

MEMORANDUM



Bellevue Parks &
Community Services

DATE: November 04, 2024

TO: Human Services Commission Members

FROM: Saada Hilts, Human Services Planner
Parks & Community Services

SUBJECT: Panel Conversation: Service trends and challenges in the areas of domestic violence and survivor support

Background

Washington State law defines domestic violence as any criminal act committed by a "family or household member" against another. According to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 41.4% of women and 31.7% of men in Washington have experienced intimate partner physical violence, rape, and/or stalking. Furthermore, the National Domestic Violence Hotline indicates that intimate partner violence and sexual abuse may be even more prevalent among transgender and non-binary survivors than among their LGBTQ+ peers. In 2023, The Hotline reported approximately 22.5% of trans women, 22.4% of non-binary folk, and 19.2% of trans men experiencing sexual abuse.

Domestic violence can affect anyone, regardless of race, age, sexual orientation, religion, sex, or gender identity. It can occur in both opposite-sex and same-sex relationships and take many forms, including physical, emotional, sexual, financial, and psychological abuse.

Efforts are being made to address the pressing need for domestic violence support in Bellevue. Human Services staff have assembled a panel that includes organizations offering assistance to survivors. These services encompass support programs, emergency housing, and counseling for individuals and communities impacted by domestic violence.

Representatives from the following agencies will be joining the panel:

- Norma Guzman: Domestic Violence and Transitional Housing Program Manager at Consejo Counseling and Referral Service
- Estella C. Williamson Director at Harborview Abuse & Trauma Center
- Lalita Uppala: Executive Director at Indian American Community Services
- Janeira Bencosme-Gil : Co-Executive Director of Organizational Operations at LifeWire

Consejo Counseling and Referral Service provides advocacy, crisis intervention services, and safety planning in Spanish in English for clients experiencing or exiting domestic violence.

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Harborview Abuse & Trauma Center offers tailored interventions for children, families, and adults affected by trauma, crime, and child maltreatment.

Indian American Community Services (IACS) provides real-time and culturally sensitive domestic violence services by multilingual attorneys from the South Asian community.

LifeWire provides a confidential Emergency and Transitional Shelter for survivors of domestic violence.

Panel members will be asked round-robin style to answer the following questions:

1. Please introduce yourself and provide a brief overview of your agency and the services you provide to attend to domestic violence supportive needs.
2. What are some common misconceptions or misunderstandings about domestic violence?
3. What are the most significant service needs and barriers related to domestic violence impacting those seeking and providing services?
4. What challenges is your agency experiencing that the Commission should be aware of?

Commissioners will be invited to ask questions after the panel has completed answering all questions.