

Understanding the Effects of the Pandemic for Domestic Violence Victims

October 29, 2021

2:00pm-3:30pm ET

The webinar will begin shortly.



Welcoming Remarks



Kristina Rose
Director
Office for Victims of Crime



Allison Randall
Acting Director
Office on Violence Against Women

Presenters



Dr. Alex Piquero

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Dr. Bethany Backes

Assistant Professor, Violence Against Women Faculty Cluster, University of Central Florida

Tosha Connors

CEO, My Sister's House

Ashleigh Washington

Senior Director of Learning & Development, Safe Horizon

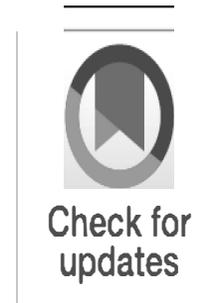
UNIVERSITY
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Domestic Violence During COVID-19 Lockdowns

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Staying Home, Staying Safe? A Short-Term Analysis of COVID-19 on Dallas Domestic Violence

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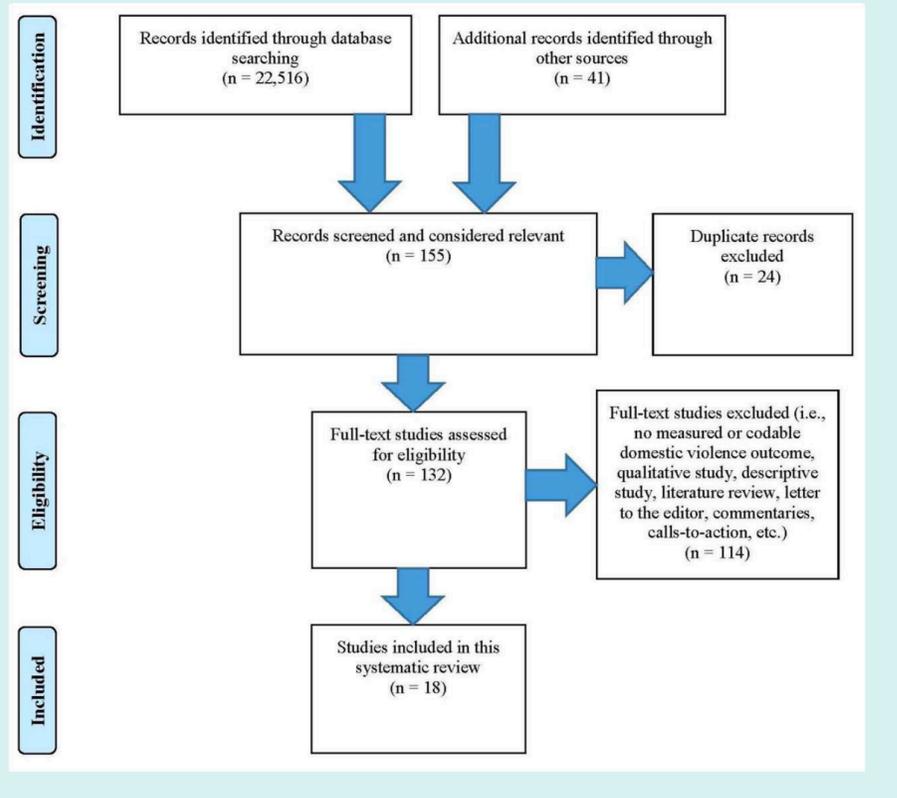
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Abstract

COVID-19 has wreaked havoc on the lives of persons around the world and social scientists are just beginning to understand its consequences on human behavior. One policy that public health officials put in place to help stop the spread of the virus were

FIGURE A1

PRISMA Flow Diagram Outlining the Funneling and Identification of Relevant Studies



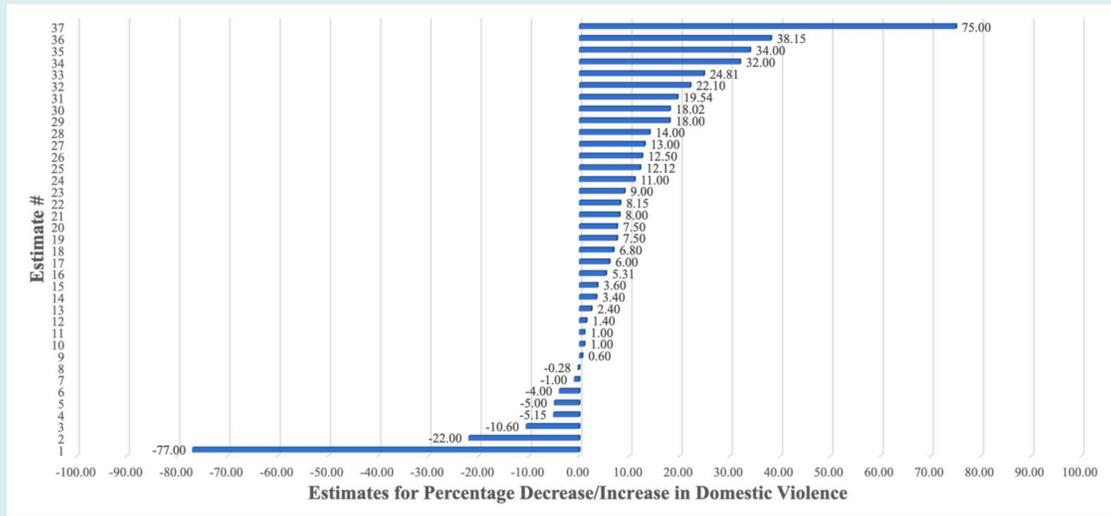
Research was based on a systematic review and meta-analysis of US and international studies that compared changes in domestic violence incidents before and after the pandemic-related lockdowns in early 2020.

The studies included a wide range of data, from logs of police calls for service to domestic violence crime reports, emergency hotline registries, health records, and other administrative documents.

The systematic literature search that was performed in accordance with the steps outlined above was carried out between December 15, 2020 and January 27, 2021. Beginning with over 22,000 records identified at the outset of the search, the penultimate (for study analyses) search yielded 18 empirical studies that met the general inclusion criteria, and details for these studies including the study number, author/s, publication year, study site, time frame of the study, and the domestic violence outcome

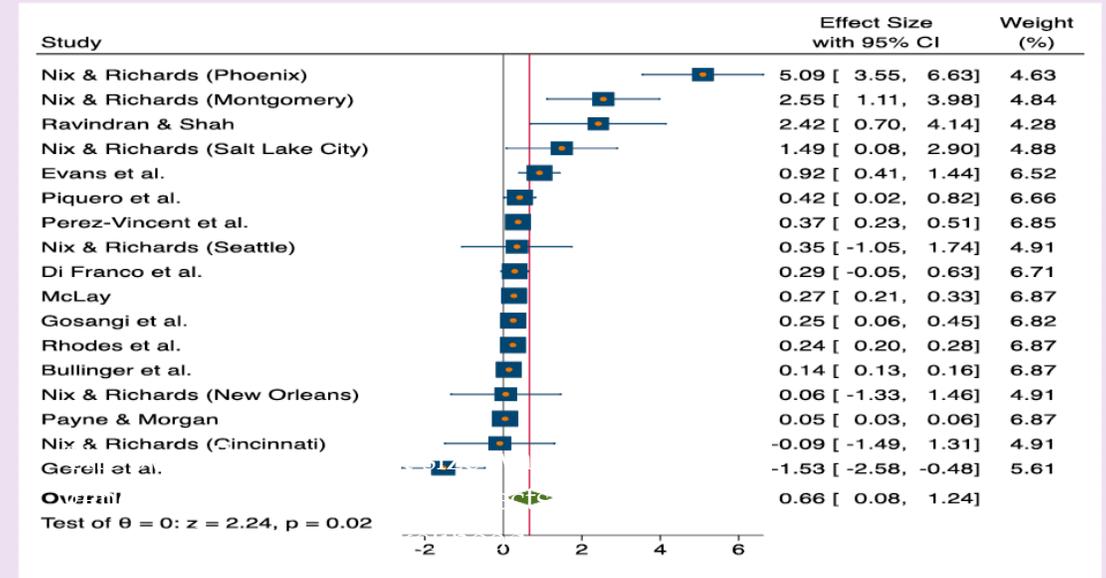
FIGURE 1A

US and International: Change in Domestic Violence During Pandemic
(n=18 studies; 37 estimates)



Note: Analyses evaluated the change in domestic violence pre- and post- implementation of lockdowns. Please see Appendix A for a legend of estimates.

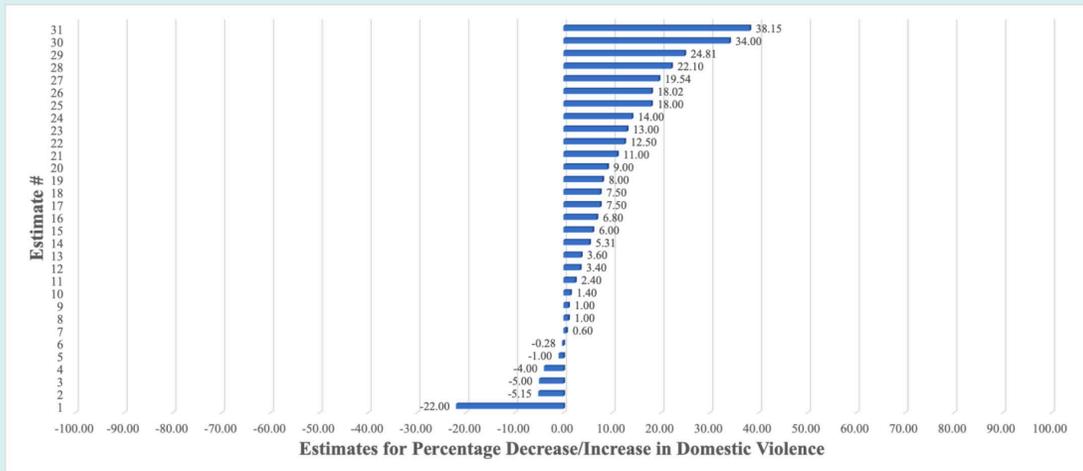
Figure 2A: US and International: Distribution of Effect Sizes
(n=12; 17 effect sizes)



Study-specific estimates of changes in domestic violence that occurred following the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic (US and International studies).

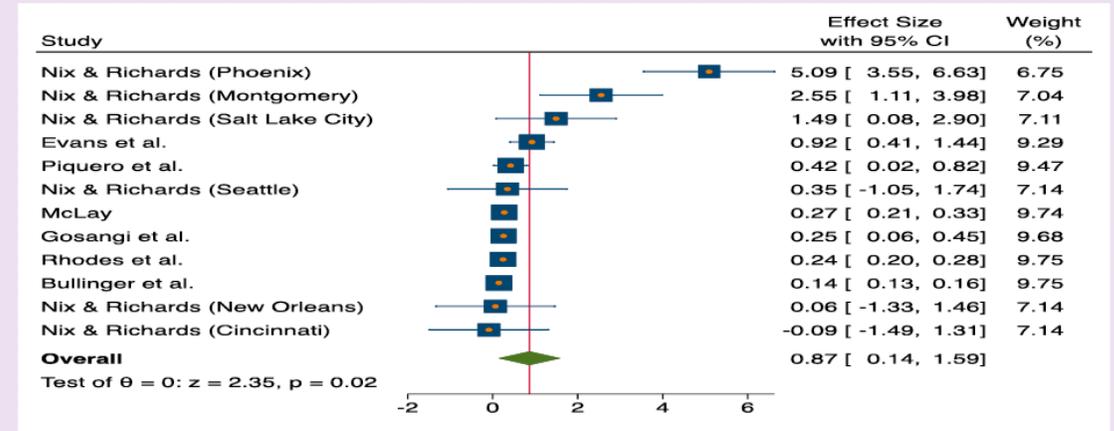
FIGURE 1B

US Only: Change in Domestic Violence During Pandemic
(n=12 studies; 31 estimates)



Note: Analyses evaluated the change in domestic violence pre- and post- implementation of lockdowns. Please see Appendix A for a legend of estimates.

Figure 2B: US Only: Distribution of Effect Sizes
(n=7 studies; 12 effect sizes)



Study-specific estimates of changes in domestic violence that occurred following the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic (US studies).

Results

- **The review found that domestic violence incidents in the U.S. increased by 8.1% following the imposition of stay-at-home orders.**
- **While evidence to support the findings is strong, it is unclear precisely which factors drove the 2020 spike in domestic violence.** The lockdowns and pandemic-related economic impacts have exacerbated factors typically associated with domestic violence, such as increased unemployment, stress associated with childcare and homeschooling, and increased financial insecurity.
- **By isolating parents and children in their homes, the pandemic separated potential victims from their network of friends, neighbors, teachers, and other individuals capable of helping those at risk.**

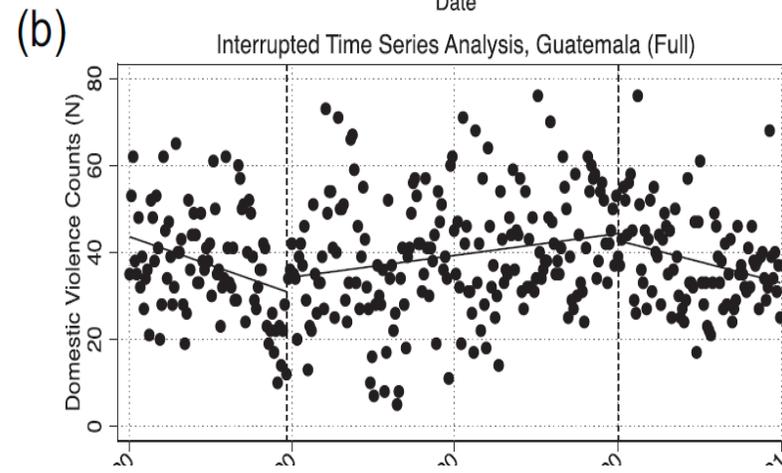
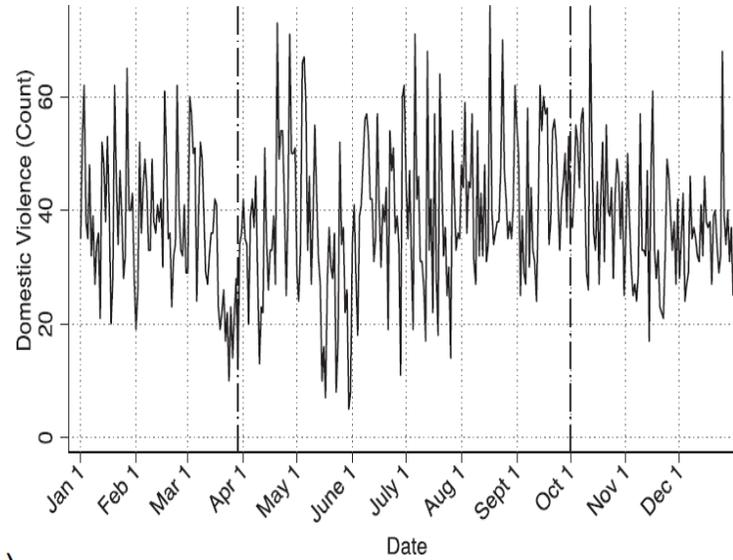
Implications

- The results confirm the concerns raised by public health leaders, victim/survivor advocates, and policymakers around the world for a pandemic-related spike in domestic violence.
- Our findings highlight the need for additional resources for domestic abuse prevention and victim services.
- We will need to continue to direct resources to historically marginalized groups and those disproportionately isolated during the pandemic (and those who are still impacted), including older adults, women, and children with past experiences with violence and abuse, as well as those with ongoing mental illness and chronic health conditions.

Media Coverage

- Bartiromo, M. (2021, February). Domestic violence increasing amid coronavirus pandemic, just as experts predicted: Report. *Fox News*. <https://www.foxnews.com/lifestyle/domestic-violence-increasing-coronavirus-pandemic-report>
- Benner, K. (2021, February 24). Domestic violence has increased during the pandemic, studies show. *New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/02/24/world/covid-19-coronavirus#domestic-violence-has-increased-during-the-pandemic-studies-show>
- Cirruzzo, C. (2021, February 25). Domestic violence increased in 7 countries during lockdowns, review finds. *US News & World Report*. <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-countries/articles/2021-02-25/domestic-violence-increased-in-7-countries-after-pandemic-lockdowns-review-finds>
- Kottasová, I. (2021, March 2). *It's not yet time to relax the COVID-19 restrictions*. CNN. <https://www.cnn.com/2021/03/02/world/coronavirus-newsletter-03-02-21-int/index.html>
- *WLRN*. A rise in domestic violence during the pandemic. <https://www.wlrn.org/2021-03-16/tourism-and-covid-19-a-rise-in-domestic-violence-during-the-pandemic-and-find-me-in-havana> (March 16, 2021).
- *Tampa Bay Times*. Domestic violence rose more than 8% during lockdowns. <https://www.tampabay.com/opinion/2021/03/05/domestic-violence-rose-more-than-8-during-lockdowns-column/> (March 5, 2021).
- *Global Citizen*. Domestic violence increased in the US by 8.1% during the COVID-19 pandemic. <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/domestic-violence-covid-19-increase-us-ncccj-study/> (March 2, 2021).
- *Marketplace*. Pandemic lockdowns fueled domestic violence worldwide, report says. <https://www.marketplace.org/2021/04/16/pandemic-lockdowns-fueled-domestic-violence-worldwide-report-says/> (April 16, 2021).

Domestic Violence During COVID-19 Lockdowns in Guatemala (Iesue et al., 2021)



Related Studies & Policy Implications

- **Research**

- Replication in Guatemala, Miami-Dade, San Antonio
- Public Health Violations

- **Policy**

- Technology (Apps)
- Visits
- Shelter Investments
- Attitudes

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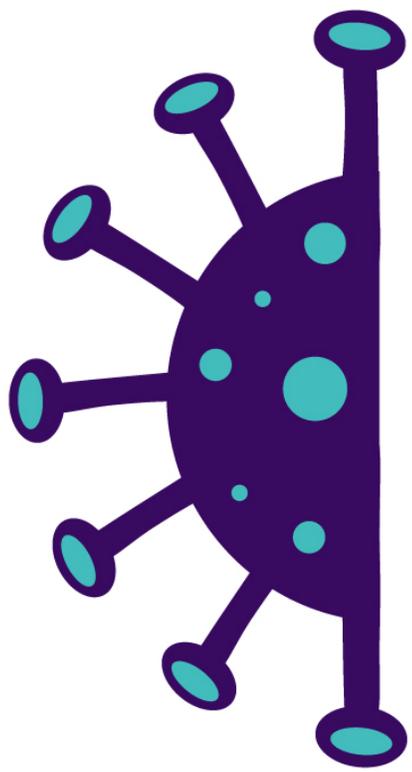


Contact Information

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DrAlexPiquero



CORONAVIRUS AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE STUDY

Perceptions & Experiences of Criminal Justice Personnel

Bethany Backes, PhD, MSW, MPH

Erica Fissel, PhD

Amy Reckdenwald, PhD

William Moreto, PhD

Matthew Stephenson, MS

Purpose

1. Mixed method study to understand experiences of criminal justice professionals during the Coronavirus crisis

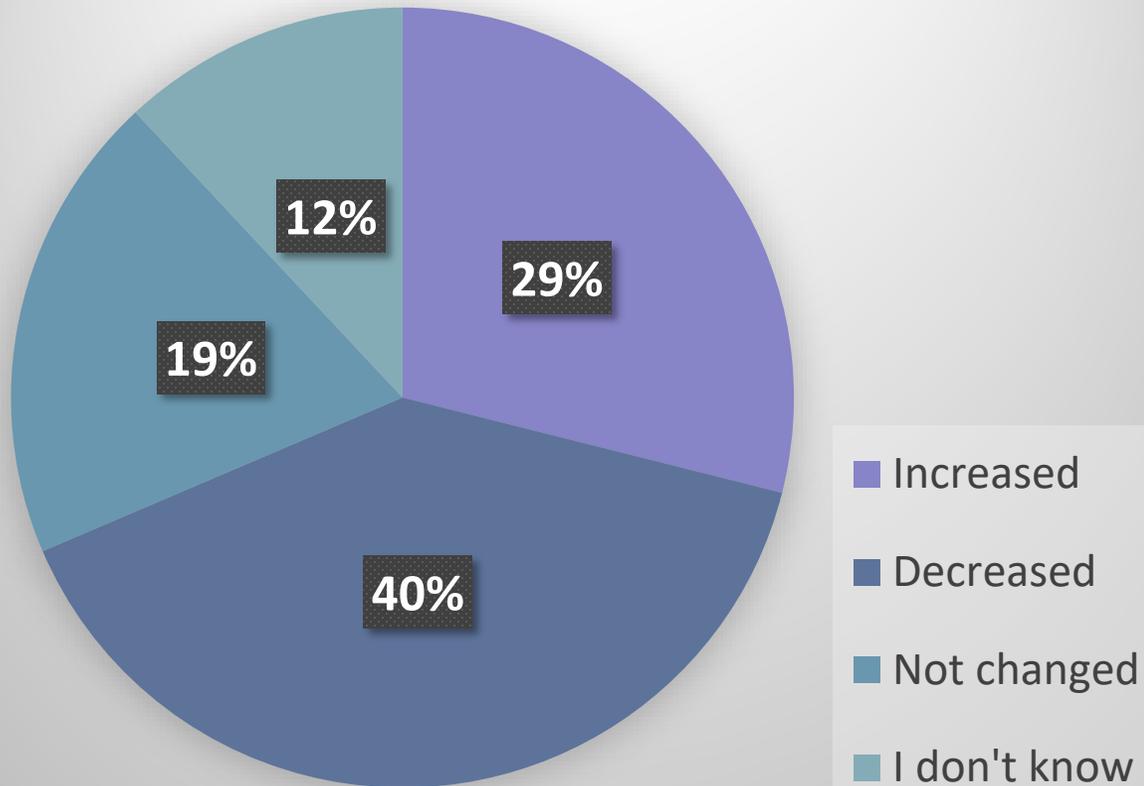
2. Aid in our understanding of current responses to domestic violence during this crisis and the related met and unmet needs of law enforcement, prosecutor, and advocacy personnel

Participant Demographics (n=173)

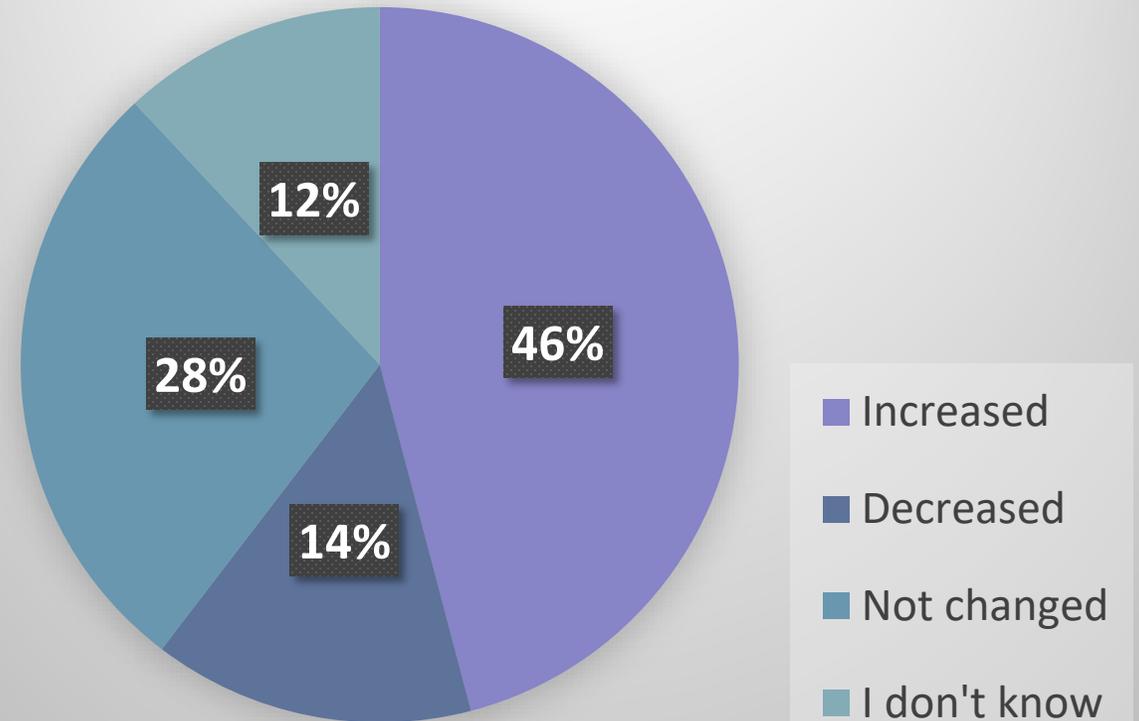
	N	% of sample
<i>Gender</i>		
Men	71	41
Women	101	58.4
<i>Race/Ethnicity</i>		
White	137	79.2
Black/African American	16	9.2
Hispanic/Latino	13	7.5
Other	6	3.5
	Mean	Range
Age	27.28 years	48 (22-70 years)

Changes in Calls and Cases Since Start of COVID-19

Number of general calls or cases (n=159)



Number of domestic violence calls or cases (n=159)

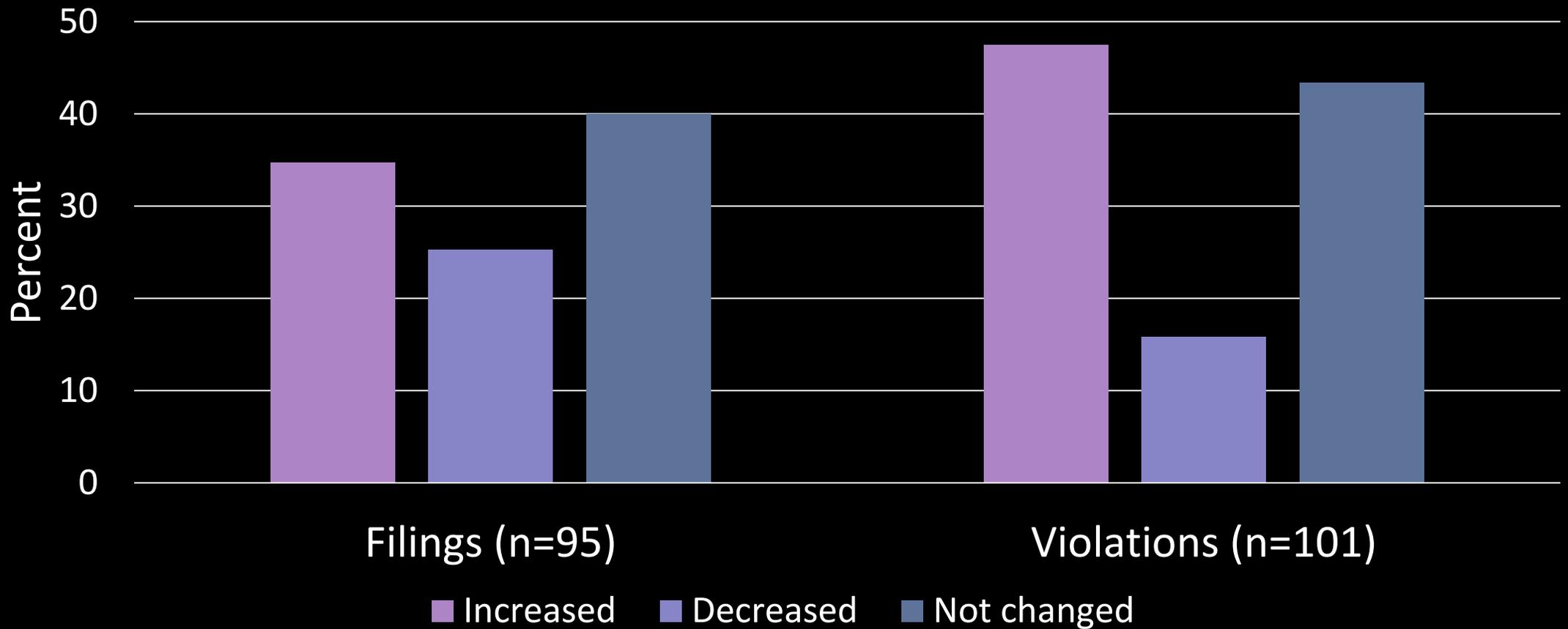


Changes in Calls and Cases

“The calls for service seem to be **more common** for domestic violence. Our criminal sexual conduct cases have also exploded in the amount of reporting abuse.” (Law enforcement officer in Michigan, Female, 40s)

“The problem with schools and daycares being closed is the abuse is **not getting reported**. By the time I get the allegation, the abuse has been for an **extended period of time or serious physical harm** to the victim.” (Law enforcement officer in Ohio, Male, 40s)

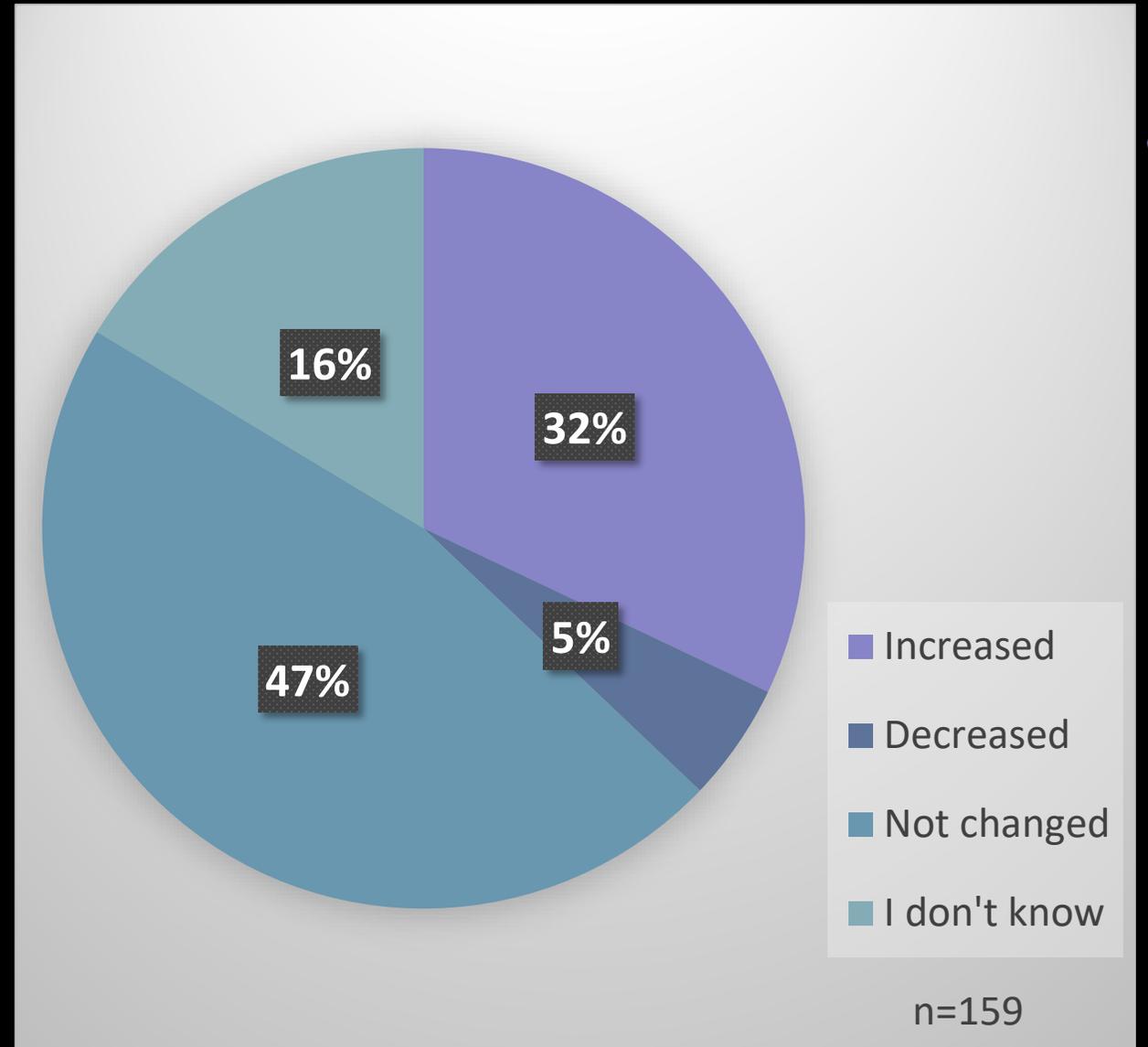
Changes in Protective Order Filings & Violations Since Start of COVID- 19



Changes in Protective Order Filings & Violations

“With all the *unrest with law enforcement*, I think this has been challenging for victims to seek police help when needed. Plus, the *rumor* that law enforcement is not arresting people and/or releasing people quickly due to jail overcrowding has hindered victims in seeking services.” (Staff at Prosecutor/District Attorney agency in Alabama, Female, 40s)

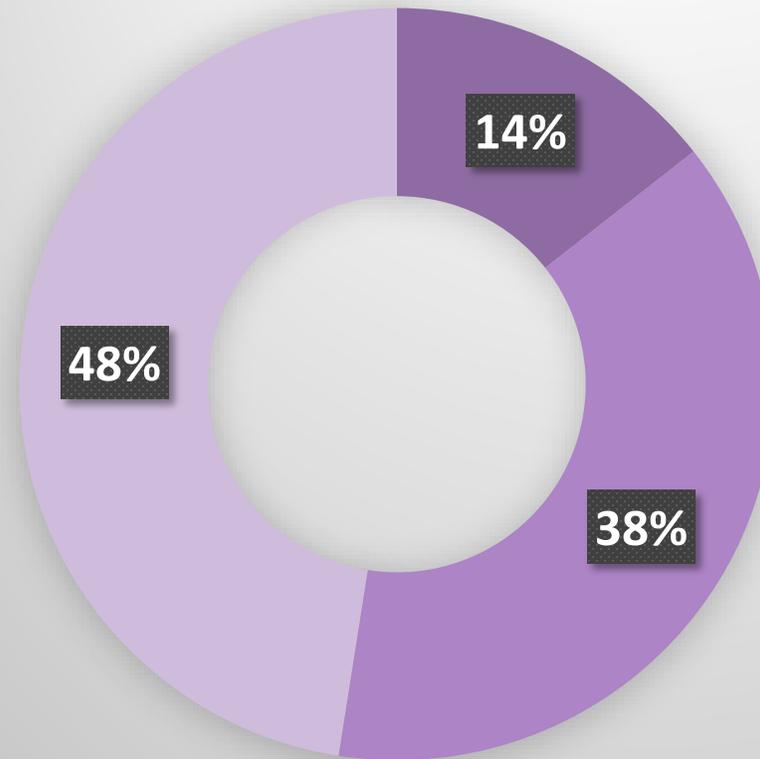
Change in Severity of DV Calls & Cases



Change in Severity of DV Calls & Cases

“Having *less school and less community activities* has made it harder to know about the things going on with the child at home. Many of my DV victims have cited the Coronavirus as a contributor to the *stress and escalation of violence* in the home. It is unclear how many of them this is true for, versus how many of them are using Coronavirus as a way to deflect from the abuser’s toxic behaviors when those victims are trying to drop the charges.” (Victim advocate/victim-witness specialist at Prosecutor/District Attorney agency in Florida, Female, 30s)

Perceptions of Victim Safety (n=129)



- Safety is Same as Before COVID
- Safety Decreased a Little Since COVID
- Safety Decreased a Lot Since COVID



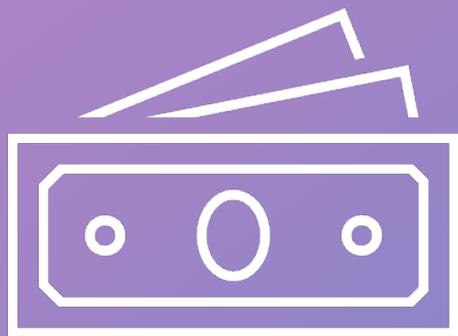
Barriers to Access

“Domestic violence victims were less likely to go into shelters or seek medical treatment for *fear of getting COVID.*” (Victim advocate in a law enforcement agency in Texas, Female, 30s)

“[There are] challenges with helping domestic violence victims find housing after law enforcement is called. COVID has had *major restrictions on our domestic violence shelter* with regards to how many victims they can house.” (Victim advocate at Prosecutor/District Attorney agency in California, Female, 20s)

- “Victims are *more afraid.* Domestic violence with much, much more severe injuries. Victims even *more reluctant* to find alternative housing.” (Law enforcement officer in Ohio, Female, 40s)





Barriers to Leaving Abuser



“The Coronavirus pandemic is making it more difficult for victims to **afford to leave**. They are stuck in their situation because they cannot make ends meet if they leave.” (Prosecutor/District Attorney in California, Male, 20s)

“Some victims have had a harder time relocating from their abuser. Many victims are more hesitant to leave their abuser because their **children are at home with them all day**.” (Prosecutor/District Attorney in Texas, Female, 20s)

Strategies Used to Help Victims During COVID-19 (n=173)

	N	%
Encouraging them to call the police	109	63
Suggest they file for an emergency injunction/protective order	102	59
Encouraging them to stay in another home or residence	94	54.3
Helping/encouraging them to develop a safety plan	84	48.6
Offering emergency shelter or other housing programs	79	45.7
Suggest they use a hotline or chat/text service from an agency	74	42.8
Encouraging them to call child protective services or similar agency	60	34.7
Encouraging them to obtain substance use treatment or support	57	32.9
Conducting a danger or other risk assessment with them	54	31.2
Advising them to avoid conflict with people they live with	42	24.3
Encouraging them to stay in another room from people they live with	39	22.5
Encouraging them to stay off social media (e.g. Instagram)	29	16.8
Suggesting they use social media and phones to connect to others	27	15.6

Summary of Preliminary Findings

Increased calls and severity of DV incidents

Lack of reporting and help-seeking or ability to identify DV due to school closures, lockdowns, etc.

Perception that victim safety has greatly decreased during COVID

Reduced access to and availability of services due to COVID and social/political activities of past year

CORONAVIRUS AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE STUDY

The Violence Against Women Cluster at the University of Central Florida is interviewing criminal justice professionals about their experiences during the Coronavirus crisis.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?

The purpose of the Coronavirus and Domestic Violence Study is to understand the experiences of criminal justice professionals during the Coronavirus crisis. Specifically, it will aid in our understanding of current responses to domestic violence during this crisis and the related met and unmet needs of law enforcement, prosecutor, and advocacy personnel.

AM I ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE?

You are eligible to participate in the study if you are 18 years of age or older, a current employee within a local, county, state, tribal, university/campus or federal law enforcement agency in the United States OR a current employee within a city, county or tribal prosecutor's office in the United States that worked on Domestic Violence cases during the pandemic.

WHAT WILL THE INTERVIEW BE LIKE?

Interviews will be between 45-60 minutes and you will be compensated with a \$40 gift card for your time. The interviews will focus on your experience with domestic violence incidents and cases during the coronavirus pandemic.

HOW DO I SIGN UP FOR AN INTERVIEW?

To see if you are eligible for an interview, please go to: <https://tinyurl.com/55m99fjk> and answer a few questions. If eligible for the study, you will be asked to provide contact information and someone from our research team will contact you to schedule an interview.

Or scan this code:



- Interview time slots are available 7 days a week
- between 8am - 10pm EDT to accommodate a variety of schedules.
- **Survey end date: May 31, 2022**

If you have any questions, please contact the study PI, **Bethany Backes** at Bethany.Backes@ucf.edu.



For additional information contact:
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Principal Investigator
Bethany.Backes@ucf.edu

UNDERSTANDING THE EFFECTS OF THE PANDEMIC FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS



MY
SISTER'S
HOUSE

LOWCOUNTRY LEADERS IN
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SURVIVAL

CONTENT

1. IMPACT ON CLIENT SERVICES
2. INEQUITIES EXPERIENCED BY
UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS
3. CHALLENGES & BARRIERS
4. APPROACHES TAKEN TO SERVE VICTIMS



IMPACT ON CLIENT SERVICES

- **Less Clients in Emergency Shelter**
 - *reduced capacity for health and safety*
- **More Clients in community-based programs**
- **Greater Opportunities to Connect with Agency**
 - *more accessible via phone and web to connect*
- **Strengthened Community Partnerships**
 - *Have to rely on others to be the experts in their field and utilize the resources*
- **Agile and Innovative**
 - *More willing to embrace the experience has a mechanism for change in a way that benefits the client*



INEQUITIES EXPERIENCED BY THE UNDERSERVED



SAFE SHELTER



LAW ENFORCEMENT



LANGUAGE ACCESS



COMMUNITY RESOURCES



ISOLATION



TRANSPORTATION



CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED

2020

- **Congregate Care Setting of Emergency Shelter**
 - *Reduced capacity from shared rooms to single families/clients*
 - *Shared kitchen, bathroom and living room settings*
- **Health and Safety of Staff and Clients**
 - *Covid 19 outbreaks among staff and clients*
 - *Elder care and child care for staff members*
- **Communication with clients and potential clients**
 - *Victims did not have the same opportunities to seek help*
 - *Due to lockdown restrictions, access to resources was limited*
- **Technology**



CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED

2021

- **Hotel Model**

- *Clients in multiple locations*
- *Transportation*
- *Food preparation*

- **Health and Safety of Staff and Clients**

- *Testing and vaccination resistance from clients*
- *Outbreaks among staff and clients*

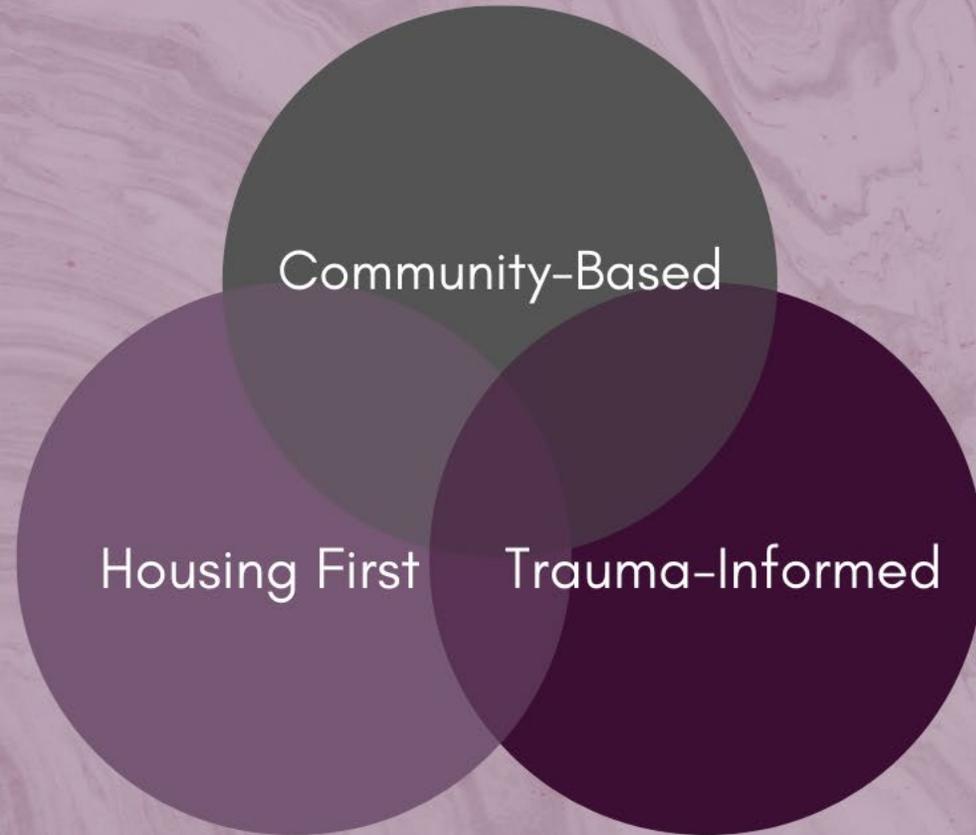
- **Staff Burnout**

- *Mental and emotional health of staff*

- **Technology**



APPROACHES TO SERVE VICTIMS



YOU ARE NOT ALONE





About Safe Horizon

- [Safe Horizon](#) is the largest domestic violence and victims services organization in the country
- 250,000 NYC children, adults, and families
- Domestic violence, crime, trafficking, violence, youth homelessness
- 1,000~ employees, 100+ locations including, 8 shelters, 5 child advocacy centers, family and criminal courts, police precincts, counseling centers, community programs and more

Challenges & Opportunities

- Public awareness
- Decrease in Hotline calls and shelter requests in early months of COVID
- Closings and limitations of community, government providers
- Taking care of staff
 - Grief, loss, burnout, vicarious trauma, life, racial trauma
 - Vaccine mandates and testing
 - Pay equity
 - Remote learning and community
 - Hybrid schedules
- Remote capacity increased
- Technology, phone, internet accessibility



Service Provision Examples

- **Advocacy in Courts & Precinct Programs**
 - Remote hearings
 - Protective orders
 - Remote visitation
 - Coordinated response with judges, clerks, police officers, public housing,
- **Remote Services in Shelters and Counseling Center**
 - Protective equipment for residents and staff
 - Remote case management within dwellings
 - Coordinating with court programs for child visitation
- **Emergency Assistance - Prioritizing basic needs**
 - Utilities, food, rental arrears, moving expenses
 - Survivors are seeking support not systems

Questions?



Submit questions in the [Q&A Box](#)
Send to [All Panelists](#)

Closing Remarks



Vanita Gupta

Associate Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice