strategic planning and work planning over the coming years. We will encourage others to partner with us in this work. That partnership will take many forms. As varied as our communities are, as varied as the lives of victim/survivors, as varied as our programs/organizations are, that is how varied the work will become.

One of the suggestions that arose during the planning stages was the idea of developing a contract of sorts where programs/organizations and individuals could commit to this work. Part of committing to the contract would be to agree to be in community around this work, to report progress at regular intervals, to evaluate ourselves as we move forward. The idea was not a formal report or a punitive process but rather a way to keep us focused on the values and vision -- a mechanism to keep us all inspired.

Empower Our Future claims the future we desire for domestic violence victims, their families, our programs, our communities and our movement overall. The vision contained in this plan inspires us and challenges all who do this work to take measurable actions towards ending domestic violence in Minnesota.

We are at our best when we come together. Please join us in this work.





Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women

360 Communities/Lewis House, Dakota, Carver, Goodhue, Hennepin, Ramsey

Advocates Against Domestic Abuse, Aitkin & Crow Wing

Advocates for Family Peace, Itasca, Northern St. Louis Co

Advocates for Human Rights, International

Alexandra House, Anoka

American Indian Community Housing Org., St. Louis, Koochiching, Lake, Cook, Itasca

Anna Marie's Alliance, Sherburne, Benton, Stearns, Mille Lacs, Wright

AshaUSA, Anoka, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey

Asian Women United of MN, Hennepin, Ramsey

Aurora Center for Advocacy & Education, Uni. of MN

Battered Women's Justice Project, National

Battered Women's Legal Advocacy Project, Statewide

Bluff Country Family Resources, Filmore, Houston

Bois Forte Victim Services, Nett Lake, Koochiching, St. Louis

Breaking Free, Ramsey

Casa de Esperanza, Hennepin, Ramsey

Committee Against Domestic Abuse, Brown, Nicollet, Blue Earth, LeSuer, Sibley, Waseca, Watonwan, Faribault

Communication Service for the Deaf, Statewide

Community Health Service, Polk, Norman, Clay, Pennington

Community University Health Care Center, Hennepin

Cornerstone Advocacy Services, Hennepin

Crime Victim Crisis Center, Freeborn

Crisis Resource Center of Steele Co., Steele

Dakota County Attorney's Office, Dakota

Division of Indian Work, Hennepin

Domestic Abuse Intervention Programs, St. Louis

Domestic Abuse Project, Hennepin

Down on Violence Everyday DOVE, White Earth Reservation, Mahnomen, Becker, Clearwater

Equay Wiigamig, Red Lake Reservation, Beltrami

Family Safety Network of Cass County, Cass

Friends Against Abuse, Koochiching, Lake of the Woods

Gender Violence Institute, Statewide

Global Rights for Women, International

Hands of Hope Resource Center, Morrison, Todd

Headwaters Intervention Center, Hubbard & Clearwater

Hmong American Partnership, Ramsey

Hope Center, Rice

Hope Coalition, Goodhue

Isaiah's Domestic Violence Task Force, Statewide

Lakes Crisis & Resource Center, Becker and surrounding area

Lutheran Domestic Violence Initiative, Ramsey

Mahnomen County Victim Services Office,
Mahnomen

Marshall County Victim Services, Marshall

Men as Peacemakers, St Louis

Mid-Minnesota Women's Center, Crow Wing

Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless,
Statewide

Minnesota Elder Justice Center, Statewide

Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center,
Hennepin

McLeod Alliance for Victims of Dom. Violence,
McLeod

Missions, Inc./Home Free, Hennepin

New Horizons Crisis Center, Lincoln, Lyon,
Murray, Redwood

North Shore Horizons, Lake

Northwoods Coalition for Family Safety,
Beltrami, Cass

Oasis of Love, Hennepin

Outfront Minnesota, Statewide

Pearl Crisis Center, Mille Lacs

Pillsbury United Communities, Hennepin

Praxis International, National

**Rape & Abuse Crisis Center of Fargo-
Moorhead**, Clay, Wilkin

Refuge Network, Chisago, Isanti, Kannebec

Rivers of Hope, Wright & Sherburne

Ruth's House, Rice

Safe Avenues, Kandiyohi, Swift, Chippewa, Lac
Qui Parle, Renville, Meeker, McLeod

Safe Haven Shelter, St. Louis, Carlton, Aitkin,
Itasca, Lake, Cook, Koochiching

Safe Journey at North Memorial, Hennepin

SEWA-AIFW (Asian Indian Family Wellness),
Hennepin, Ramsey

Sexual Violence Center, Carver, Hennepin, Scott

Sojourner Project, Hennepin, Carver, Dakota,
Ramsey

Someplace Safe, Big Stone, Grant, Pope, Stevens,
Douglas, Wadena, Traverse, Wilkin, Otter Tail

Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services,
Southern MN

Southern Valley Alliance for Battered Women,
Carver, Scott

Southwest Crisis Center, Noble, Pipestone, Rock,
Cottonwood, Jackson

**St. Paul and Ramsey County Intervention
Project**, Ramsey

Tubman, Anoka, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey,
Washington

Violence Intervention Project, Pennington, Polk,
Marshall, Kittson, Roseau, Red Lake, Norman

Violence Prevention Center, Cook

WATCH, Hennepin, Ramsey, St Louis

WINDOW, Carlton, Pine & Kanabec

Women of Nations, Anoka, Dakota, Hennepin,
Ramsey, Washington

Women's Advocates, Anoka, Carver, Dakota,
Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, Washington

Women's Resource Center, Winona

Women's Rural Advocacy Programs, Lincoln,
Lyon, Yellow Medicine, Redwood

Women's Shelter, Inc., Dodge, Fillmore, Olmsted,
Wabasha



We ask that the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women be credited when information from this plan is used.

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A MEMBER OF



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