

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

Why is this Goal Area Important?

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

What's Working?

- The Harborview Center for Sexual Assault and Traumatic Stress (HCSATS) offers telephone consultations, crisis response, advocacy, therapy, and sexual abuse evaluations. Many services are free of charge or can be paid for by Medicaid or Crime Victim's Compensation. HCSATS also provides community education and workshops for providers to build skills and develop strategies to prevent sexual assault. Examples of topics covered in 2015 for providers include understanding the meaning of sexual consent and working with transgender and non-gender conforming youth.
- LifeWire (previously known as Eastside Domestic Violence Program) offers emergency shelter, transitional housing, rental assistance, and other types of housing assistance. Also offered are advocacy-based counseling, the Help Line, support groups, legal advocacy, and a variety of children's services. Most clients who come into the program do so through the Crisis Line.
- King County Sexual Assault Resource Center (KCSARC) provides services for sexual assault victims and their families, including trauma focused therapy, legal advocacy, parent support and 24 hour crisis interven-

tion services. In 2013 KCSARC launched Project 360, in partnership with Youthcare and Friends of Youth, a unique approach to providing trauma focused services to homeless youth who have been victims of sexual assault. The program includes specialized trauma work, case management, legal advocacy, and system coordination.

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence (DV), sometimes called intimate partner violence, profoundly affects the lives of survivors as well as the entire community. Domestic violence incidents involve family or household members; traditionally the term has referred to altercations between spouses and former spouses, but legally it includes roommates with or without a romantic relationship, and parents or children. Individuals may be of the same gender. The financial and human costs of domestic violence are staggering, and can negatively impact generations to come. For example, in a recent study of women enrolled at Group Health Cooperative in Seattle, healthcare costs were 42% higher for those who reported ongoing domestic violence compared to women who did not report domestic violence. Among women who reported violence within the last 5 years but not ongoing violence, costs were 24% higher.¹

Prevalence

- According to the Center for Disease Control, Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is a significant public health problem. The most recent data from the 2011 National Intimate Partner Violence Survey (NIPVS) indicates that over 10 million men and women in the U.S. experience physical violence each year by a current or former intimate partner.² The cost of IPV was an estimated \$8.3 billion in 2003, the last year where these statistics are available, which includes medical care, mental health services, and lost productivity.³
- The number of reported domestic violence

offenses statewide increased 7.4% between 2012 and 2014, from 45,944 to 49,360. This reverses a decreasing trend of 17% between 2010 and 2012. Domestic violence offenses made up 51% of all crimes against persons in 2014.⁴

- Based on Washington’s 2011 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey, 19% of women and 9% of men in Washington reported experiencing domestic violence during their lifetimes. 16% of women and 6% of men reported experiencing injury by an intimate partner.⁵

- The National Network to End Domestic Violence in its 2014 Domestic Violence Counts Census report for Washington State found that on just one day in this state, 1,026 domestic violence survivors were in emergency shelter and transitional housing, and 549 requests from survivors were turned down because programs did not have the resources to provide services; 89% of unmet requests were related to housing.⁶

- It is extremely difficult to determine the exact annual number of King County domestic violence victims. However, it is estimated that over 90,000 domestic violence incidents occur each year. In 2011 there were 10,157 domestic violence offenses reported and 12,755 in 2012 according to the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs.⁷ The 2007-2011 rate was 309.4 per 100,000 population. The rate in Eastside cities for the same time period was 211 per 100,000 population.⁸

- As Figure 1 indicates, after trending steadily upward between 1997 and 2002, the number of reports of domestic violence to the Bellevue Police Department decreased slightly (7%) in 2003 (1,337 reports), then fell 11% in 2004 (1,196 reports). In 2005,

reports increased again to 1,559, then dropped to 1,410 in 2006. In 2007, reports dipped by 15%, then stayed about the same in 2008. Reports remained relatively flat between 2009, 2010, and 2011 (1,366 and 1,350, 1,377 respectively). In 2012 the numbers dropped to 1,214, and dropped again in 2013 to 976. In 2014, reports spiked to 1,199, a 22% increase. These numbers reflect calls in which domestic violence was indicated, but were not necessarily assaults.⁹

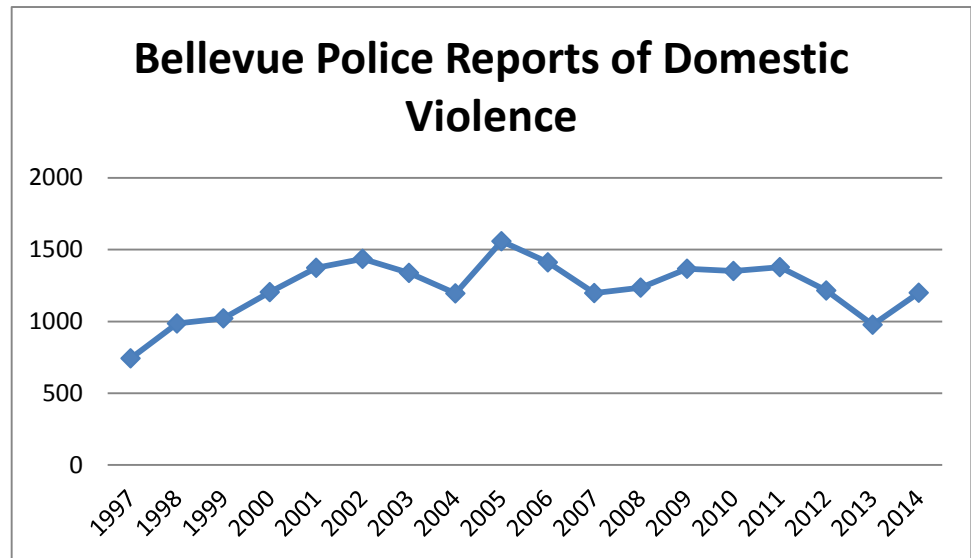


Figure 1

Source: Bellevue Police Department

- The Bellevue Police Department (BPD) works closely with and relies heavily on LifeWire’s services. In all cases of domestic violence where the police are involved, an advocate works with the person identified as the victim, explaining the complicated justice system, providing them with information on no contact and protection orders, and planning for safety. The advocate accompanies the victim to court, works closely with the city attorney’s office, and is in weekly contact with the prosecutor’s office. The BPD Domestic Violence Victim Advocate averaged a case-load of 22 filed misdemeanor cases per month in 2007 and 24 in 2008. In 2009 and 2010, average caseload dropped again to 22, but for 2011, the average caseload increased to 25. For 2012, there were an average of 21 cases per month, in 2013, an average of 21 cases per

month, and in 2014, 22 cases per month. For the first six months of 2015, the average was 17 cases per month. The biggest challenges are lack of shelter, affordable housing, access to free/reduced fee legal services, and financial resources, as well as an increase in non-English speaking clients.¹⁰

Service Trends

Accessing Services

- On the Eastside LifeWire is the only provider of comprehensive services to survivors of domestic violence and their families. Several other agencies also assist survivors and may offer specialized services. These agencies include Eastside Legal Assistance Program, Refugee Women's Alliance, Jewish Family Service, Eastern European Counseling Center, CHAYA and Consejo. Additionally, Youth Eastside Services and Asian Counseling and Referral Service work with teens on dating violence.¹¹
- The King County Department of Community and Human Services Domestic Violence Program provides King County General Funds/Children and Family funding support to organizations that provide direct services to survivors of domestic violence and their children. Services include community advocacy, education, direct survivor services, shelter and outreach. Currently County funding supports 16 agencies through the Women's Program. King County staff is preparing a report in response to a Proviso in a Budget Ordinance related to domestic violence and several other program areas such as civil legal services, including a needs/gaps analysis, which will be available in 2016.¹²

Housing

- Housing is a major concern for survivors and their families. According to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, DV is the leading cause of homelessness for women. In the 2015 One Night Count of homeless people in King County, 807 adults, which are 12% of the 6,275 individuals accessing shelter and transitional programs, had experienced domestic violence or abuse.¹³

- LifeWire is the only provider on the Eastside offering confidential shelters. It has ten apartment units that serve as emergency interim shelter for families in lethal domestic violence situations. In addition, LifeWire transitional housing delivers lengthier shelter for up to ten families for survivors experiencing both domestic violence and substance abuse issues. Confidential motel/hotel vouchers provide short term emergency housing. LifeWire is also able to provide rental assistance to families as well as extensive flexible financial assistance and support services focused on obtaining and/or maintaining housing as well as homelessness prevention efforts. 91% of Housing Stability participants remained in permanent housing after six months. One hundred percent of the families in their housing programs are homeless due to domestic violence.¹⁴
- LifeWire reports that their service levels are reflective of their capacity, not client demand, so the number of clients served has not increased significantly over time. LifeWire turns away 19 households for every 1 the serve in emergency housing; however, many of these families are served in their rental assistance and housing stability programs thereby reducing the turn away rate to 6-1. In 2014 646 families were served in their housing program, with over 34,000 bed nights.¹⁵

DV Crisis Line and Advocacy Services

- LifeWire provides a 24-hour Helpline which is a gateway to all LifeWire services, including advocacy-based counseling, adult support groups and safety planning. There were 9,781 Helpline calls in 2014. Other advocacy services include resource and referral and education for survivors, family and friends, legal advocacy counseling, and education and coordination with the criminal justice system. In 2014 1,261 Advocacy clients were served.¹⁶

Legal Assistance and Mental Health Counseling

- Legal assistance remains a primary need for survivors of domestic violence. Eastside Legal Assistance Program (ELAP) provides pro bono legal services for low-income families and individuals residing in East/Northeast King County. Through its Domestic Violence Legal Fund Program (DVLFF), it also provides free emergency representation to low-income domestic violence victims residing anywhere in King County. Due to growing need, ELAP has also added another program, the DV Family Law Corps that uses non-practicing volunteer attorneys and provides them with staff support and malpractice insurance.¹⁷ The King County Bar Association also has a domestic violence and family law clinic specifically for refugees and immigrants. The Family Law group is currently involved in a collaborative project through Office of Violence Against Women. They are working with King County Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Lifewire, Consejo, Sound Mental Health and a survivor panel to develop materials for domestic violence survivors with mental health issues.¹⁸
- A 2003 economic study found that while shelter, hotlines, and counseling had no significant impact on the likelihood of abuse, the availability of legal services decreased the likelihood that women would be abused. Helping survivors legally pursue and obtain protection orders, custody, child support and other financial needs, gives them the physical safety and financial security that enable them to leave the abuser.¹⁹
- Included in the full range of services needed for survivors is mental health counseling. Providers report that many survivors

“As a licensed mental health provider, we are now accepting private insurance as well as public “Medicaid” for sexual assault specific trauma. And more individuals have insurance, many cannot use it because the co-pays and deductibles are beyond their financial reach; we are not tracking uncompensated care costs for therapy.”

Provider Survey, KSARC

are experiencing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and suicidal ideation as a result of their abuse. There is a lack of counselors who have worked specifically with this population, and inadequate funding to cover services. Due to funding from the Mental Illness and Drug Dependency (MIDD) sales tax passed in King County in 2009, mental health counselors were hired for each of the three regional domestic violence service providers, including LifeWire. At LifeWire, this full-time counselor works with survivors and their children on-site, which increases access to early intervention, prevents more severe mental health issues later, and increases coordination between programs, including enhancing the team approach to serve individuals with multiple issues. Refugee Women’s Alliance, which also serves East King County residents, received funding for two part-time staff to provide culturally specific mental health services.²⁰

- Another issue for many survivors is substance abuse, which often affects both the perpetrator and the survivor. Drugs and alcohol are often used as a control issue by the perpetrator. Therapeutic Health Services provides on-site chemical dependency treatment to LifeWire clients at their transitional shelter, “My Friend’s Place.”²¹

Services for Children Who Witness or are Victims of Abuse

- Studies show that 3-4 million children ages 3-17 are at risk of exposure to domestic violence each year. Research indicates that children who witness domestic violence show more anxiety, low self-esteem, depression, anger and temperament problems than children who do not witness violence in the home. These disturbances, also referred to as Adverse Childhood Experiences, can impede healthy development, cause school difficulties and physical health problems, and continue to be a problem into adulthood.²² LifeWire has ongoing support groups for children while their mothers are in their support groups; these groups address self-esteem, conflict resolution, and safety. A group called “Voices”

was started for teens affected by domestic violence in their families. This group addresses dating/friend/family relationships and empowerment.²³

Older & Vulnerable Adult Abuse

- Although domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking affect victims in all age groups, older individuals who are survivors face additional challenges in accessing services needed to enhance their safety. Appropri-

- In Washington State, Adult Protective Services (APS) reported a steady increase in allegations of overall intakes. As shown in Figure 2, there was an 89% increase in the number of APS intakes received over the five year period covering 2000-2005, an 8% increase between 2005 and 2010, and a 45% between 2010 and 2013. The most significant increase in reports for these time periods were in the area of financial exploitation.²⁷

Calendar Year	Total # of APS Intakes received	Physical Abuse	Sexual Abuse	Mental Abuse	Neglect	Self Neglect	Exploitation of Person	Financial Exploitation	Abandonment
2000	7391	1258	260	1274	1867	1803	557	1831	68
	(89%)							(91%)	
2005	13973	2168	383	2214	2975	3107	885	3512	49
	(8%)							(29%)	
2010	15059	1489	372	2769	3081	4397	867	4565	46
	(45%)							(66%)	
2013	21896	2076	501	4312	4428	6328	1515	7599	86

Figure 2

Source: State of Washington, Adult Protective Services, ADSA Reporting System

ate interventions may be compromised by misconceptions that older persons are not victims of these types of crimes, that domestic violence does not occur or lessens in later life, or that the abuse is an expression of stress associated with caring for an aging individual. Age or disability may increase the isolation of these victims and their dependence on abusers for care or housing. Also, these cases may go unnoticed because medical and other professionals may perceive a victim's injuries as arising from aging, illness, or disability instead of recognizing that the injuries may be attributed to violence in the home.²⁴

- No one knows exactly how many older Americans are being abused, but according to best estimates, between 1 and 2 million people age 65 and older have been abused, exploited or neglected by their caregivers. Incidence rates vary from 7.6 to 10%. It is estimated that for every case of elder abuse, neglect, exploitation or self-neglect, about five go unreported.²⁵ One in 23 cases of elder abuse is ever reported, and only one in 44 cases of financial abuse is ever reported.²⁶

- In King County, there were 4,344 reports of all types of abuse and neglect to APS in 2013 resulting in 3,568 investigations. This represents a 41% increase from the 3,076 reports received in 2009 and a 22% increase from the 2,909 investigations in 2009.²⁸ In King County, the Elder Abuse Council brings together members of the community from different jurisdictions and disciplines, such as law enforcement, prosecuting attorneys, DSHS Adult Protective Services, agencies such as KCSARC and hospitals. The Council also takes on other projects such as working with Cornell Medical School and the Department of Justice to develop research and tools to better understand how to detect and prevent elder abuse.²⁹
- The Bellevue Police Department is an active member of this team and report overall increasing numbers of elder abuse reports, including assault, neglect and financial. There were 50 incidents of elder abuse in 2004, 105 in 2005, and about 100 each year through 2008. In 2011, there were 79 referrals to APS assigned for investigation, increasing to 81 in 2012 and 101 in 2013. In 2014, the number decreased significantly, to 44; police are not sure why this occurred.

Police believe the number overall is vastly under-reported because, like many types of abuse, the victims will not press charges against family member perpetrators. This is especially true for older adults.³⁰

“Victims of scams experience shame and embarrassment and oftentimes become sick. Financial exploitation cases are as lethal as assault cases with a victim’s health.”

Page Ulrey, King County Prosecuting Attorney’s Office, Presentation on Elder Abuse to the Bellevue Network on Aging

Refugees and Immigrants

- Due to their immigration status, some immigrant and refugee women may face more barriers in escaping abuse and accessing services. Bellevue’s rapidly changing demographics create even more urgency for services that are responsive to these communities. Gaps in access to services include multi-lingual information and support and awareness campaigns with linguistically and culturally appropriate messages and materials. Two of the primary barriers to non-English speakers who are seeking assistance are a lack of information available in languages other than English and a shortage of bilingual staff members. Finally, undocumented survivors also lack access to services like housing, and often fear that if

they call for help, they will be detained and deported.³¹

- In 2014, LifeWire staff reported a 20% increase in the number of immigrants and an 11% increase in limited English-speaking survivors seeking services. The countries from which they are seeing the greatest increase in clients are Mexico, China and Russia.³¹ Consejo, a Seattle-based Latino agency, began providing a DV advocate in 2004 on the Eastside to help address additional needs. In 2009, Refugee Women’s Alliance began a survivors’ support group in Bellevue to serve Eastern European immigrant and refugee women who speak Russian, Romanian and Ukrainian. Eastern European Counseling Services works with people from the Ukraine, former Soviet Union and other eastern European countries. KCSARC’s Dando Voz program is the only comprehensive sexual assault program for the Spanish speaking community. KSARC also reported that between 2012-2014 there was a 146% increase in people of color, 60% of whom are children/teens, and a 114% increase in the number of refugee and immigrant victims, again, the majority of whom are children and teens. They saw a 64% increase in Hispanic clients.³³

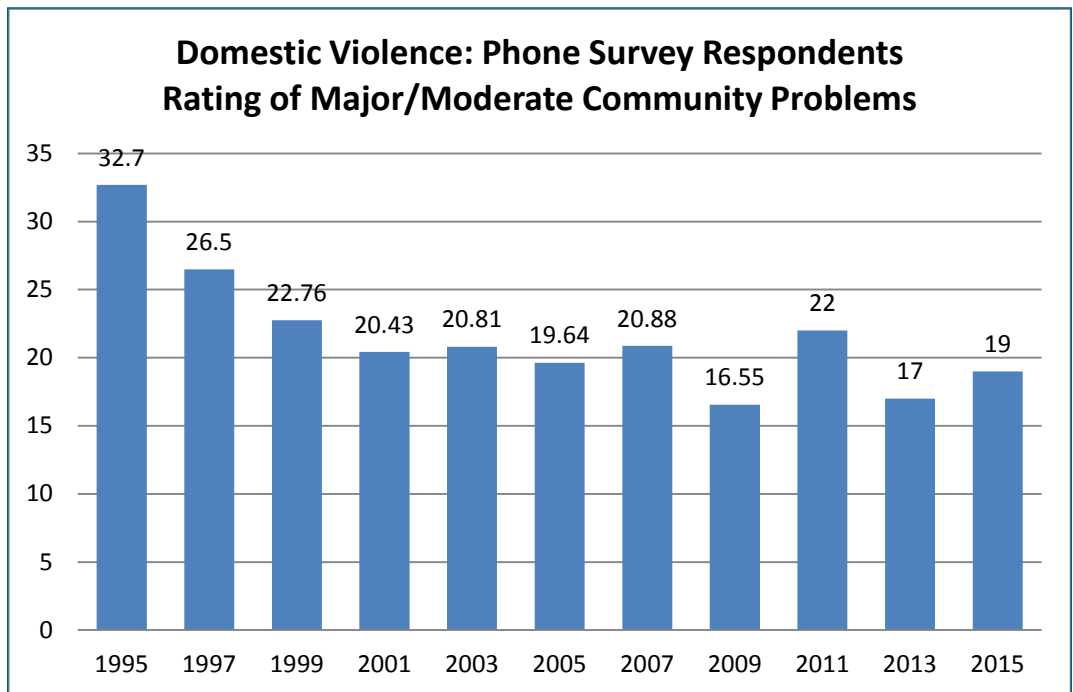


Figure 3
Source: 2015 Bellevue Phone/Online Survey

Need for Affordable Treatment Programs for Offenders

- First-time domestic violence offenders are typically required to complete an intensive counseling program. These programs, all geared toward achieving victim safety, hold DV offenders accountable for abusive behavior while teaching healthy behavioral alternatives. Washington State certifies for-profit and non-profit substance abuse treatment agencies to provide court-ordered domestic violence perpetrator treatment programs for low to medium risk offenders. Staff from the Bellevue Probation Department refer some of their clients to these agencies; some of these clients face barriers in paying for these services though they are mandated to participate or face time in jail. At times the final completion notice is withheld until full payment is made. There is a need for scholarships for low-income offenders who cannot afford the cost of the treatment program.

Community Perceptions

- Over the past 18 years, phone/online survey results indicate that Bellevue residents feel domestic violence is not a significant community or household problem, as shown in Figure 3. The number of respondents rating it as a moderate or major community problem decreased somewhat, from 22% in 2011 compared to 17% in 2013, but rose again slightly to 19% in 2015. Although underreporting of abuse is very typical on surveys, Bellevue Police Department statistics show steady domestic violence reports through 2008, then decreasing in 2009, and dropping back down in 2013 then increasing in 2015.
- The 2015 consumer survey results also reveal that physical abuse in respondents' households is not considered a major or moderate problem. 83% rated this as not a problem.
- In several Key Informant interviews conducted in 2015, domestic violence was mentioned in regard to immigrants who are confused by the system in the U. S. regarding consequences of making police reports, which can result in the arrest of the

alleged perpetrator. Also, volunteers with the Muslim Community Resource Center mentioned that they are partnering with LifeWire staff to train Muslim volunteers in how to recognize signs of domestic violence and how to bring up the topic if they suspect domestic violence is occurring.³⁴

Implications for Action

- The high cost of housing in Bellevue creates a serious challenge for survivors who want to remain in the community to maintain their jobs and support systems. More shelter beds as well as more permanent housing options with services are needed, especially as the lingering effects of the economic downturn has resulted in increased demand for DV services.
- Next to housing, one of the largest gaps in services for survivors is for legal representation for child custody, protection orders, immigration, and financial issues. When these services are unavailable, it becomes much harder for survivors to maintain their safety, return to employment, and become self-sufficient.
- Service trends and demographic changes in Bellevue indicate that the need for culturally relevant and linguistically appropriate services for survivors continues to grow. Appropriate services are needed to keep up with the demand.
- Children and youth who witness domestic violence are at risk of internalizing the abuse. Data suggests that child abuse occurs in approximately 70% of families experiencing domestic violence. Holistic programs including prevention and earlier interventions are needed to break the cycle of abuse for future generations. Also, for children and youth who have witnessed abuse, programs that include support groups and individual counseling need to be available to address the resulting trauma.
- Services for older adult survivors of family violence need to be available to target the particular issues experienced by this increasing population.
- Community awareness and engagement efforts ensure that the issue of domestic

violence gains public visibility. Coordinated strategies should not only include better programs and access to services, but also ideas to prevent neglect and create positive norms.

Child Abuse and Neglect

Child abuse is the physical, psychological or sexual mistreatment, or physical neglect of children by their parents or guardians. Neglect is the most common form of child abuse, but rates are hard to establish because neglect is often unreported.³⁵

Prevalence

- Nationally, an estimated 679,000 children were victims of child abuse or neglect in 2013, similar to the number in 2011, but a decline of 23,000 children compared to 2009 when it was 702,000. An estimated 1,520 children died due to child abuse or neglect in 2013 according to the National Child Abuse and Neglect Database, an almost 11% decrease from 2009. In 2013, there were 85,096 reports of abuse or neglect in Washington State; of these, 37,501 received a response from Child Protective Services (CPS). This represents an 8% increase compared to 2011. In mid-2015, the State implemented an alternate intervention program, Family Assessment Response (FAR) that will offer an alternative investigation process in the case of less severe allegations of abuse and neglect.³⁶ In 2012, CPS had 9,562 accepted referrals for children 0-17 living in King County, representing 2.4% of all children in the county. Between 2000 and 2012, accepted referrals to CPS countywide did not change.³⁷
- Between 1995 and 2000 CPS annually averaged 300 accepted referrals for suspected child abuse and neglect in Bellevue and more than 1,000 in East King County. Consistent with state and national trends, the total number of accepted referrals from Bellevue decreased to 165 accepted referrals in 2001. This continued through 2002, with a total of 158 referrals accepted. However, in 2004, the total accepted referrals in Bellevue jumped sharply to 254, a 61% increase; CPS staff suspected that the increase was due to

changes in their intake system, including a centralized after-hours intake line. In 2013, there were 445 accepted referrals (16.74 per 1,000 children) from Bellevue zip codes to the Eastside office, including child abuse and neglect and child sexual abuse compared to 447 cases (16.82 per 1,000 children) in 2012, a very slight decrease. These rates have been consistently below county and state averages. It is estimated that about 70% of the accepted referrals to the King East Office of the State of Washington Department of Social and Health Services, which serves Bellevue and the Eastside, will be referred to the FAR program as soon as it is operational.³⁸

Service Trends

Risk Factors

- Child maltreatment causes stress that can disrupt early brain development. Extreme stress can harm the development of the nervous and immune systems. As a result, children who are abused or neglected are at higher risk for health problems as adults, including alcoholism, depression, drug abuse, eating disorders, obesity, sexual promiscuity, smoking, suicide, and certain chronic diseases. It is estimated that the lifetime financial costs of just one year of confirmed cases of child maltreatment is approximately \$124 billion.³⁹
- A study of abused and neglected children found that they had lower grades, more suspensions and grade repetitions, and were more likely to drop out of school than their peers, independent of the effects of poverty.⁴⁰ Additionally, abused and neglected children are arrested 4.8 times more often for juvenile crimes and are twice as likely to be arrested as adults.⁴¹
- Families with returning service members who are experiencing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and combat-related stress may also be at increased risk for child abuse.⁴²

Best Practices

- Kindering Center provides parenting classes for families who are experiencing problems with childrearing, as well as services

for children with disabilities, medically fragile or abused children up to age three. The CHERISH program provides support for foster or kinship caregivers who are caring for children under age 3 involved in the child welfare system. Kindering Center also provides a Parent Child Home Program (PCHP) an evidence based home visiting program focused on supporting low-income immigrant and refugee families with children 2-4 years old. Positive results for PCHP in 2014 included increased communication, consistency and responsiveness between parents and their child in the program which is a protective factor in preventing child abuse and neglect.⁴³

- Healthy Start, using the evidence based Parents as Teachers model, provides home visiting and support groups to young families (under age 24) with children birth to three years old. High quality home visiting programs increase the odds that children from at risk families will enter kindergarten ready to learn, and prevent child abuse and neglect by increasing parenting skills, parent-child attachment, and knowledge of child development. Healthy Start participants have fewer referrals to CPS compared to other young parents with similar risk factors.⁴⁴
- KCSARC provides Parent Child Interaction Training (PCIT) in English and Spanish to parents whose child was sexually assaulted or referred by CPS. KCSARC developed a specialized Parenting Enhancement Program (PEP) to assist parents “parent” their sexually abused child. The program provides 10 modules, which can be tailored to fit the unique needs of the family. PEP is provided in English and Spanish.⁴⁵

Community Perceptions

- Few of the participants in community outreach conducted in 2015 (Community Conversations, key informant interviews, or surveys) mentioned child abuse and neglect as a community or household concern. However, in one key informant interview, it was noted that there were a higher number of CPS referrals from the Crossroads neighborhood, perhaps due to the higher number

of new immigrants and refugees living there who may not be aware of laws in the U.S. related to disciplining children. The Family Assessment Response, described above, is expected to address this discrepancy.⁴⁶

Implications for Action

- Poverty can be a contributing factor in child neglect. Parents and caregivers experiencing economic hardship have challenges in providing the basics for their children. The same can be true for child abuse, due to stress from lack of resources or war-related traumatic injuries. With the ongoing economic recovery, it is even more important to offer basic needs assistance to families with children, and provide outlets for stress and other issues to help prevent child abuse and neglect.
- Similar to children experiencing family violence, abused or neglected children also can bring those issues into the next generation when they act as they have been treated. These children need therapeutic care and opportunities to build trust and self-esteem to succeed in school and life.
- Programs that promote protective factors (like home visiting, which uses caring adults as role models and mentors to help nurture parenting skills), lessen the risk of child maltreatment.

Sexual Assault, Rape and Child Sexual Abuse

Sexual assault and rape occurs in all communities and among all socio-economic groups. Approximately 73% of sexual assaults and two-thirds of all rapes are committed by someone the victim knows not by strangers. With child sexual abuse (rape or assault), about 44% of victims are under age 18, and about 15% are under age 12.⁴⁷

Prevalence

- There were 300,170 incidents of sexual assaults and rapes in the U.S. in 2013; there were no statistically significant changes in violent crime, including sexual assault and rape, between 2012 and 2013.⁴⁸ Most rapes

and sexual assaults (68%) are not reported to police.⁴⁹

- Washington State has seen a steady decline in rapes over the past several years: in 2005, there were 2,772 reported rapes, declining to 1,432 in 2012. However there was a slight increase to 1,562 in 2014.⁵⁰ In the Office of Crime Victims study in Washington State, 85% of victims did not report their assault to law enforcement.⁵¹
- Over the past 12 years, Bellevue Police Department’s annual rape reports have generally remained between 20 and 30. However, there have been some spikes: there were 38 in 2004, 42 in 2006, and 33 in 2008. There was a 60% decrease in reported rapes from 2009 to 2010, dropping from 25 to 10. The number of reported rapes rose again in 2011 to 23, and has leveled off in 2013 and 2015 to 20 and 25 respectively.⁵²
- Over the past 5 years there has been some fluctuation in the number of accepted intakes in Bellevue zip codes for child sexual abuse with a high in 2014 of 52 and a low of 37 in 2012. As of July 2015 there have been 30 accepted intakes, putting it on track to meet or exceed last year’s total.⁵³

Adverse Childhood Experiences or ACES, become significant risk factors for serious dysfunction later in life (substance abuse, depression, suicide, parenting problems). Without intervention or help for the child, normal psychological development can be negatively affected.⁵⁴

- Additionally, adults who have been sexually assaulted or raped also suffer many negative health consequences. They are 3 times more likely to suffer from depression, 6 times more likely to suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, and 13 times more likely to abuse alcohol.⁵⁵

Needs for Services

- Many agencies are encountering increased service requests from refugees and immigrants. In 2015, KCSARC reports that they are seeing an increase in undocumented immigrants, most dealing with significant trauma and trauma reactions which impact their ability to access the services that are available. KCSARC, in partnership with Northwest Justice Project, provides advocacy, case management and civil legal assistance to low-income Latino sexual assault victims and their families, including helping with visas, child support and protection orders through the “Abriendo Puertas (Opening Doors) program.⁵⁶ KCSARC’s Dando Voz Program, where all services to victims and their families are provided in Spanish, is the only comprehensive sexual assault program for Spanish speaking victims and their families in the area. The program includes legal, medical and general advocacy, trauma focused therapy and specialized psycho educational programming to help parents support their sexually abused child.⁵⁷

Year	Accepted Intakes of Child Sexual Abuse	% of Bellevue intakes with allegations of sexual abuse
2010	44	25%
2011	53	21%
2012	37	22%
2013	42	18%
2014	52	16%

Figure 4

Source: Washington State Department of Social and Health Services Children’s Administration 2015

Service Trends

Long-term effects

- Adults abused as children who receive no treatment experience psychological distress many years after the abuse. These traumatic childhood experiences, also called

- Harborview Children’s Response Center (CRC), which is a program of Services for Sexual Assault and Traumatic Stress (HCSATS), had provided advocacy and counseling for child and youth victims of sexual assault as well as community-based

prevention initiatives since 1985. They also provided services to children impacted by other forms of trauma and victimization (e.g. physical abuse, homicide domestic violence, internet crime). In late September 2013, CRC was integrated in HCSATS and KCSARC for an expanded partnership in East King County. As a result of this change, HCSATS began serving adults for the first time on the Eastside. In 2014, the program reported serving 15 unduplicated adult Bellevue residents with ongoing counseling services. For adults and children combined, the program served 56 Bellevue residents, a number expected to increase as more adults seek services on the Eastside.⁵⁸

- People receiving services at KCSARC report the major barriers to accessing services in the community are transportation, language, and cost of services.⁵⁹
- KCSARC reports in addition to therapy needs, they are still seeing legal cases take longer to go through the criminal justice system, upwards to two years; they are working with the King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office to address this issue.⁶⁰
- Sexual assault can lead to significant mental health problems, and downstream consequences - such as substance abuse or involvement in the juvenile justice or criminal justice system - are more costly to address. In 2008, funding from the Mental Illness and Drug Dependency sales tax in King County provided resources for community sexual assault programs to hire staff and fill this gap. In East King County, KCSARC and CRC each added counselors to increase on-site access for survivors. Using "best practice" interventions for children and adults, this coordinated effort is seen as a much needed systems-change approach.⁶¹
- Asian Counseling and Referral Service staff facilitates a Teen Peer Advocate Program that offers a peer-to-peer support group of young women in order to discuss healthy relationships and the prevention of dating violence.⁶²

Emerging Issues

Women in the Military

- Military Sexual Trauma (MST), sexual as-

sault and harassment that occurs in military settings, is identified more frequently by the increasing number of women now serving in the military. Studies indicate that around 23% to 33% of female veterans report experiencing MST. 2-3% of male veterans are estimated to have experienced MST. Research shows that rates of MST are higher during war than peacetime. (Note: For more information about this issue, see the Veterans section in this report.)⁶³

Internet Safety

- Internet-based services are becoming increasingly important. KCSARC's website addresses how to help friends, how to approach post-traumatic stress, and other victim issues. KCSARC tracks website visits, unduplicated visitors, page views, and average site visit times which provides a more useful snap shot of web site usage. They also offer a training for young adults and adults who are interested in learning about "Digital Safety" in regard to internet-facilitated exploitation and other issues related to "cybersafety."⁶⁴
- KCSARC's 24 hour Resource line is the only 24 hour resource in King County for victims of sexual assault, their families and others needing information, referrals and support. From 2012 to 2014 the number of calls to the line increased by 51%, an increase attributed to the overall increase in awareness of sexual assault and the availability of services. The line is staffed by professional counselors and serves as an after-hours line for Harborview Center for Sexual Assault and Traumatic Stress.⁶⁵

"My program has more clients applying for services each month. Many more domestic violence survivors applying and clients with language barriers."

Provider Survey, King County Bar Association

Community Awareness

- KCSARC's education department gives priority to prevention programming, where the community can be engaged in addressing the problem of violence. Vehicles for

prevention programming include dealing with bullying and harassment, teen peer education and sex offenders in faith communities. Research shows that one-time presentations are ineffective at developing skills or reducing risk, so emphasis is on working with schools or other institutions that will sustain the work over time. HC-SATS also provides an educational forum for professionals on the eastside on a bi-monthly basis. Topics are specific to sexual assault, trauma and child abuse and focus on prevention and treatment.⁶⁶

Human Trafficking

- Human Trafficking is defined as the inducement of a personal sexual act, labor or service through force, fraud or coercion. To illustrate how vastly under-reported this crime is, in 2014, only 6 cases were reported by law enforcement agencies in the entire state.⁶⁷ Approximately 600,000 to 800,000 victims annually are trafficked across international borders and include women, men and children. Some victims are native born U.S. citizens, as well. Victims are coerced to prostitute or to work without pay and often subjected to physical and psychological dangers, such as severe beatings, rape, drug addiction and other forms of violence.⁶⁸ (Note: For more information about human trafficking, see the School-Aged Children and Youth and Refugees & Immigrant sections of this report).

Community Perceptions

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

were identified as the first points of contact for these issues.⁶⁹

Implications for Action

- Survivors of sexual abuse often have multiple needs including treatment for substance abuse, parental support and childcare, legal aid, counseling and transitional and permanent housing. These services should not be created in a “silo” but rather developed so that they can assist survivors of domestic violence and child abuse seamlessly.
- Sexual assault continues to be a public safety issue; in order for the community of offenders to hold accountable, services must exist for those victimized.
- It is critical to support community education about sexual assault, rape and child sexual abuse, as decreased staff levels at many agencies may complicate finding and getting help. This education can also be co-presented with topics related to other forms of family violence.
- Consent workshops for youth are rising in popularity among sexual assault prevention experts. Informing youth as to what sexual consent is, how to develop boundaries, and the legal definitions of assault can help them to make more informed choices as young adults
- Several ongoing areas of concern in this service area that should still be monitored include Internet safety, on-line victimization of vulnerable youth, the potential needs of partners of returning veterans, or of women who are veterans, and exploited children and adults who are used for sex trafficking.
- There is a strong connection between early, untreated child sexual abuse and homelessness and trafficking. Upwards of 40% of youth who are homeless experience sexual assault prior to becoming homeless. It is important that conversations about homelessness and trafficking include the issue of sexual assault.

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