

# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

HEARINGS  
BEFORE THE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON SELECT EDUCATION  
OF THE  
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND LABOR  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
NINETY-FIFTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

ON

H.R. 7927 and H.R. 8948

TO AUTHORIZE THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH, EDUCATION,  
AND WELFARE TO ESTABLISH A GRANT PROGRAM TO DE-  
VELOP METHODS OF PREVENTION AND TREATMENT RELAT-  
ING TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

HEARINGS HELD IN WASHINGTON, D.C.,  
ON MARCH 16 AND 17, 1978

use of the Committee on Education and Labor  
CARL D. PERKINS, *Chairman*



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TESTIMONY  
ON  
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

MARCH 17, 1978

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PROJECT TITLE:  
YWCA Woman's Shelter Advisory  
Committee

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I am Rose Marie Seitz Hengesbach, Director of the Woman's Center of the YWCA in South Bend, Indiana. I speak to you out of my experience as a YWCA Staff member and member of the YWCA Women's Shelter Advisory Committee. The National YWCA has observed the effect of Domestic Violence on Women and Girls and has given it priority status. Our Association has taken a leadership role in the development of a comprehensive program responding to the issue of Domestic Violence. The YWCA and the Social Service Agencies in our county have combined forces to attack this nationwide problem as it affects our community.

St. Joseph County is a community of 245,000 people. St. Joseph County is unique in the excellent cooperation that exists between agencies. Roles and responsibilities have been well defined and agencies avoid gaps and duplications of service. There is a network of support developed among the agencies, both public and private, to resolve the problems related to domestic violence and its impact on families and the community. The Shelter project has developed as the result of work done by the Task Force on Women in Crisis which was organized in January of 1977. The Task Force was composed of representatives from the Family and Children's Center, the Mental Health Center, the Young Women's Christian Association, the Justice and Peace Center, the Junior League of South Bend, the Women's Committee on Sex Offense, the Guidance Center, the Voluntary Action Center, the American Association of University Women, the Commission on Human Development, interested citizens and victims of domestic violence. The Task Force organized the Shelter Advisory Committee of the YWCA to implement the Shelter project. The Advisory Committee has had the first organization meeting

with representatives of the law enforcement agencies, the County Prosecutor, Adult Probation, and the Legal Services Association in addition to the agency representatives named above.

These public and private agencies must work together during the project in order to implement the coordinated network of services that they will provide to victims of domestic violence. The agencies have indicated their willingness and enthusiasm for continuing the working relationship already developed.

The South Bend Police Department received 1873 "family fight" calls during the period March 1, 1977 - February 28, 1978. Of those 1873 calls, official reports are filed for 74 and four of these required a return visit. An analysis of the "family fight" calls for the first quarter of that reporting period indicate a total of 463 initial calls with 39 calling twice, 7 calling three times, and 2 calling four times for a recorded incidence of 404 different cases during the three month period. Since 1973 there have been 17 homicides stemming from family fights investigated by the South Bend Police Department.

In the past twelve months there have been over 200 battered women seeking assistance from agencies in St. Joseph County. Reports from Memorial Hospital in South Bend indicate that every 2-3 days domestic assault victims come to the emergency room for treatment.

The Prosecutor's Office reports that they receive three to five cases involving domestic violence during the course of a month.

Legal Services Program of Northern Indiana, Inc., represented

approximately 220 women in 1976 who were seeking a dissolution of their marriage because of physical abuse by their husband.

I received 175 calls during 1977 in my office and home from women who are victims of Domestic Violence. They ranged in age from 65 to 17 years old. 90% of the women were or had been married to their abuser. We have given temporary emergency shelter in volunteer homes to 60 women and their children. Counselling or information and referral were given to all of the women.

A survey conducted in St. Joseph County in the Fall of 1977 indicated that there are no resources for the victims of domestic violence other than the police department and the hospital emergency rooms. The survey disclosed that there are 60 emergency beds for men and 5 for women with children. The police departments respond to complaints of domestic assault and resolve the fight if at all possible. If resolution is not possible, police try to locate relatives with whom the victim can be safe. They frequently have no alternatives other than to ask the assailant to leave the home for a cooling off period. If the victim has serious injuries the police will take him/her to the hospital emergency room.

Representatives from the Prosecutor's office have indicated that the most critical need for service in domestic violence situations is shelter and security for the victim while heated emotions cool so the victim can gain objectivity and clarity of thought.

The Shelter for victims of domestic violence project is a coordinated program providing complaint response, crisis intervention,

casework, emergency shelter, advocacy, mental health treatment and social services for families in which violence exists. The project's design is twofold: to help family members cope with the crisis that occurs in the home as a result of violence and to support and provide resources to law enforcement personnel when they intervene in such a situation.

The project will provide social intervention for purposes of planning to protect those persons whose health, safety, and/or welfare is endangered with primary emphasis on those cases requiring extensive social and/or mental health services for resolution.

Any member of the family can avail him or herself of our services. The Shelter philosophy includes the hope that each family member will participate in the resolution of the problem. The shelter project offers a wide range of services to family members with an emphasis on protecting the victims and reducing the trauma induced by the crisis.

The network of services provided through the Shelter include the following components:

- Twenty-four hour emergency intake
- Emergency Shelter for victims and their children
- Emergency Foster Family Homes
- Family Counseling and Individual Counseling
- Family Life Education
- Day Care
- Alcohol and Drug Treatment
- Community Education
- In-service training for Criminal Justice, Social Services and Mental Health Personnel

Legal Services Liaison  
Victim and Witness support

The entire system of services provided through the Shelter project will interrelate in such a way as to facilitate the most effective service delivery. The Shelter will have the flexibility to respond immediately, at any hour, to emergency problems occurring as a result of domestic violence. Each component of the service will interrelate with all the other components in such a way that there are no gaps in service to the family. The system will have the authority to monitor itself and detect gaps as they occur. Referral procedures will be simple and easily executed so that families will have immediate access to each component. This flow will be achieved by building the components into the system under the coordinating mechanism - the Advisory Committee and administration of services will be through one primary agency - the Shelter. The Shelter is scheduled to open April 1st.

The Shelter will make its purpose and objectives clearly known to the community. Public Information is an essential factor and will greatly determine the success or failure of the program. The telephone number of the 24 hour crisis intervention/emergency intake services will be highly publicized.

This project includes the planning, development and implementation of a comprehensive program aimed at reduction and prevention of intra family violence.

The principal objective for the project will be the provision of shelter and support for victims of domestic violence with a broad range of mental health and social services for families in which violence occurs and to coordinate and combine improved police responses, more effective prosecution and community correctional programs for serious cases.

Subordinate objectives for the project are: to stimulate the creation of resources and institutional changes critical to the domestic

violence victim's survival, well being, and self sufficiency; to alter the community environment of bias and misunderstanding surrounding domestic violence situations and thereby reduce community acceptance of these victims; and to provide support to the justice system in their efforts to curb family violence by providing services to victims and community education.

Regarding the proposed Bills, our legislative committee suggests the following:

In order to fully implement the project as developed by the Task Force there must be adequate financial resources plus legislative and administrative support. National legislation that would have the most significant impact would include (1) The development of a grant program that would support demonstration and on-going projects which are providing direct services. The Grant Program should be administered by an existing Health Care Agency. (2) A National Clearinghouse for information and referrals should be established. (3) We need a national media program to educate the public to the problem. (4) An analysis of existing State Laws with recommendations of model legislation for States. (5) In our case it is more critical to have operating expenses rather than additional Volunteer resources, which are available in our community.

Existing Federal Programs such as Comprehensive Employment and Training Act and Title XX of the Social Security Legislation have proven valuable resources in the development of our existing programming.

In closing we commend you on your foresight in preparing these Bills and holding public hearings. I appreciate the opportunity to speak with you about our project.

YWCA Shelter Committee Members:

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 Theresa Tyler  
 Mara Newman  
 Mary Hickner  
 Joyce Foley  
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**END**