


Preventing Violence Against Women in Santa Cruz County



STOP
VIOLENCE
AGAINST
WOMEN

2019 Needs Assessment Findings

Presented to the City of Santa Cruz
Commission for the Prevention of Violence
Against Women (CPVAW)

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Cole
COMMUNICATIONS, INC.

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Interviews, data analysis, and reporting were conducted by Nicole Lezin, President of Cole Communications, Inc., with translation and interpreting assistance from Mireya Gomez-Contreras.

writing
editing
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planning



Executive Summary

This needs assessment, commissioned in 2018 by the City of Santa Cruz Commission for the Prevention of Violence Against Women (CPVAW), is based on reviews of data and reports as well as dozens of interviews. Each respondent shared valuable insights and perspectives from vantage points in law enforcement, health care, education, and the system of services for survivors, helping to identify current gaps as well as opportunities for improvement.



Although each of these perspectives contributed to the needs assessment, it is the voices of women experiencing violence at different points in their lives that ripple through these pages.

Researchers describe social norms of harassment as the testing ground for violence; women live this truth every day. Young women in high school in Santa Cruz recognize the toll of casual harassment, cyberbullying, and unwanted touches from boys around them and from strangers on the street. They are highly attuned to — and profoundly resentful of — the vigilance required of them as they go about their daily lives, the calculations about how much to speak up or push back, and whether or not it’s worthwhile to do so. They see many of the messages saturating social media, from their peers and even well-meaning adults as harmful and confusing. As one said, “When you’re in elementary school and boys are mean to you, adults tell you it’s because they like you. And it just goes on from there, all the confusion and mixed messages ...”

Women years away from high school recall painful childhoods and teenage years. In their recollections, the violence swirls around them from older relatives, boyfriends, husbands, and men they thought were friends or mistrusted as roommates — so common in their lives that it barely registers as worth mentioning in the long list of other struggles for housing, for treatment, for safety. When violence is normalized, it’s hard to call daily undermining or even assaults a crisis. As one survivor said, after enduring years of abuse, “I didn’t call the crisis line because I didn’t think I was in crisis.”

Young mothers, in English and Spanish, use the same words in different languages, hoping for a much better future for their toddlers than the one they’ve endured so far. Women with older children worry that the violence their children witnessed will scar them as they grow, leading them to become victims or perpetrators themselves and repeating the cycle of trauma, generation after generation. They blame themselves for staying too long with partners they thought would change; they blame themselves for leaving and adding economic uncertainty to their children’s lives.

About the CPVAW Needs Assessment

True to its name, the CPVAW needs assessment was designed to answer a series of questions about what is needed in Santa Cruz County to prevent violence against women and respond

more effectively when it occurs. What do current data tell us, and what's missing from the portrait? How do local services align with best practices? What do people representing survivors and sectors as varied as health care, education, and law enforcement see as opportunities for improvement and impact?



Violence Against Women in Santa Cruz County by the Numbers

Data on violence against women are flawed: they come from multiple sources, use inconsistent definitions, and should be considered an under-report of the actual levels of violence. Despite flawed and inconsistent data, we know that violence against women is common, starts early, and is connected to other forms of violence.

Compared to California overall, Santa Cruz County is:

- Below the state average for domestic violence calls; the volume of calls has been fairly consistent over the last decade.
- Below the state average for women's hospital encounters for assault.
- Above the state average for sexual assaults.
- Above the state average for women feeling safe in their neighborhoods.

In the most recent California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS), a significant proportion of Santa Cruz students reported having sexual jokes, comments, or gestures directed towards them: 26% of 7th graders (with 10% reporting this happened to them four or more times), 25% of 9th graders, and 21% of 11th graders reporting these behaviors in the survey.¹ These are slightly lower than statewide averages, but are still cause for concern — and affirm the descriptions of high school interactions and school climate described in a focus group of high school girls conducted for this needs assessment.

In addition to reviewing currently available data, the needs assessment explored respondents' ideas about what might be included on a data wish list, to create a more accurate picture of violence against women in Santa Cruz County. Suggestions for future data points included:

- Estimates of under-reported violence against women
- Information on trust in law enforcement
- Victims'/survivors' reasons for declining SART exams
- Incidence of strangulation/choking
- Details about men who do harm, relationships between them and victims/survivors
- Human trafficking data, especially for younger victims

¹ Santa Cruz County. California Healthy Kids Survey, 2015-2017: Main Report. San Francisco: WestEd Health and Justice Program for the California Department of Education.

- Follow-through on calls for assistance, including what happens to everyone involved over time
- Presence of children as witnesses to violence

Assets and Signs of Progress

In interviews across the different sectors (health care, law enforcement, education, and services for survivors), respondents pointed to many ways the City and County of Santa Cruz are working well to serve those at risk or surviving violence against women. Examples included various cross-sector partnerships such as the Sexual Assault Response Team (SART), which is currently located in San Jose but is reportedly transitioning back to Santa Cruz County this year, as well as other productive partnerships such as the Gender and Justice Task Force and Community Corrections Partnership.

Respondents noted that awareness of the prevalence and toll of violence against women benefits from national trends such as the #MeToo movement, as well as local efforts to highlight different aspects of violence against women (such as local conferences devoted to human trafficking and other related issues). Trauma-informed approaches, training, and systems are also far more common than they were just a few years ago.

Interview respondents were justifiably proud of accomplishments in areas such as securing funding to **house violence survivors**, offering more **services for victims/survivors** (e.g., at the Multidisciplinary Interview Center), **placing advocates inside of Safety Net health centers** (such as Salud Para La Gente and Santa Cruz Community Health Centers) to reach women who are unable to seek help in other ways, and piloting a new **assessment and customized intervention for men who do harm** (instead of the one-size-fits-all approach mandated by the state of California for men placed on probation for domestic violence battery).

Survivors generally praised the support and services they received when they were in crisis, but there were also some notable exceptions to this view (most markedly among women experiencing homelessness).



Gaps and Room for Improvement

Not surprisingly, each of the assets and signs of progress listed above has a flip side. Indeed, the **inconsistencies** within agencies and sectors constitute room for improvement on their own. Survivors can and do have very different experiences, depending on the individuals they happen to encounter — in reporting an assault, interacting with health care providers, seeking counseling or substance use treatment, in courtrooms, classrooms, and clinics.

Although some women are able to obtain needed housing, counseling, substance use treatment, job training and placement to get on their feet, and legal aid or support to navigate both large and small legal issues, many others do not. Many survivors described the legal system as confusing. Many respondents also noted that few, if any, effective interventions are

currently available for men who do harm; even if their current partners are able to leave a violent relationship, the likelihood of these men behaving violently towards subsequent partners (and children) is high.

Although respondents *generally* felt that acute, crisis services met most urgent needs fairly well they felt the opposite about the domains where most researchers and practitioners believe we can make the greatest difference: **primary prevention**. Community norms, media and societal messages about gender roles, early childhood experiences, school messages and interventions (e.g., regarding healthy relationships, dating violence, and cyberbullying) are generally described as receiving far less attention and resources than they deserve, given their potential impact.

Current and Future Opportunities

In 2017, the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC) at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) compiled a set of intimate partner violence prevention strategies and approaches supported by evaluation findings.² Many of the CDC/NCIPC elements match the opportunities identified by Santa Cruz County respondents from different sectors, although in general all would benefit from greater investments in primary prevention. Although geared specifically to intimate partner violence prevention, the CDC/NCIPC strategies also have the potential to affect other types of violence against women (e.g., through bystander empowerment and education, or making young women less vulnerable to human trafficking). They include:

- Teaching safe and healthy relationship skills
- Engaging influential adults and peers
- Disrupting developmental pathways toward partner violence
- Creating protective environments
- Strengthening economic supports for families
- Supporting survivors to increase safety and lessen harms

In addition to programs and policies in place or being considered, respondents identified specific models of evidence-based programs, policies, data collection, documentation, and criminal justice responses that are not yet part of the City's and County's portfolio, but deserve consideration by specific sectors.

² Niolon, P. H., Kearns, M., Dills, J., Rambo, K., Irving, S., Armstead, T., & Gilbert, L. (2017). *Preventing Intimate Partner Violence Across the Lifespan: A Technical Package of Programs, Policies, and Practices*. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Recommendations to CPVAW

Despite limited resources, CPVAW is an influential voice in our community on issues of violence against women. The Commissioners can use their collective voice to have a greater impact by:

- Joining forces with the revamped **County Domestic Violence Commission**.
- Proposing a set of **data elements** to DataShare Santa Cruz County.
- Supporting **dissemination** of meaningful data and stories.
- Choosing a **rotating theme or area of emphasis** to maximize results.
- Monitoring an **evaluation of the Batterer Intervention Program pilot**. As one of six county pilots, Santa Cruz County could contribute to learning more about a topic that lacks promising interventions.
- Using a **formal Request for Proposals (RFP) process** to award CPVAW funds in the future, and using this mechanism to focus on prevention.



Introduction

*“When you’re in elementary school and boys are mean to you, adults tell you **it’s because they like you**. And it just goes on from there, all the confusion and mixed messages ...”*

High School Student

*“I didn’t call the crisis line because **I didn’t think I was in crisis**. I thought I had to suffer for my child to have a father.”*

Survivor

*“I had to go **find the last of me**, before the last of me is gone ... “*

Survivor

*“We treat this like a criminal justice issue more than a health issue, but **we can’t punish it away ...”***

Advocate

What’s needed in Santa Cruz County to prevent violence against women, and respond more effectively when it occurs? What do current data tell us, and what’s missing from the portrait? How do local services align with best practices? What do people representing survivors and sectors as varied as health care, education, and law enforcement see as opportunities for improvement and impact?

In 2018, the City of Santa Cruz Commission for the Prevention of Violence Against Women (CPVAW) contracted with Nicole Lezin of Cole Communications, Inc. to conduct a needs assessment to explore these questions. This report presents findings from the needs assessment, which included a review of current data and reports as well as 32 individual interviews and 3 group interviews of professionals involved in addressing these issues (across education, health care, law enforcement,

and service agencies), and group and individual interviews of 19 women who had experienced violence.³

The needs assessment is organized into five main sections:

- By the Numbers: What Can We Learn from Existing Data, and What's Missing?
- Assets and Signs of Progress
- Gaps and Room for Improvement
- Current and Future Opportunities
- Recommendations to CPVAW

CPVAW's vision is an end to sexual assault, sexual harassment, and domestic violence in the City of Santa Cruz through prevention, programs, and public policy. As a small city Commission with dedicated volunteer members and a limited budget, CPVAW Commissioners realize that they cannot accomplish this vision alone, nor is it the responsibility of any one agency or sector. Indeed, violence against women is — and always has been — a reflection of social norms and forces. For that reason, CPVAW's mission requires collaborating with local stakeholder partners and law enforcement to ensure best practices to respond to and prosecute violent crimes against women.

This needs assessment adopts a similar broad lens, examining CPVAW's potential contributions in partnership with other individuals and organizations throughout the City and County.



Violence Against Women in Santa Cruz County by the Numbers

Limitations of Data on Violence Against Women

Data about violence against women — covering sexual assaults, domestic violence (i.e., in the home), intimate partner violence (between partners whether or not they live together), and, more recently, human trafficking — is not straightforward. First, each of these elements may be **defined differently**, depending on the agency collecting the data and their purpose in doing so. Within agencies, data are not always collected consistently, especially when **data elements are optional**.

³ Data sources and a list of interviewees are provided in Appendix A.

Across all realms, violence against women is considered to be significantly **under-reported**, because the main criminal justice and health care reporting systems only capture a level of violence that led to formal contact with those systems. Even then, there is no assurance that the most serious incidents are fully captured. For example, assault statistics (whether they are for criminal charges or hospital stays) may or may not include indications of domestic violence.

Section Summary: By the Numbers

- **Data on violence against women are flawed:** they come from multiple sources, use inconsistent definitions, and should be considered an under-report of the actual levels of violence.
- Despite flawed and inconsistent data, we know that violence against women is **common, starts early**, and is **connected to other forms of violence**
- **Santa Cruz County is:**
 - Below the state average for **domestic violence calls**; the volume of calls has been fairly consistent over the last decade
 - Below the state average for **women’s hospital encounters for assault**
 - Above the state average for **sexual assaults**
 - Above the state average for **women feeling safe in their neighborhoods**
- Nearly a **quarter of Santa Cruz County adults (24.9%) had four or more Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)**
- A **data wish list** would include:
 - Estimates of **under-reported** violence against women
 - Information on **trust in law enforcement**
 - Victims’/survivors’ reasons for **declining SART exams**
 - **Incidence of strangulation/choking**
 - **Details about men who do harm, relationships between them and victims/survivors**
 - **Human trafficking data, especially for younger victims**
 - **Follow-through on calls for assistance, including what happens to everyone involved over time**
 - Presence of **children as witnesses** to violence

Some **surveys** have tried to capture self-reported data about whether respondents were ever hit, slapped, or physically hurt on purpose by a boyfriend or girlfriend; attacked with a weapon or other item; forced to have sex; or emotionally abused. Even when these questions are asked, they are often limited to a time frame (such as the past year), and do not capture data on violence over time or whether it has involved one or multiple perpetrators.

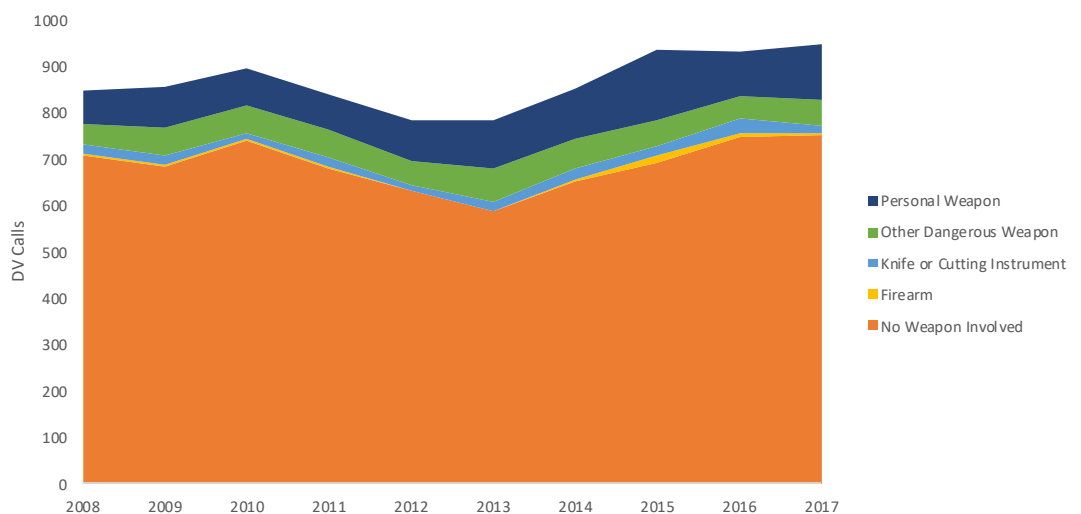
What Do Current Data Tell Us?

Despite these limitations, we do have some insights about violence against women in the City and County of Santa Cruz, as well as comparisons in some cases to state and national rates.

Figure 1 shows that across Santa Cruz County jurisdictions, domestic violence-related calls for assistance to law enforcement have held fairly steady over the past decade, with a dip in 2013 and rise between 2015-2017. Note that an uptick in calls could reflect increased incidence of domestic violence and/or more trust in reporting domestic violence to law enforcement.

In these data, which are reported by each law enforcement agency to the California Department of Justice using Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) definitions, a “personal weapon” may include use of hands or feet.

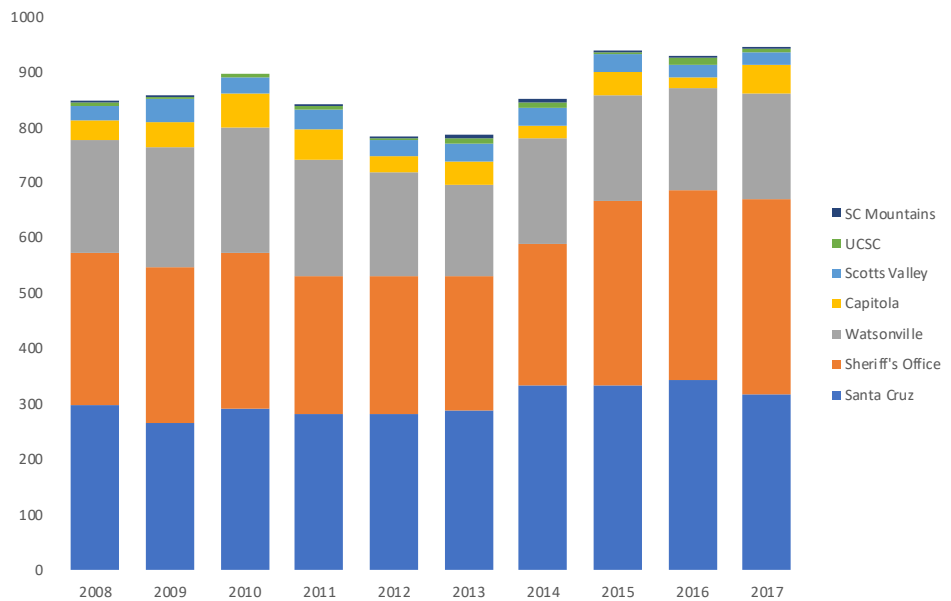
Figure 1: Santa Cruz County Domestic Violence (DV) Calls, With and Without Weapons, 2008-17⁴



⁴ California Department of Justice. Open Justice Data Portal. Accessed 4/25/19 via <https://openjustice.doj.ca.gov/crime-statistics/domestic-violence>.

Figure 2 shows the total calls to law enforcement for domestic violence assistance (with and without weapons), by jurisdiction. Jurisdiction data followed the pattern in Figure 1, with the vast majority of calls involving either no weapons or personal weapons (i.e., using hands and feet as weapons). With their substantially larger populations, Watsonville, the Sheriff's Office, and the City of Santa Cruz account for the majority of the calls.

Figure 2: Santa Cruz County Domestic Violence (DV) Calls, by Jurisdiction, 2008-17⁵



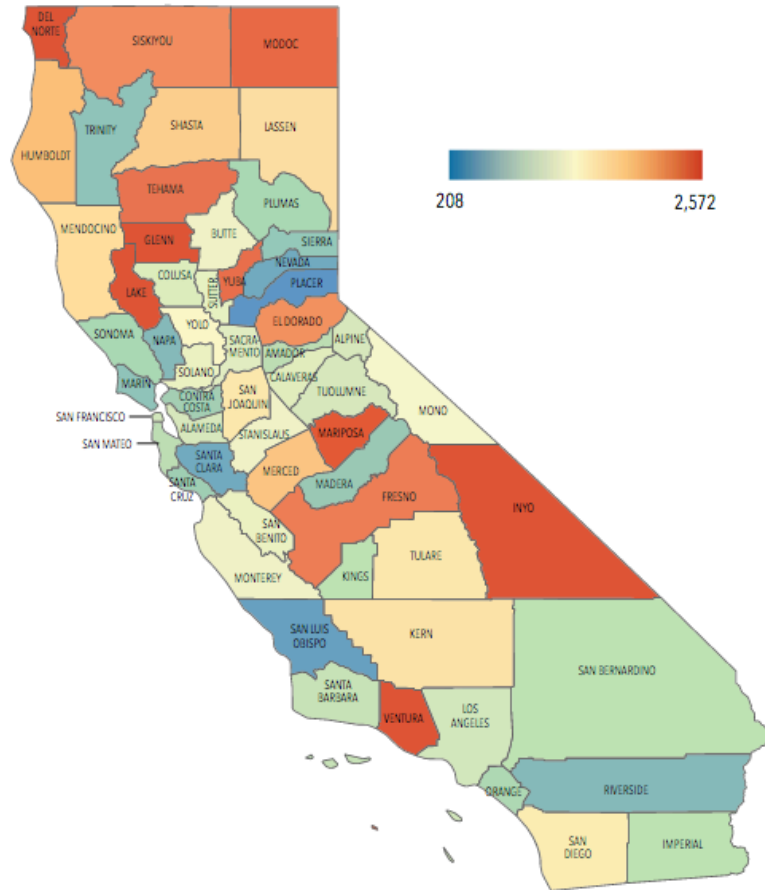
According to the **California Women's Well-Being Index** (a data compilation prepared by the California Budget and Policy Center), Santa Cruz County's average annual domestic violence calls for assistance per 100,000 people was 309.4, compared to 416.6 for California overall.⁶ This places Santa Cruz County in 11th place among the 58 California counties. (The index generally uses data from 2010-2014.) A calculation by the Family Health Outcomes Project at the University of California, San

⁵ California Department of Justice. Open Justice Data Portal. Accessed 4/25/19 via <https://openjustice.doj.ca.gov/crime-statistics/domestic-violence>.

⁶ California Budget & Policy Center. California Women's Well-Being Index. Personal Safety Indicators. Accessed 3/25/19 via <https://calbudgetcenter.org/resources/womens-well-being/>.

Francisco (UCSF) found a similar rate of domestic violence calls per 100,000 population (315) in 2013-2015.⁷

Figure 3: Santa Cruz County Domestic Violence Calls for Assistance per 100,000 Population, 2010-14, Compared to All California Counties

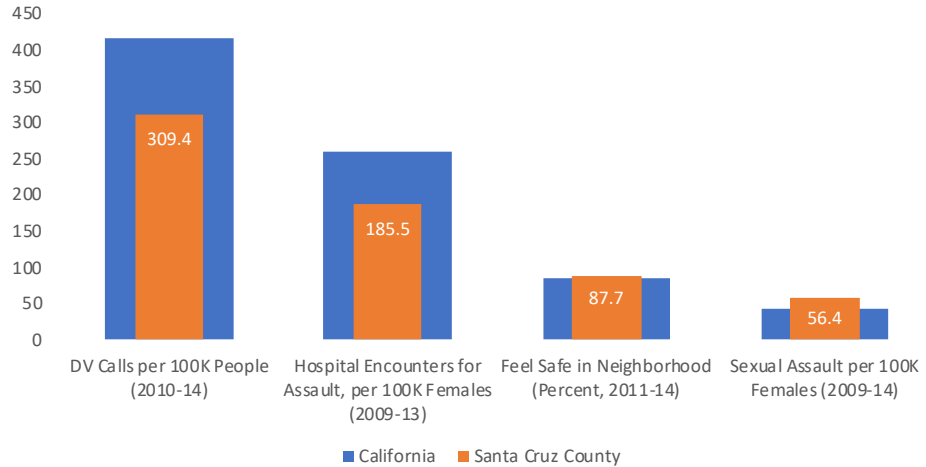


The California Women’s Well-Being Index also compiles **sexual assault rates per 100,000 females** (in this case, from 2009-2013). On this indicator, Santa Cruz County does not fare as well, with 56.4 sexual assaults per 100,000 females, well above the state average of 42.3. The average annual hospital encounters due to **assault per 100,000** women was 185.5 (encompassing all assaults, not only sexual assaults), lower than the California average of 259.9. And between 2011-14, 87.7% of women in Santa Cruz County reported feeling safe in their neighborhood

⁷ UCSF Family Health Outcomes Project Data for Santa Cruz County. Community Health Status Report Overview. Personal communication with Santa Cruz Health Services Agency (HSA) epidemiologist, 3/29/19.

all or most of the time, near the state average of 85.6% but in the bottom third compared to other counties.⁸

Figure 4: California Women’s Well-Being Index: Santa Cruz and California Comparisons



Santa Cruz County is fortunate to have an ongoing source of data in the Community Assessment Project (CAP), conducted by Applied Survey Research on behalf of United Way and other partners. Now in its 25th year, the CAP includes a telephone survey component that asks a sample of County residents whether they or any of their family members or friends have experienced domestic or intimate partner violence in the last year. In the 2017 survey (soon to be updated), survey respondents who answered “yes” to this question dropped from 10.4% in 2011 to 5.9% in 2017 — a 43% decline. However, the survey did reveal some geographic differences, with San Lorenzo Valley survey respondents much more likely than others to report experiences with domestic or intimate partner violence among their families and friends.⁹

In addition to rates of domestic violence and sexual assault, researchers point to a variety of risk factors and behaviors across the lifespan that could indicate risks for violence for women and their children. For example, data from the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS) suggest that among the 8.5 million women and 4 million men in the United States who reported physical violence, rape, or stalking from an intimate partner in their lifetime, these forms of violence were

⁸ California Budget & Policy Center. California Women’s Well-Being Index. Personal Safety Indicators. Accessed 3/25/19 via <https://calbudgetcenter.org/resources/womens-well-being/>.

⁹ Applied Survey Research. Santa Cruz County Community Assessment Project, Year 23, 2017. Accessed 11/7/18 via <https://online.flowpaper.com/73630724/CAP23ReportFINAL/#page=151>

first experienced when they were adolescents.¹⁰ These statistics represent 7% of American women and 4% of men; **relationship violence is common.**

The Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) also supports the finding that violence in relationships starts early. In 2015, among students who reported dating, 1 in 10 (10%) had experienced *physical* dating violence; 11% had experienced *sexual* dating violence.¹¹

Intimate partner violence is also connected to other types of violence; **violence begets violence by placing people at risk of becoming either perpetrators or victims.** For example, numerous studies have shown that children who witness violence at home are more likely to harm their future partners or be harmed by them, and adolescents who bully their peers are also more likely to “graduate” to intimate partner violence.^{12,13}

In Santa Cruz County, nearly **a quarter of adults (24.9%) had four or more Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)**, which can include witnessing violence at home and/or experiencing emotional, physical, or sexual abuse as a child; and/or household substance use, mental illness, or incarceration.¹⁴ ACEs are well documented as precursors to a wide variety of adult health problems, ranging from behavioral health and substance use issues to chronic diseases such as heart disease.¹⁵

¹⁰Smith, SG, Chen, J, Basile, KC, Gilbert, LK, Merrick, MT, Patel, N, Walling, M, & Jain, A. (2017). *The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2010-2012 State Report*. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

¹¹Kann, L, McManus, T, Harris, W., Shanklin, S. L., Flint, KH, Hawkins, J. et al. 2016. Youth risk behavior surveillance – United States, 2015. *MMWR Surveillance Summaries*. Volume 65 (No. SS-6), 1-174.

¹²Vagi, KJ, Rothman, EF, Latzman, NE, Tharp, AT, Hall, DM, & Breiding, MJ. 2013) Beyond correlates: a review of risk and protective factors for adolescent dating violence perpetration. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 42(4), 633-649.

¹³Temple, JR, Shorey, RC, Tortolero, SR, Wolfe, DA, & Stuart, GL. 2013. Importance of gender and attitudes about violence in the relationship between exposure to interparental violence and the perpetration of teen dating violence. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 37(5):343-352.

¹⁴UCSF Family Health Outcomes Project Data for Santa Cruz County. Community Health Status Report Overview. Personal communication with Santa Cruz Health Services Agency (HSA) epidemiologist, 3/29/19.

¹⁵Corso PS, Edwards VJ, Fang X, Mercy JA. Health-related quality of life among adults who experienced maltreatment during childhood. *Am J Public Health*. 2008;98:1094–1100.

A 2017 profile based on interviews with 31 women in Santa Cruz County Jail was conducted by Susan Greene, Ph.D., for the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office. Her research documented the powerful connections between ACEs, violence, and later **incarceration for women**, as well as behavioral health and substance use problems later in life. Among other types of trauma and instability, four of five women in the jail study reported that they had been in intimate relationships in which their partner hurt them physically; for two-thirds of them, the violence was frequent. Over half reported rapes and the same percentage reported being mugged, held up, or threatened with a weapon. As Dr. Greene noted in the report, "For many women in jail, their histories of trauma contributed to mental illness that led them to self-medicate with alcohol and other drugs, and in turn led to their subsequent addictions and criminal involvement."¹⁶

In considering childhood and adolescent experiences that place people at risk for being victims or perpetrators of violence, Santa Cruz County had:

- Lower rates of child abuse and neglect reports than the California average (46.7 per 1,000 in 2015 for Santa Cruz County, compared to 55 per 1,000 for California)¹⁷
- Lower percentages of 7th graders who were bullied at school the previous year in 2013-15 (33.6% vs 39.2% in California)
- Higher rates of 9th graders with high levels of school connectedness (56% vs. 45.5% in California)^{18,19}

In California overall, significant percentages of 7th, 9th, and 11th graders reported experiencing cyberbullying (near 80% for all three grades in California).²⁰

¹⁶Greene, S. *Gender Matters: A Profile of Women in Santa Cruz County Jail*. March 2017. Research report prepared for the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office.

¹⁷Webster, D. et al. California Child Welfare Indicators Project Reports, U.C. Berkeley Center for Social Services Research, June 2016. Accessed via kidsdata.org.

¹⁸Santa Cruz County California Healthy Kids Survey, 2015-2017: Main Report. San Francisco: WestEdHealth and Justice Program for the California Department of Education.

¹⁹Austin, G., Polik, J, Hanson, T, & Zheng, C. 2018. School climate, substance use, and student well-being in California, 2015-17. Results of the Sixteenth Biennial Statewide Student Survey, Grades 7, 9, and 11. San Francisco: WestEd.

²⁰Austin, G, Polik, J, Hanson, T, & Zheng, C. 2018. *School climate, substance use, and student well-being in California, 2015-17*. Results of the Sixteenth

In the most recent California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS), a significant proportion of Santa Cruz students reported having sexual jokes, comments, or gestures directed towards them: 26% of 7th graders (with 10% reporting this happened to them four or more times), 25% of 9th graders, and 21% of 11th graders reporting these behaviors in the survey.²¹ These are slightly lower than statewide averages, but are still cause for concern — and affirm the descriptions of high school interactions and school climate described in a focus group of high school girls conducted for this needs assessment.

A statewide assessment of **sexual harassment and assault** released in May 2019 found that sexual harassment and assault are significant issues for California women, with 85% of women (and 53% of men) reporting some form of sexual harassment and/or assault over their lifetimes. Women reported experiencing sexual harassment in public spaces such as on the street or in a store (77%); half experienced sexual harassment where they worked or attended school.²²

What's Missing? A Data Wish List

In interviews for this needs assessment, respondents were asked to identify data items that would be helpful in understanding the problem more fully, responding to ongoing needs, and/or planning new programs and services for the future.

Since all types of violence are **under-reported**, finding ways to identify these incidents as they are referenced during home visits, case management, or other interactions would be imperfect but possibly useful to gauge the extent of under-reporting. Also useful would be more detailed information on why reporting did not occur.

A related data point is **trust in law enforcement**, which affects reporting of violence. The current CAP telephone survey, with input from the Community Corrections Partnership, includes a question about trust in law enforcement that should provide a baseline for monitoring future

Biennial Statewide Student Survey, Grades 7, 9, and 11. San Francisco: WestEd.

²¹Santa Cruz County. *California Healthy Kids Survey, 2015-2017: Main Report*. San Francisco: WestEd Health and Justice Program for the California Department of Education.

²²Johns NE, Raj A, Lee DS, Kearn H. *Measuring #MeToo in California: A Statewide Assessment of Sexual Harassment and Assault*. May 2019. Center on Gender Equity and Health at UC San Diego, California Coalition Against Sexual Assault, Promundo.

progress. A related issue is reasons for **declining Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) exams**.

In Santa Clara, as discussed later in this report, health care and law enforcement agencies are documenting the incidence of **strangulation and choking**, particularly as these relate to brain injury.

Data about the **relationships between victims and offenders**, the sequential nature of violent relationships (for domestic and intimate partner violence), and about those who do harm are not generally available and would be useful.

Human trafficking data are becoming more available as awareness of this issue increases rapidly, but data on young sexual trafficking victims (i.e., under 18) are not. In 2017, the most recent year for which data are available, there were nearly 4,000 calls to the human trafficking hotline, with the majority of the 1,305 reported cases involving sex or both sex and labor trafficking.

Given the early roots of violence in families, several noted that **child involvement in witnessing violence** is often missing from reports, especially if the child was not in the home at the time of an incident. More consistent recording of this important piece of data could occur at multiple points, but particularly when the law enforcement or health care systems are engaged.

The Santa Cruz *Sentinel* publishes data on domestic violence calls during domestic violence awareness month in October, which helps bring attention to the issue. As useful as this snapshot may be, it could also serve as a springboard for other data highlights, including tracking what happens in the aftermath of those calls, whether children were present, more about the circumstances surrounding them, and following through with the extent of successful prosecutions, repeat offenses, and what happens over time to those who do harm as well as those who were harmed.



Assets and Signs of Progress

In interviews across the different sectors (health care, law enforcement, education, and services for survivors), respondents pointed to many ways the City and County of Santa Cruz are working well for those at risk or surviving violence against women.

Working Together Across Sectors

Cooperation and collaboration are in place across sectors. Examples include the **Sexual Assault Response Team (SART)** members, who are frustrated by the need to provide services in Santa Clara but optimistic about the return of these services to Santa Cruz County in 2019. Even though the services are geographically (and, they hope, temporarily) separated, the cooperation among team members and the efforts to return these services to Santa Cruz County were highlighted as examples of working smoothly and sharing information across sectors.

Members of the **Justice and Gender Task Force** have advocated for a variety of criminal justice reforms, highlighting prevention and response to sexual abuse in jails. As the Task Force nears the end of its official convening work in 2019, a proposal has been made to transform it into a resurrected County Domestic Violence Commission — a group that was once active but has been dormant for years. Efforts are underway to revise the Commission's by-laws to make this possible. Whatever form the County Commission takes, it would make sense for the City and County Commissions to collaborate (e.g., by sending a representative to each other's meetings) and work on joint projects, policies, conferences, and/or awareness campaigns.

The **Community Corrections Partnership**, whose members also represent the sectors highlighted in this needs assessment, has convened partners to develop a *Blueprint for Shared Safety*, which is designed to put crime survivors at the center of how local governments can build a stronger safety infrastructure.²³ Since early 2018, as part of this process, Partnership members have convened focus group discussions of over 140 survivors, youth, people in custody, and other stakeholders to identify survivor needs and barriers, echoing many of the themes identified in this needs assessment.

²³*Blueprint for Shared Safety*. Materials accessed 3/28/19 via <http://sharedsafety.us/>.

Increased Awareness

Awareness of the prevalence and toll of violence against women benefits from national trends such as the #MeToo movement, as well as local efforts to highlight different aspects of violence against women (such as the Commission's Transforming Together conference in October 2018 and joint District Attorneys and Coalition to End Human Trafficking in Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties conference in March 2019).

Trauma-informed approaches, training, and systems are far more common than they were just a few years ago. In many agencies, there is recognition that trauma (from violence as well as other adversities) is prevalent not only among those served, but among staff as well.

Local Innovations and Resources

Interview respondents were justifiably proud of accomplishments in areas such as securing funding to **house violence survivors**, offering more **services for victims/survivors** (e.g., at the Multidisciplinary Interview Center), **placing advocates inside of Safety Net health centers** (such as Salud Para La Gente and Santa Cruz Community Health Centers) to reach women who are unable to seek help in other ways, and piloting a new **assessment and customized intervention for men who do harm** (instead of the one-size-fits-all approach mandated by the state of California for men placed on probation for domestic violence battery). Santa Cruz is one of six pilot counties selected to implement a pilot program under Assembly Bill 372.

Survivor Voices

Survivors interviewed for the needs assessment praised the services they had received (through Monarch Services, the Downtown Streets Team, and Homeless Services Center). One young survivor — the mother of a toddler — was pleasantly surprised by the wraparound services she and her son experienced, covering housing, clothing and household supplies, legal support and advice (including accompanying her to court appearances), parenting training through Triple P, counseling and health care, camaraderie and support from other women while she stayed at the shelter, and assistance getting an entry-level job she hopes will set her on the path to self-sufficiency. A monolingual, Spanish-speaking survivor, also the mother of a young child, praised the persistence of many different service providers who urged her to care for herself and her child by removing herself from an increasingly violent home situation, and supported her through multiple attempts to do so until she was ultimately successful.

A focus group of high school girls yielded insights into some of the issues they face. Currently in 10th through 12th grades, the young women who joined the group said they generally felt safe at school, but each had witnessed or been the recipient of charged, sexualized comments from boys at school — behavior they described as “testosteroney,” yet typical and accepted. Even boys who they considered friends would not challenge other boys directly about these comments, some of which felt threatening.

Although the girls generally felt safe at school, they were acutely aware of feeling vulnerable while walking around Santa Cruz. Several had heard of classmates (and, in one case, an older sister) being raped. They were unsure of resources available to them at school and felt they would be unlikely to report incidents of harassment, since they had seen these reports by others lead to vicious social media reactions and ostracism from peers (boys and girls alike). The girls reported admiration for specific teachers and administrators who spoke up about these issues and encouraged their own activism (e.g., walking out in support of choice), but also noted a male teacher who made inappropriate comments about a girl’s outfits and faced no repercussions (while the student was ridiculed by peers for reporting him). These types of reactions discouraged them from speaking up more often or more forcefully.

As a high school senior, one had been looking at colleges and was impressed by the online reporting mechanisms on many college websites; she wondered whether such a link to support might be helpful at the high school level as well.

Service providers generally agree that in Santa Cruz County, **crisis support is relatively strong**. (As noted below, there are some notable exceptions.)

Section Summary: Assets and Signs of Progress

- **Partnerships:** SART, Justice and Gender Task Force, Community Corrections Partnership
- **Increasing Awareness:** Conferences, trauma-informed care and training
- **Local Innovations and Resources:** Housing (much more is needed, but recent increases in funding and supply have helped), placing advocates inside community health settings, new and better options for men who do harm
- **Strong crisis support** from existing advocates and shelters



Gaps and Room for Improvement

Not surprisingly, each of the assets and signs of progress listed above has a flip side. Indeed, the **inconsistencies** within agencies and sectors constitute room for improvement on their own. Survivors can and do have very different experiences, depending on the individuals they happen to encounter — in reporting an assault, interacting with health care providers, seeking counseling or substance use treatment, in courtrooms, classrooms, and clinics.

The **lack of a local SART** looms large for respondents across the health care, law enforcement, and service sectors. As noted above, a SART may be returning to Santa Cruz County in 2019, but for now it remains in Santa Clara County.

Despite the attempts to collaborate across sectors and convene action-oriented groups such as the Gender and Justice Task Force and Community Corrections Partnership, **agencies and staff are stretched thin. Silos persist**, and approaches are not always aligned with best practice as would be expected from written policies and procedures in place. Too often, respondents noted, individual agencies have dedicated, trained, compassionate people interacting with victims/survivors alongside those who make harmful, insensitive comments despite required training and peer norms.

Respondents mentioned a variety of **harmful reactions that minimize violent behavior**: judges who still say, of an abuser, “Well, [despite the abuse], he appears to be a good father,” or first responders who tell a woman, “This case will never go anywhere,” or “In the scheme of things, this wasn’t that bad.” These initial responses are so critical to everything that follows, and respondents from all sectors are frustrated that despite their efforts to educate colleagues and highlight the harm these types of comments cause, they continue far too often. Both survivors and those who serve them identified reactions by first responders as an area for improvement, calling for more patience and understanding in the crucial early moments after an incident or event. Trauma-informed approaches have not filtered through all levels of interaction with survivors. For example, judges were singled out for making inappropriate comments and/or misinterpreting a woman’s body language, anger, or frustration.

Training may meet requirements, but **requirements are minimal** (a few hours every other year, for example) and compete for scarce bandwidth in agencies dealing with many other issues. Even when required, training must be repeated regularly and incorporated into workflows, policies,

procedures, and performance expectations — which again varies greatly by agency and even by teams within agencies.

Local law enforcement agencies do try to go beyond mandated Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) training about domestic violence, which is only required every other year. The City of Santa Cruz Police Department funds a full-time Victim Advocate within its Investigations Section, who supports law enforcement officers by providing ongoing feedback and training and promoting agency-wide adoption of initiatives such as Start by Believing, a campaign to “flip the script” on criminal justice responses to reports of sexual assault. Law enforcement interviewees report that in accord with best practice, dual arrests (in which both victim and perpetrator are arrested in cases of domestic violence calls) are discouraged by policies, procedures, and training and are exceedingly rare, with none reported in the last year.

Santa Cruz County continues to top lists of the **least affordable housing markets** in the country, which makes it even more difficult than it already is for victims of violence to leave their living situations — and for local service providers to help them do so. Housing is part of a much larger regional and state issue, but it is a particularly acute issue for survivors. Local advocacy groups are **working with landlords as partners** to negotiate housing for women who may have prior histories with inconsistent utility payments, broken leases, or spotty work histories that would make them appear to be risky tenants on paper, but whose issues are more a reflection of their past situations than their future prospects.

As noted above, many survivors are grappling with **behavioral health and/or substance use** issues. Integrated behavioral health initiatives are helping, but not enough. Even when counselors are available, they may not have specific training to deal with the consequences of trauma. Survivors, too, have often normalized the trauma and violence they experienced (often since childhood or adolescence) and are either unsure or would do any good or, like one survivor we spoke with, believe it is unnecessary even when available.

Several respondents noted the need for more *pro bono* **legal assistance** to help survivors navigate the complexities of court cases as well as the implications of “decoupling” from leases, joint accounts, and, for Latinx survivors, dealing with immigration concerns and fear of deportation. Many survivors expressed confusion about the legal system. While advocates and victims services staff can help considerably, this only serves women who access crisis services or are already involved in a legal process; many more could benefit from support and coaching to

understand their options and move through an often lengthy, complicated, and frustrating process.

As illustrated by the **missing data “wish list”** described above, another area for improvement involves collecting various types of data, including data on long-term outcomes (for survivors, perpetrators, and children), perpetrators’ experiences of childhood violence themselves, and disposition of legal cases among them.

Women of all ages, incomes, relationship types, and walks of life are vulnerable to violence, but some populations experience **heightened vulnerability and risk** because they lack (or perceive they lack) options. Field workers, women experiencing homelessness, women with language and/or cultural barriers, women lacking legal documents, and members of the LGBTQI community are some of the groups of women whose needs were particularly highlighted by interview respondents. Some women experiencing homelessness perceive the domestic violence shelter system as hostile and skeptical of their reports of violence in their lives (according to some, perceived as “gaming the system” in order to receive shelter and housing). Women in these situations also had far more negative opinions of law enforcement, based on their prior encounters. Several said their status as people experiencing homelessness was held against them (e.g., not taking a report of violence as seriously compared to if they had reported the same incident if they had been housed).

Santa Cruz County’s pilot program for a different approach to **batterer intervention programs** is in part a response to recognition that recidivism rates are high for this population and there is little evidence, if any, that existing programs are effective.

The question of **how and whether to serve men who harm women** is a complicated one. Advocates note that women in their shelters ask, “Can’t you fix him?” They are not always ready to sever ties with the father of their children. Respondents across sectors noted that even if women leave these relationships, the men who abused them are likely to move on to other relationships — as both partners and fathers. For this reason, to break generational cycles of violence, some believe a minimum investment should be in parenting education (and co-parenting in the custodial and legal arrangements that can unfold). And as noted above, data on recurring violence, past (childhood) experiences of violence, and other longer-term outcomes are sparse.

Although the results will not be available immediately, outcomes from Santa Cruz County’s new A.B. 372 **pilot program** (as well as findings

from the other five counties participating in the same program) may help identify other options that improve on the current *status quo*.

As noted above, respondents *generally* felt that acute, crisis services met most urgent needs fairly well (although more resources, housing, counseling, and substance use services are needed). However, they felt the opposite about the domains where most researchers and practitioners believe we can make the greatest difference: **primary prevention**. Community norms, media and societal messages about gender roles, early childhood experiences, school messages and interventions (e.g., regarding healthy relationships, dating violence, and cyberbullying) are generally described as receiving far less attention and resources than they deserve, given their potential impact.

Attempts to intervene on a societal scale and at younger ages naturally turn attention to **schools**. Like other organizations, schools are far from consistent in their approaches, although they do attempt to address issues related to school climate and connectedness to school, as tracked in the annual California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS). Messages about consent, boundaries, bullying and cyberbullying, the role of alcohol, and gender roles and fluidity are part of health and Physical Education (PE) classes, topics at school assemblies, and sometimes incorporated into other class content as well.

For many years, CPVAW has supported a martial arts-based self-defense curriculum in schools that is offered through Physical Education classes in area middle and high schools. The course begins and ends with mixed groups of boys and girls, but separates them by gender for content that focuses on practical ways to respond to conflict, defuse situations, or, if necessary, defend oneself. In addition to practicing physical moves, the course covers broader issues such as consent.

Pre- and post-course surveys are completed by students and focus on their changes in awareness about how they carry themselves and confidence using the skills (yelling, kicking, punching), but do not address the school climate and interpersonal interactions (e.g., consent) that are more aligned with primary prevention. In addition, some respondents (including survivors) raised concerns about hitting/kicking/punching becoming triggering or traumatic events for those currently or recently experiencing violence at home, especially because there does not appear to be screening for these sensitivities before classes start.

Section Summary: Gaps and Opportunities for Improvement

- **Social norms** that condone or minimize harassment
- **SART:** Bringing SART services back to Santa Cruz County
- **Inconsistent and harmful responses** by first responders, judges, health care providers, and others
- Lack of effective interventions for **men who do harm**
- Crisis response receives more emphasis than **primary prevention**

Current and Future Opportunities

Echoing the comments of many interview respondents, the National Center for Injury and Violence Prevention (NCIPC) at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends a comprehensive public health approach that combines individual skills and actions (e.g., among victims/survivors of violence) with those that address peer, family, school, and other social environments.

In its most recent compilation of recommended strategies supported by evaluation findings,²⁴ CDC/NCIPC proposes a set of intimate partner violence prevention strategies and approaches that match many of the opportunities identified by Santa Cruz County respondents from different sectors. Although geared specifically to intimate partner violence prevention, the strategies also have the potential to affect other types of violence against women (e.g., through bystander empowerment and education, or making young women less vulnerable to human trafficking).

Table 1 shows examples of efforts underway in Santa Cruz County that match the CDC/NCIPC categories. Although much more could be accomplished in each area, it is encouraging that organizations, programs, and policies are in place across this spectrum of activities, even if they currently tilt more to crisis response and intervention than prevention.

²⁴Niolon, P. H., Kearns, M., Dills, J., Rambo, K., Irving, S., Armstead, T., & Gilbert, L. (2017). *Preventing Intimate Partner Violence Across the Lifespan: A Technical Package of Programs, Policies, and Practices*. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Table 1: CDC/NCIPC Recommended Strategies and Approaches for IPV Prevention

Strategy	Sample Approaches	Santa Cruz City/ County Examples
Teaching safe and healthy relationship skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Social-emotional learning programs for youth ▪ Healthy relationship programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Existing school-based curricula (though not consistently offered/ implemented) ▪ Recent integrated behavioral health group (County Office of Education)
Engaging influential adults and peers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Men and boys as allies ▪ Bystander empowerment/ education ▪ Family-based programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Training for health care, law enforcement, court, school personnel on responding appropriately ▪ Batterer Intervention Program pilot ▪ Papás ▪ Men Overcoming Abusive Behavior (MOAB)
Disrupting developmental pathways toward partner violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Early childhood home visits ▪ Preschool enrichment ▪ Parenting skills ▪ Treatment for at-risk children/youth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Health Services Agency/ Nurse Family Partnership home visits ▪ Triple P ▪ Choosing Wisely curriculum (alternative education) ▪ Probation/Juvenile Hall curricula
Creating protective environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School climate/ safety ▪ Workplace climate; neighborhood safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Existing school climate efforts (though not consistently offered/ implemented) ▪ Start by Believing pledges ▪ Cabrillo online reporting mechanism
Strengthening economic supports for families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Household financial security ▪ Work-family supports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community Action Board (CAB) ▪ Workforce Investment Board (WIB)

Strategy	Sample Approaches	Santa Cruz City/ County Examples
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Human Services Department (HSD) CalWorks ▪ Cabrillo College programs
Supporting survivors to increase safety and lessen harms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Victim services, including treatment/ support for survivors ▪ Housing ▪ First responder ▪ Patient-centered approaches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monarch Services, Walnut Avenue Family and Women’s Center ▪ SART back to Santa Cruz ▪ Housing First; Landlord Outreach ▪ Law enforcement agencies ▪ Hospital/ clinic screening and referral programs ▪ Safety Net clinics/ embedded advocates

In addition to current local examples, interviewees mentioned initiatives in other counties or regions that could be considered for Santa Cruz County. These included:

- **My Strength** social media campaign geared to high school boys (sponsored by the California Coalition Against Sexual Assault, CALCASA), designed to prevent first-time perpetration of sexual violence.
- **Green Dot** bystander education to encourage a culture shift about tolerance for violence. (Women’s Crisis Support/Defensa de Mujeres was a pilot site for this program in 2011-12, but it is not currently in place.)
- **Dating Matters Teen Violence Prevention Capacity Assessment and Planning Tool and Policy Guide** — online system that helps local health departments and their school and community partners assess and monitor their capacity for implementing a comprehensive teen dating violence initiative. The DM-CAPT allows for organizations to gather information on organizational and intervention specific capacity, instantly generate automated capacity assessment reports, and work



with partners to determine capacity priorities and develop a web-based action plan for monitoring capacity building efforts.

- **Shifting Boundaries** curriculum (Prevention Institute) — middle school sexual harassment prevention curriculum to address precursors to dating violence (e.g., Respecting Boundaries Agreements, student hot spot mapping of safe and unsafe areas, awareness campaigns to increase reporting and promote names/contacts for school counselors).
- **Information Escrow** — a practice in which people are reported for harassing behavior, but no actions are taken unless there is a second complain about the same person. The idea is to treat harassment as a testing ground for sexual violence, to avoid letting “small” issues slide (so more are reported), and to have proportional consequences in place (so employees or students don’t feel responsible for getting someone fired, for example, which might make them more hesitant to report harassing behavior).
- **California Partnership to End Domestic Violence** — recommended policies for schools to adopt on school climate, healthy relationships, Board policies, and bullying.
- **Chula Vista Domestic Abuse Response Team (DART)** — a law enforcement, District Attorney, Child Welfare partnership to increase monitoring, send strong social norms messages, and reduce repeat DV incidents.
- **Documentation of Domestic Violence Incidents** — By documenting domestic violence cases as thoroughly as sexual assaults (e.g., with photos of bruises, obtained during an exam), some counties have dramatically increased their felony filing and plea rates.

Section Summary: Current and Future Opportunities

- **Santa Cruz County has programs across the CDC/NCIPC recommended categories**, although in general all would benefit from greater investments in primary prevention:
 - Teaching safe and healthy relationship skills
 - Engaging influential adults and peers
 - Disrupting developmental pathways toward partner violence
 - Creating protective environments
 - Strengthening economic supports for families
 - Supporting survivors to increase safety and lessen harms
- Specific models were identified of evidence-based programs, policies, data collection, documentation, and criminal justice responses.

Recommendations to CPVAW

Despite limited resources, CPVAW is an influential voice in our community on issues of violence against women. Through the advocacy and efforts of individual Commissioners, sponsorship of its annual conference, and ability to highlight issues for Santa Cruz City Council members, CPVAW can shape prevention, programs, and public policy.

The following recommendations are based on the needs assessment data sweep and interviews, and are presented for the Commission's considerations as it considers next steps.



1. **Join forces with the revamped County Domestic Violence Commission.** Whether the County Commission absorbs the Gender and Justice Task Force, assumes a broader victims' rights portfolio, or some combination of the two, it is likely to address many of the issues of concern to CPVAW as well. It makes sense to consider some joint projects, such as a conference sponsored by both entities. In addition, it would be useful to have each Commission send a representative to attend the others' meetings to identify opportunities to act in concert whenever possible.
2. **Propose a set of data elements to DataShare Santa Cruz County.** A joint project of the Health Services Agency (HSA), Health Improvement Partnership (HIP), and other local funders, DataShare Santa Cruz is an interactive data platform that was launched in March 2019 and will become more useful as it is populated with more and more locally relevant data. Currently, DataShare houses very little data about violence against women — but CPVAW could propose adding key elements and/or a special data dashboard to make these data more robust and accessible. DataShare's Steering Committee is in the process of determining how data elements will be added and the costs involved, but this would be an excellent way to continue highlighting gaps and issues in our City and County.
3. **Support dissemination of meaningful data and stories.** Whether or not more data become available through DataShare or other sources, CPVAW could promote ideas such as using the Sentinel's October domestic violence calls tracking to explore longer term trajectories of what happens to women, children, and men who do harm to them. This could raise awareness of the

issue overall as well as leverage points for prevention (e.g., in early care and education, schools, parenting programs).

4. **Choose a rotating theme or area of emphasis to maximize results.** This could be a prerogative of the incoming chair; with short terms, it may make sense to work on two overlapping themes or focus areas simultaneously. This could take the form of focusing on a particular population (children, adolescents, women experiencing homelessness, incarcerated women), a sector (law enforcement, health care, education), or policy focus. Each year's theme could be the catalyst for guest appearances at Commission meetings, conference content, reports to the City Council, etc.
5. **Monitor an evaluation of the Batterer Intervention Program pilot.** As one of six county pilots, Santa Cruz County could contribute to learning more about a topic that lacks promising interventions.
6. **Use a formal Request for Proposals (RFP) process to award CPVAW funds in the future.** In the past, CPVAW's limited resources have supported self-defense classes in local schools. These classes are well-received by students and teachers and have many fans in the broader community. Asking organizations to compete for funds is not meant to detract from the self-defense classes as a worthy project; rather, in the interest of fairness and transparency, it allows CPVAW to consider other options and opens up CPVAW's support to a broader range of organizations and initiatives.

Based on the needs assessment findings, criteria for RFP applicants could include:

- The degree to which the project/initiative addresses the **social norms and attitudes** that are precursors of violence
- The degree to which the project/initiative **addresses a gap or need**, especially one that would not be otherwise addressed
- Where the project/initiative falls along a **spectrum from primary prevention to crisis response** (all are worthwhile, but CPVAW may consider tilting toward primary prevention efforts, given its name and vision/mission, and/or ask applicants to explain how they view prevention)

- **Aligns with the existing evidence base** and/or **advances the evidence base** or understanding of outcomes (e.g., by including a sound evaluation strategy or testing a new idea in a rigorous way)
- Leads to an **impact** (e.g., on numbers of people, multiple generations, systems, age groups, influencers, etc.).

Section Summary: Recommendations to CPVAW

Despite limited resources, CPVAW is an influential voice in our community on issues of violence against women. The Commissioners can use their voice to have a greater impact by:

- Joining forces with the revamped **County Domestic Violence Commission**.
- Proposing a set of **data elements** to DataShare Santa Cruz County.
- Supporting **dissemination** of meaningful data and stories.
- Choosing a **rotating theme or area of emphasis** to maximize results.
- Monitoring an **evaluation of the Batterer Intervention Program pilot**. As one of six county pilots, Santa Cruz County could contribute to learning more about a topic that lacks promising interventions.
- Using a **formal Request for Proposals (RFP) process** to award CPVAW funds in the future, and using this mechanism to focus on prevention.

Appendix A: Needs Assessment Interview Respondents

Many people took time from busy work and personal schedules to respond candidly to questions about what is currently in place in their organizations or sectors and, most importantly, what could be improved in the future. Without their input, this needs assessment could not have been as detailed or comprehensive.

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In addition to representatives from key sectors involved in preventing and responding to violence against women, we made a special effort to hear from survivors themselves. Women of all ages, many in the midst of some of the most trying times in their lives, took the time to share painful memories and experiences with the consultant, an interpreter, and with one another in group interviews. We are so grateful for their participation in this effort and hope that their futures will offer safety, stability, and healing.

Because they were offered confidentiality to encourage candid responses about services, we cannot list them here, but also want to thank Brooke Newman (Downtown Streets Team and CPVAW Commissioner), Evyn Simpson (Homeless Services Center), and the team at Monarch Services (Angelica Perez, Maria Barranco, Kalyne Foster Renda, and Sydney Rogers) for connecting us to these survivors. We also thank the fabulous, feisty, fearless high school students (you know who you are!) who trusted us with stories we could not have heard in any other way and gave us an invaluable window into current high school life. All of these women helped us look beyond statistics, reports, and data to understand more about how violence and the threat of violence affect daily life in our County. A heartfelt thank-you to all of you.