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Hello, everyone. Welcome today to the advocacy learning Center Affinity discussion. Joline, if you would get us started we are ready to roll.

Hello, everybody. Good afternoon and good morning. I am Joline from Praxis muttering our discussion to -- safety and success in particular we will focus on advocating with and for women to stay in violent relationships and explore how the ideas about safety impact our advocacy, the program we provide, and ultimately how we view or to find success for women. Today we have classes J JKL and a big welcome to the L participants because this is their first discussion. This is everyone's first advocacy discussion as we have changed the name from Affinity which you may have noticed -- with the name change we hope to pull in for advocates to join in discussions on hot and emerging topics in advocacy. I know that a lot of you have done this but chat in your team name and location. We have Liz from practices as well as [indiscernible] -- many of you have better. We also have [indiscernible] in Chicago and Laura from advocates for family piece from Minnesota that are both in class J. Lori and [indiscernible] will share their perspectives as we explore social change advocacy rethinking how we define safety and success.

They will share some of their thoughts and observations and questions and we encourage everyone to share questions you might have in the chat box.

Liz, would you like to share any tech tips or reminders? Certainly. Hello. Welcome to the webinar today. The Affinity discussion. Recently, a couple of things to remind you about how to have the best webinar experience today. If anyone is participating by telephone only, we welcome your comments. The best way for you to share things with this is by email. If you have a comment send a note to liz@praxisinternational.org and I will do my best. If you happen to get disconnected by telephone or to the webinar at any point, simply rejoin to your original process. For those of us participating in the webinar, don't be shy about chatting in your comments or questions at any point. We want to know what's on your mind and just to remember I think you are familiar -- about the view have -- a bunch of you have chatted hello. The chat box is the best way for you to share your thoughts with the whole group. If you have an issue to chat individually open the private tab and you see a list of presenters and you can open an individual feed with that person if you would like. Finally, this session is being recorded. You'll be able to revisit it with your colleagues who perhaps are not able to join you today. It will be posted to the archives page of the ALC class webpages and you'll be able to look for it there. At the beginning of next week. I'm glad you are with us today and Jolene, I will ask you to further introduce the topic.

Will start with a pole. -- A poll. Does your program serve women staying in violent relationships? -- Please vote A, B, or C.

Or Other for you can check it in. We'll take a minute to get your responses.

[indiscernible], what about your programs?

Go ahead.

Agency serves women who stay. It doesn't matter if they stay or go. We serve them all.

The same for us, too. We serve women who stay, women who have left, women who are thinking about it the goal is to try and meet them where they are in their journeys.

Very good. This is Liz again -- I will pause to say thanks to all of you that chatted in your response. There is a technical pickup on my end. -- Pickup -- Hiccup. I saw that you rapidly switched to the chat so thank you -- 98% are saying A -- we serve women who stay.

Thank you for that.

Getting into the meat of the subject, now that we know about your advocacy program we want to talk about the complexities of advocating for women to stay. Domestic violence is to be something that women had to put up with. They didn't disclose their experience of violence and there were few services and for most women separating from the partner was not considered an option. Social convention -- a woman's lack of access to work in education and a lack of support services meant that for many women abuse lasted a lifetime. Now in many ways the situation has been reversed as we presume that women living with abuse can and will end the relationship. The assumption that women want to and can and abuse underpins most violent policies and service provision and advocacy organizations. For advocates supporting women's to successfully separate from primary partners could be used as a measure of success. As advocates we want to do whatever is possible to keep women safe. Sometimes what if that means -- we all want women to not be victims of violence but is leaving the only way or the best option for women? Now there is a graphic -- it reminds us that of all the different dimensions that are a part of each woman's experience -- the multiple factors that happen in addition. When I look at this I think of the principles of recognize the intersection and complexity and placing a person's reality and needs at the center. In regard to the discussion today I think about how these aspects might be they wanted to stay in or turn to a violent relationship. Lori, from your experiences, what are some factors that you think impact or leave a woman to not leave a relationship?

It's going to be different for everyone. I think one thing that I really try to do my work with women is to be present and use the core activities that were taught and to also hold what I know about violence against women -- I try to hold what I know about violence against women and develop an understanding of her individual experience. Because it will be -- I don't know what her reasons are so I try to help figure them out.

Would you like to add anything?

Yes, I think there is a lot of reasons why people stay. One thing that we do is we serve a lot of immigrant survivors and they are new to the country. They may have linguistic barriers. The immigration status or lack of status may be used against them to keep them in a situation and to further control them. That's something we see as a huge reason for needing to stay. Also a lack of access to resources not having a job. Not having social support. Children. Issues around a

disability. Societal pressures. A lot of the clients VCR from communities that are small and there is a lot of pressure to keep the community -- family and the community intact and to not present this -- sharing the dirty laundry, so to speak. There are a lot of pressures and other reasons they may end up staying or as you said before returning. These are the reason why it is compensated and it takes a lot of strength and courage and there are a lot of decisions that go into try to figure out what comes next.

May I add something? One thing that I found is that women really want the violent behavior to change they want that to change. So, one thing that I do is I use the control log from Duluth to explore with women how men can't change their actions. There are police that to support the actions. What are the beliefs he has and what would he have to think differently about in order to do something differently? I feel like that is an important component into helping them think about what the experiences.

Wonderful point.

Anything else for you guys?

No.

Just showing -- in all of our lives we have so many different aspects that play into this and sometimes it's hard to pull them apart. They are also interconnected.

Also, I think as advocates a lot of times we tend to see the partner as a man who is violent. We can have a limited perspective on who he is as an individual person. She experiences all the different aspects of him. I think it's important for me to try to see him as she sees him because that can also be a part of what makes it complicated and hard to leave or separate.

Yes. We only see a brief snapshot of what a woman's life is like. We see one instant or a brief amount of time and she has to live with this day in and day out.

Yes.

Liz, please move the slide. Thank you.

Pulling out -- how do we truly understand where a woman is that? How do we lead to the idea of a survivor designed advocacy?

Think about understanding the nature of violence against women and how it impacts their lives and the need or problem it creates. How have you found to connect and understand and truly meet a woman where they are at? Lori shared a tool that she uses. What other ways have you been able to connect with women and understand the integrity of their life situation is much as you can?

I think from our perspective -- I think we definitely encourage them to talk about it as much as they can so there -- I was thinking about the whole process. In terms of the way they contact us

and the way that we are available even for being able to provide services. The concept of understanding what they are going through a they are in the process is important. We try to keep our conversations and interactions open-ended. We try to make sure that we let them define their situation and have them describe to us what they understand so there's no imposition around what we think might be useful. We wanted to provide as much information and resources as we can, but we wanted to let them decide what the next step would be or how they want to use the information. We want to try to adapt the service plan based on what their situation is and how they define it and how they see it.

Yes. I agree with what you are saying. Also, our perspective is that one thing I always want to communicate whether directly to a woman or to the mom calling the agency the cash sees concerned about her daughter -- she wants us to talk with her daughter -- we never have an agenda for her life. Explain to her that our services are free and they are confidential and that we never have an agenda for her life. Like she was saying, we don't impose our ideas about what's happening in her life. I made the mistake one time of meeting with a woman and talking with her and when she described what she was experiencing from her husband I called it abuse. That's not how she defined what she was experiencing and she was offended. It's a simple thing like that which could stop her from wanting to connect with me and share with me. I think we have to be sensitive to where their it.

It sounds like a fine line how to truly do that with women.

Sometimes as humans we want to help people in what we think is right and let people -- meet people where they are it can be difficult. In practice it can be difficult to do.

Another thing I find for myself is important -- sometimes I meet with many women or have conversations in a day. As I said earlier -- being present -- I want to make sure that when I meet with this person now I'm not caring over my thoughts or the conversation I had with the other woman into this conversation. It would be easy to do if I wasn't being very present with her.

Especially when you are seeing way more people.

Yes, are you are working with someone with a high level of violence in their life and then you meet with someone who isn't having that level to carry it with you.

To you to safety planning with people?

Yes. We do.

How does the idea of not leaving impact how you to safety planning?

From our perspective we try to talk through that and in terms of understanding the level of violence they are experiencing -- any kind of danger they may be in. Talking through all of that and taking time to develop the safety plan. Again, presenting options, not what would happen [indiscernible] but options on how to be safe and how to think about things. Providing resources and how to reach out for help if they need to. That's part of the discussion. I want to emphasize --

the idea is that we are not trying to prescribe that as a way to be the most safe. So, again trying to see what makes sense for that individual.

Yes. We don't have a safety plan form or anything like that. It's more in the conversation like -- not a prescriptive kind of thing. I met with a woman yesterday that was experiencing a lot of harassment from her ex-husband and its thinking through -- what are your options? The possible outcome if you do this versus this. What are you ready to do? That kind of thing. We don't use the language of safety planning. That's where we are at with it.

Interesting.

Liz, poll next.

As we continue -- I was thinking about all the barriers I've seen a rise for women -- advocates working with women that stay. I was wondering what you saw as barriers -- the time and resources -- funding restrictions, the mission of the organization or something else. Chat that in -
- A would be time and resources. B funding restrictions --'s C the mission of the organization. D -- chat in whatever it is.

Lori, what do you see as some of the barriers coming up for electing with women not staying in the shelter not wanting to leave a relationship.

I had never thought about that. I've never even considered any barriers. I guess I want to think about that. I haven't thought about it in that way.

[indiscernible], anything you've seen?

Several of those things could be an issue. I think there are some time and resource issues. One thing that we started to do is try to have groups and meetings at different locations. That's a way that we meet women at different locations -- community-based -- working with resettlement organizations to have a support group or even a self-care group -- a discussion. Maybe talking about coping skills and things like that. Just as a way to reach women and provide information that might be useful. Without any expectation. Again, time and resources to do that -- we've been thinking so much about how someone finds us -- the way that the organization is set up, feels like -- from the perspective of a survivor even though it's not our expectation when she connects with us but the way it is set up she might feel that she needs to have made a decision about leaving. We have a shelter -- that is a visible service. So I think it's unintentionally something that may have come across to survivors and we want to make sure that we communicate that it's not an expectation that we want to support them with whatever makes sense in their lives at that time. Then, I know tying the resources to do that and thinking about how to cover suburban locations and places where survivors are, they seem less explicit but there are some implicit funding restrictions as well. In terms of rules of staying at the shelter, being in contact with abusers at the shelter. That type of stuff. As a program we tried to get around this but it definitely exists. Right now there is a citywide initiative in Chicago which is an outcome measures project for survivors trying to measure the impact of the intervention from programs like ours.

The funders to our perspective into consideration and they changed a lot of things with the project but in the beginning that was very much their understanding -- a survivor would be safe after she left and the program would provide services and she would not go back and that is what success would look like.

That's the challenge. Working with funders and helping them understand and helping them see the perspective -- the program perspective as well as the survivors seeking service. And for our organization -- it is our mission statement and the cycle of violence and dealing with our understanding of what that looks like and what it might mean has been a constant internal conversation, too.

Thank you.

Was thinking about this -- I'm not seeing in our agency there are any barriers to providing advocacy for women who stay. One thing I think about is -- a lot of women I work with -- they describe things this way -- I've heard it three times this week -- when they talk about what's going on in their lives and where they are at with things they'll say I do stuff, too. So it's like they aren't OK with what they are experiencing but they also feel a sense of responsibility and they see some things that they do as being similar to the things he does and if they're going to continue to be in this relationship I want to help give them some tools so they could hopefully put together -- how the stuff that they do and they stuff he does is different. A way for them to analyze it and maybe feel differently about themselves. Also I feel like it will allow them to see that he has believes that allows him to do the things he is doing were what she's doing could be coming from a totally different place. If that makes sense. I find that to be a barrier. I try to work with it.

There have been some nice responses in the chat and I want to pull them out. [indiscernible] mentioned they are co-located with child protection and that it's organized -- one. They see women feeling pressured to leave or stay depending on the circumstances. How working with child protection services and dealing with the caseworkers could have an interplay about whether they felt pressured to leave or stay.

She also mentioned external pressure from cultures can be a barrier not so much [indiscernible] but from culture -- the associate that a good victim would want to leave. Yes.

I hadn't thought about that with social services. That would be a barrier. That can be a barrier.

The way that they describe it for sure.

Yes, a barrier to people wanting to seek advocacy because they wouldn't want to enter into a system or anything like that. It is a big concern for women, particularly mothers.

Yes.

When I was on the board of directors the advocates spent a lot of time working with women who stayed in shelters because they were having to drive people various places and they had services and [indiscernible] and these sorts of things and it got to be difficult for them to make time in the

day for women who weren't staying in shelters. For themselves that was difficult -- they wanted it to end the mission was to serve all women but sometimes it got hard when they had other things they were doing.

Sure.

Also in looking at some of the funding a lot of the funding available for direct shelter services and children's programming -- it wasn't so much for off-site women.

Yes.

We have entered into this a little bit -- talking about how we are organized and how women survivors often have a broad view of what their needs are and what makes them safe and sometimes programs have a more narrow view and it is more [indiscernible] base with fewer offers on safety -- how can she find out what she wants and to support those needs? We spoke to that a little bit.

I wanted to talk a little bit about program institutes to find survivors with negative experience of violence and focus becomes harm reduction and preventing similar incidents. As we mentioned we typically make him the perpetrator -- out to be an enemy or a monster. The impact is that no one will support the woman or support me when I go back or for being with him and if I make that choice I suffer [indiscernible]. Have you seen in the outreach and whatever it might be that women are simply not seeking services to you because of the fear that they have to leave? How that impacts women who might go back in a relationship if they feel that they might be letting us down or what that might be. I wonder if you could share your experience on that.

It's definitely a concern. I spoke earlier about this -- in the way that the organization is sent up, it's not an idea we want to put out there but it might be something -- it might be a way in which survivors experience us. We've been delivered in terms of thinking about how to reach them and how to be more in the communities -- it's not embedded but being able to reach them at different times in their lives and have this position of where we're just sitting back and waiting for the crisis line to bring or waiting for someone to contact us. That's something we've evidently been thinking and considering because I think that is really a way in which survivors might experience the organization itself. As a system, as a place that may have some expectations of them and the primary expectation being that they have left or that they made a decision to keep themselves and their children safe and things like that.

I went to bring in something that was said in the chat -- Jennifer mentioned they were run into situations where faith leaders will review them to these services because [indiscernible]. The communities mentioned -- the death -- deaf community as well. Some people are reticent to come forward. Do you experience that with your program?

Yes. We've had some clients who have told us that they went to the religious leader and they discouraged them from reaching out to us because again they didn't want -- from the perspective of the religious leader they could deal with it internally. A lot of religious communities that we have contact with talk to the survivors about mediation and working it out. The other fear from

those communities is how the community looks. The reputation of the community as well that they think the survivors -- reaching out for help. We had a client that told us her husband -- at the church the pastor told her to not report it to the police or reach out for help.

Yes.

One thing we've been working on as part of our agencies five year strategic plan is to reach out to churches because we didn't realize -- we gained an understanding that so many people are deeply connected to their churches and a reaching out to their churches. We've been working on reaching out to the churches. Last fall I went to a number of churches in our area and they gave me time on Sunday -- during the service -- to talk about the agency and about domestic violence and that we don't have an agenda for people's lives and we are here to support people. We were able to do that with a number of churches that we were well received and supported in that way. Hopefully this is how we build a connection with them.

We had some examples, too. We had a church -- a group reach out to us and they had a lot of social workers in their congregation. They wanted to organize themselves to provide some of the support but they realized there were issues around confidentiality or just in terms of understanding the issue. They reached out themselves and ask us to provide training. We have been doing a lot of that and it from a John right now. We have gone to several mosques. -- It's Ramadan.

The places where there are issues are also places where a lot of great support and solutions come from. We try to engage all the time in ways that are useful to the survivors that might be part of those groups.

Great.

That's what we've been talking about today -- working with the women individually. Were measuring the church -- -- we were mentioning the church. What other ways have you been able to talk about the broader community about people not leaving and how it's not something you will impose on people. Have you done any work around that or has anybody chanted in if you that any successor difficulties in working with the broader community?

We've been engaging the medical community quite a bit. Work in hospitals that we are doing -- assessing and with the changes in the ACA screening for domestic violence but then when they - - working with them on how to discuss the issue when somebody does disclose and how to provide referrals that is helpful to them. The issue of what the safety might look like and what the medical professional might say to them about the situation has definitely come up and we've had a lot of conversations and training around that, too.

Yes, and we work to connect with other agencies -- once a month we have a small potluck where we think about an agency in the community that we don't know much about -- we don't feel like it knows what we are about and we invite them to join us for lunch and we sit down and talk or we go to the college into an outreach presentation. There's a lot of that going on as well.

[indiscernible - multiple speakers] .

I want to make sure we didn't lose you.

I'm collecting my thoughts. I'm wondering -- Priya has been mentioning some things in the chat and I wondered if she would be willing to share things about what they are doing -- what Manavi is doing.

Yes. The outreach coordinator goes into the community every now and then to meet people and talk to the people just to spread the word about their organization. Various festivities and meetings at the events. Trying to get the word out. We hold community drives -- a community group. An open women's group where we bring tea and snacks and the idea is to get an exclusive space for women -- for them to talk about things that are important to them. So far -- domestic violence and sexual assault -- it has been interesting to talk about what it is women have been worried about or the questions they have. From immigration to healthcare -- signing them up for healthcare and things like that. This was interesting because to start they were chatting in trying to connect women. Then it would go on to -- okay, I'm new and my kid is going to go to school and stuff like that. It was a nice space that was created for women to connect and reach out to each other.

This created a community space to start to reach out to women. A lot of women were for other women to our hotline.

I know that the shelter is a big part of your program. Do you have any perspective in your community that people think being sheltered is a requirement or people that think that if they do refer people to you feel the pressure to leave or anything like that?

No, not really.

A lot of the time -- one thing that we do -- we reach out to the community and try to make a point to work on multiple issues. We get calls from -- fired for discrimination or somebody who is homeless and need to job and eight immigration and language assistance. Or women that are facing violence.

You are this kind of organization -- you will understand why want to keep the family intact. One of the things that we say -- they say you understand why I didn't call the police and why I stuck around. We try to say let's start from where you are and what you want to do. Trying to figure out a way that this can happen. If not, what are the next steps?

I see another way to connected to the broader community. To be engaged in other issues happening in the community. Like supporting the sexual assault program in our community. Recently we had an issue our community is dealing with an issue happening in high school and we've done advocacy around that issue. I think it is a great way for people to see us in a broader way. And that we are concerned with a lot of issues -- all issues impacting people, not just this issue of domestic violence.

Capacity building as well -- we aren't talking just about the violence they are experiencing but talking about the surrounding issues it might help to -- not that we have an agenda but it might help them to understand more broadly the options that might be out there and how they might be able to do this if they would want to leave. But they don't feel it's possible. I have people in my life who feel that they can't leave abusive situations because they don't have the money to pay rent or because of an illness and they are able to take care of their kids. So, having a broader sense of community might enable people to feel a little bit more confident that if they decide to leave they are truly able to.

I agree.

Good point.

Were going to say something?

Great point. I agree.

Talking about the community -- how about in terms of working with other institutions are systems? Has law enforcement or [indiscernible] or anything like that how have you been able to connect with them on the issue on -- leaving and going back -- staying in a relationship -- have you had any situations around that? Have you implemented things in your community to work with that?

We've had plea of issues come up. Law enforcement specifically and also court. We've tried to build it into the advocacy that we try to engage with those institutions with the survivor and sometimes on behalf of of people that we haven't served yet for them to understand the situation. Those institutions, especially, there's a lot of conversation about why doesn't she leave and that type of thing. Or kind of a misunderstanding around the cultural norms and societal pressures. For example we hear all the time from the police -- I didn't think she would want to leave. In your culture don't women want to stay? We hear crazy things all the time. It's a constant conversation and education. Some of the ways to do this is in addition to provide training we are also part of the subcommittees and we try to lend a voice whenever we can to the discussions and we also try to find people within those institutions that understand or that have some level of responsibility and authority to be able to assist in times that survivors might need. It is a constant issue.

Yes.

That's helpful. It's helpful in our area to do CT -- coordinated to minute response work -- if I can understand their policies and how the work is organized you can sometimes put together how they -- why they impart are communicating frustration about her not leaving. It might be something about how they are structured.

How they are organized to work with her.

Sometimes -- I say all the time that people mean well. A lot of times these things are put into place because they mean well. They are working to protect women and look out for their safety. But what safety means for each woman is something unique and what success is for women is very unique. You mentioned about how in Chicago they are trying to count things by how many people left their relationship, correct?

Yes, equating safety with that. If they were safer it meant they had left.

Yes, the idea was to figure out -- in the beginning it's coffee life outcomes -- figuring out how they were safer without the abuser or without abuse or violence in their life and they were trying to measure the program intervention that led to that.

Yes, and I think it about -- that's a common way that people would -- the general immunity would you safety or success. How they report for funders -- how many meals we served. How many lovers of protective orders were issued and things like that and how that can impact the advocacy and the funding as well.

Yes.

The July keynote and I hope people will talk more about success and especially the research done by the [indiscernible] Institute. That's something that is so interesting to research and learn about. I hope everyone is able to participate in that keynote.

We are about ready to wrap up.

I wanted to mention -- these are some of the resources that we use as we prepared for this. Lori in particular was reading -- [indiscernible] came out in 2008 and it was a pivotal research that was done in this topic. There were so many other wonderful resources and so many wonderful stories that helps to get at the heart of what safety looks like and how it impacts advocacy. I wanted to share in case I forgot to share them on the secured page. A lot of people are serving everybody. At the same time we need to keep thinking about what that truly looks like and how it impacts us on the individual institution and the community level. And what we can do to keep furthering the idea -- truly ending violence against women and children.

Next slide.

Are there any final thoughts or points you would like to get out to people or wisdom you would like to impart?

No pressure -- sorry.

[laughter]

It's a lot of what we are ready discussed -- focusing on letting survivors define their situation and their understanding of the situation as well as their understanding of all the pressures in terms of culture and society that they face and finding creative ways to be able to provide those services

in different ways. I know that Priya said a lot of survivors that they see in support groups are women in the community and ones that refer other survivors and also word-of-mouth -- with the survivors we work with. A level of trust building and being involved in the community. This is very important. Supporting women through their journeys and sometimes that does take needing to help funders and other well-intentioned institutions and people. It does mean that the advocacy is about helping them see things from the survivors perspective.

Yes.

Something I don't think I emphasized much is the fact that none of us are trying to say that women staying is the best idea all the time or that women leading is always the best. We are trying to meet women where they are and recognize that sometimes there might be very good reasons why they might not be able -- feasible for them to leave. Financial, personal capacity, what not. Or the fact that leaving can be a dangerous time and it's something the advocates need to acknowledge.

Yes.

The thing is cut and dried -- I wish that advocacy was black and white and we had easy set formulas to use throughout the country. Sadly, life isn't like that.

Yes.

Any final lots ask

Perfect.

Anything you would like to add before we leave, Priya No, this was an amazing discussion. I learned a lot.

I will now turn it over to Liz for any final announcement she might have.

Thank you, everyone, for joining us.

Thank you, Jolene and to all of the participants we are happy to have these conversations with you. We apologize for any technology issues we experienced today. If you would, when you get disconnected, share a few of your thoughts in the evaluation you will be linked to and certainly if you have comments about technology, let us know. As Jolene referenced the next all class webinar coming up is Wednesday, July 15. It will be the ALC keynote discussion. It will be the full frame initiative as presented by Anna Melton and the topic will be a continuation of this conversation about how it is that survivors define success. We hope to be able to join us. The publicity for the keynote session will go out on Monday. Register and plan to join us. We wish you a happy and healthy long Fourth of July summer weekend. Take care, everyone. Until we are back together again -- Lori and Priya and Jolene, thank you so much. We will be back together soon. Thanks, everybody. Take care.

Thank you for joining.

[Event concluded]