



Council on Crime and Justice

Victims'/Partners' Experience with the Criminal Justice System

*A Domestic Violence Study focusing on Probation in Hennepin
County*

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2002, the Battered Women's Justice Project subcontracted with the Council on Crime and Justice to conduct in-depth interviews with women on their experiences with the Criminal Justice System, specifically with probation. In-depth interviews were conducted with 14 women whose partners, or former partners, were under intensive probationary supervision as a result of a domestic assault conviction. Analysis of the interview transcripts resulted in seven theme areas which are discussed in detail in this report.

- **Role of probation services:** When asked about the role that probation services should play in the lives of offenders and victims, the women interviewed for this project identified four key roles: 1) Holding the Probationer Accountable; 2) Providing Victim Support; 3) Keeping Victims Informed; and 4) Seeking Victim Input. A critical aspect of how women utilized probation services was based on how confidential they perceived their interactions with probation to be. Women wanted to know that what they shared with a probation officer would be kept confidential. This issue was often a concern for safety and prevented communication between the victim and probation officer.
- **Probation in context of overall safety:** Some women discussed an ongoing concern for their safety and the role of probation in their safety. However, many women discussed how from their perspective, probation had a limited ability to make them safe.
- **Mandated programming viewed as necessary for change:** A common theme from this study was the importance that many victims place on the mandating and enforcement of programming. For many women, the use of mandated programming is critical for promoting accountability and change in the probationer. The women who believe this see their partner's issues as stemming from childhood trauma, mental health, or chemical dependency problems and want probation to be addressing the root of these problems by providing and enforcing treatment. If these services are not enforced, there is a concern that the offender won't change and will continue to be abusive.
- **Women's perspectives on the impact of probation on probationer:** The women interviewed often discussed three core elements of probation which they saw as having the most impact on changing attitudes and behavior. **Monitoring:** Women often linked monitoring as an effective tool for probationer accountability. **Programming:** When an offender participated in an anger management program, women saw an impact on the probationer's attitude and recognition of abusive behavior. **Pending Incarceration:** While women often preferred probation and services to jail time for their partner or former partner, they did see the possibility of jail time as an important deterrent to future

abuse. Women felt safer because their perpetrators knew that further violence or violations of their probation order could lead to time in jail.

- **Distrust of Criminal Justice System:** It was common that women's previous experiences with the criminal justice system influenced how they approached their probation experience. Although there were a range of positive and negative experiences, a distrust of the criminal justice system was a common finding of this study. The key areas where women were most impacted by the criminal justice system were with police response to their calls for help and their experience of the court process. Women often talked about not being taken seriously nor being treated as a unique case, and rather being treated as "just another battered woman". The quality of these other experiences had an impact on the level of trust and engagement victims have with probation.
- **Role of Victim Advocates:** Almost every woman discussed the positive role of victim advocates in their experience of the criminal justice system. Advocates contributed to women's experiences through providing education, resources, and support which contributed to their safety. Women also discussed the need for increased advocacy for victims of domestic violence.
- **Women's Recommendations for the Criminal Justice System:** During the course of the interview, the women discussed areas where they felt the criminal justice system could improve. These areas include: having a centralized contact for victims, promoting safety during the court process, further training on domestic violence for criminal justice officials, and improved communication between the justice system and victims.

INTRODUCTION

Advocates and probation departments have encouraged the use of intensive supervision for domestic violence offenders who pose a heightened risk to their victims, typically because they have a history of abusive behavior or other actions indicative of dangerousness. Hennepin County Community Corrections has a specialized Intensive Domestic Abuse Program, which provides intensive supervision of repeat domestic abuse offenders.

This report presents findings from in-depth interviews with women whose partners were clients of Hennepin County Community Corrections' specialized Intensive Domestic Abuse Program. This interview project, commissioned by the Battered Women's Justice Project (BWJP), and conducted by the Council on Crime and Justice (the Council), was designed to inform a larger Domestic Violence Safety and Accountability Audit being conducted by BWJP in collaboration with Hennepin County Community Corrections. More information about BWJP and the Council can be found in Appendix A of this report.

History of the Safety and Accountability Audit

BWJP and Hennepin County have been working on a multi-year, jurisdiction-wide Safety and Accountability Audit. The Safety and Accountability Audit (SAA) methodology was adapted by Minnesota-based Praxis International¹ from the field of Institutional Ethnography. The SAA methodology is based on the theory that most individual behavior of personnel within institutions is determined by the ways in which the institution organizes and structures their work. To improve the responses of institutional actors and processes to domestic violence cases, a SAA systematically analyzes the many factors that determine a person's actions and work routines on the job within the justice agency in which he or she is employed.

In 2002, BWJP began working collaboratively with Hennepin County Community Corrections to examine its Intensive Domestic Abuse Program, which is located at two of Hennepin County's field service offices. This partnership identified the need to understand intensive supervision from the perspective of women who have experienced domestic violence. The Safety and Accountability Audit methodology traditionally utilizes focus groups in order to gather feedback from victims of domestic violence. In order to gain a more in-depth perspective of women's experiences with probation, an interview project was developed in order to enhance BWJP's larger SAA audit of Hennepin County Community Corrections.

The Interview Project

In 2002, the Battered Women's Justice Project subcontracted with the Council on Crime and Justice to conduct in-depth interviews with women on their general experiences with the

¹ For more information about Praxis International and Safety and Accountability Audits, see Praxis International's website at www.praxisinternational.org

criminal justice system, but also their experiences specifically with probation. In-depth interviews were conducted with 14 women whose partners, or former partners, were under intensive probationary supervision as a result of a domestic assault conviction. These interviews were then analyzed and the findings are presented in this report.

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

There is growing evidence in the fields of domestic violence and criminal justice to support the use of intensive supervision for domestic violence offenders (Duffy et al, 2003; Hofford, 1991; Mederos et al, retrieved 2005). Pro-arrest policies have increased the number of offenders who are arrested and convicted of domestic violence offenses. However, most domestic violence offenders are not sent to jail and are instead placed on probation (Ames, 2002). This increase of domestic violence offenders on probation caseloads has intensified attention to the need for this group of offenders to have specialized supervision. The development of specialized probation programs for domestic violence offenders is also influenced by advocates for victims, who argue that the criminal justice system needs to play a key role in providing a systemic response that prioritizes the safety of victims and accountability of offenders (Mederos et al, retrieved 2005; Johnson, 2001).

Victim safety is a key concern in the criminal justice response to domestic violence. Unlike other crimes, with domestic violence, the offender typically continues to have ongoing access to the victim and the ability to continue and escalate abusive behavior. Victims of domestic violence also face an increased risk of retaliation after the perpetrator becomes involved with the criminal justice system (Hart, 1990). Therefore, victims often believe that they have a lot to risk by engaging with the criminal justice system. In addition, victims of domestic violence are also known to face additional barriers to engagement in the criminal justice process such as being blamed for their victimization. To achieve victim safety in these cases it is crucial to understand the nature of victim reluctance in engaging with both the criminal justice system and probationers (Hart, 1990).

In addition to advocating for specialized probation supervision it is also argued that different standards for assessing the intensity and parameters of probation monitoring should be used for domestic violence offenders versus those established for other types of crimes. Typical guidelines such as criminal history, employment status, and image in the community, should not be considered with the same type of weight as used with other crimes (Mederos et al, retrieved 2005).

The literature on probation supervision for domestic violence offenders discusses four components often central to intensive supervision: 1) a longer probationary period, 2) specialized units of probation officers who are trained to work with domestic violence offenders, 3) established guidelines and expectations around victim contact, and 4) mandated attendance programming, including domestic violence programming and chemical dependency treatment when warranted.

In domestic violence cases, probation officers often perform a variety of tasks, including domestic violence assessment, sentencing investigation, providing specialized services, and victim assistance (Hart, 1990). Specialized services may include mandating completion of a batterer education/treatment program, regular reporting to a probation officer, reading and writing assignments aimed at examining thinking and beliefs that contribute to abusive behavior, and periodic unannounced home visits (Hart, 1990). However, the role of probationer as victim assistant and the experiences of women whose partners are under supervision for a domestic violence offense has not received a lot of attention in the literature and are important areas for study. For instance, there is little information on whether or not probation officers actively involve victims in the probationary process. More importantly researchers have failed to examine what types of experiences victims have had with probation officers and how they view the officers assigned to their case.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to better understand the experiences of women when their partner is placed on intensive supervision for a domestic violence offense. In this study, women's experiences with probation were gathered utilizing a qualitative approach of conducting individual semi-structured interviews.

METHODOLOGY

Study Design

The design of this study was developed in collaboration with BWJP and Hennepin County Community Corrections and involved two phases. Phase I involved conducting focus groups with Hennepin County probation officers. Phase II involved conducting in-depth interviews with victims of domestic violence.

Phase I

In order to better understand the nature of probation officer's involvement with victims two focus groups were conducted with probation officers. One focus group included probation officers involved with pre-trial, conditional release, and investigations (group 1 below). The second focus group included probation officers involved in the supervised release of domestic violence offenders (group 2 below). The interview guides used for these focus groups can be found in Appendices B and C. The findings from these focus groups helped to shape the focus of this study. As outlined in Table 1, eight major themes emerged from these focus groups.

Table 1 Themes from Focus Groups with Probation Officers

Themes	Group 1 Pre-trial, Conditional Release & Investigations	Group 2 Supervised Release
When more information is needed from victims, there is a very short turn around time by which to gather the information.	x	
It is hard to make contact with victims because there isn't an address or phone number.	x	x
Language and cultural barriers are an issue.	x	x
Victims often don't know what they are getting into when they first call 911.	x	x
It is very common for a probationer to be in a relationship during supervised release.	n/a	x
Contact is usually initiated by victims.		x

Phase II

In planning this study both qualitative (open-ended interviews) and quantitative (surveys) approaches were considered. The strengths and limitations of each approach were weighed. Ultimately, it was decided that conducting qualitative semi-structured interviews was the best approach, in order to elicit victim's experiences in their own words. In addition, it was decided that a qualitative approach would be more culturally appropriate and would allow for a more exploratory analysis. The interview guide was developed to capture women's experiences with probation and their lived experiences during the time that their partner (perpetrator) was on probation. See Appendix F for the interview guide implemented for this study.

In order to fully represent women of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, attempts were made to over-sample Women of Color. Six racial/ethnic groups were identified as prominent in Hennepin County: African-American, Latina, Somali, Hmong, Native American, and Caucasian. Each of these groups were sampled for this study. Because many Hennepin County probationers are African American and Caucasian, additional strategies were implemented to target the other four racial/ethnic groups and are described below.

Sampling Methods

In May, 2003, the sample for the victim interviews was selected first by identifying the population of male clients who were currently on supervision for domestic assault. This population totaled approximately 1,365 probationers and included 33 Latino, 6 Hmong, 6 Somali, 54 American Indian, 700 White and 669 Black males as entries into Hennepin County's electronic probation system. In an attempt to include cases from each racial/ethnic group, all partners of probationers from Latino, Hmong, Somali, and American Indian were included in the sample. For the Caucasian and African American groups, a *random sampling* approach was used to identify approximately 100 cases in each group. Once the sample was identified, cases were screened to make sure that the probationer was on supervised probation for at least six months. In addition, only victims still living with the offender or that had children in common were considered for the study. A variety of sources were utilized to identify probationer's victims, including the following:

- Minneapolis Police system (CAPRS)- Provides information on calls for service and police reports
- Hennepin County Probation Adult Field Service (AFS)- Provides information on all probation cases
- Hennepin County Criminal Court System (SIP)- Provides information on criminal court cases
- MN Statewide Supervision System (SSS)- Holds all state detention facility and probation information.

- Hennepin County Civil Automatic Tracking System (CATS)- Holds information on all Hennepin County civil matters, including orders for protection and harassment orders
- Document Imaging

Screening and Recruitment Process

In accordance with the data sharing and privacy agreement with Hennepin County, a representative from Probation Services made the initial contact with potential interview participants in this study. All potential participants were contacted by phone. A screening tool was utilized to identify the race/ethnicity of each victim, whether they qualified for the study, and their interest in participating. A member of the Council on Crime and Justice research team was present during the initial calls and made the initial scheduling arrangements with participants. Participants were asked whether they had a preference in regards to the race of the interviewer and were given the choice of where to conduct the interview. Participants were paid a \$25 stipend for their time.

The initial target of the study was to have 40-50 interviews representing a range of races and cultures. Due to barriers faced in participant recruitment this number range was not met. Of the cases sampled, a total of 99 women qualified for participation. Of these, 50 had telephone numbers which were disconnected or no longer valid. Of the 49 cases with valid phone number information 28 (57%) did not return phone calls or declined participation. Of the women contacted, a total of 21 (43%) women agreed to participate. Of the women who agreed to participate 7 (33%) initially agreed to participate in an interview, scheduled to meet with an interviewer, but later did not follow through with meeting the interviewer. Ultimately, a total of 14 interviews were completed. Of the 14 women who participated in the interview, one was Latina, 7 were White and 6 were Black.

Table 2 details participant sampling, contact, and outcomes for each racial/ethnic group. Hmong and Somali ethnicity is not coded by Hennepin County. Therefore, in order to target these groups probationers were identified by asking a service provider from each community to review names of probationers to in order to identify possible matches. In order to identify Hmong probationers, a Hmong community advocate was engaged to review the names of probationers coded as Asian. Similarly, in order to identify Somali probationers, a Somali community victim advocate was engaged to review the names of probationers coded as African/African-American.

Table 2

Race	Total Cases	Qualified Probationer and Victim	Disconnected/Invalid Phone Number	Did not return calls or declined to participate	Agreed to participate	Interview Conducted
Native American	54 (of 54)	10	5	4	1	0
Latino	33 (of 33)	16	8	7	1	1
Hmong	6 (of 6)	4	3	1	0	0
Somali	6 (of 6)	4	3	1	0	0
Caucasian	100 (650)	33	12	11	10	7
African American	104 (669)	32	19	4	9	6
Totals	297 (of total population)	99	50	28	21	14

In order to offer the choice of a cultural match for interview participants, racially diverse interviewers were recruited and trained to conduct the interviews. Seven interviewers were recruited and retained. See Appendix D for the interview training curriculum utilized for this study. Interviews were conducted between May and October of 2003. Interviewers obtained informed consent from each participant. In addition, each participant consented for the interview to be audio recorded. These recordings were then transcribed by a staff person from the Council on Crime and Justice.

Sampling and Recruitment Barriers

This project faced a few different methodological limitations in the areas of sampling and recruitment methods. One of the intended focuses of this project was to gain a better understanding of how racial or class factors may impact a woman's experience of the criminal justice system. Unfortunately this project was not able to recruit enough participants in general and specifically participants of color to conduct an analysis of the impact of race and class on these women's experiences. First of all, finding victim contact information was an arduous process. In order to identify victims of probationers and their contact information, multiple data sources had to be accessed. The race of probationers was often easily accessible but it was not possible to assume the race of victims based on the probationer's race. For

example, some of the Caucasian women interviewed were involved with African-American probationers. In addition, as mentioned previously, Hennepin County does not track ethnic groups such as Somali and Hmong. Because of this, the project had to rely on identifying probationers and potential victims in these groups through the association of last names with each group. Both of these sampling limitations made it more difficult to target Women of Color.

The high rate of disconnected phone numbers severely limited access to potential victim participants. When a woman was not home, a message was left, and almost all of these calls were not returned. Some women who were contacted expressed hesitancy to participate and often refused. It was common that women would share that they had never had any contact with probation and therefore did not feel their participation would be beneficial.

In addition, having a member of the Hennepin County probation services department make the first contact with women may have further hindered participation. Any fear or distrust of the justice system or probation may have prevented some women from being willing to participate in this study. This particular sampling strategy could not have been changed, as it was necessary for Hennepin County to make the first contact in order to use Hennepin County data.

Even once a woman agreed to participate in an interview, project staff faced further challenges in successfully meeting with women and completing the interview. On a few different occasions, project staff would schedule a day and time for an interview, but the woman would not show up. In order to increase interview participation among those who agreed to be interviewed, a reminder call was made by research staff a few hours before the scheduled interview. This seemed to increase participation, but no shows were nevertheless a problem. In order to retain participants, after a woman did not make a scheduled appointment, at least two attempts were made to contact the woman to reschedule the interview.

It is quite common and anticipated for studies to face barriers in the recruitment and retention of participants. However, because of the subject matter and the small number of available participants in various cultural/ethnic groups (i.e., Somali and Hmong), it is not surprising the response was poor. As far as sampling, it may have been helpful to have utilized different sampling sources in replacement of or in addition to the one implemented in this study. Future studies may want to utilize victim advocacy programs and other programs which work with women who have experienced domestic violence, instead of a representative from the criminal justice system, in order to explain the study and gain participation. This approach may help to decrease the stigma of participating.

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

A team of two researchers from the Council on Crime and Justice worked with two staff members from the Battered Women's Justice Project (BWJP) to analyze the interview transcripts utilizing a collaborative analysis approach. This team worked together to identify and code common themes from the interviews. Council on Crime and Justice staff later re-read the interview transcripts and conducted additional analysis in order to further focus and refine the findings. The interviews were analyzed both by utilizing the framework of questions developed for the interviews (deductive analysis) and also by identifying patterns and themes that emerged from the interviews (inductive analysis). Interview quotes are used throughout the findings section in order to provide support and examples for the various themes and findings. In addition, quote charts can be found in Appendix G, which includes more exhaustive quotes to support the findings.

Analysis of the interview transcripts resulted in seven theme areas which are discussed in detail in this report. Below is an outline of the areas of findings, followed by a detailed discussion of each area.

- Role of probation services
- Probation in context of overall safety
- Mandated programming viewed as necessary for change
- Women's perspectives on the impact of probation on probationer
- Previous Experience of Criminal Justice System
- Role of Victim Advocates
- Recommendations for Criminal Justice System

Finding 1: Role of Probation Services

A large focus of this study was to better understand how victims of domestic violence conceptualize the role of probation officers in working with the offender. Although the quality and level of probation contact varied for these women, one critical finding is that these women view probation as having a role with both the probationer and the victim. The four prevalent probation roles which emerged in this study are:

- Holding Probationer Accountable
- Providing Victim Support
- Keeping Victims Informed
- Seeking Victim Input

Probationer Accountability

The women interviewed had varied levels of contact and experiences with probation services, but common among all the women's stories was the importance they placed on probationer accountability. Some women described probationer accountability in the context of their own experience with probation, while others discussed it as an area where they had expected more probation involvement.

Women talked about accountability both in terms of holding the offender accountable for his abusive behavior and enforcing the probation order, such as completion of mandated programming or the prohibiting and monitoring of chemical use. When a woman felt that the offender was being held accountable by the probation officer, she used terms and phrases such as, "zero tolerance for foolishness" "authority" and "stern and strict" to describe the probation officer.

Even when women had no direct contact with a probation officer, many commented on their perception that the probation officer was holding their partner accountable. This perception was based on their observations of how seriously the probationer was taking the consequences and monitoring of probation.

However, for some women, their expectation of accountability was not met. One woman discussed how she felt that probation was not being taken seriously by the offender and that the probation officer should have done more to hold the offender accountable:

"Yeah, more accountable. I mean, he can go and try and kill someone, he can go and do whatever. If he wouldn't have known me, that would have been completely different! I mean it is just frustrating knowing that my life has completely changed and his probably...you know, he's got a little inconvenience"

Women often felt that a lack of accountability is sending the signal that what happened to them is insignificant. As one woman put it:

"It would be just kind of nice to know what action is being taken for something that was done to you."

When the expectation of accountability was not met, this was discussed with frustration. For example, one woman discussed how the probation officer was not enforcing attendance at anger management and how the probation officer was just "letting him get away with it." Women who were frustrated often discussed a desire for more enforcement of programming, such as anger management, domestic abuse counseling, and chemical dependency treatment. One woman commented on probation's lack of enforcement of drug screenings:

“I know that if you are pulled out on a random drug screen, you can’t leave. You have to sit there. So, it’s beyond me why this guy is letting him go every time. ‘Oh, you can’t go to the bathroom? Oh well, you can just come back in a few days.’ You know, so it just kind of baffles me that he’s letting him get away with all this and I think that [boyfriend]’s trying to pull something over his eyes.”

Victim Support

Similar to probationer accountability, women also placed value on the role of a probation officer providing support to the victim. Women often described having felt supported when the probation officer expressed concern for their situation, was on their side, and legitimized their experience with the criminal justice system. Feeling this support was critical to their experience of probation as a source of protection.

Women who shared positive experiences with probation services often talked about the concern that the probation officer showed for their situation. Recognizing this concern helped women to trust the probation officer and to identify him or her as part of her support system. One woman commented:

“They checked in with me often and were attentive to me. They wanted to know how I felt and worried about me...that’s what made me trust them and feel that someone was protecting me.”

Another aspect of support for many women was to feel like the probation officer was on their side. One woman relayed a story of a time when she contacted the probation officer with some concerns and the probation officer was able to address these concerns with her husband without him knowing that she called. This experience made her realize, “the probation officer was in my corner.”

Women wanted to be acknowledged in both the abuse they had experienced and also in the negative experiences they had with the criminal justice system. Many women felt like they were not taken seriously at different points in the criminal justice system. One woman discussed a negative experience with a pre-sentencing probation officer and how a different probation officer showed concern for her negative experience:

“Well, he was really nice and he told me that it wasn’t my fault. And when I told him about these other two guys and how bad I was treated, he was just like “You know, we never want to treat anybody like that.”

Keeping the Victim Informed

Women also commonly associated informing the victim as a key role for probation officers. Many of the women interviewed did not know the complete details of the offender’s probation order although this was something they desired to have. Women wanted to be informed about the extent of the probation order and the probationer’s progress. In addition women desired to be kept updated about any changes in status, such as release from the workhouse, change in probation officer, and the termination of probation. Those women who had little or no contact with probation expressed concern over not having information

about the status of the probation order. Many women considered this information as key for them to facilitate their own safety and prioritized this as an area where probation could improve.

Details of Probation Order

When women were asked about the details of the offender's probation order, they tended to have limited knowledge. Often the knowledge they did have was what they obtained from the probationer. This information was viewed as important because they wanted to know what resulted from the court process and what the offender is supposed to be accountable for.

Updates on Progress and Changes in Status

Uncertainty regarding the progress of the offender was often a concern and led women to want more information about whether the perpetrator was meeting his requirements. In addition, some women expressed concern that they were not being kept aware of changes in status, including changes in probation officer, shift to administrative supervision, or when the offender was released from probation. One woman commented on how she knew that her boyfriend was going to see the probation officer, but she had no idea what the purpose of this meeting was or what was discussed.

In contrast, women who shared a positive experience with the probation officer often talked about the updates on progress they received:

“They were really cool. They were very...they...I don't know, they just kept in contact and kind of, you know, I had a piece of mind of this person's doing this or not doing this and I knew that this probation officer would be on him, you know, and keep track of him and that kind of thing. I had a good experience. You know, if I had questions they...I could contact them and they...you know...”

Women often talked about the importance of accessing information about the offender's progress and status for their own safety. One woman shared that her boyfriend received notice of being off probation, but she herself was never contacted:

“So I didn't have any warning or anything if they felt that we wasn't together and no one told me he's out of probation, just to let you know that hey maybe this person will probably come after you, you know, or anything just to know.”

Seeking Victim Input

Women want to have the opportunity to provide input to the probation officer about the probationer's progress. They felt it should be the responsibility of the probation officer to seek feedback from the victim of the probationer. Some women were unclear about whether they had the right to give input, while others held this as an expectation.

“But my understanding too is that he is supposed to be checking in with me also. To see how everything is going and to see if {boyfriend} was, you know, going back to his old patterns or whatnot and that wasn't happening either.”

Often women felt a duty to report any break in probation, especially violations related to drug and alcohol use. They often had this expectation because they believe that their input is needed for the probation officer to do his or her job. The areas of input included what the probationer needs in order to change and what is needed for their own safety. They are aware of the offender's progress on a daily level and may have key insight into whether the offender is progressing.

“If you are so concerned about how he's doing maybe you should, you know, make an appointment with *me* once in a while.”

Women's concerns around not having access to the probation officer were often exacerbated because they felt that their partner was relaying an inaccurate perception of themselves to the probation officer. There is concern that the probationer knows how to come across to the probation officer so that it appears that he is making progress, when he really isn't. These women had a real concern that the probation officer would let their partner off probation without actually knowing whether the abuse is continuing.

“Okay, the offender can go to his probation officer and act sweet as ever like everything is straight and that's the type of person that he was. He could sit in front of somebody and you wouldn't even know that he did the things that he did. So you can be in front of him and he can be, you know, okay on paper and being um the officer and thinking okay he's really doing good...”

This often took the form of probationer's finding ways to pass their drug screenings while they continued to drink and use drugs.

“Oh, they started taking UA's on him... never could catch him because he beats the system. Dude is a genius when it comes to probation. He tells them what they want to hear, dude good. He's real good. I have to give it to him, I've seen him work. He's worked the system.”

Confidentiality

One barrier that many women identified to providing input was related to the confidentiality of information shared with the probation officer. They were worried that what they wanted to share would not be kept confidential and could jeopardize their safety. Women who

experienced this confidentiality talked about how they value this, often discussing how it raised their trust in the probation officer and contributed to an increased sense of protection. One woman knew that any information she shared should be kept confidential, but was still hesitant because she feared for her safety:

“I don’t know what they could do. I don’t know what they...I mean I know that whatever I say is confidential, but there’s just always that fear, just because his dad’s side of the family has a bunch of violent men that have been in jail and that have killed people and he’s threatened that they are going to come after me.”

Finding 2: Probation in the context of overall safety

It is important to understand that although the women interviewed did not relay that they were in imminent danger, many shared an ongoing concern for their safety.

“I see in him in the long run that if he doesn’t get the help, he could end up in jail for murder. And the sad part is that it could be me that he murders too. And that’s a sad, sad thing.”

The women interviewed had varying perspectives on how they viewed probation in the context of their overall safety. For some women, they had experiences where they felt that the work of probation was directly linked to their safety.

“The probation- and I’m sure we’ll get to that- has actually somewhat, with out being dramatic and over-exaggerating- has saved my life right now....[later]....It has saved my life a lot of times, because I would use that to say...when he would threaten me, I’d say “well, I’ll call {probation officer}” or I know what I’ll do, I’ll just call {probation officer} about it. So, I would use that to my advantage, you know.”

However, many of the women interviewed felt that they themselves held the key to safety and that probation had a limited ability to make them safe. This was especially true for women who continued to live or be involved with the offender.

“There is nothing that they can actually do to make somebody feel safe. I mean, if you’re still with the person, there’s still that potential possibility.”

Finding 3: Mandated programming viewed as necessary for change

Meaningful programming

One of the requirements often placed on probationers convicted of domestic assault is attendance at a domestic violence or anger management program. In addition, when deemed

necessary, probationers may also be required to complete drug and alcohol treatment. A common theme from this study was the importance that many victims place on the mandating and enforcement of programming. As mentioned previously, accountability for programming completion is an expectation of probation that these women have.

When women were asked about the impact of a batterer's or anger management program, many were not aware of whether the probationer was attending or required to attend a program. Many of the women who were aware that the probationer was attending, were not knowledgeable of the content of the program.

For many women, the use of mandated programming is critical for promoting accountability and change in the probationer. The women who believe this see their partner's issues as stemming from childhood trauma, mental health, or chemical dependency problems and wants probation to be addressing the root of these problems by providing and enforcing treatment. Women want to see an assessment of what the problem is and mandate services to help. If these services aren't enforced, there is a concern that the offender won't change and will continue to be abusive.

Assessment and Root of Problem

Often women talked about the need to get to the "root of the problem" and that addressing the root of the problem is critical in order for the probationer to change and not recidivate. In order to do this, it is viewed as important to do an assessment of what is contributing to his behavior and to mandate appropriate programming.

"You've got to get to the root of the problem. That so much of is stemmed into childhood, you know, he was abused as child. Physically abused by his father. You need to get out all that kind of stuff."

Anger Management and Domestic Violence Counseling

Some women identified the need for help with dealing with anger and wanted programming that would help the offender recognize his behavior and to learn how to handle his anger differently.

"He blows up...so I would expect that they will teach him ways to, first of all control his temper and calm down, and secondly to get him some kind of help. I know he's depressed. He's been depressed for years. So, I am just expecting that they are going to give him some kind of help or resource to get help."

Programming for Drug and Alcohol Abuse

Some women identified the domestic abuse as being associated with drug and alcohol abuse and wanted treatment to be enforced. This was especially a concern when women saw the offender continuing to use drugs and alcohol regardless of a probation order that prohibited use.

Programming as an Alternative to Jail

Many women felt strongly that having their partner on probation and in programs would be more beneficial than going to jail. Going to jail is viewed as something that will set the partner back from making changes because there is a perception that the partner will not get the help and services he needs in jail.

“So there’s a reason that a person was in jail and there’s obviously something that needs to be fixed, so that doesn’t happen again. And just putting him in jail is not going to do much. You know, I would say make more programs for them or I don’t know. Some kind of interventions.”

Some women noted that when they were asked for input into the sentencing decision, they would specifically ask for probation over jail.

“They were going to throw him in jail for thirty days and I said ‘No, putting him in jail at this point is not going to help him. Because he’s going to get out of jail, he’s not going have gotten any kind of probation. No counseling. No anger management, no nothing. I would have rather seen him get the counseling and gotten better, instead of being thrown in jail.’”

Finding4: The impact of probation on probationer

The women interviewed often discussed three core elements of probation which they saw as having the most impact on changing attitudes and behavior. These elements included monitoring, programming, and impeding jail time.

Monitoring

For many women, the monitoring provided by probation officers had been effective in facilitating changes in the offender. As discussed earlier in the section on Probationer Accountability, this is viewed by victims as a key role for probation. As one woman shared:

“I really haven’t had much of any contact. I’ve had just the off contact of knowing that he’s being held accountable and hearing that he’s had to go and do different things to be held accountable, so that he knows there’s some consequences there if anything happens.”

Pending Incarceration

While women often preferred probation and services to jail time for their partner or former partner, they did see the possibility of jail time as an important deterrent to future abuse. Women felt safer because their perpetrators knew that further violence or violations of their probation order could lead to time in jail.

“Now he, you know, thinks a little bit now because he knows that if he does something he is going to go back to jail and I know that’s not what he wants to do.”

Changes in Attitude and Behavior

The women who reported improvements discussed seeing changes including a shift in attitude and change in problematic behaviors, such as alcohol use and physical violence. Women discussed changes in both the attitudes and behaviors of their partner or former partner as a result of probation. For many of these women, the change that was critical to their experience was when their partner realized that their abusive behavior was a problem.

“I think it also helped him to realize that he’s hurting me, not just himself, you know, if he does something. So, its gotten better. Its gotten a lot better.”

Changes were also observed in how the probationer has changed in how he handles anger and how he communicates. One woman discussed how her partner handles anger differently and the role that having a new baby has taken in his changing. Other women have noticed that their partner is more disengaged when it comes to conflict. This woman shared how now her partner takes time to stop and think about what he is doing:

“It made him think so when we did have argument, he’ll think for a minute and then say no I can’t. You know I’m going through this class or whatever. So it comforted me um, knowing that he was thinking about the probation and everything that was happening. So that helped the house being real happier at the time about which me a little happier.”

One woman related the change in behavior to her husband’s cessation of drinking. She shared that he has stopped threatening her and exhibiting other abusive behaviors. Some women commented on a decrease in physical violence:

“Um, other than like I said he doesn’t argue with me, you know, we used to get into disagreements and literally he chased me around the car, you know, tried to hit me, um, crazy behavior like that, um, that’s gone. You know that doesn’t happen anymore

um, so that part is (estranged), that part is good. He doesn't hit me anymore when he gets mad so, again, but that's there's limited time with him.”

Finding 5: The Criminal Justice System

It is important to recognize that victims of domestic violence have varied experiences with the criminal justice system. Although there were a range of positive and negative experiences, a distrust of the criminal justice system was a common finding of this study. The key areas where women were most impacted by the criminal justice system were with police response to their calls for help and their experience with the court process. As will be discussed later in this report, less than positive experiences led many women to identify the need for improvement in the criminal justice system's treatment of victims of domestic violence

Law Enforcement

As the first responders to these women's victimization, the initial experience with police officers has a critical impact on the overall engagement and level of trust in the criminal justice system. In this study, women's experiences with law enforcement varied. However, common among these experiences was an expectation that law enforcement would respond in a way that was respectful and showed concern for the victim's safety.

The women who talked about positive experiences with the police shared that when responding to a domestic call, the police responded quickly and expressed concern for their physical and mental wellbeing. In addition, women also discussed the police as a deterrent for future violence and associate them with safety.

However, some women who reported negative experiences with police felt that they were dismissed or judged by the police officers involved in their case due to their race, gender, or socio-economic status. One woman shared the story of an experience she had with the police after a domestic assault.

“Well, its like another police pulled up and wanted to know if they needed any assistance so they had to go back to my home and the police car that I was in the back of, the policeman said ‘well just some old black people running up here from Chicago to live off the system’ and that really offended me because I felt like I came to you for help and this is the way you treated me. So, I asked for their badge numbers and they told me to ‘shut up’ before they would just take me back to where he was and drop me off. And so that...I felt like... the reason why I came to court is because I felt like if I didn't show up because they was already sayin' ‘well, if you didn't follow through with it its not going to do any good anyway.’ I showed up to everything. Because I

wanted to show them, just because I am African-American and from the city I'm from doesn't make me dumb.”

Another example of a negative experience is when a woman reported that the police refused to assist in removing the abuser from her home.

“If I ask them to make him leave they should have made him leave and they didn't and so then the physical part came into play and then I'm back in the boat I was so I think that's um, the police need to be responsive to a female and they need to be more, is the word caring or non-judgmental or whatever, at least act like they give a damn about what's going on. You know instead of just ... they're just like bored with the whole situation when their taking the information and really don't respond to what the female is saying. They just kind of blow you off.”

The Courts

Women also discussed their experiences with the court process and how their satisfaction and level of engagement depended on how much they felt that the court process accounted for their experience and requests. One woman shared how the input she was able to provide contributed to her positive experience:

“Basically the court, they did listen to me, what my feelings were on the situation, and that and I think they took that into consideration when I was going through the court system with him so that even though I wasn't there on a personal contact in court with him, they were calling and getting my input. They were asking how I felt, what thought. From the beginning to the end when he finally finished off in court. So, I did have input there.”

For others, their experience was not good, often because they didn't feel their voice was heard. Many of these women attempted to engage in the court process by attending hearings and providing input into the sentencing process. As discussed further below, women face many obstacles to this participation and it is a great risk. However, although women actually provided input, they often didn't feel that their voices were heard, which resulted in plea agreements which they found to be unfair.

Women concerned about being seen as “just another” battered woman

Common to many of the women interviewed was concern about being treated by the criminal justice system like “just another battered woman.” Women desire to be treated as unique cases and to not be blamed for their victimization. Many of the women discussed fear that they would be judged because of their involvement in an abusive relationship:

“I don’t think that I’ve experience ideal. What I do know by sitting in the courtroom and these judges, and you’re just another face. You’re just kind of another somebody who’s done another something. They might just put you all in the same type of category of people like, “She’s a little battered woman. He’s the abuser.” We’re all so different. We are all so different.”

Finding 6: Role of victim advocates

The role of victim advocates was a common theme in this study. Although victim advocacy was not a focus of this study, many women discussed their experience working with victim advocates and their stories included the critical role advocates played in their experience of the criminal justice system. Others discussed the need for increased advocacy for victims in order to improve their experience of the criminal justice system. Three roles for victim advocates emerged from these women’s experiences: victim safety and advocacy during court process, education and resources, and general safety and well-being.

Victim Safety and Advocacy During Court Process

For some women, advocates played a very critical role in promoting victim safety during the court process. For instance, many women talked about the fear they experienced when encountering the offender during the process. Victim advocates would respond by intervening when the offender was trying to intimidate the victim.

“No, no one really ever helped me ever the only, I think I had an advocate the first time when I went to court one time; there was an advocate there. Um and when I went to get the restraining order against him I had an advocate and I remembered he showed up there and he kept trying to talk to me. And she kept telling him he’s not supposed to be talking to me and he kept talking to me anyway and it got where um finally she told him to leave me alone and he wouldn’t leave me alone and she went to get the probation officer or she went to get, not probation officer, but a police man and they were going to put, they put me in another room and shut the door so that he couldn’t talk to me anymore.”

One woman discussed how she sought support from an advocate after a negative experience with probation officers during the court process:

“They just walked out of the room and then I went over to the probation window and I asked if somebody from Cornerstone was there and they found somebody and I was just shaking and crying.”

Another woman had contact with an advocate during her probation experience and discussed the impact it had on her:

“It made me feel a lot better. Knowing that somebody agreed with me. That, hey this shouldn’t be going on. That I wasn’t crazy thinking, “okay, is this legal or is this illegal or, you know. Just because I know about drug testing and it just didn’t seem legal to me. So, I’m glad that she agreed and that she looked into, so...you know...hopefully something will be done.”

General Safety and Wellbeing

Women also discussed the role that advocates played in checking on their safety and wellbeing:

“She called me and checked on me and made sure that I was alright and let me know that it was okay if I felt like I needed to talk to somebody to call and she also let me know the steps I needed to take to get out of there, just in case something like that occurred again. And I think that was very helpful for me and my kids.”

Education and Resources

Advocates also have a role with providing education on the criminal justice system and domestic violence:

“And the advocate at the courtroom gave me a lot of things, I haven't mentioned that but, I read through a lot of the things. There were a lot of different pamphlets.....So, that was nice that they provided me all that different information. A folder full of information for a victim on what to do and how to feel safe, how to make yourself safe.”

The following section discusses the recommendations offered by the women interviewed for criminal justice system improvement and further discusses the role of victim advocates in contributing to this improvement.

Finding 7: Women’s Recommendations for the Criminal Justice System

When asked what is needed for victims to have a better experience with the criminal justices system, the stories of the women interviewed carried four core themes: communication, training on domestic violence, safety during court process, and having a centralized person to contact.

Communication

Women’s expectations around communication spread beyond just probation to the entire criminal justice system. The lack of communication between officials in the criminal justice

system and victims can often cause safety concerns. Here, one woman discussed how the lack of communication impacted her:

“God when he got out of jail, they brought him to my house...well, they are supposed to call you when he gets out of jail, but its an automated system...which it was a 651 phone number, so I didn’t answer it, I didn’t know...and they don’t leave a message that this person’s getting out, so all of a sudden, I am comfortably sitting in my living room, because I am thinking that he’s locked up in jail. And its like 8 or 9 o’clock at night and they are knocking on...banging on my door, shining their flashlights in my door...and I freaked out. I mean, I called the police and I was like, ‘this guy just tried to kill me on Saturday and its whatever day it is and you’re bringing him to my house.’ And his car was still in front of my house, so that was...you know...and then they wanted to get his belonging that night and I’m like ‘you didn’t even tell me that he was out.’ So, the whole police thing, you know, something where there is more communication.”

Other women discussed their desire for more communication during the court process:

“If someone would have contacted me sooner after the incident um, would have contacted me, this is what’s happening; this is what we might need from you, um, if you have any questions. I basically didn’t hear from someone until about three days before my trial which was a month from the, after incident. So I would got some contact sooner then that way it would have made me feel confident knowing that their working on my case. That would have been fine.”

Training on Domestic Violence

Often women commented that they felt that part of why they were treated poorly at different points in the criminal justice system is because of the lack of education on domestic violence on the part of criminal justice officials, especially police officers.

Safety During Court Process

Women also commonly discussed the issue of attending court and fears for their safety. One woman shared how she was hesitant to go to court because of fear of her partner and how this resulted in the charges being dropped. Therefore, women consistently discussed the need to make it safer for women to participate in the court process.

Centralized Contact

The need for a central person to work with victims throughout the process was identified:

“From start to finish just I think no matter what a person, especially a victim of domestic abuse really needs to feel like somebody’s listening to them and they have one person to contact at all time who can answer their questions even though their limited, answer to the point to where the person feels comfortable and that when victim something with the defendant um they know that they call this person and say this what happened, you know, what are my options or what can we do about [it]...but to let that person know that something being done I think would have made a big impact on me.”

These recommendations reveal areas where women are most impacted by their positive and negative experiences of the criminal justice system.

SUMMARY POINTS AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this report was to present the findings from the Victim Experiences interviews and to provide key summary points on both the methodology and the findings. This report does not include a recommendations section, because these findings were integrated into a safety and accountability audit conducted by BWJP.

Summary Points on Findings

- **Role of probation services:** When asked about the role that probation services should play in the lives of offenders and victims, the women interviewed for this project identified four key roles: 1) Holding the Probationer Accountable; 2) Providing Victim Support; 3) Keeping Victims Informed; and 4) Seeking Victim Input. A critical aspect of how women utilized probation services was based on how confidential they perceived their interactions with probation to be. Women wanted to know that what they shared with a probation officer will be kept confidential. This issue was often a concern for safety and prevented communication between the victim and probation officer.
- **Probation in context of overall safety:** Some women discussed an ongoing concern for their safety and the role of probation in their safety. However, many women discussed how from their perspective, probation had a limited ability to make them safe.
- **Mandated programming viewed as necessary for change:** A common theme from this study was the importance that many victims place on the mandating and enforcement of programming. For many women, the use of mandated programming is critical for promoting accountability and change in the probationer. The women who believe this see their partner's issues as stemming from childhood trauma, mental health, or chemical dependency problems and want probation to be addressing the root of these problems by providing and enforcing treatment. If these services aren't enforced, there is a concern that the offender won't change and will continue to be abusive.
- **Women's perspectives on the impact of probation on probationer:** The women interviewed often discussed three core elements of probation which they saw as having the most impact on changing attitudes and behavior. **Monitoring:** Women often linked monitoring as an effective tool for probationer accountability. **Programming:** When an offender participated in an anger management program, women saw an impact on the probationer's attitude and recognition of abusive behavior. **Pending Incarceration:** While women often preferred probation and services to jail time for their partner or former partner, they did see the possibility of jail time as an important deterrent to future

abuse. Women felt safer because their perpetrators knew that further violence or violations of their probation order could lead to time in jail.

- **Distrust of Criminal Justice System:** It was common that women's previous experiences with the criminal justice system influenced how they approached their probation experience. Although there were a range of positive and negative experiences, a distrust of the criminal justice system was a common finding of this study. The key areas where women were most impacted by the criminal justice system were with police response to their calls for help and their experience of the court process. Women often talked about not being taken seriously nor being treated as a unique case, and rather being treated as "just another battered woman". The quality of these other experiences had an impact on the level of trust and engagement victims have with probation.
- **Role of Victim Advocates:** Almost every woman discussed the positive role of victim advocates in their experience of the criminal justice system. Advocates contributed to women's experiences through providing education, resources, and support which contributed to their safety. Women also discussed the need for increased advocacy for victims of domestic violence.
- **Women's Recommendations for Criminal Justice System:** During the course of the interview, the women interviewed discussed areas where they felt the criminal justice system could improve. These areas include: having a centralized contact for victims, promoting safety during the court process, further training on domestic violence for criminal justice officials, and improved communication between the justice system and victims.

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APPENDIX A: ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION

About the Battered Women's Justice Project

The mission of the Battered Women's Justice Project (BWJP)² is to promote systemic change within community organizations and governmental agencies engaged in the civil and criminal justice response to domestic violence that creates true institutional accountability to the goal of ensuring safety for battered women and their families. To this end, BWJP undertakes projects on the local, state, national, and international levels.

The Battered Women's Justice Project (BWJP) is a collaborative effort of three nationally respected organizations that have pioneered innovative civil and criminal justice responses to domestic violence.

- **Minnesota Program Development, Inc.**, better known as the Duluth Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, manages the BWJP Criminal Justice Office.
- **The Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence** coordinates the BWJP Civil Justice Office.
- **The National Clearinghouse for the Defense of Battered Women** operates the BWJP Defense Office.

Each office maintains up-to-date libraries of related resources and provides training and technical assistance to communities around the country. Information is available to battered women, advocates, legal and justice system personal, policymakers, and others engaged in the justice response to domestic violence. None of the offices provide direct legal representation, but focus instead on communicating best practices and policies to professionals in the field and the public.

BWJP is an affiliated member of the Domestic Violence Resource Network, a group of national resource centers funded by DHHS and other support since 1993. BWJP is a designated technical assistance provider for the Office on Violence Against Women of the Office of Justice Programs.

About the Council on Crime and Justice

The Council on Crime and Justice (the Council)³ is a private, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that has been a leader in the field of social reform and criminal justice for nearly 50 years. The Council's leadership position stems from its expertise in researching, designing, operating and testing new approaches to criminal and social justice, combined with its ability to draw on the experience and ideas of both the community and the criminal justice system. Our methodology includes prevention, intervention and restorative justice concepts.

The Council's current efforts range from testing strategies to improve the response to crime victims, to working with offenders and their families to improve the likeliness of a successful transition back into

² For more information about the Battered Women's Justice Project, please visit www.bwjp.org

³ For more information about the Council on Crime and Justice, please visit www.crimeandjustice.org

the community, to an analysis of the racial disparities in Minnesota's criminal justice system. The Council's overriding objective is to effect policy and systemic change that results in positive and lasting changes in people's lives.

Appendix B: Probation Officer Focus Group: Investigation & Pre-Trial

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this focus group. The Council on Crime and Justice is conducting a study of domestic violence victims'/girlfriends' experiences with Hennepin County Probation. We want to learn from you more about what your contacts with victims are like so that our interviews with victims/girlfriends are appropriate.

1. How often would you say you make contact with the average domestic violence probationer's victim/girlfriend? How often does she reach out to you on her own?
2. What are the reasons you make contact with probationers' victims? Are there any barriers you encounter?
3. What are the reasons the probationers' victims/girlfriends make contact with you?
4. Describe how receptive victims are to having contact with you. Since we think that different racial/ethnic groups may not welcome criminal justice response in domestic cases, do you think there are any racial/ethnic differences in terms certain groups being receptive to your contact? If so, please describe?
5. Is there anything else we should know about your contacts with victims/girlfriends?
6. Is there anything you would like to know from victims/girlfriends about their experience with Hennepin County probation?

Appendix C: Probation Officer Focus Group: Supervision

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this focus group. The Council on Crime and Justice is conducting a study of domestic violence victims'/girlfriends' experiences with Hennepin County Probation. We want to learn from you more about what your contacts with victims are like so that our interviews with victims/girlfriends are appropriate.

1. How common is it for a domestic violence probationer to be in a “relationship” with the victim and/or have a girlfriend during their first 6 months of intensive supervision? Since we think that different racial/ethnic groups may stay in relationships when there is a domestic at various different rates, do you think there are any racial/ethnic differences in terms certain groups being in relationships during supervision? If so, please describe?
2. How often would you say you make contact with the average domestic violence probationer’s victim/girlfriend? How often does she reach out to you on her own?
3. What are the reasons you make contact with probationers’ victims? Are there any barriers you encounter?
4. What are the reasons the probationers’ victims make contact with you?
5. What does it take for you to hear from victims to issue a violation? How do you substantiate a violation when you get information from the victim?
6. Describe how receptive victims are to having contact with you. Since we think that different racial/ethnic groups may not welcome criminal justice response in domestic cases, do you think there are any racial/ethnic differences in terms certain groups being receptive to your contact? If so, please describe?
7. Is there anything else we should know about your contacts with victims/girlfriends?
8. Is there anything you would like to know from victims/girlfriends about their experience with Hennepin County probation?

Appendix D: Interviewer Training Curriculum

PLANNING AND CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS

Interviews are mainly used to get information and are generally of two types:

Person centered: To obtain information of a personal nature such as person's likes and dislikes, experiences, background etc. The person becomes the center for such an interview.

Subject Centered: To obtain information about a subject from a person because they have knowledge and information.

PURPOSE OF THESE INTERVIEWS

To get the story behind the participants experience. The interviews are not to explain, predict, or control, but to offer insights and descriptions of what the experience of the women are with probation.

PREPARING FOR INTERVIEWS

Familiarize yourself with the questions: It is important to know the questions as much as possible so that you maintain eye contact with the interviewee. It is also important to know the questions as you may sometimes be forced to move from one question to the other depending on the response from the interviewee.

Contact the interviewees: Contact the interviewee a day or two before the scheduled day to remind them and reschedule if necessary.

Logistics: Make sure the recorder is working properly and you have enough tapes, note pad and pens.

Mental Preparation: The interviewer must be mentally alert, free from distractions, anxieties, or pressures that would limit them to think quickly.

QUALITIES OF A GOOD INTERVIEWER

1. To guide the interviewee through the interview process.
2. Build rapport and gain trust of the interviewee to make them comfortable. Establish this at the outset of the interview.
3. Good communication skills
4. Should be able to speak clearly and think fast.
5. Take notes
6. Polite but firm
7. Good listener

CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS

1. Arrive on time and dress appropriately. Do not dress too casual or in a way that can be intimidating.
2. Introduce yourselves and repeat the purpose of the interview as well as the fact that the interviewee's participation will be confidential and anonymous.
3. Review the consent forms with the interviewee before beginning the interview.
4. Ask for permission to tape the conversation before starting the interview. If there is an objection or hesitation do not tape.

SKILLS NECESSARY FOR EFFECTIVE INTERVIEWS

Listen more and talk less: Listening to the interviewee is very important during interviews. The interviewer needs to listen to what the interviewee is saying to assess whether what they are hearing is complete and as detailed as needed, or it is an outer voice (political or public). Follow up on what the participant says: The interviewee may introduce a point that will be asked later. It is important for the interviewer to follow up with that question. In this case ask for a concrete example or a story.

Ask questions when you do not understand: The interviewer should ask the interviewee to clarify a point or ask them to repeat something that may not have been clear.

Probe: It is important for the interviewers to ask for more details or examples especially if they feel that generalizations are being made or the interviewee is being evasive or vague. Keep the conversations on track: It is important for the interviewer not to let the conversation digress to other topics. However, care must be taken not to be sound rude as this may convey a message that the interviewer does not care about the interviewee's experiences. Remember that the interviewee is more informed than you are and may raise some important points that may not be covered by the interview guide

Good Communication: Though it is important for the interviewer not to talk too much, good communication is very important for an effective interview. The interviewer should give feedback to the interviewee from time to time. For example; It is very helpful to get a clear picture of your experiences. It is exactly what we are looking for. The voice tone and pitch, stress on particular words may affect the interviews.

Neutrality: The interviewer has to be neutral and not approve or disapprove of what is being said. However, this needs to be done carefully without showing disinterest in the conversation

Body language: The interviewer should be very much in tune with their body language and that of the interviewee. The interviewer should avoid nodding or making any gestures as much as possible. It is important for the interviewer to take notes on the different expressions and the stimulus. For example if the interviewee laughs after responding or before the interviewer should make note of the response before or after the laughter. The laugh may be a sign of nervousness or something else.

Persistence: This is a very delicate element of interviews. One can ask the questions differently. Sometimes the participant may not answer the question because they do not understand the way it is originally stated.

Closing the interview: It is up to the interviewer to bring the interview politely to an end and thank the interviewee.

Appendix E: Participant Screening

Hi, I am calling from Hennepin County and would like to know if you are interested in participating in a research study. You came to our attention because of your contact with Probation Officer _____ or the Probation office.

The study is to find out and try to understand your experience with the criminal justice system. Your answers could really make a difference!

If you agree to participate:

You will receive \$25 for an interview that should take about 1 ½ hrs.

An interviewer from a private non-profit agency, the Council on Crime and Justice, will contact you and set up the face-to-face interview at a place of your choice.

Your participation is voluntary and responses will be kept completely confidential. The interview you give **will not** be a part of your court file.

Do you think you might be comfortable in participating in this study?

Yes No

I have some demographic questions I am supposed to ask. Are you?

Latino or Hispanic	Yes	No
African-American or Black	Yes	No
Caucasian or White	Yes	No
Somali	Yes	No
Hmong	Yes	No
American Indian or Native American	Yes	No

Do you have a husband/boyfriend who is on probation for domestic violence? Yes No

Thanks, I'll have you speak with Karen to schedule an appointment.

Hi, my name Karen and I'd like to schedule you for an interview.

Would you prefer your interviewer to be any particular race or ethnicity? If so, which one?

Yes _____ No

In that case, can you meet _____ at _____ time?

Your interviewer's name is (first name) and she can be reached at (phone number) if you need to make other arrangements.

_____ Is it ok to confirm this appointment? Can voice mail message be left for you?

If you would like more information, you can call Laura Schauben at the Council on Crime and Justice at 612-340-5432 from 8:30-4:30 or leave a message.

Thanks for your interest in the study. Once again, your participation is voluntary and responses will be kept completely confidential. I will let (interviewer name) know to meet you at (place), (time) and (place).

Frequently Asked Questions

How did you get my name?

We randomly selected files from the Hennepin County Probation Services. Your name was in the selected file and we thought you might have valuable information to share.

What are the implications of me participating?

Whatever you say will be kept between you and the person who will interview you. Nothing you say will be traced back to you.

I'd like to participate, but I don't feel safe.

What are the reasons you don't feel safe?

What do I do about my kids?

You can have them present at the interview if you feel comfortable.

Where will we meet?

You can decide along with the interviewer.

When will I get the money?

You will be given a check or cash at the end of the interview.

How will the information be used?

The information will be used to make recommendations and suggestions to Hennepin County Probation Services.

Will my husband find out?

Only you and the researchers will know. The only way others would find out is if you tell them.

Appendix F: Interview Guide

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview. The Council on Crime and Justice is conducting this interview for the Battered Women's Project. The purpose of the interview is to learn about the experiences of girlfriends and wives of men who have been convicted of domestic violence with the probation and the Criminal Justice System.

Probation works to ensure that you as the victim are safe and to see that there is change in the offender's behavior and attitude. I'd like to talk to you today about your experience with probation and the criminal justice system and how successful both were in achieving these goals.

I would like to assure you that what you say is confidential. Please feel free to ask for a break when you need to.

(Examples of Ice Breaker Questions)

How long have you lived in the area? Do you like it here? Do you have any children?
How are they doing in school?

1. How did you first come to know about what probation is and what probation does?
2. How did you first come into contact with probation, thinking back to your earliest experience?
3. Tell me about your experience with probation officers when your boyfriend/husband was first arrested in (date?) for domestic violence?
4. How would you describe the most recent experience with the domestic violence probation officers?
5. As you reflect on your first experience in relation to (date?) and your most recent, with the domestic violence probation how would you describe the changes in your life?
 - How would you describe your boyfriend/husband's behavior and life since his involvement with probation in (date?) for domestic violence?

6. Tell me how your life has changed since your boyfriend/husband has gone through the batterers treatment program
 - How has your boyfriend/husband's behavior and life changed since his involvement in the treatment program?
7. What are some of the hurdles you have faced with probation and how did you work through them?
8. How has being a ----- woman influenced your experience with probation?
9. What are some of the things that probation can do to help you feel safer from domestic violence?
10. What are some of the things that the criminal justice system can do to gain your trust?
11. How would you describe an ideal experience with the criminal justice system?

Note: For each question the appropriate probe for more information would be "could you tell me a story" or give me an example about that experience

Appendix G: Quote Tables

List of Quote Tables

- I. Probationer Accountability
- II. Victim Support
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- V. Mandated Programming Viewed as Necessary for Change
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- VII. Probation in Context of Overall Safety
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- IX. Role of Victim Advocates
- X. Recommendations for the Criminal Justice System

I. Probationer Accountability

<p>“He [Probation Officer] had called to find out how things were going. And he just came across to me as an individual that was, not only concerned, but had zero tolerance for foolishness.....There’s something about the authority ... he know that that man’s [probation officer] got some authority.”</p>
<p>“I really haven’t had much of any contact. I’ve had just the off contact of knowing that he’s being held accountable and hearing that he’s had to go and do different things to be held accountable, so that he knows there’s some consequences there if anything happens.”</p>
<p>“But its good because the probation officers he do have do...he may not check with me....but he make sure he’s doing what he’s supposed to do and I think that’s good...cause they’re always constantly on everything that they got him doing, they always got to check and they don’t let him fall behind on nothing. His probation officer is real stern and strict on what he’s supposed to do and how he’s supposed to do it if he wants it done that way. So, I think that was very good.”</p>
<p>“Yeah, more accountable. I mean, because...I mean, he can go and try and kill someone, but he can go and do whatever. If he wouldn’t have known me, that would have been completely different! I mean it is just frustrating knowing that my life has completely changed and his probably...you know, he’s got a little inconvenience here and there...”</p>
<p>“I think there could be more accountability on his end through probation. I think in some ways they could be a little tighter on him and what he is doing in his life.”</p>

<p>“It is up to my boyfriend to be following through and so forth, but it is also up to probation to say “Hey! You were court ordered to do this anger management! You were court ordered to do the domestic violence...or the domestic abuse counseling! You were court ordered to do the cultural diversity!” And this probation officer is just letting him get away with it.”</p>
<p>“He should be held more accountable than he is. He should have had to go through some classes and have to be held accountable and say “hey you’ve gotta do this, or...” you know there is definitely a pattern that he’s shown in his life that he needs to get help with anger management. I think they should have forced him into some kind of help.”</p>
<p>“I know that if you are pulled out on a random drug screen, you can’t leave. You have to sit there. So, it’s beyond me why this guy is letting him go every time. ‘Oh, you can’t go to the bathroom? Oh well, you can just come back in a few days.’ You know, so it just kind of baffles me that he’s letting him get away with all this and I think that [boyfriend]’s trying to pull something over his eyes, maybe.”</p>
<p>“It doesn’t always that way because he’ll call when he’s drunk and I just want to call probation and just scream on them and saying why aren’t you doing something because he’s still doing every he’s doing, he was doing to begin with...What’s the point of putting those restriction but you’re not following through?”</p>

II. Victim Support

<p>“They checked in with me often and were attentive to me. They wanted to know how I felt and worried about me...that’s what made me trust them and feel that someone was protecting me.”</p>
<p>“Probation for me was a support system, for me. It was really blessed. I would reach out to [Probation officer] because I didn’t have anyone else that could understand “he’s not doing this, he’s not doing it.” And there were times....you know...so that’s.....it was a support for me.”</p>
<p>“Well, he was really nice and he told me that it wasn’t my fault. And when I told him about these other two guys and how bad I was treated, he was just like “You know, we never want to treat anybody like that. He was like ‘you do have rights.’”</p>
<p>“He [The probation officer] said ‘I’ll tell you what, I can talk to him when he comes in.’ And he did. From my understanding my husband came in one day and he says “You know. It sure is funny [Probation Officer] said to me of ‘how many men in here wish they could be with their families and be back with their wives and children. And you are screwing up man, why</p>

<p>are you doing that?” You know, and he says “I don’t understand why...he’s a probation officer, he shouldn’t be talking to me about things like that.” So, but he....so that was funny to me when he said “So I am just wondering...” He says “I am just sitting here and wondering what would make him say something like that.” And he’s looking over at me and then right then and there I knew that the probation officer was in my corner.”</p>
<p>“My experience with probation here has been incredible like his PO, all I know his first name [Probation Officer’s Name] and he’s amazing. Like he is on top of things and he is like on my side and stuff and he’s willing to go out of his way to protect me and it’s just amazing; so very impressed with this guy.”</p>

III. Keeping Victim Informed

<p><i>Little to no contact with probation</i></p>	
<p>“And then I know that his probation officer changed to a guy and I never heard anything from him and then I know that it changed to another female now and I never heard anything from her. So, I don’t even know who it is now.”</p>	
<p>“They have called my home and asked to speak to him but they have never talked to me.”</p>	
<p>“They never called me, unless something my husband never told me about. But they always talked to him. He had to go see them, but in my situation I never had to talk...I never talked to them. Never.”</p>	
<p><i>Limited knowledge of Probation</i></p>	
<p>“You know, he says that {Probation Officer} is a nice guy and whatever else but he doesn’t really talk about too much of all that. So I don’t really know what gets said in all those meetings and I’ve always kind of wondered. But I don’t ask him and I don’t pry and maybe that is kind of weird and I should, but I don’t.”</p>	
<p>“I don’t know what it was, the probation, what he had to do exactly.”</p>	
<p>“But I think if I would have had more contact and found out a little bit more, I would have had the resources to be stronger, to say, “hey, this is the way it is”... Understanding more what he is going through, what it is, that he is supposedly being held accountable, so that I was aware of it. So that, you know....I think I would have had more of a support and a mental knowledge that of, you know, what resources I had or what there was, what he was supposed to be doing.”</p>	
<p>“You know, I wasn’t really contacted all that much to...he has moved back in with me, so he is living with me again, but I wasn’t really informed totally. I was informed that he had gotten probation for his offense and besides that I wasn’t really given a lot of information as far as what it all entails.”</p>	

	<p>“What it does...really, I don’t know. Um...I know that he had to do a couple things, like he had to go to anger management. Other than that he was on probation for two years. And I know he can’t commit like another similar offense, otherwise he will go back to jail. Other than that...that’s about it...”</p>
<p><i>Desire for more contact and information</i></p>	
	<p>“Have more knowledge about what is going on. You know, why...what they have to do ... or where they have to do it... or why they have to do it ...or how long they have to do it or, you know...”</p>
	<p>“I think on probation...you know, let the person...let the victim know...you know, what’s going on. Why does he go there? What does he need to do?”</p>
	<p>“And, I think it would maybe would have helped to have had more contact with them, more that I haven’t had contact with probation. To really know what he’s being held accountable for because I don’t really totally know. You know, I don’t know really exactly what all came across in court. So I think that it would have been better for me to have more knowledge of what was going on.”</p>
	<p>“Well, because it’s a part of me too. You know, it happened to me. It didn’t just...not something that...I mean they’re getting punished for something they did and it would be nice to know what exactly is going on. Like my boyfriend. “Oh...”, you know. According to him he doesn’t do anything. He just goes there and sits there and looks at the wall for all I know. It would be just kind of nice to know what action is being taken for something that was done to you.”</p>
	<p>“Maybe let you know what is going on. Even though he was living with me, I should still know probably what the probation...you know...what’s part of his probation, what... why exactly he goes...I don’t even know why he goes to the probation officer...just say “yeah, I’m still living”. I don’t even know what they talk about. Maybe just inform people more about what exactly is going on. Instead of just waiting for you to find out from them or, you know, like my boyfriend or whatever.”</p>
	<p>“So, I would kind of like to know that he is, you know, at least doing what he is supposed to be doing, which, you know. I mean, if he isn’t doing the money thing, then what else isn’t he doing? I want to have updates and kind of have a clue.”</p>
	<p>“They were really cool. They were very...they...I don’t know, they just kept in contact and kind of, you know, I had a piece of mind of this person’s doing this or not doing this and I knew that this probation officer would be on him, you know, and keep track of him and that kind of thing. I had a good experience.”</p>

	<p>“Let the victim know what exactly is going on and maybe why they have to do it or how long they have to do it. You know, just...I’m...maybe just let them know...the victim know...every periodically...every few months what’s going on. Because there’s a reason obviously why this person has to go see a probation officer. You know, just let the victim know what exactly is going on and, you know, how things are progressing...good or bad”</p>
	<p>“I think to let me know when, um, like just keep me post, updated on like when he gets out of placements, like the workhouse, and um just to let me know like um if he’s making some kind of threats or something which I’m sure they’d throw him in jail for but just I don’t know even able to be able to tell me if he been through anger management would make feel a little safer cause he used to make threats; a lot about killing me and stuff so.”</p>
<p><i>Not informed of Release from probation</i></p>	
	<p>“If I was informed maybe not in writing may be if someone would have called me and told me this.....After probation if they let me know he’s off of probation, just promptly and you know prompt and just to let the victim know that we’re here for you too and we’re going to keep you informed, that would be good.”</p>
	<p>“So I didn’t have any warning or anything if they felt that we wasn’t together and no one told me he’s out of probation, just to let you know that hey maybe this person will probably come after you, you know, or anything just to know.”</p>

IV. Seeking Victim Input

<p><i>Uncertain about access to probation officer</i></p>	
	<p>“I haven’t faced personally any hurdles with probation because it is mostly my husband dealing with probation. Like I said, they don’t contact me. I have never spoken to {Probation Officer}. I almost felt to the point of that I can’t.”</p>
	<p>“I had called him in between...probably a couple months ago...well...yeah a couple of months ago during the summer just to check in and see, you know...and I don’t know if I am supposed to be doing that or not, but I didn’t get a response back.”</p>
<p><i>Duty to report breaks in probation</i></p>	
	<p>“I even told his probation officer he would drink, you know, so dude act like he didn’t really care what he did, you know, to some of them, you know they got they job, some of these probation officers, you know they’re just here to listen to you to punch the clock. I’m serious because he acted like he didn’t even care what he was really doing.”</p>
	<p>“Um, you know, even today he’s still on probation and he’s still drinking and he’s not suppose to be and I reported it and they just blow me off, you know, because he’s on a limited check ins or whatever that is and so um when I call I don’t even necessarily his probation</p>

	<p>officers, I'll get whoever's officers of the day, you know, I reported, you know, he's still drinking and he's still smoking weed and he's still doing all these things and there's nothing being done about it and I'm real disgusted about that whole thing and yah, I feel like I just get blown off by them."</p>
<p><i>Expectation of notification</i></p>	
	<p>"Either they should be notified, and I know that he's got rights and privacy and all that but I have rights too and if he still drinking and if he's still a threat because he's still drinking then something got to be done somewhere and if I report to a probation officer or the officer of the day and the victim isn't, there's no contact after that, how is the victim suppose to know that anything being down, you know there should be some kind of contact there. Some kind of a letter, um, a phone call saying yes we are aware this is going on, yes we're going to do something about or no we're not or something so that victim knows that their not just being forgotten."</p>
	<p>"But my understanding too is that he is supposed to be checking in with me also. To see how everything is going and to see if {boyfriend} was, you know, going back to his old patterns or whatnot and that wasn't happening either."</p>
	<p>"I think probation officers should become more interactive with the spouse. If it's a domestic issue. They should check with the spouse more often to see how things are going. Set up a time to where the spouse doesn't have their husband sitting across from them, so they can't really say what is going on. You know what I mean?... Because the spouse is able to tell you things that are really going on. Because if the spouse feels that it doesn't do any good to tell you, or...then it didn't....drastic things could happen."</p>
	<p>"The day that I went to court really, because I never had been in the system before and after court I got a chance to go in and talk to someone...the probation officer in the office, because they wanted to know any suggestion that I had towards his probation and I thought that was good. That me being the person that living with him and dealing with him I knew him on a day-to-day basis. So, that was good because I got a chance to let them know a lot of details and things of what was going on."</p>
	<p>"I have never contacted them and I have often wondered why don't they contact me, why don't they ask <i>me</i> how are things going with my husband why do they just take his story. What do you think my husband's going to say or what do you think any...you know because my story and his story might be a little bit different. And so I often wonder honestly why don't they talk with the victim? Why don't they get the wife in there, whatever the situation is, maybe it's a woman, and the guy's the one that was battered. Why don't they get some info from them like "So far, how are things going at home? Are things happening again? Is he keeping his anger under control?" "</p>
	<p>"Um, just the fact that I...once he got out of jail I had no clue. I mean I just got...like I said I got that one letter...gosh I think that was after a month or two after he had gotten out saying</p>

	<p>'oh, call me if something happens.' Well, I want to know who you are. You know? If you are so concerned about how he's doing maybe you should, you know, make an appointment with me once in a while. And be like 'Okay, What's it like? How's he been? How's he acting? Is he improving at all? Is it the same? Is it worse?'"</p>
	<p>"But what I think that they should have done, they should have at least kept in contact with me. To ask me. Because he still lives in my home, to see if his behavior's changed. I never was contact...[later in interview]... And by you [the probation officer] contacting the victim, you know, they can let you know, well his attitude still hasn't change, he still has that violence in him, with you being the probation officer you... you can always recommend something else-- you know-- to kind of help the situation or whatever."</p>
	<p>"I don't know if this is a situation where they do contact the spouse and talk about what's going on....But I wish there were-- I wish they would have called and notified me more. Because I was getting into the situation...my husband just felt like "well, I only have to be there, show up, once a month...just to be there...me and the probation officer we just kind of talk about what's going on in the home." But I wish they would have called and said "Well, you know what, bring his spouse. Let's all sit down and talk about, you know, what's happened now for three months in the home."</p>
<p><i>Offender relaying inaccurate perception</i></p>	
	<p>"Okay, the offender can go to his probation officer and act sweet as ever like everything is straight and that's the type of person that he was. He could sit in front of somebody and you wouldn't even know that he did the things that he did. So you can be in front of him and he can be, you know, okay on paper and being um the officer and thinking okay he's really doing good..."</p>
	<p>"And basically what was going on was this probation officer hasn't been giving him drug screens. Or he has been, but my boyfriend pretends that he can't go and then the probation officer says "Hey, go ahead and come back in three days." Well, by that time he's already tried to rid himself of whatever drug he's done."</p>
	<p>"He knew when he was going to get his UA's so he knew when to not drink and when to not smoke."</p>
	<p>"Oh, they started taking UA's on him... never could catch him because he beats the system. Dude is a genius when it comes to probation. He tells them what they want to hear, dude good. He's real good. I have to give it to him, I've seen him work. He's worked the system."</p>
<p><i>Concerns about Confidentiality</i></p>	
	<p>"And he's been really cool and really aware that...to know let {boyfriend's name} know that I had been contacting him. So, that's been really nice."</p>

<p>“Letting the spouse know that they can trust you. That’s important. That’s important because I trusted {PO} where I could tell him what {husband} was doing and he not just tell him. But he would come at him in a way, like...like he did. He says “you know {husband}, how are things at home?” And {husband} would like, girl, he would lie so much. “Fine, everything’s fine.” And he’d say “you know, {husband}, you know, that’s good, because there’s so many men...” You know, he would come at him in a way, without telling him what you’re wife says.”</p>
<p>“But during the time that I was being with him it would have been nice if they would have asked me how he was acting and maybe saying okay if we can keep the confidential we won’t tell him this what your saying but we might keep on that probation a little longer.”</p>
<p>“The other issue too is that I don’t want the probation officer going ‘Look I have information that you’ve been doing stuff.’ That’s all I need to happen. That puts me in fear for my safety.”</p>
<p>“I almost wish I would have had some contact to put input into how is probation officer saw him. But, yet I wouldn’t want to do it with his knowledge, because of how repercussions of what he would say to me, for my putting input in. Cause my view of it is probably different than what his view is...of what’s going on and how he is. If there was a anonymity with me being able to talk to his probation officer... let him know what is going on in our life...I feel that would be a positive input if it was there.”</p>
<p>“I don’t know what they could do. I don’t know what they...I mean I know that whatever I say is confidential, but there’s just always that fear, just because his dad’s side of the family has a bunch of violent men that have been in jail and that have killed people and he’s threatened that they are going to come after me.”</p>

V. Mandated Programming Viewed as Necessary for Change

<p>“You’ve got to get to the root of the problem. That so much of is stemmed into childhood, you know, he was abused as child. Physically abused by his father. You need to get out all that kind of stuff. Yeah, I think different programs should be mandated right away after a certain individual is arrested for that. It is for their own good, too, so they aren’t arrested for the same thing again. Make them get to the bottom of whatever it is that is causing them to just overreact and get so angry and violent...”</p>
<p>“If they can get to the root, I know they don’t have time to evaluate people their probably not in the business of trying to evaluate them but if you want to save taxpayer and make it more open for the officers that actually handle more cases or whatever so you won’t keep seeing these people because if not, if your not getting to root of the problem, you going to see them again.”</p>

	<p>“That anger still gonna be there and its gonna eventually...it might not come out on me, or the person that they....its gonna eventually come out on somebody else. So, instead of just housing them and caging them, they need to just work with them and just get to the problem, you know. That would be the ideal thing to try to help fix the problem, you know?”</p>
	<p>“I know that some of them have a group of offenders and I think...like I said, he’s got a huge anger problem, not just toward me but towards the whole world, so I guess I am expecting that they are going to give some kind of mental health help maybe. Some kind of help. Help him work through his issues. He’s got some pretty bad issue to deal with. He’s never dealt with them. He’s always carried them inside. When he does deal with them, they blow up. He blows up...so I would expect that the will teach him ways to, first of all control his temper and calm down, and secondly to get him some kind of help. I know he’s depressed. He’s been depressed for years. So, I am just expecting that they are going to give him some kind of help or resource to get help.”</p>
	<p>“I think they should have forced him into some kind of help. If, you know, if possible...which I don’t think they could of and they didn’t. I think that as far as that goes they have failed me in making sure that he got some help, which was the main thing when he was going through court, I kept emphasizing that he needs help, he needs to go and get in and get some help whether it be with anger management, domestic abuse or whatever. He needs help!”</p>
	<p>“I thought that they’d be helping him get over his drug and alcohol problem, but there is no help. You know? It’s tough and its like I walk into his house and I see him with a 40 every other day, you know. I can’t....I know I can get myself out of the relationship, but when you’ve been with someone for six years it’s tough. And I don’t know...I just thought they were going to help them. I thought they were going to give him the anger management counseling and that they were going to give him the domestic abuse counseling.”</p>
	<p>“The anger management it helped but drug and alcohol was plays a very important on his, what goings on with him and his reaction, and every time we did get into an incident he had been drinking...heavily. So, to me that should have been addressed too, drinking too.”</p>
<p><i>Programming better than jail</i></p>	
	<p>“Because he’s going to get out of jail, he’s not going have gotten any kind of probation. No counseling. No anger management, no nothing. I would have rather seen him get the counseling and gotten better, instead of being thrown in jail.”</p>
	<p>“So there’s a reason that a person was in jail and there’s obviously something that needs to be fixed, so that doesn’t happen again. And just putting him in jail is not going to do much. You know, I would say make more programs for them or I don’t know. Some kind of interventions.”</p>
	<p>“He needs help! And I had hoped that going through....’cause I didn’t think that him just</p>

<p>going to jail would do it...make any difference in his life, where I thought that him going through this, getting on probation would get him in and get him some help.”</p>
<p>“So, instead of just housing them and caging them, they need to just work with them and just get to the problem, you know. That would be the ideal thing to try to help fix the problem, you know? Cause a lot of times jail just adds to the problem. They think that’s just gonna make it better.”</p>
<p>“I said that I don’t believe that jail time is what’s going to serve him. He needs treatment, he needs treatment for alcoholism, he’s got some emotional issues.”</p>
<p>“They were going to throw him in jail for thirty days and I said ‘No, putting him in jail at this point is not going to help him. Because he’s going to get out of jail, he’s not going have gotten any kind of probation. No counseling. No anger management, no nothing. I would have rather seen him get the counseling and gotten better, instead of being thrown in jail.”</p>

VI. Impact of probation on probationer

<p><i>Changes in attitude and behavior</i></p>	
	<p>“I don’t think at the time that my spouse knew that he had a situation here he had to do something because, you know, growing up he probably though, I can yell, swing, and throw things at people all that I want. And he can get away with it.....I think once he got put on probation, that if he did something wrong, then he would go to jail for it. And that probably scared him more than anything in the world.”</p>
	<p>“And I think that it wakes that person up as an individual and go “Whoa, I didn’t even notice that I had these problems.” So, it really changed him, to make him really think that “I really need to change my avenue, of what I need to do, to be a father and a husband to my family.” So, to be honest with you, it is better. I mean, there are still some issues where I think it still could be addressed a little more, but at least it does raise a flag.”</p>
	<p>“Um... it’s a little better. He’s...you know...he still is kind of quick to temper, but he kind of controls it a little better. You know, um...he tries...he tries to calm himself down. Before he would just fly off the handle, you know, and wouldn’t even think about what he’s doing before he does it.....I think it also helped him to realize that he’s hurting me, not just himself, you know, if he does something. So, its gotten better. Its gotten a lot better.”</p>
	<p>“So he’s now had to take that energy and focus it into something positive. So he do a lot of that late at night, with writing and putting energy into his music or his poetry, so that was good. He know how to change it around and use it for something positive.”</p>
	<p>“Yeah, yeah. It has helped him. I mean, despite him complaining so much, he’s...he has</p>

<p>learned that he needs to like go into another room...walk away... you know just try to calm down.....I think he tries to be a little more responsible now. I mean, 'cause I was actually pregnant when all this happened and then we had a baby...I think, gosh...probably about six months after he got out of jail. So that, you know, then he has more added responsibilities and he has been very good with it.”</p>
<p>“The only thing that I can say that I’ve noticed a change is he doesn’t argue with me (laughter), when I get angry, you know, he’s just sits there, and doesn’t listen, he doesn’t argue with me. He verbalizes a little better than when he use to about his feelings and um about where’s he’s coming from but he’s still I think stuck, you know, he wants to blame other people for what has happened. like I said he doesn’t argue with me and he’s probably more verbal about where he’s coming but he’s not argumentative; he’s more just stating facts and simply saying that I don’t want to argue with you; I want to do this, this, and this, you know, so that part is better.”</p>
<p>“Um, I think he is actually doing, he’s doing better, I mean not the best. He’s definitely got some unexplained mental health issues going on. Um, but I, I would admit I had a rough weekend and I did call him and he didn’t call me back so that’s pretty amazing. So, and usually he’s the one to initiate the calls. Um and to call back. So I don’t know if he threw his pager away or what. But um, its pretty amazing on how his, I mean before he would have been laying on top of me like meaning emotionally he would have been calling and he would have been trying to get a hold of me and he would have been um stalking me and stuff so...”</p>
<p>“It made him think so when we did have argument, he’ll think for a minute and then say no I can’t. You know I’m going through this class or whatever. So it comforted me um, knowing that he was thinking about the probation and everything that was happening. So that helped the house being real happier at the time about which me a little happier.”</p>
<p>“Yes, before when he was drinking he was very aggressive, really offensive, he used to swear. And now since this has happened he hasn’t been drinking and he hasn’t come here to make a scene or anything. He’s acted the way he should. He hasn’t made a scene on me, he hasn’t threatened me or bothered me at all. We just have contact about our son, but that’s it.”</p>
<p>“Um, other than like I said he doesn’t argue with me, you know, we used to get into disagreements and literally he chased me around the car, you know, tried to hit me, um, crazy behavior like that, um, that’s gone. You know that doesn’t happen anymore um, so that part is (estranged), that part is good. He doesn’t hit me anymore when he gets mad so, again, but that’s there’s limited time with him.”</p>
<p>“Now he yells at me a lot more instead. Instead of actually being physically violent, he’s just more verbally. Which, I’d rather have that...I’d rather have nothing at all...but if I was to pick I’d rather have the verbal. But he just knows that if he can just say what he has to say and walk away, you know, then it’ll be better. Then he can just vent and, you know, then he’ll calm down.”</p>

	<p>“Man, when I took it, it was like, I didn’t get...they told me that I was way too controlling. I was very possessive. I really didn’t realize, you know, I didn’t want you to have your freedom or let you do what you want to.” So, I mean, like I said, I think it just automatically raised the flag to him, to make him realize that, no you do have a problem! That it’s a situation that you need to try and handle or you need to take some sort of control of it. I’m not saying fully recover in a minute, but its just a slow process that you need to take as a person to make yourself better. So, I think it helped him out a lot, you know to re-recognize...sometimes when you’ve got a stranger out there, somebody who’s kind of experiencing those things or as opposed to just a spouse thing, you know, where you’re just out of control, just...I think it opens their eyes a little more, seeing that from somebody who’s an expert and who has these experiences and has seen cases like this over and over again.”</p>
	<p>“But it was nice that he was required to go to classes.....But, somehow it has helped him and I think its more because he wants to change himself....Because I know if he doesn’t want to it’s not going to happen.</p>
	<p><i>impending jail time</i></p>
	<p>“I think once he got put on probation, that if he did something wrong, then he would go to jail for it. And that probably scared him more than anything in the world.”</p>
	<p>“Now he, you know, thinks a little bit now because he knows that if he does something he is going to go back to jail and I know that’s not what he wants to do.”</p>
	<p>“I mean they had him in the classes so that made me feel safe and it made me feel safe cause I knew that if he made some mistakes during that time that he, you know, he would go to jail.”</p>

VII. Probation in Context of Overall Safety

	<p><i>Ongoing concern for safety</i></p>
	<p>“When he gets angry, I’m like ‘Oh my God, what are you going to do? Are you going to push me or try to choke me?’”</p>
	<p>“I see in him in the long run that if he doesn’t get the help, he could end up in jail for murder. And the sad part is that it could be me that he murders too. And that’s a sad, sad thing. To think that with his mentality, if he doesn’t get help, that’s a road he could take.”</p>
	<p>“They checked in with me often and were attentive to me. They wanted to know how I felt and worried about me...that’s what made me trust them and feel that someone was protecting me.”</p>
	<p>“The probation...and I’m sure we’ll get to that...has actually somewhat...with out being</p>

	dramatic and over-exaggerating...has saved my life right now...[later]...It has saved my life a lot of times, because I would use that to say...when he would threaten me, I'd say "well, I'll call {probation officer}" or I know what I'll do, I'll just call {probation officer} about it. So, I would use that to my advantage, you know."
<i>Probation has limited ability to provide safety</i>	
	"I made the decision to let him back in, so I myself am holding the key more for my personal safety and allowing him back into my life, but I also know that getting him out of my life is not going to be easy."
	"I don't know what they could do to help me feel safer because I think mostly a lot of it for me feeling safe from it has got to do with my own personal issue of being with him yet. See, I hold the key for most of the safety issues right now. The fact that he is still with me, living in my house, is the main reason why my safety issue may not be where it should be. And its all within my power to end it. So, I don't feel that the criminal system has as much power as I do to feel safer. I feel that it is more in many ways my issue of feeling safer."
	"There is nothing that they can actually do to make somebody feel safe. I mean, if you're still with the person, there's still that potential possibility."
	"Um, other than that there's I don't think there's a lot more probation can do because a victim out there in their home, the um, what do they call them? The defendant is out there doing his thing and probation kind of in the middle somewhere. You know sometimes they find out about stuff and sometimes they don't you know I don't really think there's really a lot that probation can really do to keep a person safe"

VIII. The Criminal Justice System

	"It is not probation but like the criminal justice system I think is really bad. Um, so I was really scared that I was going to get laugh at and kind of looked down upon and cause I felt like that with the big, big part and that's the police but um, when I finally got in contact with him it was, you know, he was just amazing and like I just remember like my friend being over at my apartment and I was like wow there, I actually found somebody in the system that is willing to listen and help me. So, I was really impressed with him, I mean I don't know what else to say but I'll, if there I could put out there is that they need to educate their police a lot better."
<i>Law Enforcement</i>	
	"[I was] very pleased with the fact the officer gave me time to fill out my forms and came back a couple of hours later after I had called down for just a little bit. Followed up with me the next day, came out. Another officer shook my hand, left several cards with me. I must have

<p>had four different officers' cards. "Call us if you ever need us. Don't you ever hesitate." Almost counseling me and telling me some different things. You know, "you don't need to take this. There's a way out of this. I've seen the cycles."</p>
<p>"I would say the cops were fine. They did exactly what they had to do, what they were supposed to do. I have no complaints about it, about the cops at all."</p>
<p>"When I know a lot of African-American women that have been through the system and it has failed them... you know. I am just going to tell you from my experience the situation first happened to me...the police treated me like I was trash because I was African-American and because I was from the city I was from."</p>
<p>"Well, its like another police pulled up and wanted to know if they needed any assistance so they had to go back to my home and the police car that I was in the back of, the policeman said 'well just some old black people running up here from Chicago to live off the system' and that really offended me because I felt like I came to you for help and this is the way you treated me. So, I asked for their badge numbers and they told me to 'shut up' before they would just take me back to where he was and drop me off. And so that...I felt like... the reason why I came to court is because I felt like if I didn't show up because they was already sayin' 'well, if you didn't follow through with it its not going to do any good anyway.' I showed up to everything. Because I wanted to show them, just because I am African-American and from the city I'm from doesn't make me dumb."</p>
<p><i>Law enforcement and Safety</i></p>
<p>"There has been already in the since this main occasion some slapping, some pushing, some things like that where, you know, I didn't go and come to the point and say "Hey I'm going to call the cops" for a while and once I did, at that point...once he realized that I meant business and that I was going to call, that he wasn't going to get this free ride to go. And I wasn't going to be his slapping thing anymore, he's hasn't been abusive since then...I've become stronger but I'm not totally there yet."</p>
<p>"But I do feel a lot safer, I do feel like within five minutes I could have somebody at my door, even when I live...I'm not so in the country, I'm still in Hennepin County- that I can have someone there, you know what I mean. I know I feel safe, I really do."</p>
<p>"If I ask them to make him leave they should have made him leave and they didn't and so then the physical part came into play and then I'm back in the boat I was so I think that's um, the police need to be responsive to a female and they need to be more, is the word caring or non-judgmental or whatever, at least act like they give a damn about what's going on. You know instead of just ... they're just like bored with the whole situation when their taking the information and really don't respond to what the female is saying. They just kind of blow you off."</p>
<p>"I was assaulted and um they sent a police officer 20 minutes later because my abuser wasn't</p>

	<p>there on the site with me. Um, and by that time he had taken off and here I was afraid for myself that he was going to like kill me or something and they didn't have him locked up or nothing and the police officer that night just happened to be really nice and stuff but I've been laughed at, I've been talked down to, I've been laugh at over the phone, and this is all by the police force."</p>
<p><i>Courts</i></p>	
	<p>"You know I think so because basically the court, they did listen to me, what my feelings were on the situation, and that and I think they took that into consideration when I was going through the court system with him so that even though I wasn't there on a personal contact in court with him, they were calling and getting my input. They were asking how I felt, what thought. From the beginning to the end when he finally finished off in court. So, I did have input there."</p>
	<p>"I think that as far as that goes they have failed me in making sure that he got some help, which was the main thing when he was going through court, I kept emphasizing that he needs help, he needs to go and get in and get some help whether it be with anger management, domestic abuse or whatever. He needs help!...And that hasn't been accomplished totally."</p>
	<p>"And they had promised that he would definitely be charged with a gross misdemeanor..... He wasn't. He ended up pleading down the day we went to court to a misdemeanor. And, I objected to it, because I am like, that's just not even...I mean a misdemeanor...that's like a driving offense or something like that. It's like...you know? And I think for a misdemeanor, you know, two years probation I think was longer than normal...I think. But otherwise I don't really think, you know...I was really kind of....floored that the just didn't...I mean....like I had said before, if he didn't know me and just did that, you know, he would have been, you know, something more would have happened to him.... Did the judge actually read what happened to me? Did she actually read my medical records? Did she look at the letter my doctor wrote to the court to get an order for protection? You know?"</p>
	<p>"I mean...I was told that it was important to go to court that day and yet they are in the room plea bargaining. Why wasn't I a part of that? Why is it that I can finally stand up and make my objection in court, but that doesn't hold any weight either, because basically it's like 'too bad.'"</p>
	<p>"I just don't trust the court system, I guess. That's who I don't trust. I don't think the court system is fair at all. Not at all...I just have an issue with how it's handled. What kind of sentence he got and things that weren't followed. Just the fact that they asked me for my input and I gave it and it wasn't even considered."</p>
<p><i>"Just another battered woman."</i></p>	
	<p>"I just feel like I was treated like 'Another domestic violence victim. OH, here she is coming into court again! Two times in four months.' I mean, what's going on? I just think they almost look badly upon me for that. Like 'Well, you stuck with him, it's on you.'"</p>

<p>“I don’t think that I’ve experience ideal. What I do know by sitting in the courtroom and these judges, and you’re just another face. You’re just kind of another somebody who’s done another something. They might just put you all in the same type of category of people like, “She’s a little battered woman. He’s the abuser.” We’re all so different. We are all so different.”</p>
<p>“I kind of...my main concern thinking about the criminal system is my fear of what the criminal system, what the police, what they think of me as an individual, especially having let him back into my life and into my house once I’ve had the issue of calling the cops and having him taken out. It’s a...it’s more of a psychological issue, do they...does the world think of less of me because I did do that. Is the world going to uphold me if I do call for help again. Those kind of issues lay on my mind more than anything else as far as thinking along the criminal system, with the domestic violence.”</p>
<p>“I know I felt bad went I back the second time they probably were looking at me like ‘okay you here again’. They don’t know me, you know, but it felt like okay they’re probably think, you know, this lady is stupid she went back in this relationship and everything like so just um, I didn’t get the experience but, you know, some people they do and that’s why they don’t call on the police is because they feel more of victim when they ask for help sometimes because they’re like ‘okay well you shouldn’t have back with him again’ and stuff like that. So just making a person maybe feeling like its first time even if its their second or third time when probably be helpful.”</p>
<p>“It just isn’t good...it’s just the court system doesn’t treat them like...just treats them like, you know, “here’s another battered woman who’s coming in.””</p>

IX. Role of Victim Advocates

<p><i>Victim Safety During Court Process</i></p>	
<p>“No, no one really ever helped me ever the only, I think I had an advocate the first time when I went to court one time; there was an advocate there. Um and when I went to get the restraining order against him I had an advocate and I remembered he showed up there and he kept trying to talk to me. And she kept telling him he’s not supposed to be talking to me and he kept talking to me anyway and it got where um finally she told him to leave me alone and he wouldn’t leave me alone and she went to get the probation officer or she went to get, not probation officer, but a police man and they were going to put, they put me in another room and shut the door so that he couldn’t talk to me anymore.”</p>	
<p>“Um, I would say the nicest person that I dealt with when I got the order for protection was an advocate who was sent from a shelter and she just made sure that I felt safe and like my ex would try to stand and like intimidate me and she would stand in front me but I just do not like how the police, I do not think that people in the system here are trained to deal with</p>	

	domestic violence at all.”
<i>Advocacy during Pre-sentence Investigation and Probation</i>	
	<p>“And the day before that I had talked to two others through Hennepin County that were so mean and so rude and I sat there and cried and cried and cried. They told me that they didn’t have time for me and they had to go and they walked out of the room. And then I freaked out and I had to go and find somebody from Cornerstone advocacy just to talk to her because I was just freaked out.”...later... “.” I am just bawling, just hysterical and they didn’t care. They just walked out of the room and then I went over to the probation window and I asked if somebody from Cornerstone was there and they found somebody and I was just shaking and crying.”</p>
	<p>“It made me feel a lot better. Knowing that somebody agreed with me. That, hey this shouldn’t be going on. That I wasn’t crazy thinking, “okay, is this legal or is this illegal or, you know. Just because I know about drug testing and it just didn’t seem legal to me. So, I’m glad that she agreed and that she looked into, so...you know...hopefully something will be done.”</p>
<i>General Safety and Wellbeing</i>	
	<p>“That...having someone come and talk to battered women and like after court the girl that helped me, she gave me her number and everything. She called me and checked on me and made sure that I was alright and let me know that it was okay if I felt like I needed to talk to somebody to call and she also let me know the steps I needed to take to get out of there, just in case something like that occurred again. And I think that was very helpful for me and my kids.”</p>
<i>Education and Resources</i>	
	<p>“I went through the DAP group at and I wish I had that folder cause we had to do a report and like just to the different like the different steps that we have to take as victims to learn stuff and um just steps that we make and the awareness. Like Dap really made me aware of stuff like”</p>
	<p>“And the advocate at the courtroom gave me a lot of things, I haven't mentioned that but, I read through a lot of the things. There were a lot of different pamphlets. I still have it at home. I’ll hang on to it, just because. One of the pamphlets, it was really kind of interesting, it was all of the different things of what’s abusive. And I went “wow”. It just listed all the different things. So, that was nice that they provided me all that different information. A folder full of information for a victim on what to do and how to feel safe, how to make yourself safe.”</p>

X. Recommendations for Criminal Justice System

<i>Communication</i>	
	<p>“God when he got out of jail, they brought him to my house...well, they are supposed to call you when he gets out of jail, but its an automated system...which it was a 651 phone number, so I didn't answer it, I didn't know...and they don't leave a message that this person's getting out, so all of a sudden, I am comfortably sitting in my living room, because I am thinking that he's locked up in jail. And its like 8 or 9 o'clock at night and they are knocking on...banging on my door, shining their flashlights in my door...and I freaked out. I mean, I called the police and I was like, 'this guy just tried to kill me on Saturday and its whatever day it is and you're bringing him to my house.' And his car was still in front of my house, so that was...you know...and then they wanted to get his belonging that night and I'm like 'you didn't even tell me that he was out.' So, the whole police thing, you know, something where there is more communication.”</p>
	<p>“If someone would have contacted me sooner after the incident um, would have contacted me, this is what's happening; this is what we might need from you, um, if you have any questions. I basically didn't hear from someone until about three days before my trial which was a month from the, after incident. So I would got some contact sooner then that way it would have made me feel confident knowing that their working on my case. That would have been fine.”</p>
	<p>“Keep me or whatever victim informed about what's happening because you already feeling lost. There's a thousand and one things on your mind, you're feeling a little scared...I wasn't thinking okay let me call this person and see what he's doing here or what their giving him there, you know, so if some would just call you and tell you okay this is what were doing. It'll keep you from thinking about what's happening or what's not happening and you'll be able to focus on moving on instead of having all that.”</p>
	<p>“Let them know where they're going, how long they'll be there. What I should expect. I guess once they're in court, just let the victim know what exactly is going on...if they're going to jail, how long they're going to jail for...you know, how soon they can get out or when they'll get out or, you know, whatever...I guess...I don't know...And then after that, I guess, I guess, you know, just get out and have them take their classes or whatever and have them fulfill their probation.”</p>
<i>Safety During Court Process</i>	
	<p>“I kept going back and forth when he actually went to court for the domestic assault and whether I should go or not and I was really scared to go cause it was awkward cause he actually talked me into dropping the charges, and then the State like took over and took control and decided to press charges on him and I thought it would be really awkward for me to be there because we were kind of together and stuff and he was trying to get me to be on his side and I was a little scared about being there and I, so I didn't show up and I remember like that day calling down there and like what he got in court and they said, they told me what his court thing was and that the domestic had gotten dropped and as I said earlier that it really made me mad and then I went to my women's group that following Monday and they said</p>

	<p>yeah that stuff when the victim doesn't show up, they end dropping a lot like what the actual charge was, which makes sick, cause how many women, how many women or I mean like men or anybody that wanna see their abuser in court that they are trying to press charges on and trying to be safe from."</p>
	<p>"I definitely would like to see an alternative route that the victim could take so that they don't have to go to court...like maybe having an advocate from a domestic abuse shelter, um, speaking for us or um bringing in a tape recorder and it taped and the judge hear it ahead of time or I mean there's lots of different theories its just all like what would work and what won't and its that trial and error thing. Um, I mean even if like the judge would be willing or the court system would willing to like sit in room of like similar to this and just hear the victims."</p>
<p><i>Centralized Contact</i></p>	
	<p>"From start to finish just I think no matter what a person, especially a victim of domestic abuse really needs to feel like somebody's listening to them and they have one person to contact at all time who can answer their questions even though their limited, answer to the point to where the person feels comfortable and that that when victim something with the defendant um they know that they call this person and say this what happened, you know, what are my options or what can we do about [it]...but to let that person know that something being done I think would have made a big impact on me."</p>
	<p>"So, I just think that the whole system needs to change. They don't treat victims very well. There's a lot of support out there for them, but the way that the system treats them isn't good.They just don't treat them right. The system just isn't fair. It literally takes somebody to be killed for anything to be done."</p>
	<p>"I would say in general, in a broad span that the Hennepin County system sucks. I don't think their police officers, are um educated enough to be dealing with domestic violence. Um, the judge was, the judge when I went to get the order for protection was really kind of rude to me."</p>
<p><i>Victim Advocacy</i></p>	
	<p>"For sure, following up with the victim. The one thing they also let me know that in court I could have had a woman's advocate sitting next to me. You know they're provided by the county. So that was always really nice for them to let me know that. The people who I talked to on the phone...I think victims of abuse center or something...very nice people there that spoke to me. And so, that would be really the only thing is, yeah, just following up on that kind of stuff."</p>
	<p>"I don't know who that woman was at the court hearing. I don't even know. For the domestic abuse people. But she wasn't playin'. And she sat out in that lobby and she talked to me and talked to me. And she said "{respondent name}, you don't know have to go through this. He doesn't even have to come back here. Do you understand? You don't have</p>

<p>to deal with this.....[later]...So, hopefully....to answer your question, they'll get a support system like I had. A good support system.”</p>
<p>“And they shouldn't feel, you know what I'm saying, make them feel and even if...it could be like maybe, if someone like from the battered women's shelter or anything could come and talk to a victim after the incident happened...[later]...but it was beautiful how when I came to court, I had...because I didn't have nobody else there but him... and when I got here. It was like there was these women here sitting with me and from the batter place and they was there to support me and make me feel....and they really made me feel good, you know? And if you can get that support before you go to court, that would give a lot of women the courage to show up for court. You know? 'Cause some people don't have somebody that they can talk to or just encourage them, you know? That's why a lot of women don't show up for court..... [later]... You know, 'cause they stayed there with me to help me with my case. They helped me talk to the prosecutor or whatever. So, I think that was beautiful that they was there and I hope they continue having them there for the women because a lot of women need that. And a lot more women would be safe.</p>