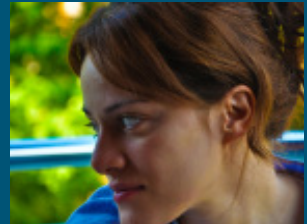


GUIDE TO GIVING

Empowering Victims of Domestic Violence



HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Are you interested in helping to empower the victims of domestic violence? This guide will help you assess the effectiveness of the organizations you are considering supporting. It is based on Social Impact Research's (SIR) methodology that identifies a recommended approach through which an organization's performance can be measured. For more information, read SIR's social issue and state reports on empowering victims of domestic violence.

An effective organization should incorporate all four components of the recommended approach – or have partnerships with organizations to cover the full range of services represented by these components. In addition, effective organizations should collect data to measure the outcomes and impact of their programs.

See our social issue report for more information on how to effectively empower victims of domestic violence.

STEP 1 Understanding the Recommended Approach to Empower Victims of Domestic Violence

SIR recommends that donors interested in assisting victims of domestic violence support organizations using the empowerment approach, which recognizes individual needs by providing knowledge, information, and support services to victims. Services for victims cover four areas, each outlined below.

DEFINITION

Domestic violence, or intimate partner violence, is a willful single occurrence or pattern of abusive behavior employing coercion, threat, intimidation, isolation, power or fear that results in physical, psychological or emotional trauma. This report focuses on abuse perpetrated by males against their female partners.

COMPONENTS OF THE RECOMMENDED APPROACH

SIR found that effective programs incorporate the following four components. A program can offer one or more of these, either singularly or in partnerships, as long as victims can access all four at all times.

- **Community Awareness and Advocacy** to inform women about available resources that facilitate and encourage a community level response.
- **Crisis and Pre-Crisis Services** to remove women from abusive environments as quickly as possible.
- **Medium and Long-Term Services** to help victims cope with emotional, psychological and physical trauma, restore self-esteem, and build independence.
- **Children's Services** to enable mothers to seek help for themselves and their children, and address trauma experienced by children exposed to domestic violence.

STEP 2 Evaluate the Program's Effectiveness through the Lens of the Recommended Approach

A. Evaluate the effectiveness of community awareness and advocacy

These programs educate and inform communities about domestic violence.

EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION

- ✓ Community is engaged in reducing domestic violence, increasing public interest in those efforts, and informing victims of available resources
- ✓ Community members are involved in the development and implementation of awareness raising initiatives (campaigns, public presentations, networking)
- ✓ Civic and religious organizations as well as city departments are engaged in disseminating information

INEFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION

- ✗ Public awareness campaigns are limited in scope and provide little information on available resources
- ✗ Community members participate in, but do not develop or implement awareness raising initiatives
- ✗ Civic and religious organizations as well as city departments are not involved in disseminating information



Example of EXCEPTIONAL IMPLEMENTATION

Development of innovative, cross-sectoral initiatives that leverage and infuse expertise from the government, private, and nonprofit sectors to help victims of domestic violence (e.g. workforce training provided by leaders in the private sector that is funded by the government and is administered by a nonprofit organization)

B. Evaluate the effectiveness of crisis and pre-crisis services

These services fulfill a victim's immediate needs by offering information, referring them to local services, and providing advice on how to minimize risk.



Examples of EXCEPTIONAL IMPLEMENTATION

Shelters are open to transgender victims

Shelters have strong partnerships with supportive organizations (e.g. medical clinics, employment agencies) in whose programs victims can participate

EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION

- ✓ 24/7 toll-free hotlines are available with immediate response
- ✓ Operators are bilingual or multilingual in high immigrant communities and are sensitive to cultural and social differences
- ✓ Shelters are dispersed throughout the community and are easy to reach
- ✓ Shelters are open to single women and women with children, without regard to criminal background

INEFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION

- ✗ Calls to hotlines are directed to a voice message system and response is delayed during off-peak hours
- ✗ Operators only speak English and have a standardized protocol that does not address cultural or social differences
- ✗ Shelters are centralized and often difficult to reach
- ✗ Shelters are only open to women with young children and exclude women with a criminal background

C. Evaluate the effectiveness of medium and long-term services

These services help victims cope with and recover from physical, psychological, and emotional trauma and empower them with safety planning, skills development, and housing.



Examples of EXCEPTIONAL IMPLEMENTATION

Permanent housing information is provided to victims

Skills training courses, such as English language classes, are offered

Education and employment resources, such as computer training, are available

EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION

- ✓ Counseling addresses emotional issues as well as daily issues such as problem-solving and planning; offers personal and group therapy
- ✓ Legal advocacy offers information on safety planning, available legal resources, and rights of victims to help them make well-informed decisions
- ✓ Financial training and workforce development is offered to enable women to become independent

INEFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION

- ✗ Counseling addresses emotional issues, but not daily issues; does not offer both personal and group therapy
- ✗ Legal advocacy provides information on safety planning and rights that lead victims to take pre-determined actions, such as obtaining a restraining order
- ✗ Programs to increase independence, such as financial training and workforce development, are not offered

D. Evaluate the effectiveness of children's services

These services enable women with children to seek help knowing that the needs of their children will also be met.



Example of EXCEPTIONAL IMPLEMENTATION

Parenting classes or peer mentoring for parents is available

EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION

- ✓ Specialized therapy for children (e.g. therapy or parent-child psychotherapy)
- ✓ Extracurricular activities such as after-school tutoring, daycare, and summer programs are offered to encourage youth development

INEFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION

- ✗ Specialized therapy for children is not offered
- ✗ Extracurricular activities and literacy development for children are not offered

Collecting outcome data enables organizations to know whether or not their programs are effectively improving the lives of their participants over the long term. High-performing organizations collect and analyze a wide variety of data to measure the effectiveness of their programs. Organizations use this data to build upon their successes and improve upon their weaknesses.

**Sullivan, Cris M., "Evaluating domestic violence support service programs: Waste of time, necessary evil or opportunity for growth?" Aggression and Violent Behavior, (2011) 16:354-360.*

E. Evaluate outcomes and impact

Key indicators of domestic violence nonprofits are program-specific and should be applied to only the populations seeking specific services. Indicators should include outcomes that the victims control. Some examples are listed below. For domestic violence, outcomes cannot be tracked over the long-term since continued contact with victims can enable their perpetrator to locate them more easily.

Outcome Measured	Expected Outcome Rate
Effectiveness of legal advocacy*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Of victims working with legal advocates, 85% will understand their rights as crime victims ✓ Of victims going through court, 85% will understand their role in the process
Effectiveness of support groups*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Of victims attending three or more support groups, 90% will report feeling less isolated

STEP 3 Evaluate the Organization's Health and Stability

Evaluating an organization's health and stability will provide insight into its structure, capacity, and ability to carry out its mission. It is important to consider at least two factors:

- A. Financial Sustainability**, which describes an organization's ability to conduct its work in a fiscally responsible manner
- B. Management and Governance**, which describes the leadership and oversight of the organization

A. Evaluate financial sustainability

Financial sustainability describes an organization's ability to conduct its work in a fiscally responsible manner. The following four indicators provide an understanding of the organization's financial sustainability. The information below can be found on the organization's 990, an IRS form required of most nonprofits. It is best to review financial information over three to five years.

FINANCIALLY SUSTAINABLE

- ✓ Organization's debt to equity ratio is less than 1.5, meaning its debt is manageable given its assets
- ✓ Organization's current ratio is equal to or greater than one, meaning its assets are greater than its short-term debt
- ✓ Organization maintains three to six months in cash reserves, so it can withstand brief financial downturns
- ✓ Funding comes from a variety of sources, including government and philanthropic

FINANCIALLY UNSUSTAINABLE

- ✗ Organization's debt to equity ratio is greater than 1.5, meaning assets are directed to paying off debt
- ✗ Current ratio is less than one, meaning the organization will accumulate short-term debt as its assets are not enough to cover debt payments
- ✗ Organization maintains fewer than three months in cash reserves, leaving it susceptible to economic shocks
- ✗ Funding is dominated by one or two sources or types of funders

B. Evaluate management and governance

Management and governance indicators describe the capacity of senior staff and board members to expand an organization, and deliver on and hold themselves accountable to the mission.



Examples of EXCEPTIONAL IMPLEMENTATION

A 360-degree review is conducted annually of the CEO, including a review by the board

Three to five-year plans are created with stakeholder input and tangible goals and milestones are explicitly laid out

Board includes victims of domestic violence

EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION

- ✓ CEO has significant experience; management team members have good relationships with one another and external stakeholders; staff are actively involved in the field
- ✓ Board has at least seven members with diverse experience, including legal, management, financial marketing and fundraising; board meets at least three times per year
- ✓ Planning shows evidence of measurable goals toward providing effective services for victims of abuse

INEFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION

- ✗ Management team lacks experience, education, and licenses/certificates that ensure services provided are appropriate
- ✗ Board is comprised of individuals with similar backgrounds and experience; board plays little or no role in oversight, fundraising, or organizational planning
- ✗ Planning occurs sporadically; possible changes are discussed informally

There are many ways in which an organization can influence the field of domestic violence. Activities include conducting impact and outcome research, providing consulting and training to other programs, and publicly advocating for victims. SIR recommends considering three categories of activities:

- A. Growth plans**, which describe the organization's plans for the next three to five years
- B. Community partnerships**, which demonstrate the organization's ability to work collaboratively
- C. Field-building activities**, which show whether the organization is influencing the field

The preceding four steps helped you gain a holistic understanding of an organization and its domestic violence programs. To make a decision about the best way to provide support, determine where your organization fits among the following three categories:

- A. High-performing organizations** meet the majority of the criteria outlined above
- B. Developing organizations** meet some, but not all, of the criteria outlined above
- C. Low-performing organizations** meet few to none of the criteria outlined above

STEP 4 Evaluate the Organization's Ability to Create Systemic Impact

A. Evaluate growth plans

Evaluate growth plans to understand the organization's capacity to further its mission:

- Has realistic growth plans with funding and measurable goals to increase the number and quality of services provided
- Seeks out innovative and collaborative methods of continuously serving more victims

B. Evaluate community partnerships

Evaluate community partnerships to understand the organization's ability to collaborate:

- Creates partnerships with other organizations to provide services such as workforce development, permanent housing, education, and English language training
- Participates in alliances to create a comprehensive system to address domestic violence

C. Evaluate field-building activities

Evaluate field-building activities to understand the organization's role in driving systemic change:

- Works actively with civic and religious organizations and government agencies to integrate domestic violence awareness into various programs and initiatives
- Shares lessons learned with other practitioners by making research publicly available

STEP 5 Interpret your Evaluation and Determine How to Provide Support

A. High-performing organizations

These organizations are using the empowerment approach to minimize risk and provide information and services to victims. They are financially sound with excellent management and governance structures. They have realistic growth plans and are engaging in field-building activities. You can confidently invest in a high-performing organization.

Risk / Reward	Low risk / high reward
Involvement level	Usually low, but can vary
Examples of investment opportunities	Implement growth plans, expand housing and service options, conduct research to build the field and provide evidence to funding entities, provide training to other organizations

B. Developing organizations

These organizations may be doing some things well and need improvement in other areas. Often these are young organizations, but they can also be established organizations that are undergoing a transition. Developing organizations are often unable to provide or connect victims of domestic violence to education services, children's services, or permanent housing. Investment in these organizations can be challenging yet exciting for donors.

Risk / Reward	Moderate risk / high reward
Involvement level	Usually medium, but can vary
Examples of investment opportunities	Support research on program effectiveness, pilot improved programs, expand effective services, recruit staff to work with children

C. Low-performing organizations

These organizations have room for improvement in all areas. Investment in a low-performing organization with a strong management team and governance structure can be exciting for a donor who wants to be deeply involved in helping an organization improve. Investment in a low-performing organization that is not dedicated to quality improvements is not recommended.

Risk / Reward	High risk / Reward varies based on organization's desire to improve
Involvement level	Usually high, but can vary
Examples of investment opportunities	Build business models, conduct research to determine services needed, hire qualified staff, receive technical assistance from high-performing organizations to improve programs

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Supporting Emerging Social Innovations

HIGH RISK WITH THE POTENTIAL OF HIGH REWARD

Donors should consider organizations that are testing new innovations that could eventually lead to breakthroughs in addressing the targeted social issue. Such organizations can articulate why they are diverging from the proven approach, and how they see themselves improving upon that approach.

In the field of domestic violence, community awareness is an area of strong innovation in recent years. Investment in organizations that are working on raising community awareness allow them to research best practices, collaborate with other organizations, and run trial programs. All of these contribute to progress in the field of the domestic violence.

Social Impact Research (SIR) is the independent research department of Root Cause, a research and consulting firm dedicated to mobilizing the nonprofit, public, and business sectors to work collaboratively in a new social impact market. Modeled after private sector equity research firms, SIR conducts research on social issues and independent analysis of program performance to provide leaders and funders with the rigorous, actionable information they need to make strategic decisions about creating and investing in social impact.



SOCIAL IMPACT RESEARCH

Actionable Information for the Social Impact Investor

Root Cause, 11 Avenue de Lafayette Boston, MA 02111 PHONE: 617.492.2310 WEB: <http://rootcause.org/social-impact-research>