

A Place to Heal: Intimate Partner Violence Survivors Reflect on Service Delivery

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IPV SERVICE DELIVERY

There are nearly 1,916 programs and shelters identified nationwide where victims of intimate partner violence (IPV) receive services (NNEDV, 2014). Despite the commitment many shelters make to restore victims empowerment in a safe place, shelters struggle with excessive rules and disempowering practices that undermine their mission. This study explored experiences and perceptions of female IPV victims ($n=15$), as well as challenges within a communal environment, in effort to strengthen service delivery.

DESIGN AND INSTRUMENTS

IPV shelter residents engaged in a series of listening projects, similar to focus groups. These semi-structured group interviews lasted for 50-75 minutes.

Table 1.1 : Interview Prompts

Question 1: What is it like to live here?

Question 2: What did you expect from the shelter (or other services)? How did that compare to actual services received?

Question 3: What message would you give another survivor thinking about coming into shelter or who is new to shelter?

Question 4: What message would you give an advocate new to this work? What do you think staff would be most surprised to learn about your life here?



RECRUITMENT AND METHOD

- Listening projects flyers were placed at the facility for recruitment. Flyers were also distributed to potential participants.
- Participants met with the principal investigator and research assistants in a reserved room.
- Participants were informed of all risk and signed consent.
- Participants were then provided with a \$10 gift card incentive for their involvement.
- Assistants captured the focus groups responses through recorded audio, then transcribed verbatim and analyzed thematically.
- Thematic codes were generated, then revised and consolidated by the research team.

THEMATIC CODING RESULTS AND QUOTES

Getting Basic Needs Met

- **Physical Needs** – *You know, we should feel comfortable that we are being taken care of to the best of their ability. We're not trying to be coddled or anything like that, but it just adds another layer to what we have going on.*
- **Emotional Needs** – *Just to be honest, I do not remember orientation because I was so traumatized of leaving my home. It's hard to take in anything at that point.*

Planning For Independence

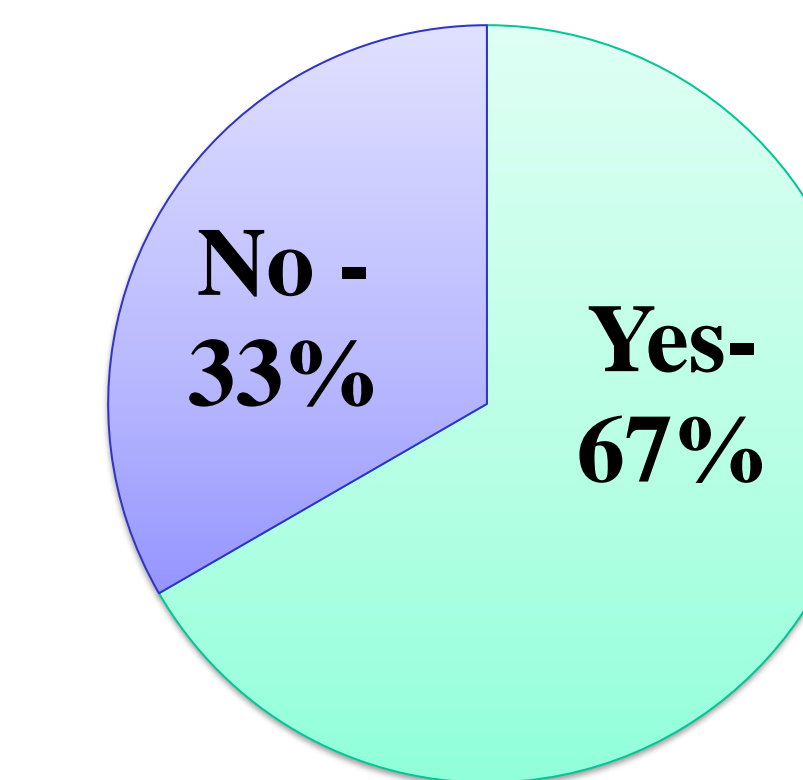
- **Challenges Conserving and Accumulating Resources** – *I have a college degree, but as soon as I got here, they mandated that I accept the first thing that's offered to me. So now I'm making minimum wage. Maybe I could have took one more beating or a couple more – he could have flipped out on me a little more - I would have just took it. At least I would have been financially stable.*
- **Coping with Time Pressure of Limited Stay** – *People are looking for a reason to write us up. It is like a fear that comes over you.*

Living Communally

- **Managing Uncertainty and Lack of Control** – *It's like being victimized all over again. I cannot speak for anybody else, but I came from a very traumatic situation and it's enough. It's enough to deal with that, to humble myself, to come to an environment to be further subjected to the abuse. It's madness. I thought this was supposed to be safe.*
- **Creating and Preserving Family Routines** – *I am here because I need to be here. If there were other ways, I would be somewhere else. Understand me when I say I would be somewhere else. People like their space and their own things.*

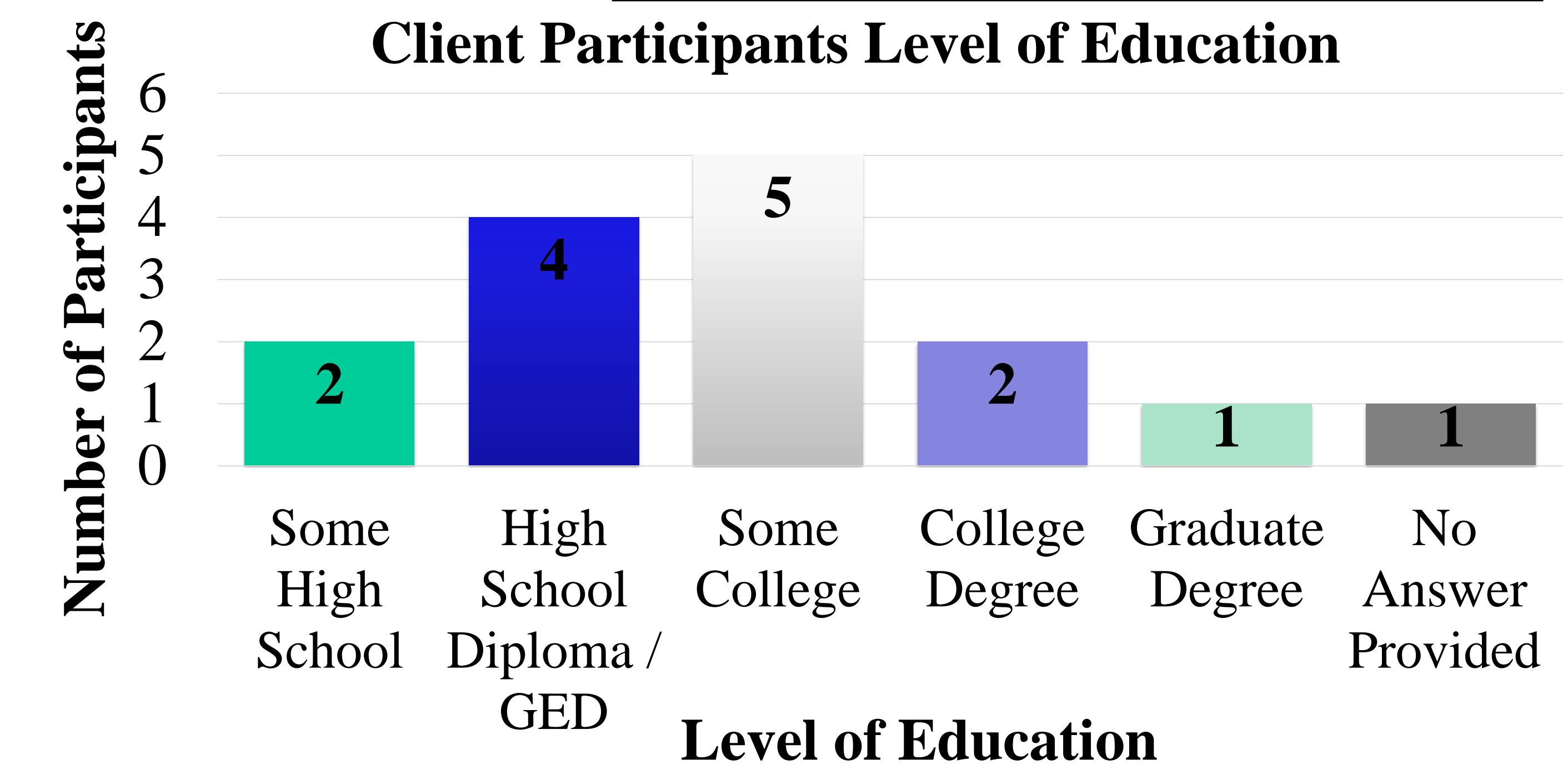
DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY

Client Participants First Time Living In Shelter



Race		
White	6.67	(1)
African American	73.33	(11)
Latino	0	(0)
Other	20.00	(3)

Length of Time In Shelter		
Less Than A Month	26.67	(4)
1-6 Months	73.33	(11)
More Than 6 Months	0	(0)



CONCLUSION

Findings support recent IPV literature that claims service delivery quality strongly influences client outcomes. Enhanced staff training, improved processes, and additional resources may be necessary to address clients' basic needs, plans for independence, and communal living situations.

"We are more than just domestic violence survivors. We are human beings and we need to be treated like that at all times."

REFERENCES

- Domestic violence counts 2013 a 24-hour census of domestic violence shelters and services. (2014). Washington, DC: National Network to End Domestic Violence.
- Kulkarni, S.J., Bell, H., & Rhodes, D. (2012). Back to basics: Essential qualities of services for survivors of intimate partner violence. *Violence Against Women*, 18(1):85-101.