



Higher GroundSM

NCJW's Domestic Violence Campaign

www.ncjw.org/higherground

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Engaging Domestic Violence Service Providers

Higher Ground: NCJW's Domestic Violence Campaign is a national effort to end domestic violence by improving the economic status of women. Grounded in the understanding that economic security is critical to women's safety, Higher Ground educates and mobilizes advocates, community-members, and decision-makers to promote progressive policy solutions that champion women's economic autonomy. For Higher Ground to be successful, it is essential that NCJW and domestic violence service providers work together to identify the most pressing needs in a particular community and the laws, policies, and resources that can help address those needs.

This resource is designed to help you partner with local service providers to conduct a community needs assessment. By working with providers to answer the questions below, you will build and strengthen relationships with them and help identify how Higher Ground can be most effective in your community.

Getting Started: Begin the Conversation

Many NCJW sections, members, and supporters already have strong relationships with the domestic violence service providers in their communities. Whether or not that relationship exists already, this needs assessment activity gives you the opportunity to share Higher Ground's goals and learn more about how the campaign can build on the important services that domestic violence shelters and programs already provide.

Follow these three simple steps to engagement:

1. Identify local service provider(s):

Service providers can include (but are not limited to): domestic violence shelters; homeless shelters; hotlines; organizations offering counseling, legal, or children's services; and providers of medical or advocacy assistance.

2. Set up a meeting via email or phone:

When you first contact the local provider, make sure you explain who you are, who NCJW is, what Higher Ground is all about, and why you're calling.

- ▶ NCJW's mission and resolutions: www.ncjw.org/mission
- ▶ Higher Ground: NCJW's Domestic Violence Campaign: www.ncjw.org/higherground

3. Have a great meeting!

Reintroduce yourself, NCJW, and Higher Ground, and use the questions below to guide your conversation.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT



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When talking to your local service provider(s), focus on these three categories of questions:

- ▶ What Do Survivors Need?
- ▶ What Services Are Available?
- ▶ What is the Role of Economic Security in Maintaining Safety?

What Do Survivors Need?

- ▶ **What do survivors need when they arrive at your shelter/program?** (Consider short-term needs like medical care, safety concerns, and housing as well as longer-term needs like permanent housing, job training, child care, and legal support.)
Follow-up questions: How do you determine these needs? How do these needs differ among women from varying backgrounds/cultures?
- ▶ **To what extent can your shelter/program meet the needs expressed above?**
Follow-up question: Which (if any) needs are met most thoroughly?
- ▶ **What resources would help you better meet the needs of the survivors seeking help?**

What Services Are Available?

- ▶ **What, if any, services are available at your shelter/program that address the financial needs of survivors?**
Follow-up question: How do these services impact survivors after they leave?
- ▶ **To what extent do the services you provide meet the needs expressed above?**
Follow-up question: Which (if any) needs are met most completely?
- ▶ **Is the shelter/program able to provide long-term economic assistance?**
Follow-up question: If so, what strategies have you found to be the most effective in promoting long-term economic stability?
- ▶ **What do you think are the most valuable educational tools for survivors to have while in transition that could make long-term economic stability more achievable?**
- ▶ **What barriers does your shelter/program face when trying to address the long-term needs of survivors?**

NEEDS ASSESSMENT



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What is the Role of Economic Security in Maintaining Safety?

- ▶ **What is your view of using women’s economic development as a strategy to prevent domestic violence?**
- ▶ **What kinds of policy changes are necessary to make the transition to permanent economic stability easier for battered women?** For example, consider policies related to: childcare, education and training, health care, housing, legal assistance, pay equity, paid sick time, transportation, etc.
- ▶ **Are domestic violence survivors motivated to pursue long-term economic stability?**
- ▶ **How many women do you think would still be in the shelter even if they had adequate access to financial resources?**
Follow-up question: How many would return to unsafe homes?
- ▶ **How would you judge your community’s ability to address the following needs of domestic violence survivors seeking assistance?**
 - Child care assistance
 - Financial literacy
 - Job training
 - Language services for non-English speakers
 - Legal assistance
 - Microloans and/or credit-building
 - Others?

Go Further

Now that you’ve explored your community’s strengths and weaknesses, it’s time to turn what you’ve learned into action. With the information you’ve just gathered, continue the conversation with the domestic violence service providers in your area as you brainstorm how you might strengthen your community’s response to domestic violence. Are there new partners you can bring in to help enhance the work already being done? Are there public policies that need to be changed? Can you get more funding for the priorities you’ve identified through state and local governments? Remember, these decisions affect everyone in your community, so be sure to consult all relevant stakeholders as you develop your plan of action.

Please share what you learn with NCJW Inc. by emailing us at higherground@ncjwdc.org.

Questions?

Questions about this and other Higher Ground activities should be directed to higherground@ncjwdc.org or Emily Alfano at 202 296 2588 x5.