

HOW TO EFFECTIVELY UTILIZE SHELTER SERVICES FOR VICTIMS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE: OR SHOULD YOU?

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ABOUT ME

- Started out hotline at Women's Protective Services in Lubbock, TX
- Children's Case Manager- WPS, Lubbock, TX
- Counselor- WPS, Lubbock, TX
- Counselor/Assistant Clinical Director- Genesis Women's Shelter and Support (Outreach)- Dallas, TX
- Chief Residential Officer- GWSS (emergency shelter and Annie's House transitional living program, Dallas, TX

THE CASE (ARGUMENT)

Referrals to shelters are not able to fully support a victim of domestic violence in increasing her safety, gaining independence, or completing certain goals. This means an automatic referral to shelter may not be appropriate.

BUT THIS IS OUR GO TO REFERRAL IN SYSTEMS LIKE CHILD WELFARE, MEDICAL, LEGAL, ETC

AFFIRMATIVE VS. NEGATIVE

PROS vs. CONS of shelter services for victims of domestic violence. It's not all beneficial.

REBUTTAL

But shelters will still need to continue to offer services!

- **When do I refer a victim to shelter?**
- **When would I not? What's the alternative option?**

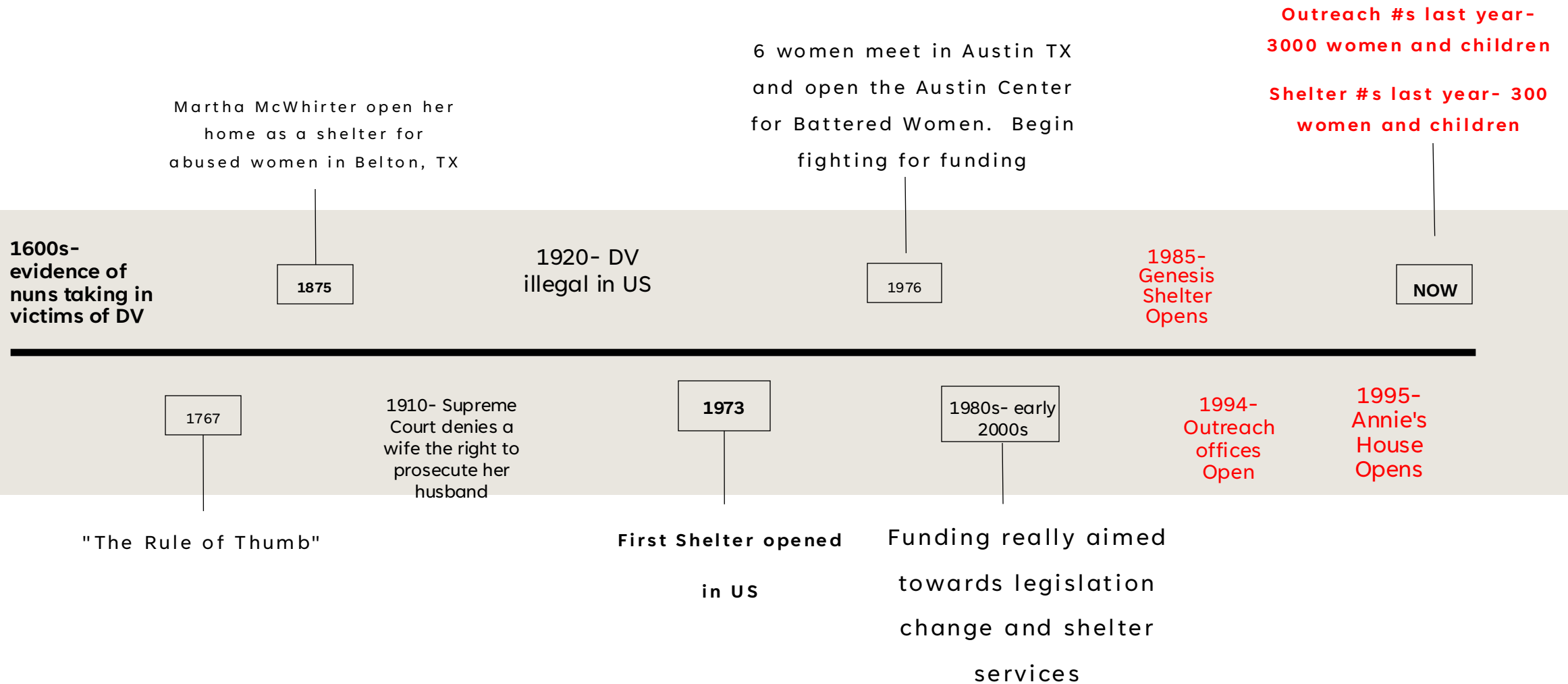
PLAN

What services shelters/residential programs should emphasize/prioritize in order to be most effective

What macro change/support should we be advocating for to increase support

THE DEBATE

HISTORY OF THE MOVEMENT

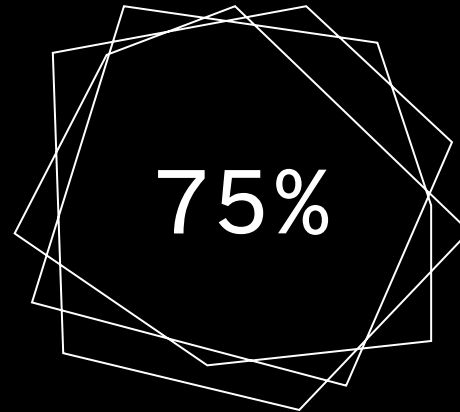


SHELTER BY NUMBERS

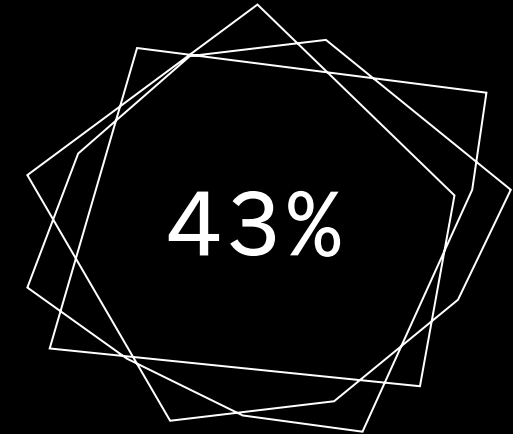
DV COUNTS ANNUAL REPORT 2023



OF DV PROGRAMS
IDENTIFIED
NATIONWIDE



OFFER EMERGENCY
SHELTER SERVICES



OFFER ADVOCACY FOR
LONG TERM
HOUSING/TRANSITIONAL
HOUSING

DOES SHELTER EFFECTIVELY HELP A VICTIM OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LEAVE HER PARTNER?

AFFIRMATIVE (PROS)

- IMMEDIATE SAFETY NEEDS MET
- ABLE TO MEET WITH SUPPORTIVE STAFF
- POTENTIAL DE-ESCALATION OF FIGHT/FLIGHT/FREEZE MODE
- ABILITY TO FOCUS ON GOALS
- INDEPENDENCE

NEGATIVE (CONS)

- Often overwhelmed by trauma symptoms that seem to set in when she enters
- Ongoing trauma triggers due to exposure to others abuse/trauma and Power and Control
- Destabilizes her and her children
- Loss of connection to community
- Communal living issues
- Length of program (exit dates)
- 99% of victims of domestic violence experience financial abuse- many of these are complicated and complex
- Lack of affordable housing
- Safety concerns typically increase due to leaving the partner.

IS THE REFERRAL REALLY WHAT'S BEST/SAFEST FOR HER?

Do we often refer to shelters because:

- it is the quick referral source?
- because getting her out is an immediate intervention?
- makes us feel like we did something when we are afraid for her?
- is it just what our systems do? Never thought of an alternative? Have not developed resources/skills internally to offer alternative options?
- don't know about Non-Residential services or how to refer a client to these services?

POWER AND
CONTROL

What are the ways in which the abuser gained/maintained control? Those are barriers to leaving/gaining independence. Those are legitimate!

CYCLE OF
VIOLENCE

Is she aware of how she has experienced the Cycle of Violence? Have you discussed escalation of violence? Honeymoon phase?

MONITORING &
ISOLATION

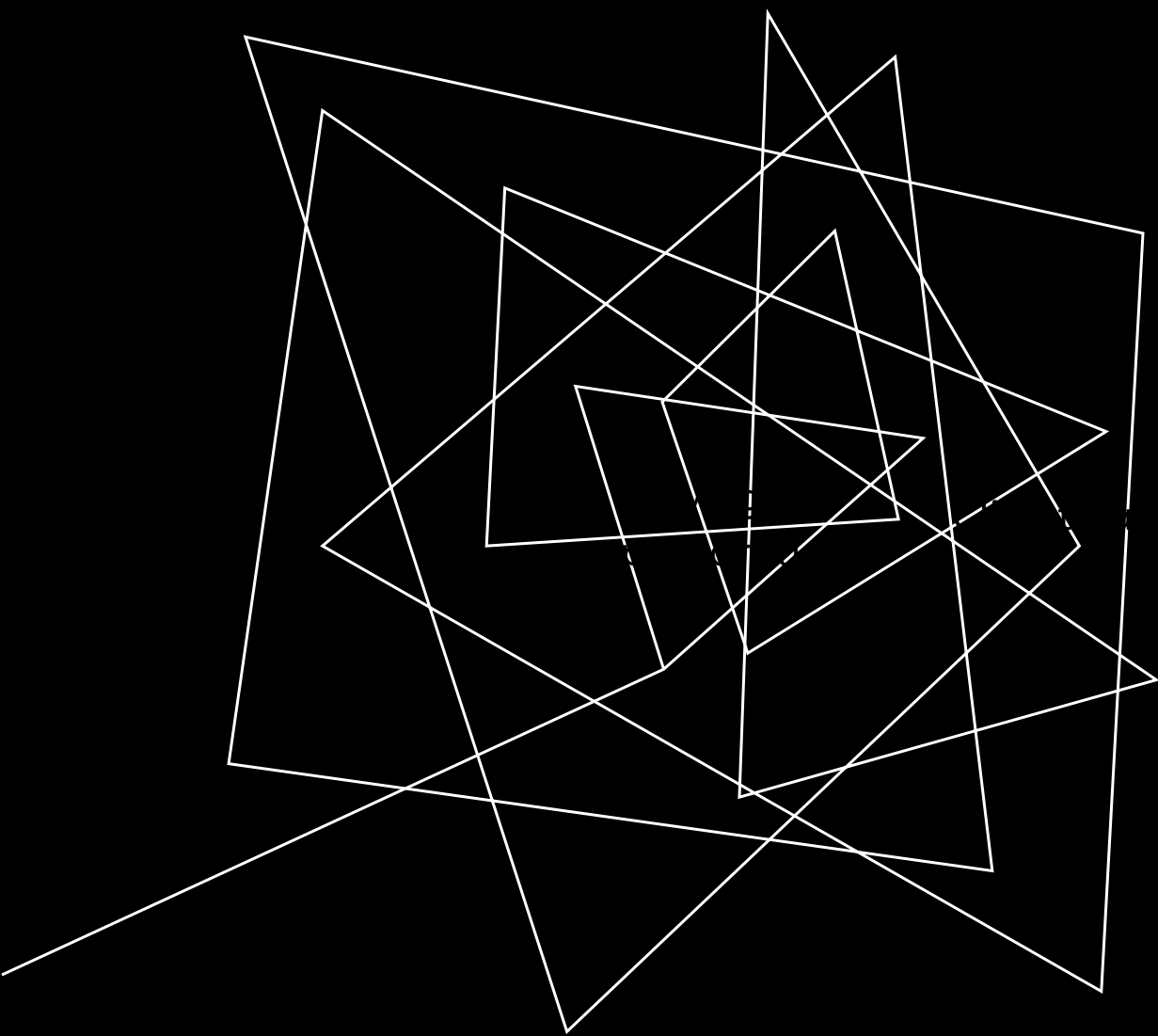
Abuser has been maintaining control by knowing everything about her and then isolating her from the most important areas of potential support/resources

AREAS OF
VULNERABILITY

Most likely, abuser used areas of vulnerability to gain access to her in the first place. Those have probably not changed.

- Past trauma
- Mental health
- Single mom
- Limited resources

**DV DYNAMICS TO
CONSIDER**



**LONG TERM
SAFETY PLANNING
AND
EXIT/LEAVING
PREPARATION**

SAFETY PLANNING

WHEN IN THE HOME-

- teach Cycle of Violence- she may be able to anticipate escalation and seek safety. Plan for escalation.
- Plan if need to exit the home quickly
- Plan for her potential increase in empowerment and confidence as she receives counseling/advocacy/support

WHEN PREPARING TO LEAVE-

- What items to hide away/pack to have when she leaves?
- Where will she go? First step or new housing?
- When will she leave?
- Who will she tell?
- Take the children!

AFTER LEAVING-

- 75X more likely to be seriously injured or killed after leaving
- Block his calls? GPS?
- Her work? Her new home?



EMOTIONAL SAFETY PLANNING

WHEN WILL YOU KNOW IF ITS NOT SAFE ENOUGH?

EXIT/LEAVING PLANNING

INCOME

- Resume building
- Apply to jobs
- Start employment
- Save money to the side
- Apply for assistance
- Gain information on income options such as child support, etc to start to consider what's best for her
- Financial abuse recovery-
 - Pull credit report

HOUSING

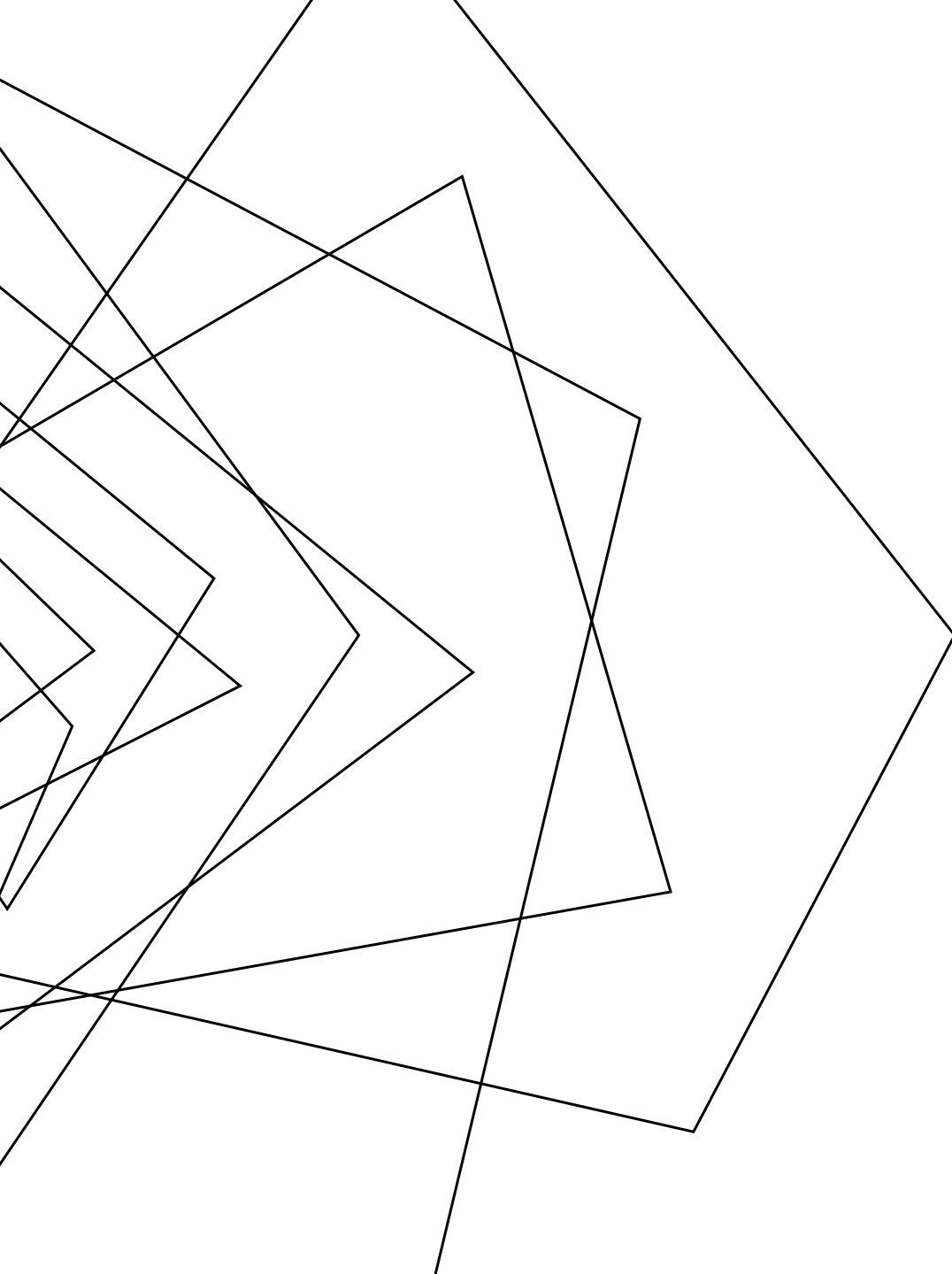
- First step housing vs long term
- Safe housing
- Gathering necessary documents or co-signers
- Relocation options?

LEGAL

- Legal consult vs. Full representation
- Prepare documents to file/serve after leaving
- Custody of children?
- Protective Order?
- Financial abuse relief?

SUPPORT

- Identifying safe friends and family
- Seek new sources of emotional support
- Process loss of support
- Group therapy
- Advocacy
- Occupational Therapy



BUT SHELTERS WILL STILL BE NEEDED

LETHALITY/DANGER ASSESSMENT

There are victims who will need to leave in the middle of the night.

FIRST STEP

Shelter would be an effective planned first step into a different program/independent housing

UNSAFE TO ATTEND NON-RES SERVICES

Just not able to receive the initial support safely.

Could 24 hour hotlines/text lines be a resource?



TO ADEQUATELY SUPPORT CLIENTS, SHELTER SERVICES NEED TO -

- Provide trauma informed care
- Be transparent in process from the time of initial call- length of stay, housing not guaranteed, services offered onsite
- develop holistic care/trauma treatment
- cultivate relationships with housing programs
- childcare support
- job readiness and path to employment
- focus on transitional housing options/start transitional housing programs

SYSTEM CHANGE IS NEEDED TO SUPPORT WOMEN TRYING TO LEAVE

- Housing
 - Laws for relief from evictions, fees, deposits, etc
 - Prioritized housing support
 - Advocacy regarding cost of housing- impact on DV victims
- Finances
 - Coerced debt relief
 - Options for identify fraud relief
- Legal
 - Family court reform

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