

## KEY SURVEY FINDINGS: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAMS AND SURVIVORS WHO USE SUBSTANCES

From June to September 2019, The National Center on Domestic Violence, Trauma, and Mental Health (NCDVTMH) administered a nationwide needs assessment to domestic violence (DV) programs within states, territories, and Tribal nations. The survey focused on DV programs' capacity to meet the needs of survivors and their children experiencing challenges related to substance use or mental health. A total of 579 DV program staff members participated in this survey.

### Substance Use Treatment Services Within DV Programs

- 74% reported an increased demand for substance use disorder treatment services in the past two years.
- 20% reported their programs were “very prepared” to meet the needs of survivors who have problems related to their substance use.
- 17% reported their programs were “very prepared” to meet the needs of survivors who are parenting and also are struggling with their substance use.
- 56% reported that there is no one on their DV program staff with specialized training or qualifications to work with survivors who struggle with their substance use.

### Changes in Types of Substances Seen Within DV Programs

- 51% reported changes in the kinds of substances used by survivors.
- 56% reported an increase in opioid use by survivors.
- 37% reported an increase in methamphetamine use by survivors.

### DV Program Accessibility for Survivors Who Use Substances

- 63% indicated that their DV program does not discharge survivors who are intoxicated while in their shelter.
- 56% indicated that survivors are allowed to return to their DV program intoxicated after using *legal* substances off-site; 44% said that survivors are allowed to return to their program intoxicated after using *illegal* substances off-site.
- 75% indicated that survivors are not allowed to use *legal* substances on-site.

### Key Takeaways:

- DV programs saw an increase in substance use among survivors, while reporting feeling underprepared to meet their needs.
- DV programs reported wanting to provide more resources and support to survivors who use substances, but frequently did not have staff who specialize in addressing substance use.
- DV programs' main concerns related to survivors' substance use in programs were:
  - 1) The safety of children and adolescents in the program,
  - 2) The potential impact on survivors who are in recovery or abstaining, and
  - 3) Legal liability issues.
- DV programs reported needing expedited referrals for local substance use treatment services; training for staff members on DV, trauma, and substance use; and more funding for additional on-site services.

You can find the full report at [www.nationalcenterdvtraumamh.org](http://www.nationalcenterdvtraumamh.org).

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