

January, 2023

Domestic and Gender-Based Violence Prevention Initiative Action Plan

This plan was developed in partnership with Transition House based on recommendations from a 2022 Needs Assessment Report by Start by Talking.

In June, 2021 the Cambridge Domestic and Gender-Based Violence Prevention Initiative (DGBVPI) launched a Needs Assessment to clarify justice needs for survivors of color with the guidance of Start by Talking, LLC. The creation of this Needs Assessment was a collaborative effort of many service providers and city employees to whom we would like to express gratitude. In June, 2022 a [report](#) was released with the results and recommendations. In collaboration with Transition House and the City of Cambridge Community Engagement Team, the DGBVPI has developed an action plan to address the needs identified in the report. We have combined some of the recommendations made in the Needs Assessment as there is overlap in the action plan.

We are excited to introduce this action plan and engage additional partners in moving this work forward.

Recommendation 1: Improve engagement and outreach to survivors from linguistically isolated communities through bilingual group sessions for the community.

How:

1. Partner with Community Engagement Team Outreach Workers and Cambridge Public Health Department to develop a plan for hosting community forums in various languages on Healthy Relationships and local resources.
2. Provide community education around healthy relationships to various communities across Cambridge.
3. Write up common themes that emerge from forums for dissemination/next steps.
4. Provide brochures in various languages with information about domestic violence and local resources in hard copy and digital format in community forums and other venues.
5. Identify or create a card for dissemination that includes various resources including Domestic Violence (DV) in order to make it safer for a victim to have a document that is not solely focused on DV.
6. Create a visual outreach campaign around verbal/emotional abuse (which may include bathroom cards, billboards, train ads, etc).
7. Providers will review and incorporate the findings of the Cambridge Family Council: Language Access Presentation into service provision.
8. Focus on community outreach, representation, consistent engagement, and follow-up.
9. Collaborate with the Language Access Manager for the City of Cambridge to:

- translate essential documents
- assist with outreach to linguistically isolated communities
- provide resources to marginalized and under-represented communities with the culturally specific tools and supports required for their healing

Recommendation 2: Increase community engagement to destigmatize access and use of services related to domestic violence. Improve community awareness of how police respond to domestic violence & sexual assault calls.

How:

1. Continued outreach campaign to increase awareness & knowledge of gender based violence.
2. Continued collaboration among service providers to improve services offered.

Recommendation 3: Develop a restorative justice model that serves as an alternate means to engage with the police for individuals interested in alternative means of healing and justice.

- This model would be community-led, city-funded, and include domestic violence-related service providers.
- Based on the 5 Rs: relationship, respect, responsibility, repair, and reintegration.

How:

1. Host community forum on Restorative Justice and DV.
2. The DGBVPI and Transition House will continue partnering with [HEART](#) in the DV Working Group hosted by HEART
3. Ensure collaboration between the new City's Community Safety Department, DGBVPI and Transition House, etc
4. Hire restorative justice practitioners to train interested service providers
5. Hire restorative justice practitioners to facilitate healing circles with survivors of domestic violence and their friends and family
6. Hire restorative justice practitioners to facilitate healing circles with staff who work with survivors of domestic violence to minimize secondary trauma

Recommendation 4: Cambridge service providers must devote ourselves to finding new & effective ways to engage with linguistically isolated communities.

How:

- Engage leaders and service providers to assist with community outreach efforts to these communities.

- Appoint a liaison who will assist with monitoring of the assessment tool throughout the survey period.
- Analyze assumptions that we operate under as people raised in the US (how people think, what people know, who will help, etc) to see what messages we take for granted need to be explicitly communicated and/or changed

Recommendation 6: Community push to expand sexual health education in schools to include conversations about norms surrounding sexuality, gender, and the safe exploration of oneself and others.

Expand sexual health education beyond biology, puberty, and pregnancy to include:

- Discussions about consent
- Harassment
- Assault
- Pleasure
- Healthy relationships
- Coercion
- How to access safe and confidential resources

It is imperative for young people to discuss these topics openly so that they are equipped with accurate information to guide their decisions as their bodies are growing and changing.

How:

1. Collaborate with Cambridge Public School Department and the Boston Area Rape Crisis Center around the health education curriculum.
2. Assist others in creating partnerships to lead these discussions in various forums/settings.