

HELP & SHELTER

PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS OF VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND CHILD ABUSE PROJECT (BY AGREEMENT WITH THE EUROPEAN UNION: EUROPEAID/130-666/L/ACT/GY, EUROPEAN INSTRUMENT FOR DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS)

M&E REPORT- OCTOBER 2011

OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of the project is to improve the lives of women, children and men who are experiencing domestic and sexual violence and child abuse.

The specific objectives are the provision of free services to victims/survivors of domestic and sexual violence and child abuse survivors to assist them to develop the necessary coping skills and build their confidence and self esteem, to support them through the judicial process, and to advise and assist them in accessing support services, so that they can rebuild their lives free from violence and the threat of violence.

ACTIVITIES

1. PROVISION OF FREE FACE-TO-FACE AND HOTLINE COUNSELLING TO 2,175 VICTIMS/SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND CHILD ABUSE

Expected Results/Outcomes

- Victims/survivors able to understand the nature and dynamics of the violence
- Victims/survivors develop necessary coping skills, self confidence/self esteem and access support services
- Family members including children affected will benefit directly and indirectly from counselling as the violence is reduced
- Counselling for family members will help to foster positive changes in their own lives while at the same time encouraging support and assistance to those relatives who have experienced domestic/sexual violence/child abuse

Achieved Results/Outcomes

Face-to-Face Counselling

Quantitative Data

- **New Adult Clients**
 - A total of 31 new adults clients, 26 females and 5 males received face to face counselling
 - Spousal abuse was identified as the type of abuse experienced by all 26 of the female clients, with alcohol related abuse being the most predominant affecting 10/38%, followed by physical abuse at 8/31%, psychological abuse at 4/15%. non-physical at 3/11% and sexual abuse (rape) experienced by 1/3%.

- Spousal abuse was also identified as the type of abuse experienced by all 5 of the male clients, with alcohol related abuse affecting 2/40%, physical abuse affecting 1/20%, non-physical abuse affecting 1/20% and psychological abuse affecting 1/20%.
 - 5 of the female clients were between the ages of 19-25, 12 were between the ages of 26-40 and 9 were between the ages of 41-60. For males 1 was between the ages of 19-25 and 4 were between the ages of 26-40.
 - A total of 11/42% of female clients and 3/60% of male clients described themselves as Black, a similar 9/34% of female clients and 1/20% of males identified themselves as East Indian. A further 6/23% of female clients and 1/20% of male clients identified themselves as Mixed.
 - In terms of employment status 8/22% of female clients described themselves as full time employed and 6/16% as self employed. Unemployment affected 4/15% of female clients and a further 6/23% of female clients identified themselves as home makers.
 - For male clients 3/60% described themselves as full time employed and 2/40% were involved in contract work
- **Returning Adults Clients**
 - A total of 32 returning adult clients, 30 females and 2 males received follow up face to face counselling
 - **New Child Clients**
 - Clarification needed if statistics on child clients are in fact court support child clients
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Qualitative Data

- A couple came in for counseling who had been referred by a former couple of H&S. The referred couple have since attended 1 follow-up session and indicated that they have observed changes in each other including improved communication among each other and the male partner is now assisting in preparing the children for schools in the mornings.
- 3 former clients returned to H&S Crisis Centre and were referred to H&S Ixora Shelter. 2 of them are presently residing there. One of them has a pending matter at Court for a DVA P.O.
- Another client who was also referred to The Shelter visited the Legal Aid Clinic but opted not to pursue legal action. This client is afraid to face her perpetrator in Court and refuses to follow up with the police even though she reported the abuse and was sent to get a medical report for her injuries. This client is also afraid after learning from her daughter that the perpetrator has threatened to report that he was assaulted with a bat by the client. The perpetrator subsequently came to H&S Crisis Centre saying he wanted to tell his side of the story. The counsellor advised him to go to the MLHS&SS Probation & Welfare Services or the Men's Affairs Bureau (MAB) and to report the alleged beating that he claimed his female partner had inflicted on him to the Police. The counsellor was subsequently informed that the perpetrator did go to MAB who contacted H&S about the matter. Client was informed of the serious nature of DV coupled with her husband's alcoholism and the need for her being in a safer environment hence her decision to access the shelter
- Counsellor also referred 10 other clients to the Legal Aid Clinic, 2 of these client opted to get legal advice and services from a private lawyers, other clients applied for divorce and DVA P.Os
- One male client whose partner left him with their infant son is attending counselling sessions on parenting and receiving information on children's rights
- Two female clients have kept their appointments for follow up counselling sessions

- Another female client received a letter of approval from the Ministry of Housing to obtain a piece of land so she can build a home for her self and children away from the abusive home environment they were living in
- A female client reported that her husband and father of her adult son were abusing her and her son. They were advised to report the matter to the police and were given information about DVA, P.O. & O.O. The client's son was reluctant to report the matter to the police as his father is already on a bond and with a new charge he was fearful that his father would be sent to jail. His mother said that she will apply for the DVA Orders with assistance from a cousin who is a lawyer

Hotline Counselling

Quantitative Data

- **Adult Clients**
 - A total of 24 hotline calls were received this month through H&S 24 hr hot line service
(The usual demographic data on hotline callers is not available at this time due to unforeseen circumstances)
- **Child Clients**
 - No hotline calls were received from children for this month

Qualitative Data

- One client wanted to return to working outside of the home, but her live-in partner would stop her whenever she gets a job. As requested a letter was sent to him to come into H&S to speak with a counselor. Up to this point he has not come in. It was hoped that through counselling the partner would be brought to the point of recognizing the need for additional financial support in the home, and understanding his partner's feelings

2. DELIVERY OF FREE COURT SUPPORT SERVICES (COUNSELLING, PREPARING CLIENT FOR COURT PROCEDURES, ATTENDING COURT SESSIONS) TO 150 SURVIVORS/VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND CHILD ABUSE

Expected Results/Outcomes

- Reduction in psychological trauma associated with domestic and sexual violence and child abuse suffered by victims/survivors and their families during the judicial process as a result of counselling
- In court support and information provided about relevant legislation and services available for prevention of domestic and sexual violence and child abuse and protection of and legal redress for victims/survivors.

Achieved Results/Outcomes

Court Support Counselling

Quantitative Data

- **New Adult Clients**
 - A total of 3 new female adult clients were given court support service
 - The 3 female clients were in Court for rapes committed on them with additional charges of assault filed on behalf of one of these clients.

- Two female clients were between the age of 26-40 and 1 client was between the ages of 41-60
 - All Court cases were held in Region 4 -2 of the cases were heard in Georgetown Magistrate Court #6 and 1 case was heard at Providence Magistrate Courts
 - The accused were husbands (2) and common law husband (1)
 - Outcomes – 2 of the cases are continuing
 - Outcomes – 1 case was dismissed and the offender fined \$10,000
- **New Child Clients**
 - No new child clients were seen for this month
- **Returning Adults Clients**
 - A total of 4 returning female clients received court support assistance through court attendances and counselling
 - Two (2) clients were between the ages of 26-40; 2 were between the ages of 41-60
 - One client was pursuing a Protection Orders under the DVA; 1 client was a survivor of an attempted murder charge-Assault Causing Bodily Harm; 1 client was a rape survivor and 1 client was pursuing a Division of Property (DOP) matter
 - All 4 of the cases were heard in Region 4 : the Georgetown Magistrates Courts 5 & 6 (2) ; Sparendaaam Magistrate Court (1) and High Court, Region 4 (1)
 - In all the cases the perpetrators were husbands (1), ex-partners of client (1) villagers (3)
 - Outcomes -2 of these cases are continuing;
 - Outcomes- I client's rape case against 3 villagers was dismissed for want of prosecution, 1 clients case for maintenance and a PO under the DVA was granted and made final
 - **Returning Child Clients**
 - A total of 8 returning child clients, 7 females and 1 male received court support assistance through court attendances and counselling
 - Clients were survivors of the offences of carnal knowledge (3), incest (2), rape (2), buggery (1)
 - Perpetrators were fathers (1), stepfathers (2), ex-partners(1), neighbours (1), villagers (2), strangers (2), Pandit (1)
 - Clients ranged from 4- 18 yrs with 1/12.5 % under 6 yrs, 2/25% between the ages of 9-11 and 4/ 50% between the ages of 12-18, I child's age was not stated
 - All Court cases were held in the Region 4 – Sparendaaam, Providence and G/town Magistrate Court#1
 - All of the 8 Court support cases are continuing with one sent to the High Court for trial and offender remanded

Qualitative Data

- Client was guided that she can continue to farm on land space stipulated in her protection order under DVA, even though her husband has attempted to stop her and children from entering the farmlands. This was an area which the PO did not cover
- Client was assisted in getting clarification/information from the Court Registry in regards to her completed court case of threatening language and child maintenance. Client was being given the “run -around” by the Court Registry officers.
- Based on discussions during counseling a client has been able to obtain a bed frame from H&S after she decided to find a place to stay instead of returning back to her abuser. She has started working and is now able to send her children to school because she successfully applied for and received a transfer to a school in closer proximity to her home.

- Counselling and discussions on health and taking care of self has helped a client to improve her eating habits, instead of allowing the stress to consume her so that she was foregoing her diet and becoming ill. Client reported that she is feeling much better since she started following the suggestions that were discussed re: staying healthy in order to see her Court matter through to its conclusion
- On one occasion after Court, a client was verbally abused by her perpetrator a few yards away from the police station. The Counselor was able to convince the Client to return to the station with the aim of making a report. When the offender saw client and counsellor turn to go back to the station he ran off. The counselor was then able to place the client in a taxi to take her to where she was staying, as the client as she decided against going to the station to make the report. The presence of the H&S court support counsellor was opportune as the client became very nervous and afraid during the man's shouting even though he was across the road from her.

3. PROVISION OF FREE ADVOCACY AND ADVISORY COUNSELLING AND REFERRAL SERVICES TO 450 VICTIMS/SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND CHILD ABUSE

Expected Results/Outcomes

Victims/survivors of domestic and sexual violence and child abuse

- informed of the legal, health, educational, housing, employment, financial and other services available to them, and
- supported in making informed choices through accessing a multi-agency network of services

Achieved Results/Outcomes

Advocacy & Advisory Counselling & Referral Services

Quantitative Data

- **New Adult Clients**
 - A total of 10 new adult female clients were given advisory counselling and referral services for this month
 - One (1) client was between the ages of 19-25, 2 were between the ages of 26-40 and 7 were aged 41-60
 - 10 of the clients were referred and or accompanied to the GLAC for legal services, 1 was referred to a private lawyer, 1 was referred or accompanied to local Police Stations, 1 client was referred to CPA, 1 was also referred for temporary housing/ shelter services and 2 clients were referred for other services
 - Three (3) of the clients receiving advisory and referral services were of Mixed ethnicity, 3 were East Indian, 3 were Black and 1 was Amerindian
 - Seven (7) were legally married, 2 were in common law relationships and 1 was separated.
 - Nine (9) out of the 10 clients had between 1-7 children, 1 client had no children
 - Clients resided in Region 4 (7), Region 3 (2), Region 2 (1)
- **New Child Clients**
 - A total of 1 new female child client was given advisory and counselling and referral services for this month

- This client was accompanied by the counsellor advocate to the Police Station
 - The client was 17 years old of Mixed ethnicity and in a common law relationship
 - Client had no children and lived in Region 4
- **Returning Adult Clients**
 - A total of 2 new female adult clients was given advisory and counselling and referral services for this month
 - Both clients were between the ages of 41-60
 - One client was referred to GLAC for legal services and or advice and the other client was accompanied to the Police Station and referred to Red Thread
 - One client was of Black ethnicity and the other was Mixed
 - Both 2 clients were married
 - Both 2 clients had between 2-4 children
 - Both 2 clients lived in Region 4

Quantitative Data

- **Returning Child Clients**
 - A total of 1 returning child client was given advisory and counselling and referral services for this month
 - The client was 17 years old
 - Client was referred to GLAC for legal advice and or representation, follow up with Police on behalf of client was done, matter referred to TIP Unit at MLHSS
 - Client was of East Indian ethnicity
 - Client was single
 - Client had no children
 - Client is living in Region 4

Qualitative Data

- In the ongoing case involving a 17 year old female client, the counsellor/advocate and client were advised that that it would be better to not go ahead with a DVA PO application since client may not qualify due to the circumstances surrounding her living arrangements with perpetrator. Statement was taken from the client and this with a letter was sent to Commissioner of Police, relevant ministries and area police stations involved in this matter in the hopes of preventing any future harassment of the client by her perpetrators and or police. The client was also informed of her right to choose where she wanted to live and informed that no one could force her to go or live where she did not want to. The request by client to move in with her grandmother before or by Christmas 2011 was followed up and contact made with the grandmother who indicated her keen interest in to having her granddaughter home with her and of her acquiring skills to better herself. The counsellor/advocate also spoke to a police officer attached to the area police station concerning client's case and incidences of the police harassment. A request was also made to the police officer for uplifting client's ID card which remains in the possession of her abusers. The counsellor/advocate also contacted TIP Unit about the matter and arranged an interview with TIP Unit and client. A promise was made by the TIP Unit to investigate the matter and work with H&S to find the client a place to live and acquire a Restraining Order against her exploiters. However to date no action was taken and no word received from anyone at the TIP Unit.
- A client is repeatedly abused by her husband. The last incident involved her husband beating her. She subsequently made a report to the police station and left the home. The client is currently residing in a safe place. The counsellor advocate accompanied the client to GLAC for a protection order and legal advice. However the client expressed her reluctance to apply for a DVA PO at that time. Client subsequently spoke to a lawyer and decided to put a hold

her application for DVA/PO until she knows for sure whether or not arrangements have been finalised for her to leave country. The counsellor/advocate also called the area police station near to where client resided and was told that the client's husband has reported that he had been assaulted by client and as such she needed to come into the police station. After consulting it was decided that the alleged report of assault by husband was just a ploy to get access to the client.

- The client was referred to counsellor advocate for legal advice and she was accompanied to GLAC. Unfortunately client could not be seen at that time so the counsellor/advocate arranged for her to see a private lawyer for the legal advice she needed. Client was concerned if a divorce could be granted to her husband without her consent as wife she was informed that this was not possible. The counsellor/advocate also encouraged the client to apply for maintenance for her and her children & explained the application procedure. Client was having difficulties in caring for her children with the money her husband was giving her per week.
- Client came into for counselling and was referred to GLAC for a divorce. The counsellor/advocate called GLAC and fixed an appointment for client to see a lawyer.
- In this ongoing case client was informed by the GLAC lawyer that they will begin to work on her petition for divorce. The lawyer also advised the client that it may take up to three months for the divorce to be finalized. The client informed the counsellor/advocate that she wants the divorce to go through smoothly and quickly so that she can begin to move on with her life.
- The client was initially referred to GLAC in August 2011 for a protection order against her husband. However, client did not keep her GLAC appointment. Client subsequently came into H&S and informed the counsellor & the counsellor/advocate that she still plans to the visit GLAC. Counsellor advocate accompanied the client to GLAC on her next appointment and client was informed that her case will be transferred from the GLAC to the LAC in Anna Regina. Attempts by counsellor advocate to follow up with this matter was unsuccessful and client has not returned to H&S since her previous visit.
- Client wanted to apply for maintenance, custody of her youngest child and division of property. The counsellor/advocate accompanied client to GLAC where she was advised on what she needs to gather to start the applications, including a valuation for the division of property. The counsellor/advocate also visited Deeds Registry on behalf of client. Client was advised to stay on the property and informed of her right as the mother of the children to stay there and to a share in the property in which she had invested. Maintenance proceedings have already been started by the client herself. The client was also given details of what to expect in the custody proceedings including fees, proving the father is not capable of caring for the child, taking her income into consideration, etc. The lawyer advised the client to give the custody matter some more thought & when she is sure she wants to go through with it, she can return to GLAC for further legal assistance.
- This is an ongoing case in which the client has been repeatedly threatened and harassed by the man she has accused of raping her, and also harassed by his relatives. The client is currently waiting on the perpetrator to be arrested for the rape and has complained that the area police station have been uncooperative. Despite this, the client is remaining hopeful and keeping herself busy in her community and church. Client was accompanied by the counsellor/advocate to the area police station where she was informed that accused will be arrested and brought to Georgetown to face the allegations made against him. The police officer informed the client of the process that is usually taken in allegations of rape: once the perpetrator is brought in, he will have to answer to the allegations, and the file will be sent to the DPP. Once charges are recommended, the client was assured that the attacker will be placed in jail for the duration of the trial. However perpetrator is yet to be arrested. The counsellor/advocate arranged for client to attend meetings of the Rape Survivor Support Group at Red Thread. Client however was unable to attend the meeting.
- This client reported that she was raped during a reunion with an old friend. The client accompanied by the counsellor/advocate went to the area police station to report the rape.

However, the officers at CID refused to take the client's statement. Their reason being, that they were holding a meeting shortly, & thus did not have the time to take her statement. She was asked to return another day but the client informed them that this was difficult due to her work situation. The client had visited the station previously to report the rape but a statement was not taken and she was asked to return. The counsellor/advocate made attempts to contact and follow-up with the client, but was unsuccessful.

- Client came to H&S seeking legal assistance in contesting the amount of money her partner is offering for the maintenance of their children. The magistrate had recommended that the client to hire a lawyer to continue the matter. The client was referred to GLAC and the counsellor/advocate accompanied her. The client was able to get legal advice and a lawyer to represent her on her next court appearance. However after informing counsellor advocate that she is feeling a lot more hopeful and happy about coming to H&S expressed dissatisfaction with the GLAC lawyer that was assigned to her case after her court appearance.
- Client wants to end an abusive relationship of 15 years. She wants her partner to leave the home and proceed with dividing the property. Counsellor advocate accompanied client to GLAC for legal advice about pursuing DVA/PO/OO and division of property. The client was given advice but was told that she could not qualify for free legal aid because of her monthly income. The client therefore obtained the services of a private lawyer. After a verbal altercation with her spouse, client reported the matter to the police and found out that her spouse had made a similar report against her. They were both charged and had to appear in court. Client was referred to H&S for court support and found not guilty, while her partner was found guilty of the Charge. Furthermore, she is seeking to acquire the DVA PO&OO against her partner.
- Client was referred to GLAC for advice on divorce. The client was told she needs to make a deposit of \$5000 to start the divorce petition. The client is waiting until she can make this payment.
- Client reported being subjected to physical, psychological, financial and sexual abuse by her partner. The client was referred to GLAC to start an application for a protection order and to get legal advice on dividing household items between herself and her partner. After meeting with a lawyer, the client decided to give her partner another chance and continues to live in the home.
- The client has been in an abusive relationship with her partner of over one year. She was put out of his home and had sought the help of a sister who was unable to accommodate client and two of her children. The client was able to find a job as a security guard and with the assistance from a friend has found somewhere for herself and her two daughters to live. Client is also receiving some assistance from Food for the Poor for herself and daughters. A referral was made to GLAC for a maintenance matter and the client was advised to visit the nearest Magistrate's Court herself and make the application herself, with the understanding that if the application was contested by the children's' father and the Magistrate orders that she gets a lawyer then GLAC will assist her. The client has not yet applied for the maintenance. Client was also referred to CPA for assistance in placement for her 2 children, but as she was able to get her children transferred to a nearby school and receive help from a friend she has opted to keep them with her.

4. ADVOCACY FOR ADVANCES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE POLICY

Expected Results/Outcomes

Through its representation on the Domestic Violence Oversight Committee, H&S will advocate, support and participate in overseeing and implementation of all aspects of the National Domestic Violence Policy. including:

- Assessment of the Domestic Violence Act with a view to necessary amendments
- Development of inter-agency domestic violence protocols for frontline workers
- Training for health workers including the development of a standard curriculum on domestic violence intervention
- Collaboration with key decision makers in building the capacity of rural and hinterland communities to respond to domestic violence
- Encouragement and monitoring of a public awareness campaign targeting students and other members of the public on domestic violence prevention and gender and gender discrimination

Achieved Results/Outcomes

Advocacy for Advances in the Implementation of the National Domestic Violence Policy

- No meetings of the Domestic Violence Oversight Committee were held in the month of October
- No word or notice was received from the Minister of Human Services concerning the convening of the DVOC

5. COUNSELLING SUPERVISION

- The Supervisor met with face-to-face and hotline counsellors and the counsellor/advocate during the month of October.
- Through face-to-face, hotline and court support counselling, a total of 111 clients were seen, including males, females and children.
- A total of 20 case files were examined by counselling supervisor in the presence of counselors and relevant issues were discussed before supervisor signed those files as seen. Generally, counsellors were consistent in completion of case records

Counsellors' Intervention

- The counsellor/advocate facilitated the process of acquiring protection orders through the Guyana Legal Aid Clinic and further referrals for educational and employment opportunities.
- The counsellor/advocate reported experiencing some frustrating moments in her efforts to broker legal assistance for clients. These were somewhat alleviated with the assistance of secretary of Help & Shelter.
- Two counsellors share their disappointments with clients' decisions and stated that they knew that it was the client's right to self determination but they feared that the decisions would have undesirable consequences. One was a case of the withdrawal of a Protection Order against the respondent. The other was the intention of an aunt to have a case of indecent assault against her brother in law involving her six (6) year old niece, to be dropped.

Training/Learning Needs

- The counselling supervisor joined H&S Coordinator on the training programme, GUIDING THE RECOVERY OF WOMEN, sponsored by Catholic Relief Services in collaboration with the U.S. Department of State. The programme contents included modules on "Relapse Prevention Treatment for women" and "Continuing Care Needs of Women in Recovery".

- The training lasted ten days and consisted of a number of practical exercises and activities which would aid in the care and treatment of women recovering from drug and alcohol abuse.
- This information will be shared with counselors over a period of time and it is possible that materials can be copied and distributed for spare time reading.

Documentation/Referrals

- There was a suggestion that clarification was needed on decisions concerning the process for internal referrals between Counselors and Counselor Advocate. This matter is to be discussed at the monthly Counselors Meeting.

Personnel Issues

- It was suggested that counsellors could engage in some fun activities during the afternoon hours on one Friday per month as a form of relaxation. It is considered that this is a reasonable and thoughtful suggestion which could be implemented.

6. CHALLENGES

- Apprehension about crossing of the Demerara River during high tide when the harbor bridge is closed was a challenge that had to be faced on a couple of occasions by one of the court support counsellors. To address this problem she has begun to ensure that she reads during the journey and avoid looking at the water or the other boats traversing the river
- Clients' non-attendance for follow-up sessions/appointments. One counsellor has begun to address this by contacting clients via phone for possible rescheduling of appointments. This has become possible since the influx of clients to the agency has been reduced
- Buzzing on extension phone lines in counsellors offices continues when calls are taken directly from caller. When calls are transferred from the central office to counsellor's room there seems to be no buzzing

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Buzzing on phones in counsellors' offices still to be worked a though there has been some improvement due to action already taken.