Survivor Voices Inclusion Project
Creating Meaningful Survivor Engagement

Bringing a Survivor Voice to Every Table

May 2013
The Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses
OAITH wishes to acknowledge:

Dawn De Souza, Project Coordinator
Sue J., Survivor Liaison
And all the women across Ontario who made this model a reality.

May 2013

Funding provided by Status of Women Canada as a Theme 4 Blue Print Project. The opinions and suggestions offered here do not necessarily reflect those of Status of Women Canada.
This image was drawn by a 13 year old girl. After her experience with abuse her goal is to end violence against women by tearing it down one brick at a time.
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All together now—The first official SVIP hands photo at our first workshop in Woodstock Ontario.
Preface

The Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses (OAITH) would like to thank all the amazing people who came together to create this model of survivor engagement. Staff of the Survivor Voices Inclusion Project (SVIP), Dawn De Souza the Project Coordinator and Sue J. the Survivor Liaison, were personally touched by the strength of all the women survivors of abuse and violence and staff of Violence Against Women (VAW) organizations they met along the way. Without your passion, honesty and courage this project would never have happened.

This project hinged on being able to reach women across Ontario. We could not have done this without the support of many amazing women’s shelters, second stage homes and women’s organizations. We know how valuable time is and appreciate the energy and effort they put into making SVIP a success in their communities.

We would also like to thank our funder, Status of Women Canada. As one of the Blue Print projects, we were able to travel across Ontario to hear the voices of women survivors and agencies and create this model.

Along with our workshop participants and funder, this project could not have happened without the support of the OAITH Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression Social Justice and Action Committee (SJAC) and the OAITH Board of Directors who have supported this work at every turn.

This model is dedicated to each and every woman who has experienced abuse and violence. You are not alone.

- The opinions shared in this model do not necessarily reflect those of our funder Status of Women Canada or individual agencies and women called on to participate.
Hard at work—One of many groups of women sharing ideas on how to be advocates for others.
The Survivor Voices Inclusion Project (SVIP) model of survivor engagement is a tool for women’s service agencies, survivors and community services to meaningfully engage women survivors of abuse and violence in the work to end violence against women. The goal is to improve access and quality of services for women and children transitioning to violence free lives. Of course, we cannot do this without engaging women who have used and are using these services.

Where We Came From: Our History

Feminists, including survivors and their allies, began demanding changes to how society responded to women disclosing violence in the early 1970’s. OAITH, created in 1977, was developed in a time when survivors were still central to the Violence Against Women (VAW) movement. Since then, the movement has been successful in creating systems to respond to women disclosing abuse, but survivors are less central than they once were. So in 2008 OAITH released Survivor Voices, a summary of 149 survivor’s voices from 11 communities across Ontario. They expressed their insights and advice concerning changes needed to systems supporting them. The goals of this project were “to gather the advice of survivors on how to include their voices in the work to end women abuse (and) to call on community systems and services to welcome, and listen to, the voices of women abuse survivors on improving their responses” (OAITH, December 2008, p. ii). The project had many outcomes including changes to specific community services. However, the main theme was that women survivors of abuse want to be actively and meaningfully engaged in these changes and the work to end violence against women.

“If I saved myself and my children, I had something else to bring to the table. Experience, I survived. I AM A SURVIVOR.”

- SVIP survivor participant, Durham Region.
Where We Went From There: Our Method

This is where SVIP took up the call. Through funding from Status of Women Canada, we travelled to 20 different communities across Ontario and engaged 373 participants including survivors, staff at women’s service agencies and community partners. Participants were consulted in a variety ways including 22 SVIP workshops (Chart 1), 9 surveys (Chart 2), VAW sector events and one on one contact with stakeholders. From September 2011 to March 2013 we travelled and met with women, and a few men, across Ontario to ask them four basic questions.

What does meaningful survivor engagement look like for you?
How do we make these inclusions ideas a reality?
What barriers stop you from being engaged or engaging women survivors?
How can we overcome or work with these challenges?

Included in these pages are their answers. We recognize that everyone’s experience with abuse and violence is as individual as the women themselves and that every community and population is different. Therefore not all inclusion ideas and barrier solutions will work for all women and communities. In the same vein this tool does not include all methods to meaningfully engage women survivors. In fact the hope is that this will become an organic tool that agencies and survivors can grow in their own communities.

Our first step was to define survivor inclusion. For our purposes the definition is creating meaningful ways of including survivors of abuse in the work of women’s organizations while most importantly making sure to listen to survivors about how they want and need to be engaged. As women survivors are at the core of all we do, the next step was simple … ask, listen and act on the voices of survivors. We created tools including a four hour workshop to reach women across Ontario.

Early on in the workshop phase of the project we recognized we were not always hearing from marginalized populations. To rectify this we began to facilitate population based workshops for Aboriginal women, immigrant women (including women with precarious or no status in Canada), women with disabilities, women who use substances, women living with mental health concerns and women who identify as part of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Transgender, Two-Spirit and Queer (LGBTTQ) community.
Where We Are Now: Our Findings

The two main themes heard rising out of the voices of participants were:

1. Survivors want to be actively and meaningfully engaged in the movement to end violence against women beyond just the four walls of the shelters.

2. Agencies want to include survivors but were not always successful in getting them to the table.

Through asking survivors and agencies what meaningful engagement looks like and barriers stopping it we heard the following responses. Statistics are based on the level of importance given by participants.

Inclusion Themes

- Prevention Inclusions - 56%
- Support Inclusions - 31%
- Population Specific / Cultural Inclusions - 13%

Barrier Themes

- Lack of Resources - 38%
- Fear, Confidentiality, Tokenism & Stigma - 24%
- Communication and Language Barriers - 11%
- Population / Cultural Barriers - 9%
- Systemic Barriers - 8%
- Personal Barriers - 8%
- Location Barriers - 2%
**Response from SVIP Survivor Survey**
What benefits do you feel come from working with women’s services as a survivor of violence against women? (Check all that apply)

- Help me to be a positive role model for others: 76%
- Gives me a sense of empowerment: 63%
- Feels good to give back: 82%
- Help me boost or gain self-esteem: 63%
- Help me build skills and gain employment: 59%
- Help me in my healing process: 67%
- Ending violence against women: 71%
- Improves access and quality of services: 75%

**Response from SVIP Agency Survey**
How do you believe survivor inclusion benefits your agency, community and the women and children you support? (Check all that apply)

- Providing survivors with practical experience to assist in securing employment: 49%
- Providing survivors with leadership skills and roles in agencies and community: 62%
- Empowering survivors to live violence free lives: 74%
- Use of survivor’s participation and experience to assist women currently in crisis: 54%
- Use of survivors’ expertise in the work to create positive social change: 87%
- Helping to develop a strong partnership with survivors and community in the work to end violence against women: 85%
- Use of survivors’ expertise to improve agency services: 82%
Before you apply this tool, you need to believe in the benefits of survivors partnering with services to improve the lives of women and children transitioning to violence free lives.

The benefits are two-sided with both agencies engaging survivors and the women themselves reaping the rewards. As the above quotation illustrates many agencies, 85% of SVIP’s Agency Engagement Survey respondents, who engage survivors, see the benefits. They spoke of an increased understanding of the needs of abused women and effectiveness of their services. Eighty per cent (80%) said they utilize the experience, ideas and recommendations of survivors when working women using their services.

And why not considering how the VAW movement began? From the early days of “Break the Silence” survivors have been at the heart, if not the heart of the movement itself. They were the ones who opened their homes to abused women and their children. These are the women who worked to create the services we have today, all the while, battling barriers such as dis-belief, lack of support and a system that blames the victim (OAITH, December 2008). This is where this model comes in. By engaging survivors meaningfully as peers once more in the movement our services can only improve.

Of course systems and services are not the only benefactors of survivor engagement. Women survivors have much to gain from being involved, not the least of which is empowerment and self-confidence. We know that abuse and violence, especially in intimate partner relationships, all comes down to power and control. The bruises many women experience are all too often the least of the effects of abuse. Even after leaving an abusive relationship many women can still feel powerless. By becoming engaged in the work to end violence against women, survivors are able to regain their power by becoming a voice of strength and providing hope for others still living in fear of abuse.

One survivor told us that for her, meaningful survivor engagement meant “women holding hope for other women when she cannot have hope for herself”. With this in mind perhaps the true beneficiaries of meaningful survivor engagement are not survivors or agencies, but the women and children currently fleeing abuse and violence. Now that is something we can all get behind!
The Benefits of Survivor Inclusion

Survivors know what worked and didn’t work for them and are experts in what it means to overcome adversity. They need to be at the table when creating new programs, policies and advocating for social change!

With all the changes happening Canada’s social policies it is more important than ever for us to hear and act on survivor’s voices.

All hands together can make a difference!

A page from our presentation at the first annual National Leadership Forum facilitated by the Canadian Network of Women’s Shelters & Transition Houses in Montreal in September 2012. SVIP was selected, along with OSAC to share our project in a “WOW’s” or “Ways of Working” session.
Key Recommendations: Where to Start

Before diving into how to facilitate inclusions or overcome barriers there are some things both survivors and agencies need to do to prepare. Much of this is already being done by many agencies and survivors across Ontario.

Agency Preparations

Talk it Up!

Before they can become engaged survivors need to know what opportunities are out there and where to find them. In the words of one survivor participant, “we don’t know each other”.

Actions:

- Create a survivor alumni group to contact women about upcoming events and engagement opportunities in your community.
- Add a question to outtake forms asking if a woman might be interested in becoming engaged in the future and for contact information, including an alternative number of someone in her support system.
- Use social media as a free and easily accessible way of providing information always being mindful of women’s safety.
- Use word of mouth through trusted sources such as counsellors, friends and agency staff. Talk it up!

Be Welcoming

Creating a space that welcomes meaningful survivor engagement can be complex. Some survivors shared that they did not always feel welcomed to engage.

Actions:

- Women are not always comfortable re-telling their stories to a group. Creating a practice of not asking women to re-tell of may be helpful. Make this clear to women so they feel comfortable coming to their first meeting or event.
- Create a peer mentoring system (see page 38) where a woman already involved becomes a welcoming mentor to a newer participant and shares how she overcame fears of engaging.
- Allow survivors to bring a friend or support to encourage them to begin engaging.
Review Agency Policies and Procedures

Agency policies and procedures, especially those regarding length of time a woman needs to be out of service before she can volunteer, can be a barrier to engagement.

**Action:**
- Review policies asking the following questions:
  - Is it inclusive to all women wishing to engage?
  - Can it be changed? Keeping in mind that some policies are in place due to requirements of funders and external systems.
  - How do we define an ex-service user? Is this realistic? For example is a woman who has not used shelter services for a long period but may still access outreach services such as counselling or food banks still considered a service user?

By reviewing policies and making appropriate changes, agencies can remove barriers for survivors. Women suggested agencies engage survivors in this process to make sure their voices are heard and valued.

Value Her Voice

As we all know many survivors become engaged on a volunteer basis. Valuing their time, even in small ways, can go a long way to making women feel welcome and respected.

**Actions:**
- Provide meals, childcare and other practical supports for group or event meetings.
- Provide honorariums.
- Dedicate funds in annual budgets for survivor engagement.
- Partner with community organizations with access to funding for survivor engagement.

Ask, Listen and Act

If you are going to ask women to engage, then you must be committed to listening to them and acting on their suggestions whenever possible. During one workshop, a participant questioned our commitment to hearing her voice. By recognizing her concern, addressing it and committing to listen and include her voice, she became an active member of the group.

**Actions:**
- Let women know what actions you are taking, or the reasons you cannot follow through on suggestions. Avoid tokenism!
- Be ready to commit to hearing a woman’s voice through policy and practice, even when your personal or professional philosophies may not be the same.
Survivor Preparation

Being Ready

Women survivors who want to become engaged also have work to do to become prepared. Above all a woman must be ready to be engaged. This means something different to everyone and there is no steadfast rule to gauge a woman’s readiness to participate.

Actions:
- Gain ownership over your life journey and become self-empowered.
- Rid yourself of any shame and recognize and own your strength and value.
- Develop personal coping skills and complete self-esteem and empowerment workshops.
- Engage or volunteer as peer mentors for women new to the shelter while still using services.

Commitment

Most survivors who become engaged are volunteers. In preparation to become engaged, women need to be willing to commit time and energy to the initiative.

Actions:
- Ask what the time commitment is before becoming engaged.
- Remember that things will happen that stop us for always being able to keep commitments but this does not mean you are not committed.

Learn How to Re-tell Without Re-living

So much of meaningful survivor engagement comes from being able to share our stories with others. However, if we are not in a place where we can re-tell without re-living then we run the risk of harming ourselves by being engaged.

Actions:
- Practice re-telling with close friends and trusted supports.
- Work with a peer mentor.
- Have agency staff attend events as support for those who request it.

Again this is very personal and each woman will have a different experience reaching this place. One survivor told us that having shelter staff with her when she first began engaging allowed her to feel strong enough to share her story and her voice. She is now asked to speak to professionals, college and university classes and at national VAW forums.
In March 2011, OAITH received funding from Status of Women Canada to complete a Blue Print Project. Our goal, to improve quality and access to services for women and children transitioning to violence free lives. OAITH took the stance that you cannot improve services without engaging women survivors and SVIP was born.

**Needs Assessment**

With the funding obtained two part-time staff were hired and the work began. A needs assessment was completed using research and input from survivors, OAITH’s membership, and community partners including Domestic Violence Coordinating Committees (DVCCs) and others active in the movement to end violence against women. These stakeholders were approached using surveys developed in partnership with the project’s evaluator.

Survivors were asked what barriers they felt existed making it difficult to become or stay engaged (see insert). Most interesting was that 16% said they did not know they could be engaged and 24% stated they did not know what opportunities were available. What a simple barrier to overcome.

We also learned from agencies that 85%, according to our SVIP Agency Survey, believe including survivors’ expertise, wisdom and leadership would or does increase the quality of services they offer. With such an overwhelming result we knew a model of survivor inclusion would be warmly welcomed.

Full surveys and results can be found on the OAITH website at www.oaith.ca.

**Workshops**

With the needs assessment showing a desire for survivor inclusion, SVIP staff created a four hour workshop to bring women survivors together with representatives from agencies created to support them. Four basic questions were asked.

- What does meaningful survivor engagement look like for you?
- How do we make these inclusions ideas a reality?
- What barriers stop you from being engaged or engaging women survivors?
- How can we overcome or work with these challenges?
To answer these questions we invited all women in the community who identified as survivors and representatives from women service agencies from all levels (front line to management and board members) to participate. The goal was to bring participants to the same table as peers with no one having to disclose or identify if they were a survivor, staff or both (except in a confidential feedback survey completed at the end of each workshop). The workshops were a combination of large and small group-work to encourage all women to participate (recognizing that not all women feel comfortable speaking in large groups). Each workshop offered free childcare, transportation assistance and interpretation for survivors. After each workshop participants were given a typed report of their inclusion and barrier ideas and solutions to encourage work to begin in their communities.

On September 8, 2011, 11 women attended the first SVIP workshop in Woodstock Ontario. The event was used, not only to gather data, but also to find out the changes needed to make to the workshop successful. Adjustments were made and workshops began.

Over 370 women (including a few men) participated in SVIP workshops and mini-workshops held during VAW sector events (Chart 1, page 70). Despite the great turnout it was quickly recognized that we were not hearing from some more marginalized populations of survivors. So in August 2012, the first population specific workshop was held in partnership with the Migrant Mothers Project (MMP) at the University of Toronto. We held a workshop for immigrant women who have precarious or no status in Canada. We were very honoured to hear from this group as they are often the most invisible of survivors. Not only are they part of an immigrant population which is not always consulted by systems, but with no or precarious status these women are much less likely to use their voices with systems that do not acknowledge they exist.

By the end of our workshop phase we had held population specific workshops with women with disabilities, Aboriginal women, women who use substances, women in the LGBTQ community and those living with mental health concerns. Throughout our community based workshops we had heard from women who identified with these groups but some may not have felt comfortable speaking opening. In most of the population specific workshops honorariums were offered to survivors. This was in addition to childcare, transportation assistance and interpretation. Personal support workers were also hired to assist women when needed.

A written version of the workshop was provided to those in the community who told us they wanted to attend but were unable to do so. At the end of each workshop participants were asked to complete a feedback survey. Information gathered was used to update the workshop and fine tune advertising efforts.
Surveys

We also utilized surveys as a method of reaching community partners. Multiple surveys were created to hear from different sources. A chart listing of all surveys used and their purpose can be found on page 71. We released the *SVIP Agency Engagement Activities Survey* to hear about the survivor engagement activities agencies are already facilitating. An *SVIP Post Workshop Survey* was also created to hear about increases or new or engagement activities two to three months after visiting a community.

Another survey was created to hear from staff at women’s organizations who identified as survivors. A review of the workshop feedback revealed that just over 1/3 or 39% of participants identifying as agency representatives also identified as survivors. However, those who do work in the sector do not always openly identify in the workplace for a variety of reasons. As paid positions can be an important way to meaningfully engaged survivors, SVIP created the *SVIP Survivors Working in VAW* survey. Findings can be found in the *Hidden Inclusion: Survivors as Staff* section on page 60.

Testing

As the project moved forward survivors groups were identified to help in the testing of the model. Groups were approached and three including; Survivor Voices Oxford in Woodstock, Freedom Sisters in Sault Ste. Marie and the OAITH Survivor Advisory Committee (OSAC) a provincial survivor group, were interested and able to test the model. The groups then worked in their communities, or provincially, on initiatives they choose from a list provided. They told us what worked, what didn’t and how they overcame challenges they faced. This information is included with the individual inclusions and barriers chosen. These groups were offered an honorarium for their time.

SVIP also contacted multiple agencies across Ontario, including one from each workshop, to review this tool and supply us with feedback that has been incorporated throughout.

**Do you find that the pilot model is helpful for having ideas to deal with the barriers that may stop survivors from being involved in the violence against women movement?**

“Of course because of the pilot model we are able to recognize the top most barriers that survivors face when accessing the service agencies after leaving the abusive situation. … Now because of pilot model of SVIP we can educate the service agencies to improve their services which will meet the needs of the survivors. We can ask and make them understand (the need) for change in policies and being included when making the changes. Our lived experience makes us experts in this area. Who knows better than us as survivors.”

- Survivor Group response to the *SVIP Survivor Testing Survey*. 
Findings and Statistics

The following are the inclusions and barriers heard from participants. At each workshop women were given stickers to act as votes. These “votes” were placed on the inclusions and barriers most important to them. The statistics here reflect those “votes”. Each inclusion is meant to be a partnership between survivors and agencies unless otherwise stated. It is recognized that some inclusions and barriers can fit into many themes and that not all items mentioned will appeal to all survivors, agencies or communities. Many barriers have also been expressed as inclusions. To maintain a theme of empowerment we have chosen to provide solutions to those barriers with the appropriate inclusion.

### Inclusion Themes

#### Prevention Inclusions
- Advocacy: 20%
- Education: 17%
- Stigmas, Social Constructs, Credibility of Survivors and Survivor Ownership: 11%
- Public Awareness: 8%

#### Support Inclusions
- Networks, Partnerships and Knowledge Sharing: 11%
- Peer Mentoring: 10%
- Survivor Groups: 8%
- Volunteering: 2%

#### Population Specific / Cultural Inclusions
- Women with Mental Health Concerns: 5%
- Immigrant Women – Women Without Status: 3%
- Substance Use: 2%
- Aboriginal Women: 1%
- LGBTTQ Women: 1%
- Women with Disabilities: 1%

**Total**: 100%

### Barrier Themes

#### Lack of Resources
- Lack of Resources for Survivors: 19%
- Lack of Resources for Both Survivors and Agencies: 17%
- Lack of Resources for Agencies: 2%

#### Fear, Confidentiality, Tokenism & Stigma
- Stigma: 11%
- Fear: 7%
- Lack of Confidentiality: 3%
- Tokenism: 3%

#### Communication and Language Barriers
- Difficulty Connecting Survivors with Opportunities: 9%
- Language and Literacy Barriers: 2%

#### Systemic Barriers
- Agency and System Policies: 5%
- Power Imbalance: 3%

#### Personal Barriers
- Self-Esteem, Time and Readiness: 8%

#### Location Barriers
- 2%

#### Population Specific / Cultural Barriers
- General: 5%
- Aboriginal Women: 4%
- Immigrant Women – Women Without Status: 1%

**Total**: 100%

### Conclusion

Women we met with spent more time talking about how they want to be engaged or engage others then the barriers standing in their way. Each workshop was an empowering experience and SVIP is confident that use of this tool will continue to empower women and agencies in their work to end violence against women.
# The Specifics: Inclusions at a Glance

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The Specifics: Inclusion Details

The following section includes, not only the ideas for how to meaningfully engage women survivors, but some practical steps you can take to make these a reality. While reading please keep in mind that each initiative is intended to be a partnership between agencies and survivors unless otherwise stated. We also recognize that just as each of us has a different experience with abuse or oppression, not every inclusion will fit every person or community. More information about programs and organizations mentioned can be found in under Resources on page 66.

Prevention Inclusions

The following ideas work towards preventing violence and abuse to women and children through education, advocacy, reducing stigmas, increasing the credibility of survivors and public awareness initiatives.

Education

Education has been listed here as an inclusion. However, we also know that it goes a long way to reducing stigmas, stereotypes and eliminating fear of the unknown.

Mandatory and Community Systems.

These education sessions would be focused on individual systems (Police and Justice System, Children’s Aid Society, Social Services, etc.) and be facilitated by survivors independently or in partnership with women’s service agencies. Participants suggested forums be created to keep this education ongoing and advocate it be mandatory for staff of all services who work with women and children experiencing abuse (including administrative staff).

This training should be from a survivor’s perspective and work to foster empathy and understanding for all systems working with women experiencing abuse, including VAW agencies.

Training Topics:

- Sensitivity Training regarding diversity, abuse, power and control and what it is to be an abused woman.
- Cultural sensitivity including education about dominant cultures in the community (created by front line staff and survivors as they know who is using services in their communities).
- Create Why Women Stay and Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression workshops.
- Policy power, speak to the power of policies, the effects on women and barriers they can create.

“Survivors of domestic violence should have an essential voice in improving court and community responses to the plight of abused women and children.”

- Access Denied The Barriers of Violence and Poverty for Abused Women and Their Children After Separation
Training Tools:
- Create surveys to send to systems. Use responses to help develop education sessions.
- Create a panel or committee to develop education sessions.
  - Make this group as diverse as possible.
  - Group should include members specific to system being educated.
  - Recognize each individual as a person and not a position, have professionals attend in plain clothes (no uniforms).

Police Education Panel
- Survivors
- Staff from women’s services
- Police officers
- Women with experience with corrections
- Women with experience with the shelter system
- Adult children of survivors
- Men with experience with abuse (as victims and abusers)


Each of the following education initiatives are associated with specific populations or systems.

Health Care Systems

Women want to educate the health care system about what it is to experience abuse, how to provide better service to women experiencing abuse and how to use empathy when a woman comes in for care. They mentioned stigmas they often feel are placed on them when they access services and the impact of these judgements. These sessions could be workshops created to be delivered during staff meetings or training sessions.

Children’s Aid Society (CAS)

Women spoke of the effects CAS policies, stating they can be judgemental and upset a survivor’s home. Participants spoke about fear of this system stating that CAS should be working to support parents, not judging them. Above all they wanted CAS to respect their experience and take some responsibility for their policies that can often create barriers for women and children transitioning to violence free lives.

During our workshop at Bkejwanong First Nation Reserve on Walpole Island, women spoke to the cycle of CAS involvement they feel happens in their community and families. Their focus in working with CAS was more to empower the women involved with the system then educating the system itself. They suggested educating parents about CAS policies and starting parenting support groups and classes.
Family and Criminal Justice Systems

When working with family and criminal justice systems participants suggested educating judges and lawyers on issues important to women experiencing abuse. This would include fairness to victims, empathy and practical options and solutions. Survivors want to play an active part in delivering these messages.

Get messages to courts by:
- Finding allies in the system (judges, lawyers, elected officials, Victim Services).
- Encouraging community (including faith based groups) to send letters to MP’s and MPP’s demanding changes to court systems.
- Child witness programs that advocate for courts to recognize a child’s voice.
- Create a system where survivors and VAW advocates meet with judges on a regular basis similar to the Mental Health Diversion Court and Human Service Justice Coordinating Committee (see Resources).
- Be the squeaky wheel to get attention.

Children and Youth

"Stopping the cycle at a young age" – SVIP survivor participant

More than any other group, participants said they wanted to stop the cycle of abuse by educating children and youth. They want to use their experiences to educate the next generation about; abuse, healthy relationships, mental health, substance use, services for women in crisis, power and control, equality, poverty, warning signs of abuse, where to go for help, how to safety plan, bullying and more.

Actions:
- Educate female and male children and youth in schools, community centres, childcare centres, groups, clubs and other child and youth organizations.
- Create education sessions about abuse for teachers, parents, guidance counsellors, administrative staff and principals.
- Involve professional services (police, doctors) in teaching and creation of the materials.
- Contact individual schools, school boards and principals with a proposal presentation to illustrate importance of this education to students.
- Create a teach-the-teacher program where survivors teach educators to ensure they understand the curriculum before they teach students.
- Advocate to school boards, parents and government for abuse and healthy relationships curriculum to be mandatory at all levels (elementary, secondary and post-secondary) and covered consistently.
- Survivors to gain power in the system through involvement in Parent Teachers Associations and School Trustee Boards.
- Start education as early as possible and gear curriculum towards age group (for example bullying in earlier years).
Children and Youth Education Tools and Methods:

- Roots of Equality curriculum, created by Springtide Resources and the Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario (see Resources).
- Teach in different styles (in class, assembly style, workshops).
- Survivors to partner with agency staff already going into local schools to teach about abuse.
- Partner with or learn from other in school programs run by community organizations.
  - See Resources for a list of all programs mentioned in workshops.
- Create a youth advocacy program in schools and apply for Speak Up! funding from the Ministry of Education (see Resources).
- Educate teenage boys using male role models (coaches, teachers, etc.).
  - Teach these male role models about healthy relationships, abuse, anger management, how to respond to stress, etc.
- Create a series of children's books on VAW.
- Use peer teaching/support models (partner younger children with older children).
- Create plays and puppetry programs to make education fun.
- Use technology based education tools (video games, computer programs, etc.).
- Create in school programs during days of activism (Take Back the Night, etc.).

Women and Their Rights

Abuse and violence, especially in an intimate partner setting is about power and control. When a survivor of abuse begins her transition to a violence free life, so much of the process relies on her learning how to use her voice and advocate for herself. Part of this work means you need to know what supports are out there and how to access them.

Actions:

- Provide information on how governments, agencies and services operate and their mandates including a women’s right to appeal decisions made by systems.
- Spread information about support services and women’s rights using pamphlets, newsletters, technology and word of mouth.
- Advertise availability of financial resources that might help a woman leave an abuser.
- Create decision making workshops for women, for example York Region Women’s Centre's Making Changes Program (see Resources).
Men

Many women spoke with passion about educating men on abuse. They talked about creating workshops for men to understand abuse, the affects and how to be a part of the solution though teaching and being role model for the next generation.

Actions:

- Survivors speaking at Anger Management and Partner Abuse Responsive Service classes.
- Partner with organizations already educating men (Neighbours, Friends & Families - see Resources).
- Create fundraiser/awareness events targeting men such as Walk a Mile in Her Shoes, car shows and sports events (see Resources).
- Advocate and create more programs for perpetrators of abuse.
  - Create a 12 step program for abusers.
  - Abusers Anonymous hotline.
  - Create non-judgemental organizations to support abusers.
- Partner with men to educate other men about abuse in a variety of locations.
- Reach out to community organizations (clubs, trade unions) and ask for opportunities to educate men.
- Work with male headed VAW organizations such as the White Ribbon Campaign (see Resources).

Get men involved and engaged as VAW is "not just a women's issues it's society's issue" - SVIP participant

Participants had different opinions on partnering with, educating and supporting men’s involvement in the VAW movement. Services and survivors have to be consulted about engaging men and all opinions must be valued in moving forward with any partnerships.

General Education Points

The following ideas can be related to all education initiatives.

- Survivors must be a part of the creation and/or facilitation of all education initiatives.
- Create and nurture community partnerships.
- Support survivors with training for public speaking, presentation skills, workshop facilitation, law, how to be an advocate and theories about abuse and violence. Can use free or low cost services such as:
  - local Toastmasters groups,
  - Neighbours, Friends and Family’s information sessions, and
  - Public library computer literacy programs (see Resources).
- Provide women with professional clothing and transportation to get to education events.
- Create opportunities for re-education on a consistent basis.
- Use all available mediums including videos, online resources and personal presentations.
Advocacy

The following are suggestions to meaningfully engage survivors as advocates for social change, system change, more funding, more services and most importantly for systems and society to listen and value what survivors have to say. Survivors said advocacy was a way for them to take back some of the power that has been taken from them by abusers and systems that use power over them.

Participants stated they wanted to be advocates for respect for ALL women’s voices in ALL aspects and with ALL services.

Advocacy Tools and Methods:

- **SURVIVORS’ VOICES** —Support survivors to speak *their* truth in a way that creates change and an ongoing dialogue that feeds policy and addresses stigma.
- Online and in person petitions.
- Ensure advocacy and public awareness events end at important destinations (government offices) and stay there until attention is paid and a voice given to the group.
- Use technology to link actions (website links).
- Create a committee to do advocacy work in communities including survivors, politicians and others involved in the movement.
- Create venues, in shelters and other spaces, for survivors to speak to politicians.
  - Include youth, old enough to share their stories.
- Create a calendar of advocacy events and post it where women will see it.
- Have in-shelter conversations encouraging women to share ideas and bring their voices to systems.
- Create actions that involve multiple sectors not just VAW to add the power of more voices.
- Get the media involved in advocacy efforts.
- Utilize technology and social media to spread awareness.

Advocacy Training for Survivors:

- Provide or support training on the skills and resources needed to successfully advocate.
  - Letter writing skills, how to access different levels of governments, etc.
  - Use tools such as OAITh’s advocacy training guide (see Resources).
  - Self-esteem, empowerment and assertiveness workshops.
  - Partner with programs in shelters and outside services such as the Mental Illness Support Network (see Resources).
  - Train/support survivors to cope with those who do not agree with them.
  - Create a peer mentor model for this training (see page 38).

"if you are going to change the system you have to know it" - SVIP participant
Each of the following advocacy actions are associated with specific populations or systems. They are based on the changes women said they want to see in these systems and are meant to be a jumping off point for advocacy work.

**Changes to CAS**

- Advocate for specific workers or a specialized department with VAW training to work with women experiencing abuse.
- Advocate that CAS work from a holistic, strength-based, client/family centered approach by creating consistency in case management, individualization of cases and not using power over women and children transitioning to violence free lives.
- Advocate that CAS listen to women’s voices, act on their input and review policies to reduce barriers they may create (telling a women she needs to leave her home or her children will be removed and then use transiency against her).

**Give Survivors a Voice in Decision Making**

- Create positions and actively recruit survivors for program development committees and on boards.
  - Provide women with information about how formal meetings work, how to participate and the roles and responsibilities of members.
- Ask for survivors’ feedback on systems and what is stopping them from participating at the decision making level, listen to and use information given.
- Advocate to reduce the idea of "professionalism" in decision making and for a return to our grassroots.
  - Give survivors’ voices value and do not question what they say.
  - Respect survivors as the experts in their lives.
- Actively hear survivors by:
  - Going to where women are to hear their stories.
  - Survivors specifically mentioned travelling to the “real north” to hear from women in remote communities.
  - Use technology such as video and telephone conferencing to hear voices when travel is not possible.
  - Have survivor input meetings two to three times a year to review programs.

“You’re making them jump through hoops when they can’t even afford a hoop” – SVIP survivor participant on CAS policies

Survivors and agencies come together at a OAITH Eastern Region meeting in Carlton Place. This workshop was held in January 2012 during a massive snow storm. Despite the weather women came and shared their hopes for meaningful survivor inclusion.
Social Change: Lobbying and Working with Government

- Create change by getting political support from Members of Parliament (MP’s) and Members of Provincial Parliament (MPP’s) (see Resources).
- Increase women’s representation in politics.
- Support survivor engagement in political actions, community forums and women’s groups.
- Survivors attend town council meetings.
- Survivors active in educating government officials on issues important them.
- Teach women about the process of policy creation including who makes the decisions so they know who to advocate to for changes.
- Create a holistic approach to political advocacy including engaging survivors.
- Advocate changing legislative/policy language to make it more accessible.

Advocate for Accountability of Abusers

This inclusion considers that an abuser does not always feel responsible for his actions. In many cases, survivors expressed they felt their abuser was protected by policies and practices of systems.

- Advocate for more accountability by laying charges every time an incident occurs.
- Advocate creating a system that puts the needs of women and children first.
- Advocate for CAS to hold the abuser accountable by ordering the him out of the home, not threatening removal of children if the woman does not leave.
- Advocate for changes to restraining orders.
  - Change wording so any infraction gets attached to family court files.
  - Change practices that do not act until the order is breached more than three times.
- Advocate for more powerful laws for protection (improved sentences and consequences).

Advocate for More Services and Programs in Shelters and Second Stage Homes

Survivors stated they wanted to see more services and programs in shelters and second stage homes. They recognized that funding limitations make this difficult and that advocating for more funding from governments was a vital step in obtaining these programs and services.

Child and Youth Programs

- Partner with drop in centres for women and children.
- Partner with YWCA for free family passes.
- Create more youth geared activities in shelters (movie nights, game centres, televisions in rooms).
- Open children’s play room more frequently.
Programs for Pets

- Create or advocate for programs that allow women to bring pets into the shelter or provide a safe place for them.
- Host joint fundraisers with the Humane Society or have a booth at their shelter.
- Partnership with PAWS for support in finding safe places for women's pets.
- Apply for grants to help pay for services for pets.
- Partner with veterinarian technician school programs for support.
- Use media to reach out to people to provide respite to pets.

General Programs

- Create spiritual support programs in shelters.
- Advocate for more specific services for elder women experiencing abuse.
- Advocate for more shelters and second stage homes in underserviced areas.

General Advocacy Topics

The following are topics or methods participants identified as important.

- More funding.
- Multiservice buildings for ease of access and reducing stigmas.
- One central VAW worker for services such as Ontario Works.
- Join the Sisters in Spirit Campaign, October vigils and other projects.
- Second stage housing that works for your community.
- Survivors given a voice in creation of all policies, programs and changes that affect them.
- More accessible housing for women with disabilities leaving shelters.
- Immigration policy changes and abuse education services for women new to Canada.
- Women without status or with precarious status in Canada – bring visibility to “non-status” women experiencing abuse to give them a voice where they have none.
- Adopt "Don't Ask Don't Tell" policies in all agencies (see Resources).
- Aboriginal voices to be heard and valued for being unique.
- 211 services in all communities across Ontario.
- More diversity in job recruitment for agency staff including cultural and lived experience.
- Survivors working as staff in agencies to be able to identify as survivors.
- Tax credits given to women who add safety measure to their homes (i.e. new locks, windows, etc.).
- Media to stop sensualisation of abuse that desensitizes society to the harm of violence and abuse women experience.
- Aboriginal women to be treated equally on and off reserve.
Addressing Stigmas, Social Constructs, Credibility of Survivors and Survivor Ownership

So much of meaningful survivor engagement is wrapped in survivors having ownership over their contributions and credibility to those around them. Much of this is a personal journey of readiness, but below are some ways survivors and agencies can come together to reduce stigmas and promote survivor ownership and credibility.

“This women with lived experience have a central role to play”
- Building a Bigger Wave Provincial Violence Against Women Coordinating Committee Forum Report

This section of inclusion ideas is closely related to barriers mentioned in workshops. We have chosen to address them as inclusions in the hopes that it will inspire women to continue to fight stigmas.

Value Her Time

So much of what survivors bring to the table is done for free on a volunteer basis. Creating staff positions dedicated to survivors and providing an honorarium can go a long way to not only showing the woman she is valued but showing her value to others.

Honorariums

- Create a survivor engagement budget line to value survivors.
- Host regular appreciation events (movie nights, dinners, appreciation of volunteer hours).
- Set up a donation system for honorariums where all donations go directly to survivors.
- Donations can be solicited from local companies (gift cards to spas, restaurants, free childcare, grocery stores).

How to Set Up A Donation System

- Send out proposals to local organizations.
- Put an advertisements in the newspaper, community centres and online.
- Have a specific phone line and person dealing with donation the system.
- Align with different companies or community organizations to create donation centres (similar to food bank boxes).
- Set up a donation system on online social network sites.
Paid Positions

- Be more inclusive in the hiring process.
- Equate lived experience to education.
- Invite survivors to apply.
- Put postings in places where more women can access them (food banks, library, shelters, doctor’s offices).
- Try to not be intimidating in the interview process by being aware of language and using small interview panels.
- Review agency policies to ensure they are inclusive to hiring survivors.
- Invite survivors to be a part of the interview process.
- Volunteering should lead to paid work.
  - Create a policy stating when jobs become available women with the identified skill set who have volunteered have the first opportunity to apply.

Change our Language

One of the simplest ways we can all address social constructs and stigmas is through the language we choose to use. When we change how we identify and what language we use in relating to survivors we change how those around us view violence against women. For example every woman should choose for herself how she identifies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language is not only important in how we relate to each other but also in how we create policies. A review of policy language can also lead to meaningful survivor engagement.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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Create Credibility

If we expect systems to view survivors’ voices with credibility then survivors and agencies that support them need to actively value women’s voices. A method of reducing stigmas and increasing credibility is to avoid tokenism by:

- Allowing women to use their voices in a non-censored manner,
- Creating forums or spaces for survivors to speak to decision makers and the community,
- Listening to each woman as an individual, and
- Give survivors a voice in decision making, creation of strategic plans and vision statements that is equal to others.
Use Media

- Create and promote a positive female image in an inclusive way.
- Women suggested creating a documentary to promote a positive image of survivors.

Other Methods

- Create survivor led groups, actions and agencies.
- Public Awareness (see below).
- Education (see inclusion).
- Survivors doing outreach in communities.
- Change stigmas related to women as victims or at fault for their experience with abuse.
- Plan and host events to raise money and spread information about abuse to end stigmas.

Public Awareness

Survivors engaged in public awareness events, including public education and creation of publications and advertisements, can go a long way towards ending stigmas surrounding violence against women. As members of this movement it is easy to forget that VAW issues are not always common knowledge. More than anything else a lack of knowledge leads to stigmas and apathy making public awareness vital.

In the testing this model the OAITH Survivor Advisory Committee (OSAC) worked to create public awareness through a Photovoice project and participation in the Shine The Light Campaign on Women Abuse. Shine the Light was started by the London Abused Women’s Centre and took place, with help from OSAC, in communities across Ontario. The incredible success of OSAC’s contribution was seen when on December 6, 2012 the CN Tower in Toronto was lit purple. For the story of how this was made possible please see the Success of Engaging: A Personal Story of Triumph on page 63.
Actions:
- Educate survivor’s voices first.
- Survivor ribbons/pins in the community.
- Use existing awareness campaigns (Take Back the Night).
- Create awareness raising networks across Canada.
- Survivors working as outreach in community;
  - Target all groups including youth, men, parents, teachers, etc.
  - Self-defense training for women working in the community.
  - Create outreach opportunities through social gatherings (BBQ’s, children fun days).
  - Make outreach and advocacy as fun as possible.

Create information pamphlets including:
- What services are available.
- Where to go and who to contact for services.
- What funds women can access.
- Include contact information for women’s organizations and relevant outside services such as police, legal aid, and Ontario Works.
- How to leave safely and where to get help.
- Artistic contributions for example body mapping, using an image of a women’s body showing different forms of violence/abuse on different parts of the body.
- Pictures of shelters to reduce stigmas and fear.

Share information via:
- Technology including email, fax, website, social media, etc.
- Digital story telling (Photovoice projects).
- Create 3 minute online videos to promote awareness and put a face on VAW.
- Advertise on 211.
- Community events and places for example shopping malls.
- Local TV, radio stations, public service announcements and billboards.
- Word of mouth.
- Community locations such as doctors’ offices, pharmacies, schools, police station, public bulletin boards, food banks, faith based groups.
- Create smart phone applications to raise public awareness.
- Flyers given out in stores as bag stuffers or contact information printed on receipts.
- Survivors volunteering at hospitals with pamphlets on abuse for women and family members to let them know they are not alone.
- Public awareness events and actions.
- Public education through poetry reading and storytelling.
- Have an public event to promote shelter services (done away from shelter for safety).

"The key idea is inclusion in the community. … To acknowledge that sexual abuse happens with those we know, in the community and that is a core part of where it needs to be addressed"
– SVIP participant
Support Inclusions

Throughout the life of the project survivors stated they wanted to support other women through creating survivor groups, peer mentoring, volunteering and creating networks and partnerships. Women shared how valuable having peer supports would have been or was for them in their healing process.

Survivor Groups

Survivor groups can have many purposes including advocacy, support or simply a safe place for women to get together and be "normal". Survivors talked of creating groups for all those "infected and affected" by abuse and violence including women who have not used emergency services such as shelters. The first step is to create a welcoming space that is caring, loving, respectful, non-judgemental, confidential and encourages women to come back.

As part of the testing of this model, Freedom Sisters, a survivor group in Sault Ste. Marie shared how they began. This group was motivated to form after SVIP travelled to Sault Ste. Marie in October of 2011. Started with only two members and growing to a core group of five they used flyers, word or mouth and a social network community group to invite new women to join.

Types of Groups

Support Groups

- Groups can be for specific support purposes (court support, parenting support) or a general support group.
- Facilitate support groups in a survivor’s first language to create a sense of community.
- Create partnerships with other survivor groups.
- Share experiences and advise each other.
- Have services come and do presentations on topics women want.
- Build friendships and bonds.
- Share skills with each other including budgeting, home repair, coping skills, etc.
- Create a survivor group that includes children (infants to teens).

Independent Survivor Committees and Advocacy Groups

- Groups to advise agencies and decision makers and advocate for needs of survivors.
- Advertise groups in shelters, second stage homes, community centres, drop-in centres, etc.
- Group can create surveys to be handed out to services to identify service gaps.
  - Create Innovative ideas to fill gaps, create a database of information gathered.
- Make the group survivor driven. Ask women what they want the committee to look like.
- Participate in or host awareness raising events for services such as police and CAS.
Create a Drop-in/Walk-in Support Program

- Create a drop-in centre for women and children using community or shelter space.
- Create a 12 Step, sponsor style program for survivors to move forward from abuse.
- Use volunteers as staff.
- Partner with college and university programs for student placements.
  - Always keep in mind safety and privacy of students and women.
- Have the area open with no attendance or sign in necessary.
- Have programs that target specific ethnic communities to address stigma within cultures.
- Partner with outside/outreach services to enter drop in, raise awareness and extend supports, for example housing workers.
- Open 24 hours.
- Provide support for women leaving the shelter.
- Provide refreshments or hot meals.
- Have resources available such as computers, phones, pamphlets, information, videos and a lending library.
- Create safety planning and self defense programs.
- Connect with other women’s groups and services in the area and pool resources.
- Create art therapy programs (get supplies donated).
- Have a food bank (partner with local food banks).
- Create a furniture bank (partner with local hotels to get donated furniture).
- Have peer mentors at the drop-in to help women new to the group/program get settled.

General Group Points

- Have meetings at times and on days that women can attend.
  - Weekends were suggested because this is often when services are unavailable.
  - Have groups scheduled on the same day and time so if a woman misses one meeting she knows when the next one is.
- Advertise centre and groups in community using word of mouth, agency outtake forms and a small brochure to distribute through other safe sources.
  - Change language of groups to "women's group" instead of "survivor's group" to make it more accessible.
  - Make advertisements accessible in multiple languages and formats.
  - Develop a group name, flyer and logo for branding.
- Create a "Sisterhood" group of current and past service users.
  - Group sets the agenda and pace.
  - Survivors educate group on identified topics.
  - Each woman should have the opportunity to lead the group.
- Create opportunities for common interests and talents to be shared (art, dance, website design, music, poetry, theatre performances all of which could be used to promote group).
- Celebrate all your successes with each other.
Survivor Voices Oxford (SVO)

SVO was a key player in testing this model. Established in 2008 after two members participated in OAITH’s Survivor Voices project they have worked on many initiatives including:

1. Meeting with Government Ministers and MPP’s to discuss funding for women’s services.

2. Acting as consultants for the Ministry of the Attorney General to review and improve restraining orders to better support abused women.


4. Facilitated a conference supported by United Way with 18 different community partners attending.

5. A Photovoice project *Violence Against Women Impact Images*, shared this project through a presentation to VAW agencies in Oxford County including local police.

6. Participation in the *Step It Up Campaign, Take Back the Night, International Women’s Day, Shine the Light* and other advocacy events.

7. Educating local and provincial agencies on VAW including Victim Services, the local police department, CAS and shelters.

The group shared barriers they faced including a lack of funding, lack of childcare and a lack of time to commit to this unpaid work. They overcame these barriers by hosting garage sales as fundraisers, having some of their older children take care of younger ones during meetings and somehow finding the personal commitment to work towards these initiatives while supporting their families. They credit some of their success to the support they felt from local VAW agencies including Ingamo Family Homes and Domestic Abuse Services Oxford.

They also attempted to register as a non-profit, however, due the excessive paper work and legalities they decided to put this off for the time being.

The five committed members agreed that they would advise other survivors to join or start their own group. They said the experience would help build self esteem, confidence and healing while contributing to the community.

For more information on the group please visit their website at www.survivorvoices.org.

“Every woman’s history with abuse is different. Our network of women volunteers offer invaluable insight and expertise through personal experience.” - SVO website.
How to Fund a Group

- Apply for grants (partner with local VAW organizations as funnel through agencies to provide credibility for funders).
- Highlight the benefits of supporting survivor groups to funders.
  - Who funding will help.
  - Where the funding is going.
  - How funding women’s programs will save money in the end (a proactive approach).
  - What they get for funding (tax benefit, helping women in crisis).
  - Education (funders may want/need services for employees).
  - Supply tax receipts if possible.
- Places to contact:
  - Small businesses.
  - Corporations.
  - Individuals.
- Create a procedure manual for survivor groups to advocate for funding.
- Register survivor group as a non-profit to be able to give tax receipts for donations.
- Create a cooperative program such as a Tea House to help fund group.

Above: *Don’t Be Silenced By Abuse* a billboard on the way into Marathon.
A great way to promote services and reduce stigma.

Right: Women’s hands coming together after SVIP’s first national presentation at the Canadian Network of Women’s Shelters and Transition Houses first annual National Leadership Forum in Montreal.

“Something positive has come out of our sadness, out of our experiences, and others can learn from this.”
- Survivor Participant in OAITH’s Survivor Voices 2008 project
Peer Mentoring

Peer mentoring is a major inclusion suggested by participants. Survivors want to support other women in ways that they feel could have helped them along their journey. This inclusion has been mentioned many times in this model as a way of facilitating other inclusions.

Women talked about spending time listening to other women, supporting them at appointments and sharing experiences of their journey to becoming a survivor.

Peer Mentors as Educators

These workshops or education sessions can take place in shelters or during survivor group meetings.

- Workshops on working with outside mandatory services and other topics important to women (dealing with courts, creating a will, building healthy relationships).
- Education seminar on what it is to be healthy and "normal" for women in shelters.
- Workshops and support with practical and life skills like budgeting, cooking, self-esteem, tax preparation, job searches, how to go back to school, etc.
- Workshops on communal living for women in shelters.
- Partner with court support programs as peer mentors.
- Have peer support training classes with mentors, professionals and support groups where women can learn how to mentor and support each other.

Agency Role in Mentoring

- Change intake forms to ask "would you like a mentor? Do you have a support system?"
- Change outtake forms to ask "Would you like to be a mentor or volunteer?"
- Create a skills exchange program (see Resources).

"I would love to do peer support work in a shelter or a second stage home. I feel I could help many women by giving them someone to listen to their story, support them in their decisions, help them find resources, be it transportation or a lawyer, housing, etc. For this to happen I need for life experience to be considered and valued and the opportunity"

- SVIP Survivor participant

Networks, Partnerships and Knowledge Sharing

Creation of networks, partnerships and knowledge sharing are vital to all inclusions. As we all have limitations regarding funding and resources, being able to support each other in engaging survivors can be the difference between struggle and success. Networking, partnerships and knowledge sharing is a great way of working towards reducing fear and stigmas related to abuse and sharing best practices between agencies.
Role of Networks and Partnerships

- Provide information about engagement opportunities, resiliency training and support for staff and survivors.
- Gather information from survivors about barriers they face and together work to overcome them.
- Reach out to network of external agencies to set up opportunities for survivors to share opinions and suggestions with the goal of improving services.
- Create a forum for survivors and agencies to come together to network (SVIP workshops).
- Use network to broadcast women’s voices to decision makers.
- Celebrate and recognize diversity among women and group members.
- Network with different advocacy groups in similar communities to see what they are doing.
- Be open to ideas/thoughts from other groups at local, provincial and national levels.
- Connect with your local Domestic Violence Coordinating Committee (see Resources).
- Get local businesses involved to promote actions (large corporations, municipal governments).
- Partner with social work students to do community outreach.
- Create allies in other services to be supports when working with systems.

Knowledge Sharing

- Between networks, partners, women, community and agencies.
- Use technology to share information publicly with networks and partners.
- Involve all levels of governments.
- Facilitate focus groups with survivors.
- Make sure all agencies get to share the information.
- Share information about government policies, services, decision making policies and upcoming decisions regarding social services.
- Create an open book practice at the agency level, including an open board and annual general meeting.
- Use public awareness actions to share information (see Public Awareness inclusion).
- Ensure all information is accurate and up to date.
- Create a message board that is safe and confidential for women to knowledge share.
- Share best practices with other agencies.
- Create interagency committees.

- Alternatives for Women in Picton, Three Oaks Shelter and Services in Belleville and Maggie’s Resources in Bancroft created an interagency committee to obtain funding and invite SVIP to their area. The committee created a survivor group as an outcome of the workshop and their partnership.
Volunteering

Meaningful survivor engagement relies on survivors becoming engaged as volunteers. The following ideas are specific to survivors volunteering in practical tasks with agencies such as childcare and organizing fundraisers. Participants also stated that survivors volunteering can reduce barriers such as a lack of staffing resources.

Create Volunteer Networks

- Create a paid volunteer coordinator position.
- Create a list of what volunteer opportunities are available and advertise them through word of mouth and postings in agency and community.
- Create a regional network of volunteers.
- Be active in engaging women who want to volunteer as good volunteers are hard to find.
- Have ongoing orientation trainings for existing and new volunteers.
- Utilize a survivor’s strengths and professional skills when they volunteer.
- Look at and revise policies around volunteering to be as inclusive as possible.

Population Specific / Cultural Inclusions

Any woman can be the victim of violence and abuse regardless of her culture, ethnicity, gender identification, mental health, use of substances, status in Canada or disability. In all of our work to be meaningfully engaged or meaningfully engage survivors, we should remember to recognize the value of each of us being unique and be inclusive to all women.

General Actions:

- Create culturally relevant programming in groups and agencies, making sure to engage the population when creating programs.
- Find peer mentors for women from diverse backgrounds who understand abuse and what it is to be a member of a specific community.

The following information is from population specific workshops held across Ontario. Included are what women from these groups have to say about meaningful survivor engagement.

“'Our women may not fall into western cultural feminist ideals which do not always fit into an Aboriginal community.’”

- SVIP participant in Sioux Lookout Ontario

“We are Anishinabeg or Earth People or Original Man.”

- SVIP participant survivor from Bkejwanong First Nations reserve about understanding Aboriginal culture

Hands in Sioux Lookout.
Aboriginal Women

As part of our project’s effort to hear from diverse communities we facilitated workshops with Aboriginal women on and off reserves in both northern and southern Ontario. We recognize that each Aboriginal community is unique and that we were unable to hear from Metis and Inuit women whose voices are just as valuable as First Nations women.

Aboriginal participants spoke to many different themes including political advocacy, recognizing and valuing Aboriginal communities and voices as different, building trust within their communities and advocating for specialized services and increased funds.

Advocacy:

- Invite politicians and decision makers to come to the "real North" and Aboriginal communities, to see what it is like for us including the high cost of living, transportation, housing, isolation and culture.
- Get survivors on band councils to use their voice and be a part of the decision making process.
- Participation in political actions such as the Idle No More movement which began with Aboriginal women.
- Advocate for more Aboriginal representation within systems making sure they have power to influence.
- Advocate for Aboriginal survivors’ voices to be heard and valued in their communities and beyond.
- Advocate for second stage housing that is specific to the community’s needs.

Education:

- Aboriginal survivors sharing why the Aboriginal experience is unique and different including: history, colonization, residential school, the experience of Aboriginal youth, and more.
- Create a collection of stories as a book from Aboriginal women.
- Aboriginal women from remote communities educating community leaders about VAW.
- Educate systems on Aboriginal culture.
- Have elders teach young women and men using traditional methods.
- Women to educate and support each other through the creation of Aboriginal survivor groups where women can meet online, in community spaces and as regional groups.

“We have learned from going back to sweat lodges, ceremonies and praying.”
- SVIP participant survivor from Bkejwanong First Nations reserve

Bkejwanong “Where the Waters Divide” First Nations Reserve hands image.
Immigrant Women and Women Without Status

As we travelled from community to community, women spoke about supporting immigrant women and those with precarious or no status in Canada. They talked of making all services safe spaces for women by employing a “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy. They also wanted to provide translation to remove language barriers and educate immigrant women and youth on what resources are available to them, how to access services and Canadian laws surrounding abuse and violence.

Actions:

- Create and advertise services for immigrant women paying attention to culture and traditional values. Remember to engage women in creation of services.
- Create pamphlets for all newcomers to Canada in the language of their origin, including a variety of resources not just those related to violence against women.
  - Including other resources reduces the chances a woman’s safety will be jeopardized.
  - Give pamphlets at the airport through immigration.
- Work with women to learn English or French in order to decrease language barriers and isolation.
- Create a sharing circle by women for women to speak about isolation and human rights.
- Advocate for women without status by connecting with organizations such as Nobody is Illegal (see Resources).

LGBTTQ Women

Just as we recognize that any women can be the victim of intimate partner abuse and violence, we also know that women in the LGBTTQ community are also affected by violence against women. However, depending on the gender of their partner, they run the risk of their abuser being able to access the same services. This was just one example shared with us limiting LGBTTQ survivor engagement. However, it is a vital reason that we need these women’s voices at the table.

Actions:

- Actively work to engage the LGBTTQ community in survivor engagement.
- Create non-judgemental and safe spaces through language and gender neutral signage.
- Change forms to remove gender identification.
Women with Mental Health Concerns

Many women spoke of their experience with abuse being directly related to mental health concerns. Post traumatic stress disorder, anxiety and depression were often linked to abuse women experienced. Survivors stated they wanted to participate in supporting others with mental health concerns, advocate for changes to systems, educating community about mental health and even the creation of a position within hospital crisis intervention programs.

Support:

- Create a support group including professionals (psychiatrist) to provide free services.
- Share coping skills with other survivors including; counselling, participation in group activities, keeping in touch with other survivors (peer mentors), self-care and sharing life experiences (talking it out).
- Peer created workshops on how to access supports.
- Create a drop in program for women to come together (see Support Group inclusion).
- Partner with mental health organizations.
  - Offer staff from these agencies space in shelters to provide support to residents.

Education:

- Survivors with mental health concerns to partner with services to create education plan.
  - Give doctors and health care professionals a solid understanding of services and referrals available. Ask that when they refer women to services to use staff names to help women feel comfortable.
  - Empathy training for mental health organizations on VAW concerns (see Education inclusion).
- Education by survivors for VAW sector on the affects of mental health.
- Create a pamphlet about abuse and mental health.
  - Distribute via the College of Physicians and individual doctor’s offices.
  - Talk to nurses and receptionists about sharing information.
  - Talk to pharmacies about distributing information.
  - Talk to pharmaceutical companies about including information with medications.
  - Put facts about mental health and abuse on products such as medication packaging.

"I would like to volunteer at a shelter (and educate about) mental health that's caused by abuse. I would like to help women to deal with mental illness due to abuse. I would like to mentor women. ... I can share my experiences being a survivor of mental health issues caused by abuse, share resources. ... As a mentor to women (I would) also do peer to peer support, (let) them know I can carry "hope" for them until they can find it. I could get a hold of women by speaking out about these issues."

– SVIP survivor participant
Women Who Use Substances

To hear from women who use substances and have experienced abuse, SVIP travelled to Huronia Transition Homes in Midland. Women at this workshop stated that harm reduction policies that allow them to continue using safely and access services, made the difference while staff said it humanizes the women they serve. Participants spoke to advocating for all services to apply a harm reduction approach and work to reduce stigmas around substance use.

Actions:

- Survivors speaking to shelters about how a lack of harm reduction dis-includes them from services and causes “othering”.
- Create a joint training with staff and survivors about harm reduction.
- Seek expertise and information from women who use as they are the experts.
- Advocate for ALL shelters to provide harm reduction tools and education.
- Have women share success stories of harm reduction.
- Use statistics to promote harm reduction (rates of intoxication going down).
- Put a human face on substance use.
- Create a train-the-trainer program for survivors to train agencies.
- Dispel myths surrounding harm reduction making shelters unsafe spaces.
- Advocate for services to focus on a women’s behaviour not her usage.
- Meet women who use with respect and dignity.

Create a Crisis Intervention Program Survivor Position

- Create a survivor position within hospital crisis intervention programs to provide women experiencing abuse instant support by through options and referrals to shelters.
- Survivor position could also educate health service professionals about abuse.
- Apply to the Trillium Foundation for a grant/funding for this position.
- Create a coordinating/establishing committee for this position including:
  - A survivor.
  - A social worker / social service worker (SW/SSW) with an expertise in mental health.
  - A SW/SSW with expertise in VAW.
  - A general practitioner.
  - A shelter representative.
  - A representative from the local Domestic Violence Coordinating Committee.
  - A legal service representative.
  - Two victim services representatives (one volunteer and one police).
  - A crisis intervention unit representative.

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Recognize and respect that being around substance use (the sight, sound and smell) can be a trigger for some women.

- Support women to move beyond this fear.
- Harm reduction in shelters can give women safe places to move past triggers and take back control over their reactions to substance use.
- On-site Alcoholics Anonymous meetings or support groups if women choose.
- Speak to the co-relation between abuse, mental wellness and substance use.
- Address fear and judgement about substance use.
  - Ideas of deserving vs. undeserving women, good vs. bad clients, good substances (coffee) vs. bad substances (heroin).
- Advocate that a woman’s problems or experience is not because of her substance use just as an abuser does not abuse because of his substance use.

Women with Disabilities

To hear from women with disabilities, SVIP partnered with Springtide Resources in Toronto. The group spoke to educating community about forms of abuse including “othering”, advocating that all services be accessible, that attendant care be available in emergency and second stage services and that all materials are created in multiple formats. This group also spoke about making sure that we do not become abusive in our attempts to work with those we are supporting.

Actions:

- Educating services on all forms of abuse including “othering” or assuming because of a person’s differences they are the “other” implying they are not an important part of society (see Education inclusion).
- Advocate that ALL materials are accessible, offered in alternative formats and can be accessed by all women experiencing abuse and violence.
- Provide attendant care in agencies such as shelters, second stage homes, etc.
- Add texting options to support lines.

"If I could not drink I wouldn’t have stayed in the shelter and I might be dead."
- SVIP Survivor participant in Midland

Above: Women using stickers to vote.
Right: Springtide group hard at work.
### The Specifics: Barriers at a Glance

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The Specifics: Barrier Details

The following section includes not only the barriers survivors and agencies face to meaningful engagement, but some ideas for solutions to hopefully help overcome or work through these challenges. Please note that the solutions offered are suggestions. We recognize that not every solution is possible for everyone but hopefully they will spark an idea that may help overcome barriers. Each solution is to be done in partnership between survivors and agencies, unless otherwise stated.

Lack of Resources

We can all relate to lack of resources as a barrier to much of what we do as we work to become engaged or engage others. The following are ideas for solutions to these issues that have almost become part of our daily routines.

Lack of Resources for Both Survivors and Agencies

Lack of Funds

Across the board a lack of funds is being felt by every agency and almost every survivor. This barrier can greatly impact survivor engagement as positions such as volunteer coordinators and paid honorariums are some of the first line items to be cut from budgets. The following are suggestions from groups participating in SVIP workshops.

Solutions:

- Obtain funding through writing grant proposals and government advocacy (see Advocacy inclusion).
- Connect with local Domestic Violence Coordinating Committee to see what funds are available for survivor initiatives.
- Stretch and be creative with funding.
  - Split work between staff and volunteers.
  - Network with community partners for cost sharing and donation opportunities (space, childcare, taxi chits, donated haircuts, donation of time from doctor’s lawyers).
  - Use both agency and survivor networks to secure funding.
- Host fundraisers:
  - Yard sales, mom to mom sales and community baby showers.
  - Auctions.
  - Donation boxes (similar to poppy boxes).
  - In store fundraisers (donate a $1 for a purple house and money goes to the local shelter).
  - Telethons.
  - Art sales (utilize women’s talents to create items).
  - Organize large scale charity events where donors get prizes (similar to hospital draws).
• Have smaller events to raise funds/awareness for main events and create perpetual awareness in the community.
• Use media and social media to promote fundraisers.
• Charge a cover charge or donation for community events where a portion goes to local women’s organizations or survivor groups.
• Apply to the Ontario Lottery Commission to get revenue from gambling (bingo halls).
• Approach casinos for donations to specific programs.
• Create a "Gift of" campaign
  • Donation of $20 will go to feed a mother and her children in the shelter for a week.
• Sell T-shirts that say "I am a Survivor" or "Abuse Hurts"

Lack of Space

The focus of this barrier was mostly on space for survivor’s groups to meet or host events.

Solutions:

• Women take turns hosting survivor groups/meetings in their homes.
• Contact faith based groups, service groups (Rotary Clubs), public parks, agencies, restaurants, colleges and universities, community centres and band offices to use space for free or at a discounted rate.

Lack of Time, Energy and Self-Care

When we are run down, tired, or stressed out, our ability to support others or focus on being engaged is very limited.

Solutions:

• Support for agency staff including counselling for counsellors that can be internal to an agency or in a regional multi-agency group.
• Add value to a women’s time by providing her opportunities to spend time with her family (movie nights, family events, gift cards, etc.).
• Ask survivors what times for meetings and events works best for them and try to accommodate as many as possible (use online polls to gather information).
• Provide continuous vicarious trauma training to staff and survivors by partnering with other agencies who offer this training to reduce costs.

Lack of Access to Technology

This barrier was heard more in remote, isolated communities.

Solutions:

• Partner with other agencies to provide access to technology for survivors (library, community centre, schools, other survivors, etc.).
Lack of Resources for Survivors

Lack of Transportation

A lack of transportation or access to transportation can lead to increased isolation and is a barrier to meaningful survivor engagement, especially in more remote communities such as fly-in communities in the north. Even in areas where transportation is available, women spoke of anxiety using public transit or limited funds to access these services. Of course those with communication or mobility challenges are at even greater risk of being effected by this barrier.

Solutions:

- Approach local transit authority to get free transit passes in return for tax receipts.
- Create a shuttle bus system.
- Get local taxi companies to offer donations or discounted taxi rates.
- Agency or survivor groups provide transportation funds (bus tickets, taxi funds, gas money).
- Survivors can network with each other to share transportation or car pool.
- Get survivors involved from home.
- Use technology (video conferencing) to bring larger areas of women together and avoid transportation costs.
- Create a “Drive to Survive” fundraiser to raise money specifically for transportation.
  - Approach car companies to partner with and for every vehicle sold $20 could go toward providing transportation to clients or a group.
- Lobby different levels of governments for more transit and transportation dollars (see Advocacy inclusion).
- Create a volunteer driver program where volunteers assist survivors with transportation.
- Have flexibility for locations of groups to make them accessible.

The artistic talents of a survivor in Windsor who chooses serenity over chaos.
Lack of Childcare

This is a major barrier to survivor's ability to become meaningfully engaged. Women also stated that quality is a major factor in solutions to this barrier.

Solutions:

- Create services/programs for children while their mothers are engaging.
- Utilize qualified volunteers or college/university students (studying childcare topics).
- Survivors can provide childcare during group meetings on a rotating schedule.
- Review childcare policies and reduce barriers, if any, they create for agencies to supply childcare when groups meet at their location.
- Provide appropriate and safe space for childcare.
- Provide transportation appropriate for children (child seats).
- Give advance notice and pre-pay honorariums to allow women to prepare.
- Contact faith based children's group to see if they can help provide/donate childcare.

General Lack of Resources

Many survivors identified a general lack of resources and services affecting the stability in their lives as a barrier to becoming engaged. These could include but is not limited to housing resources, services for women with disabilities, mental health resources, lack of support from family and friends and poverty. Many possible solutions to this barrier can be found in inclusions such as advocating for more services, providing women with information on resources and survivor support groups.

Lack of Resources for Agencies

Lack of Staffing Resources

A lack of staffing resources is a barrier for agencies not only to meaningfully engaging survivors but in all aspects of their work with women. Women suggested the following solution ideas to overcome this barrier.

Solutions:

- Partner with others in agency's network to run programs (i.e. support groups) when possible.
- Use student placements as resources for researching grant opportunities, planning events and workshops.
- Advocate for more staffing funds.
- Create a network of survivors to help support staff in initiatives (group facilitation, outreach and event planning).

Women’s hands image from our first Windsor workshop. We revisited the city when we met with women in the LGBTTQ community and those with mental health concerns.
Fear, Confidentiality, Tokenism & Stigma

Fear

Fear is one of the largest barriers a survivor has to overcome in her lived experience with abuse and violence. It should be no surprise that many survivors identified this as a barrier to becoming engaged. They highlighted fear for their safety, fear of re-victimization by services, intimidation and fear of lived experience being exposed in community as barriers keeping them from becoming engaged.

Solutions:

- Agencies and fellow survivors supporting others to define fear, identify what is behind it and addressing the cause.
- Create an atmosphere of unity to reduce women's fears to come forward and participate.
- Have a welcoming peer mentor who can give women an introduction to the project/opportunity to engage and will be honest about how they overcame issues of fear around engaging.
- Try and keep groups small and not overwhelm women by large amounts of people.
- Collaborate with other women's organizations across Canada to create survivor story videos that can be shared with other communities so women can participate in areas where she will not be recognized.

Lack of Confidentiality

This barrier was mentioned more in remote geographic communities, as well as, in some of our population based workshops where communities can be close-knit.

Solutions:

- Educate survivors about confidentiality, consent and the harmful effects of gossiping.
- Be sensitive while scheduling appointments to avoid survivors running into others they might know in the waiting room.
- Allow women to use a nickname.
- Create awareness and empathy within services (see Education inclusion).
- Post confidentiality statement where all can see it, review it with women often.
- Review ground rules at every session or group meeting.
- Tell people your own personal boundaries to the group (especially when you participate in multiple groups with the same peers).
- Respect other’s personal boundaries.
- Hold leadership and service providers accountable for breaches in confidentiality.

 PROVIDE HOPE

“If a woman feels there is hope for change she will come forward”

- SVIP participant York Region
Tokenism

As mentioned in Key Recommendations: Where to Start, tokenism or a lack of real engagement is a barrier to meaningful survivor inclusion. Survivors told us that organizations not always asking, listening and acting on their suggestions can lead them to feel unvalued.

Solutions:

- Survivors should be updated on action related to feedback.
- Set up a process that ensures women feel free, accepted and are taken seriously.
- Make agencies accountable, (through a funding requirement) to engage women meaningfully as volunteers, on boards, etc.
- This is done in other movements such as AIDS service organizations.

“If you ask for a woman’s perspective or input you need to use it.”

-SVIP agency participant

Stigma

Stigma, along with racism, oppression and shame a survivor feels is placed on her by her lived experience are barriers to her becoming engaged. Stigma was also mentioned as an inclusion and information on solutions can be found there.

Communication and Language Barriers

Communication can often become a barrier for both those becoming engaged and those supporting engagement. If we cannot communicate effectively with one another, it is difficult for us to meaningfully engage and communicate with systems, governments and our community.

Difficulty Connecting Survivors with Opportunities.

As one of the key recommendations mentioned in this tool on page 13, the first step to meaningfully engaging survivors is letting them know they can be engaged. Survivors should also be informed about where to find information about opportunities and how to get involved. However, we recognize that connecting survivors looking for engagement opportunities with agencies, projects and groups looking for their voices can be an ongoing struggle.

Language and Literacy Barriers

Language and literacy barriers can stop meaningful engagement and isolate women survivors of abuse. Reducing language barriers was partially covered in the Immigrant Women – Women without Status inclusion. On the next page are some additional suggestions.

Owen Sound group brainstorming.
Solutions:

- Promote agencies that offer free language or literacy courses.
- Peer tutoring on language and literacy.
- Create a volunteer interpretation/translation program.
- Reduce stigmas related to literacy barriers in adults.
- Educate women on "professional" language used when working with and advocating for system change.

Lack of Access to Communication Tools

Women also mentioned a lack of access to communication tools as a barrier to meaningful inclusion. This includes telephone, internet and computer access.

- Provide information about free voicemail services (where available).
- Utilize public libraries and community centres with public computers.
- Agencies to supply or allow survivors to access computers and telephones at their locations.

Cell Phone Donation System

- Have phones donated for women transitioning to violence free lives who do not have access to a phone.
- Apply for government funding for this program.
- Ask the community for donations of phone cards through radio and TV advertisements.
- Partner with cell phone manufactures and carriers for free phones.
- Old phones could be donated when people upgrade.
- Have drop boxes for old cell phones in the community.
- Make sure phones that have texting ability for those who are hearing impaired.
- Give students community service hours to do technical support for the phones.

Systemic Barriers

Systemic barriers can be some of the hardest for survivors to overcome as they tend to have very little power within systems. However, by actively and meaningfully engaging, survivor’s voices can make a difference in reducing these barriers for women who come after them.

Agency and System Policies

Survivors spoke of some polices of voluntary services (shelters and second stage homes) and some of those of mandatory systems (police, courts and CAS) being barriers to engagement. These can be barriers relating to how long a woman must be out of service before volunteering at a shelter or CAS policies women must comply with to keep their children. Solutions to this barrier can be found in Key Recommendations: Where to Start, as well as, throughout the Education and Advocacy inclusions addressing different systems and services.
Power Imbalances

Barriers relating to power imbalances include compassion fatigue and the mindset of needing to be a professional to influence decision making in systems. It can also relate to the use of power over women to dictate how they need to relate to their experience with abuse or even if they should become engaged. One woman shared that a system she was working with suggested to her that it would be best for her to not participate in any survivor support group activities, a perfect example of using power over a survivor.

Solutions:

- Engage survivors as peer teachers/mentors to help reduce power imbalances.
- Survivors and staff partnering as equals to facilitate groups.
- Allow staff to share life experiences to illustrate that time and healing may be the only difference between staff and women in crisis.
- Survivors and agency staff working with women to recognize their power.
- Adjustment in staff attitudes where needed:
  - Women stated they often feel staff interprets them as victims who are not able to deal with the world, instead of seeing the amazing ways survivors have learned to cope and to empower themselves, despite abuse.

Women at the Bkejwanong First Nations workshop spoke about empowering women in their communities that they are not (and) should not be, automatically wrong in the eyes of systems.

"I don't need the system to rescue me for being me"
- SVIP survivor participant, Bkejwanong First Nations Reserve

Personal Barriers

Personal barriers are those that affect us as individuals such as a lack of self-esteem and the time and healing needed to be ready to engage. Much of this was covered in Key Recommendations: Where to Start as survivor preparations to inclusion.

Self-esteem, Time and Readiness

Solutions:

- Have workshops on self-care, self-esteem, empowerment and assertiveness (see Resources).
- Partner with other agencies in the community doing similar work.
- Include role playing activities.
• Survivor created support groups and peer mentoring to educate and encourage each other (see Support Groups and Peer Mentoring inclusions).
• Have motivational speakers, preferably survivors, speak to women who want to get involved.
• Create programs that allow women to move past abuse.
  • Create certificates that give women a visual reminder that she is not her abuse.
• Work from a holistic, person centred approach to assist women in building self-esteem.
• Create opportunities for peer recognition of women’s skills.
• Research other options for healing because counselling is not the answer for everyone.

**Fit the Inclusion to the Survivor**

• Make meaningful engagement about a woman’s choice and personal limitations.
• Suggest engagement opportunities that fit a woman’s passion, skills and comfort level.
• Identify and support training needs.
• Support women during initial volunteer work to ensure suitability.
• Make changes to volunteer process based on survivor feedback.
• Create levels to engagement so women can ease into becoming fully engaged.

**Location Barriers**

Participants told us that where they live can act as a barrier. Location barriers relate to a lack of physical resources, services, isolation, transportation limitations and personal or family histories in communities.

Solutions:

• Bring women together by creating a “snack & yak” program where they are able to learn about topics they identify as important and engage in knowledge sharing.
• Use a peer teaching model to help spread information and access to services.
• Set up survivor support groups to help deal with isolation barriers (see Survivor Groups inclusion).
• Develop mediation assistance for women accessing the same engagement opportunities who do not get along or have personal histories (focus on conflict resolution).
• Offer honorariums or incentives such as gift cards (see Value Her Time inclusion).

Women deep in group discussions. Left is a group in Sioux Lookout and right a group in Sault Ste. Marie. Both regions that spoke about locations barriers.
Population Specific / Cultural Barriers

Just as with *The Specifics: Inclusion Details* section, some barriers mentioned are specific to populations of women participating in SVIP. Not all populations mentioned under inclusions are addressed here in an effort to eliminate duplication of information. This is in no way an effort to not be inclusive or recognize the struggles presented by different groups.

**Aboriginal Women**

Again we recognize and value that each Aboriginal community is unique, the opinions here are not representative of all Aboriginal women and that we were unable to engage Metis or Inuit women.

Aboriginal women spoke to a lack of support when using their voices within their community. This was also mentioned and addressed under *The Specific: Inclusion Details*. Women spoke to a lack of understanding of Aboriginal culture and experience by non-Aboriginals, including intimate and family abuse and the effects of colonization and residential schools. Below are solutions suggested to this barrier.

**Solutions:**

- Respecting differences within Aboriginal cultures at public events.
  - Utilize different traditional approaches including art, dance, sharing circles and sweat lodges.
  - Be sensitive to methods and philosophies of Aboriginal people.
- Form a committee to work on initiatives identified as important to Aboriginal survivors.
- Use local and social media to send open invitations to communities and organizations to participate.
- Include Aboriginal women of all ages from youth to elders.
- Recognize reservations as “gated communities” (as described by a workshop participant), causing barriers such as:
  - Not being able to reach all family supports on and off reserve, and
  - Funding and service differences on and off reserve.
- Create cultural sensitivity training for all agencies (see *Education inclusion*).
- Advocate that government understand Aboriginal culture and consult Aboriginal communities before passing any laws.

“*Within our leadership we need to uphold our traditional beliefs of truth and honesty. If not we further colonize ourselves and it makes it difficult to raise our families.*”

- SVIP survivor participant, Bkejwanong First Nations Reserve

The Specifics: Barrier Details
Immigrant Women – Women Without Status

Similar to the concerns discussed under Aboriginal Women, immigrant women or women with precarious or no status in Canada identified specific barriers related to their voices not being valued or heard in Canadian society. Women in this group spoke to the idea that it is believed to be “better” in Canada and therefore they should not complain about it as a barrier to becoming engaged.

Solutions:

- Women and agencies having conversations about these topics to bring awareness.
- Use social media and blogging to share the realities of life in Canada for women with precarious or no status.
- Share real lived experiences living in Canada with networks (family and friends) in other countries recognizing that life might be “better” here but there are also challenges.
In February 2013, OAITH’s director, SVIP staff and the two co-chairs of OSAC presented at the Third Annual Domestic Violence Conference in Toronto. As part of their 90 minute presentation a mini-workshop was held with participants from all corners of the VAW sector including police, child welfare, mental health services and researchers.
The Specifics: The Common Links

Many of the actions and solutions presented in *The Specifics: Inclusion Details* and *Barrier Details* portions of this model are common to multiple goals. Below is a list of the common links that can make meaningful survivor engagement easier to realize.

- Approach all engagement with an Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppressive (AR/AO) framework and gender-based lens.

- Creation and utilizations of networks, partnerships and knowledge sharing.
  - Learn from and share best practices with others.
  - Create and share promotional and educational materials about abuse.
  - Use of technology to spread information and communicate across distance.
  - Use branding to create awareness.
  - Creation of a “tool kit” of resources for agencies and survivors.
  - Increase and/or share resources including funding, people and materials.
  - Recognize and value the differences and similarities in our communities, our methods and our goals.

- Increase information about inclusion opportunities.
  - Creating an internet forum to post opportunities.
  - Have toll fee numbers to access services and inclusion opportunities.
  - Ask women in your community the best way to keep them informed and engaged.

- Make meaningful engagement about a woman’s choice and within her personal limits.
  - Value survivors’ voices, time and lived experience.
  - Approach survivor engagement valuing that our experiences affect us differently and our involvement can be different.
  - Working to reduce stigmas and a lack of survivor credibility in society.
  - Revising policies and the use of language that can limit inclusion.
  - Engaging survivors as paid staff.
  - Survivor ownership and leadership of projects and groups.
  - Utilize peer training and mentoring.
  - Engage survivors at all levels, including in decision making, on boards in program and policy development and on the local, provincial and national stage.
  - Support and create survivor groups.
  - Support or provide training on practical and personal skills such as public speaking, group facilitation, computer skills, self-care and self-esteem (see *Resources*).
As SVIP facilitated workshops and built a network across Ontario, we realized that many women (39% of agency representative participants as per our feedback survey) working in the field identified as survivors. However, very few spoke to this during our workshops. When we did hear about it, it was often as private conversation where women said that they felt they could not always identify as survivors in the workplace.

To hear the voices of these women, we created an online survey distributed by management in the VAW sector. Managers were asked to send the survey out to all employees with the understanding that they would not see staff’s responses and women would not have to identify publicly. Out of the five widely distributed SVIP surveys this one had the highest number of responses at 57.

When asked if women identified as survivors at work 70% said yes and 35% said no. This indicates that some women who choose to identify do so selectively and answered yes and no. When asked why they do not identify women stated they feel they may be judged, lose respect at work or that they identify in the community but not their workplace. Some stated they did not feel it was relevant to their work and inappropriate to share with clients.

Women were also split when asked if they felt their lived experience helped them obtain their current position. However, when asked if they felt their experience as a survivor helps them better support women they serve the response was undeniably yes at 86%. Many said that having lived experience gave them a greater understanding of abuse, compassion, empathy and one more tool to offer as a counsellor.

“I am able to relate to other women survivors as our shared experience brings us together in ways that others in the field (who are not survivors) are unable to comprehend”.

- Survey respondent
We recognize, as did most women who responded to this survey, that before a woman can become paid staff she needs to be ready. Healing, counselling and preparation to deal with triggers were suggested. Respondents also spoke of the benefits of continued education, workshops and training in becoming prepared to work in the VAW sector. Counselling training, education on types of abuse, community and social services courses, healing from abuse, advocacy and AR/AO training were listed as courses often taken by survivors now working in the sector. Just over half respondents (51%) shared that they had volunteered in the sector before beginning their career.

The overall result of the survey was that survivors working in the VAW sector feel their lived experience has benefited their work and that meaningfully engaging survivors benefits the movement. Unfortunately, they told us they do not always identify in the workplace or with the women they serve. When asked if they felt their employer values their lived experience most were unsure and a quarter said no. This says a lot about the stigmas survivors, even those considered professionals in the field, can feel surrounding their lived experience.

“There was quite an adjustment when I came into the field. The perception of co-workers and management was a work in progress. I experienced an immediate survivor label and needed to work through a lot of misconceptions and preconceived labels that were placed on me. I was not received as an equal. I needed to educate many of my co-workers [that] I was competent, educated and a valuable member of staff able to make positive contributions. It was an eye opener for me and caught me off guard”

– Survey respondent.

When asked perhaps the most important question, “Do you feel your experience as a survivor helps you better support the women you serve?” the answer an resounding YES! Survivors working in the VAW sector really are the hidden inclusion. Through meaningful survivor engagement we can bring their contributions out of hiding and allow all survivors to identify without fear.
As SVIP travelled across Ontario many women shared their stories of success with us. These stories were of personal and professional successes with so many of them impacting women and children transitioning to abuse free lives. We heard of survivor groups starting in communities we had visited including Freedom Sisters in Sault Ste. Marie and of women recognizing and valuing their personal journey from victim to survivor.

There was also the birth of the OAITH Survivor Advisory Committee (OSAC). The process began in 2009, with a group of women who participated in the 2008 Survivor Voices project presenting at OAITH’s Annual General Meeting. They told the membership “We were there and we belong here”. Meaning they experienced abuse, survived it and wanted a voice at the OAITH table. The group was successful and OAITH re-wrote their constitution to include two survivor positions at the board level. In 2012 those spots were filled with the two co-chairs of OSAC.

OSAC is a provincial survivor group working on education and advocacy initiatives across Ontario. In its first year, OSAC has presented at two national conferences, created a Photovoice project and participated in the Shine the Light Campaign on Women Abuse. Opposite is the personal story of one of the amazing women of OSAC. May it inspire women everywhere to never give up and see the power of their commitment to ending violence against women.

We also know that agencies across Ontario are doing some great work to engage survivors. Here are some examples.

- Support of survivor groups and peer mentors.
- Survivors as volunteers.
- Survivors as paid staff.
- Survivors as board members.
- Survivors as advocates in actions to end violence against women.
- Survivors as partners in education roles with agency staff.
- Survivors as members of advisory committees, including strategic and annual work plans.
- In projects to improve services, including providing feedback.
- Supporting survivors to create a resource binder for women experiencing abuse.
- In creating a code of conduct to inform staff interaction with women seeking service.
- In providing feedback to help facilitate better communication with women with disabilities.
- Engagement in public speaking events.
- Engaging in a focus group on the opening of a second stage home.
- Supporting survivors to decide group projects.
- As members of Domestic Violence Coordinating Committees.
My Story, by Nisha Gutpa

Last year (2012) OSAC decided to adopt the Shine the Light Campaign on Women Abuse started by the London Abused Women’s Center. I decided to approach the manager of CN Tower. … I was told that I was late in submitting the application needed. I had this feeling inside me that if somehow I can get hold of the manager of public relations I can convince her by explaining the message and reason behind the campaign. Before this I wasn’t able to talk to anyone on the phone because I was very shy and get nervous easily. I didn’t have confidence in me because of enduring 23 years of [a] very abusive marriage where I lived in isolation of the outside world. After leaving the abusive marriage … getting … counselling helped me to build my self-esteem and confidence in myself.

So I kept calling her and finally one day … talked to her. She listened to me very calmly and told me that she will get back to me. Of course her answer was no because she said this campaign is not national … and the CN Tower stands on a government property and cannot fulfil our request. It didn’t sound right to me and I was not going to give up. I called her again and again and finally got hold of her. … She told me that they light CN Tower every year white on December 6th for the White Ribbon Campaign in recognition of the National Day of Remembrance and Action of Violence Against Women and Children. The National Day of Remembrance also gives the same message [so why do] I want her to change the white color to purple? I told her that the Shine the Light Campaign requires the color purple. … She [suggested] … that instead we can talk about our message under White Ribbon Campaign. I talked to the manager of White Ribbon Campaign and found out that they have no objection [to the] CN Tower being lit purple. [The] manager of White Ribbon Campaign talked to the [woman at the] CN Tower but still she was not convinced. I felt very disappointed and decided to give up.

After one day of waiting, I followed my gut instinct and called her again. I explained her that [the] color purple is a symbol of courage, survival, honour, and … the fight to end violence against women. By creating awareness we are removing the stigma and telling those women that help is available. The shame and blame doesn’t belong to the victims. I told [her] that by lighting CN Tower purple she will be saving lots of women and children. She gave her okay right away and said that my persistence and reasoning convinced her to change her decision. She lit CN Tower Purple on December 6th, 2012 and will be doing the same every year from now on.

I was over the moon and felt so good …. I was … happy to have trust in myself. When London Abused Women Center heard about CN Tower going purple they were thrilled and told me that [the CN Tower] didn’t accept their application … and didn’t even give them the reasoning [for] refusing their request.

I think coming straight from a survivor of abuse [they] felt the pain and need to make the awareness. We as survivors of abuse are the experts in this field.

I had to overcome some barriers for this meaningful survivor inclusion [but] ever since it has boosted my self-confidence [and] trust in myself … we are experts.

Nisha at our first SVIP workshop
The women of OSAC come together for a photo during their two day event to talk about SVIP’s next steps. An amazing two days ending with a beautiful cake!
Next Steps and Conclusion: Where Do We Go From Here?

This model is the combination of 373* women’s voices from across Ontario but there are so many more voices still to be heard. As you bring this model into your communities, strive to hear survivors and empower them to use their voices.

We ask that you use and adapt the information found in this tool to your own community, agency, survivor group and project. As you create new initiatives and overcome new challenges remember to share your successes with each other.

As part of OAITH’s dedication to survivor inclusion, the OAITH Survivor Advisory Committee (OSAC) will be working to engage communities, agencies and survivors. As the project came to an end members of OSAC travelled to Toronto to participate in a two day event. The goal of these two days together was to work towards OAITH’s next steps for survivor engagement. The event also gave the group a chance to meet in person, something they had yet to do. Women came from Windsor, Sault Ste. Marie, Toronto, Oshawa and Woodstock to meet, review the SVIP model and start thinking about how they could become the ambassadors in moving the tool forward. Ideas such as webinars and development of a marketing tool for the model were discussed and the group has begun looking for funding sources to make these ideas a reality. For more information about the model, future events to promote its use or OSAC’s upcoming awareness initiatives contact them at osacoaith@gmail.com.

We know that women’s voices are powerful and wise. Listen to them and value the opinions, ideas, frustrations and solutions they have shared in these pages. Survivor’s lived experiences are invaluable and when they are engaged in a meaningful way will improve access and quality of services for women and children transitioning to violence free lives.

“[listening to the voices of survivors] is a reminder of the many success stories we have seen over time and encouragement with clients who are not yet success stories”.

- SVIP agency representative participant speaking on the benefits of survivor engagement

* This number only reflects workshop participants. An additional 167 women participated by answering widely distributed surveys.
Resources

The following are resources agencies and survivors can use when working towards meaningful survivor inclusion. Most were mentioned by participants at workshops and may or may not be free of charge or available in all communities.

**Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses (OAITH)**

OAITH Survivor Advisory Committee (OSAC), Email: osacoaith@gmail.com
General Information:
Website: www.oaith.ca, Phone: 416-977-6619, Email: info@oaith.ca,
Mail: 2 Carlton Street, Suite 1404, Toronto, Ontario M5B 1J3

**Full SVIP surveys, videos and a PDF version of this model can be found at www.oaith.ca.**

**Child and Youth and Schools Programs & Resources**

Roots of Equality, Resources designed to help educators foster students’ healthy, equal relationships and raise awareness of violence against women.
Created by Springtide Resources and the Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario (ETFO).
PDF’s of this resource in it’s entirety can be found at:

Participants mentioned the following programs as potential partners or models of best practices:

**Boys and Girls Club of Canada**
Take it Easy Program
Website: www.bgccan.com/en/ClubsPrograms/Programs-National/Pages/Take-It-EASY.aspx
Phone: 905-477-7272, Email: info@bgccan.com

**Canadian Red Cross**
RespectED: Violence & Abuse Prevention
Website: www.redcross.ca/article.asp?id=000294
Phone: 1-800-418-1111, Email: WeCare@redcross.ca

**VIP (Values, Influences, Peers) run by Durham Regional Police**, Phone: 905-579-1520
**Rainbow Group - children’s grief and divorce groups**, Phone: 1-877-403-2733

**Finding your local MP or MPP**

Member of Parliament (MP) List
Website: www.parl.gc.ca/MembersOfParliament/MainMPsCompleteList.aspx

Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP)
Website: www.ontariotenants.ca/government/mpp.phtml
Advocacy Resources

OAITH’s Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression Social Justice Action Committee and Advocacy Training Guide - see opposite for contact information.

Step It Up Campaign
Website: stepitupontario.ca

Sisters in Spirit
Website: www.nwac.ca/programs/sisters-spirit

No One is Illegal
Website: www.nooneisillegal.org

United Nations Women’s Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
Website: www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/

Government Resources

Status of Women Canada
Website: www.swc-cfc.gc.ca, Phone: 1-855-969-9922

Speak Up Projects
Ministry of Education funding for student led programs in elementary and secondary schools.
Website: http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/students/speakup/projects.html
Phone: 1-800-387-5514, General Email: information.met@ontario.ca

PLEI—Just Between You and Me: A Peer Public Legal Education and Information program for Women in Family Violence Situations.
A copy of the final report for this Ministry of Justice Project can be found at: http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/fl-lf/famil/rr04_5/rr04_5.pdf

Ontario Lottery Commission
Mentioned as a potential funding revenue source.
Website: www.olg.ca, Phone: 1-800-387-0098

211Ontario
Contains list of support agencies, programs and non-profits across Ontario.
Website: www.211ontario.ca

Ontario Women’s Directorate
Contains list of agencies and services for women experiencing violence.
Website: www.women.gov.on.ca/english/index.shtml, Phone: 1-866-510-5902
Domestic Violence Coordinating Committees

Building A Bigger Wave - Provincial VAW Network
Website: buildingabiggerwave.org
See Coordinating Committees tab for a list of local groups.
Email: info@buildingabiggerwave.org

Community and Agency Programs
The following is a list of different community and agency programs mentioned by SVIP participants that may be helpful to survivors working towards becoming meaningfully engaged.

Neighbours, Friends and Families
Website: www.neighboursfriendsandfamilies.ca
Phone: 519-661-2111, ext. 87486, Email: nff@uwo.ca

Ernestine’s Skills Exchange Program
This program is offered in shelter and may be a good model for similar work.
Website: ernestines.ca/our-programs/skill-exchange-program
Phone: 416-743-1733

Making Changes Program (a group life skills program)
Women’s Centre of York Region
Website: http://www.womenscentreyorkregion.com/index.php?page=programs&sub=changes
Phone: 1-855-853-9270, Email: info@wcyr.ca

Vicky’s Values
This program is run by a shelter and is a way to engage women and raise funds.
Website: http://www.womensresources.ca/vickys, Phone: 705-878-5938

After She Leaves: Supporting Women through the Family Court Process Online Training
Created by Springtide Resources
Website: http://www.springtideresources.org/resource/after-she-leaves-supporting-women-through-family-court-process-online-training
Phone: 416-968-3422, Email: info@womanabuseprevention.com

Women mentioned partnering with the Humane Society and PAWS for pet programs, public libraries for computer skills training programs and the Christopher Leadership Course and Toastmasters for public speaking training. Other resources such as local drop in centres, the John Howard Society and United Way were also mentioned as potential community partners. Much of the information for these programs can be found on 211Ontario.
Survivor Organizations

Womenatthecentre
Website: www.womenatthecentre.com, Phone: 416-964-0892

Women of Courage, Outward Bound
Website: http://www.outwardbound.ca/results.asp?CourseRID=245, Phone: 1-888-688-9273

Survivors Voices Oxford
Website: www.survivorsvoices.org

Durham Region Survivor Advisory Committee
Website: http://vpccdurham.org/what-we-do/survivor-engagement/
Phone: 905-728-4968, Email: info@vpccdurham.org

Mental Health and Criminal Justice Resources
The following were mentioned by participants as models for how to get important messages to the Family Court and Criminal Justice Systems.

Human Service Justice Coordinating Committee
Website: http://www.hsjcc.on.ca/

Mental Health Diversion and Court Support
Website: http://ontario.cmha.ca/mental-health/services-and-support/justice-services/
Phone: 1-866-531-2600

Mental Illness Support Network
Website: http://www.mentalhealthnetwork.ca/

Luke’s Place
Offering Family law support and guidance on how to stay safer for abused women and their children.
Website: http://lukesplace.ca/, Phone: 1-866-516-3116, Email: admin@lukesplace.ca

Men’s VAW Organizations and Actions

White Ribbon Campaign
Website: www.whiteribbon.ca, Phone: 1-800-328-2228

Walk A Mile In Her Shoes
Website: www.walkamileinhershoes.org, Phone: 1-800-604-1218 (based in the USA)

* OAIITH is not responsible for program or agencies listed unless otherwise stated.
### Chart 1: SVIP Workshop Locations and Participant Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workshops</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Survivors</th>
<th>Agency Representatives</th>
<th>Both</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Woodstock</td>
<td>8-Sep-11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sault Ste. Marie - Evening</td>
<td>27-Oct-11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seneca College - York Campus *</td>
<td>23-Nov-11</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seneca College - King Campus *</td>
<td>24-Nov-11</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peterborough</td>
<td>12-Dec-11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carieton Place</td>
<td>13-Jan-12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burlington</td>
<td>28-Jan-12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Etobicoke</td>
<td>6-Mar-12</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corbyville</td>
<td>22-Mar-12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Markham</td>
<td>29-May-12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Etobicoke</td>
<td>31-May-12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owen Sound</td>
<td>15-Jun-12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windsor</td>
<td>29-Jun-12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sioux Lookout</td>
<td>25-Jul-12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marathon</td>
<td>27-Jul-12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migrant Mothers Project (Toronto) - Immigrant Women &amp; Women without Status</td>
<td>29-Aug-12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Leadership Forum (Montreal, QC)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian Network of Women’s Shelters and Transition Houses **</td>
<td>18-Sep-12</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oshawa</td>
<td>20-Oct-12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Springtide Resources (Toronto) - Women with Disabilities</td>
<td>15-Nov-12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huronia Transition Homes (Midland) - Women Who Use Substances</td>
<td>11-Jan-13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bkejwanong First Nation Reserve (Walpole Island) - Aboriginal Women</td>
<td>17-Jan-13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian Domestic Violence Conference 3 (Toronto) **</td>
<td>28-Feb-13</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiatus House (Windsor) - Women with Mental Health Concerns and in the LGBTQ Community ***</td>
<td>9-Mar-13</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written Workshop’s Completed</td>
<td>multiple</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>157</strong></td>
<td><strong>73</strong></td>
<td><strong>46</strong></td>
<td><strong>373</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes to Chart:**

* Students were not asked how they identify.

** VAW Sector Conferences where mini-workshops were held. Participants were not asked how they identify.

*** This was a workshop for both women with mental health concerns and also women who identify as part of the LGBTQ community (done together due to timing constraints).
### Chart 2: SVIP Surveys and Response Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey</th>
<th>Target Population</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Distributed Via</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Incentive to Respond</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SVIP Survivor Survey</td>
<td>Survivors</td>
<td>Needs Assessment</td>
<td>Online &amp; In Person</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVIP Agency Survey</td>
<td>VAW Agencies including shelters and second stage homes</td>
<td>Needs Assessment</td>
<td>Online &amp; In Person</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVIP Post Workshop Survey</td>
<td>SVIP Workshop Participants</td>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>Online &amp; In Person</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVIP Agency Engagement Survey</td>
<td>VAW Agencies including shelters and second stage homes</td>
<td>Learn about survivor engagement initiatives already in place</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVIP Survivors Working in VAW</td>
<td>Staff at VAW agencies who identify as survivors</td>
<td>Hear from survivors working in the field</td>
<td>Online through agency management - Management was asked to distribute to all staff with the understanding they would not see responses meaning staff would not have to identify in the workplace</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVIP Workshop Feedback</td>
<td>SVIP Workshop Participants</td>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>In Person</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVIP - Survivor Testing Survey</td>
<td>Survivors working to test the SVIP model</td>
<td>Model development and feedback</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Honorariums offered to testing groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVIP - Agency Testing Survey</td>
<td>Agencies supporting or working with survivors to test the model</td>
<td>Model development and feedback</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVIP - Pilot Model Survey</td>
<td>A representative from each workshop (mixture of survivors and agency staff), Survivor groups testing the model and OATH Social Justice Action Committee.</td>
<td>Model development and feedback</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVIP - Facilitator's Evaluation</td>
<td>SVIP Workshop Facilitators</td>
<td>Evaluation of Project</td>
<td>Email to Evaluator</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes to Chart:**

The SVIP Survivor, SVIP Agency, SVIP Agency Engagement and SVIP Survivors Working in VAW were sent out to all project partners, OAITH members and project participants fitting the target population. All other surveys were sent only to the identified groups.


All other quotations, statistics, ideas and suggestions mention were obtained from SVIP participants over the life of the project.
Hush - by J.L. Coderre

This is a charcoal drawing. The inspiration – my children were a huge factor for my survivor journey. They gave me strength and propelled me to act and make changes.

The poem/lullaby reads:

Hush little baby don’t shed a tear
Mama’s gonna keep you safe my dear
If you have sweet dreams tonight
Maybe you’ll sleep right through the fight
Hush little baby don’t say a word
Of all those awful names you heard
If you hear the dishes break
Please pretend you’re not awake
Hush little baby stay in your room
Daddy’s gonna be home very soon
I put my diamond ring away
Sorry dear but we just can’t stay
Hush little baby don’t be afraid
Tomorrow’s gonna be a better day
Hush little baby don’t you frown
Mama’s okay and it’s over now