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# Evaluating Services for Survivors of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

图书馆



*Series on Violence Against Women*



Stephanie Riger • Larry Bennett  
Sharon M. Wasco • Paul A. Schewe  
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*University of Illinois at Chicago*

# Evaluating Services for Survivors of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault



*Sage Series on Violence Against Women*



**SAGE Publications**

*International Educational and Professional Publisher*  
Thousand Oaks ■ London ■ New Delhi

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*For information:*



Sage Publications, Inc.  
2455 Teller Road  
Thousand Oaks, California 91320  
E-mail: [order@sagepub.com](mailto:order@sagepub.com)

Sage Publications Ltd.  
6 Bonhill Street  
London EC2A 4PU  
United Kingdom

Sage Publications India Pvt. Ltd.  
M-32 Market  
Greater Kailash I  
New Delhi 110 048 India

Printed in the United States of America

### **Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

Evaluating services for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault / by Stephanie Riger . . . [et al].

p. cm. -- (Sage series on violence against women)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-7619-2352-7 (c) -- ISBN 0-7619-2353-5 (p)

1. Abused women--Services for--United States--Evaluation.

2. Sexual abuse victims--Services for--United States--Evaluation. I. Riger, Stephanie. II. Series.

HV6626.2 .E93 2002

362.82'92'0973--dc21

2002001787

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

02 03 04 05 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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|                             |                                     |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <i>Acquisitions Editor:</i> | Margaret Seawell                    |
| <i>Editorial Assistant:</i> | Alicia Carter                       |
| <i>Production Editors:</i>  | Claudia A. Hoffman and Olivia Weber |
| <i>Copy Editor:</i>         | Amy Kasilsky                        |
| <i>Typesetter:</i>          | Siva Math Setters, Chennai, India   |
| <i>Indexer:</i>             | Teri Greenberg                      |
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# Evaluating Services for Survivors of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault



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by Stephanie Riger, Larry Bennett, Sharon M. Wasco, Paul A. Schewe, Lisa Frohmann, Jennifer M. Camacho, and Rebecca Campbell



## Foreword

Thirty years into the effort to end violence against women, very significant social, legislative, and political advances that improve justice and increase safety for those who experience domestic violence and sexual assault can be celebrated. In large part, these changes can be attributed to the grassroots, feminist movement that privileged the experience and leadership of those women who survived abuse. Subsequently, efforts designed to respond to the problems of battering and rape have assumed a prominent place on the national policy agenda, resulting in the passing of federal legislation that provides funding for services, the establishment of research and academic research centers, and the introduction of public initiatives by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control, Department of Justice, Housing and Urban Development, Department of Defense, and other agencies in response to their recognition of the serious health and social consequences of violence against women.

A national, multilingual hotline has been established and receives calls from victims in need of emergency assistance, concerned family members, and community-based advocates. Local programs are flooded with similar calls. Most important, grassroots activism has led to a lively network of service providers (some who have celebrated more than 30 years of advocacy and activism) who continue to push for social change and shifts in public consciousness around violence against women and broader issues of gender inequality.

With these important advances has come the challenge to evaluate the broad-based mobilization in general terms and to assess the

effectiveness of direct service delivery programs in particular. Many long-term advocates and activists—especially those who continue to respond to women in crisis—have raised the following questions. Has our work for the past 30 years made a difference? Do treatment programs for abusers work? Do crisis intervention programs have a long-term impact? Are families safer and stronger, and are communities more nurturing and attentive to the needs of women and girls? Are more women and children free from the terror that accompanies constant physical, emotional, sexual, and economic abuse because of our work? Have all women benefited equally, regardless of race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, or social status? Have there been unintended negative consequences from our work and what antiviolence strategies will take us into the future? These are the questions that frame this book. What appears at first glance to be a volume about evaluating services is actually much, much more; it is one with tremendous appeal and broad significance.

In addition to reviewing the basic concepts related to evaluation, *Evaluating Services for Survivors of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault* is a chronicle of the antiviolence movement and the development of services. By focusing in one volume on both domestic violence and sexual assault, it makes an important conceptual intervention by challenging readers to be more comprehensive when thinking about this work. In a similar way, the authors are both researchers and practitioners who represent various disciplines. The text, therefore, reflects a multidisciplinary, multimethod approach to evaluation. It does so in a way that demystifies research, models collaboration, and promotes dialogue between the various constituencies who work to end violence against women. Although it clearly and convincingly stresses the importance of evaluation, it does so in a way that emphasizes the need for safety and confidentiality; readers will walk away from the text understanding how important it is to listen to women's voices, to build individual and organizational trust, to respect differences, and to link evaluation to intervention reform and policy changes. The honest consideration of agencies' constraints, the willingness to name contradictory roles, and the look to the future of evaluation as a key aspect of this work are tremendously important and refreshing. I expect that *Evaluating Services for Survivors of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault* will assume a key place in the scholarship on evaluation, and will make a tremendous contribution to grassroots service providers working to end violence against women.

Beth Richie, Ph.D.  
University of Illinois at Chicago

For years on end, I talked about the unfailing commitment of domestic violence programs to saving lives, about the value of these services to women and children across the state. And I talked about the incredible number of clients served, the number of hotline calls, shelter nights, and so on. But within the context of evidence-based programming, the new era for all of us, those statements didn't hold water. Now when I'm asked to prove it, or when I look for new funding (everyday), I have something besides gut feelings to rely upon. And so do our providers. What gratifies me most is observing them using the results of the evaluation and the performance measures in other venues, with other funders and potential funders. After all the blood and sweat, we all got to be winners.

Carol Brigman  
Chief, Bureau of Domestic Violence  
Prevention and Intervention  
Illinois Department of Human Services





# Introduction

In May 1998, the Illinois Department of Human Services (DHS) decided to evaluate its state-funded sexual assault and domestic violence programs. Several concerns prompted this decision. DHS was investing a considerable portion of its resources in domestic violence and sexual assault services, yet little was known about the overall impact of those services. Were clients obtaining the services they needed? Were those services helping women? Was taxpayers' money being spent wisely?

The authors of this book were selected to conduct this evaluation in part because we all have had experience conducting research on violence against women and evaluation research, as well as histories of collaborating with advocates and service providers. Our work on this project over a three-year period taught us much about evaluating services for victimized women. We learned the extreme care with which research must be designed to ensure that research methods do not put women in danger or interfere with their recovery. Safety, confidentiality, and well-being of clients must supersede evaluation considerations. We attempted, whenever possible, to develop the evaluation collaboratively with practitioners, and we learned about the value (and the challenges) of such collaborations.

Although members of our group share a commitment to ending violence against women, we differ in many ways. Some of us prefer quantitative research methods whereas others prefer qualitative ones. We come from different disciplinary backgrounds: psychology, criminal justice, and social work. Some of us have a history of working

against sexual assault; others have had more experience in working against domestic violence. We share a strong commitment to using research skills to prevent and reduce violence and to help the survivors of abuse. Over the years that we have worked on this project, we have had many stimulating discussions about the nature and process of evaluation. We hope to pass on through this book not only our expertise in evaluation but also the deeper issues that underlie many decisions in the course of an evaluation.

Perhaps the most important lesson that we learned is that evaluation always occurs in context. Resources available within an agency may affect the scope of an evaluation because data collection puts demands for time and effort on an already burdened staff. Within the violence against women movement, the press for evaluation may have consequences for future interventions. Funders' requirement that services be evaluated may exert a push for easily measurable goals and individual services because those may require less effort to show success compared to more elusive goals such as prevention. Also, evaluation may conflict with providers' service philosophy. Many practitioners consider themselves to be client centered, letting clients determine the direction of interactions. They may see asking evaluation questions as putting the needs of the agency ahead of those of the client (albeit temporarily). Evaluation of programs offering services to abused women thus may raise issues not seen in other contexts.

Our purpose here is twofold. First, we discuss the special considerations that evaluators must take into account when researching domestic violence and sexual assault. At the same time, we aim to persuade service providers of the value of evaluation. Second, we illustrate both how to do an evaluation of services for victims of interpersonal violence and the difficult choices that must be made in that process. We believe that this will be helpful not only to providers of services but also to evaluators who must operate within similar constraints. Thus, although our experience is based on our research in Illinois, the issues raised in this book are widely applicable.

In sum, this book is trying to accomplish what some say is impossible—meeting the needs of two audiences: practitioners and evaluators (and possibly even a third, funders). Material useful to all of these audiences is in every chapter of this book. Evaluators may be tempted to skip the chapters on “why evaluate” or “how to evaluate,” thinking that they already have that expertise. But the blending into these chapters of issues that are unique to domestic violence and sexual assault makes them essential reading for anyone who wants to work in this area. Alternatively, practitioners may not feel the need to read

the chapter on the movements against violence against women. Yet we believe that serious attention must be paid to the potential impact of evaluation on the direction of those movements.

The first part of the book discusses the social and political context of evaluation because of our belief that it is crucial to the success of an evaluation. We examine the evolution of the domestic violence and sexual assault movements over the last 30 years and the emergence of services for abused women. The sexual assault and domestic violence movements have somewhat different (though overlapping) histories and concerns; therefore, we consider them separately in Chapter 1. We then discuss in Chapter 2 issues that arise in the collaboration between practitioners and researchers when an evaluation is conducted jointly. These two chapters draw on previous research as well as our experience in Illinois. Part II moves to practical concerns in conducting an evaluation. Chapters 3 and 4 focus on "why evaluate" and "basic concepts in evaluation." Chapter 5 considers ways to use the results to improve agencies and attract clients and funding. Part III considers the lessons learned from our experience in Illinois that are generally applicable to evaluating domestic violence and sexual assault services. Chapter 6 discusses the problems and possibilities of the measures that we developed for use in Illinois, and we present those measures in Appendices A and B. More information, evaluation resources, and English and Spanish versions of the evaluation measures as well as statistical analyses of the measures, and consent forms, are available on our web site: [www.uic.edu/depts/psch/idhs](http://www.uic.edu/depts/psch/idhs).

We have gained valuable input from other evaluators working on similar projects, including *Evaluating Domestic Violence Programs*, an evaluation manual for domestic violence service providers that emerged from the Domestic Abuse Project in Minnesota (Edleson & Frick, 1997), which differed from our work most significantly in that it did not include sexual assault services. We also drew from the Sexual Assault and Rape Prevention Evaluation Project in Michigan (Campbell, Davidson, et al., 1998; Campbell, Davidson, et al., 1999), an empowerment evaluation project providing consultation, evaluation training, and technical assistance to sexual assault programs. This project differed from ours in that it worked with sexual assault programs but did not include domestic violence programs. Additionally, we examined outcome measures for domestic violence services developed for the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence (Sullivan, 1998). The Urban Institute was contracted by the National Institute of Justice to conduct an evaluation of the STOP grants funded by the 1994 Violence Against Women Act. To date, this work

has included process evaluations of all STOP grantees in all 50 states. Although this work was useful to us, our task was to develop outcome, not process evaluation, measures. Finally, our work focused only on services to survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence, not prevention, interventions with batterers, or community efforts. For a guide to evaluating the latter, see Garske et al. (2000).

We are grateful to the staff, volunteers, and clients of the 87 sexual assault and domestic violence agencies in Illinois that participated in the evaluation; to James Nelson, JoAnne Durkee, Carol Brigman, and Susan Catania at the Illinois Department of Human Services for their unflagging support; to the Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault and their agencies and to Illinois domestic violence agencies for their many suggestions and cooperation; and to April Howard and Mark Thomas for invaluable research assistance. We thank Linda Hauser of Willamette University in Oregon for generously sharing her literature review of more than 100 studies evaluating domestic violence and sexual assault programs. We are especially grateful to the many abused women whose patience and cooperation made this evaluation project possible. In their honor, we are contributing all royalties that accrue from this book to a fund to support graduate student research at the University of Illinois at Chicago on violence against women.



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# PART I: The Political and Social Context of Evaluation





# The Evolution of the Violence Against Women Social Movement and Services for Victims

To place our evaluation of sexual assault and domestic violence services in context, this chapter provides a brief overview of the historical development of the violence against women social movements. In both the antirape movement and the battered women's movement, two key activities dominated the early efforts of community activists. First, volunteers established rape crisis centers (RCCs) and domestic violence shelters to provide crisis services for victimized women. Starting as grassroots efforts, these agencies have grown in number and complexity. Here we review the challenges and successes in creating these centers and shelters. Second, agency staff and other advocates have pushed for reform of federal and state legal statutes that pertain to violence against women. We will highlight pivotal legislative reforms and briefly review the effectiveness of those changes in addressing the needs of victimized women. Following this historical introduction, we will focus on the primary services offered by today's rape crisis centers and domestic violence shelters. Finally, we conclude this chapter with an overview of how the violence against women social movements have responded to the increased demand for program evaluation and discuss some of the challenges in evaluating community services for rape survivors and battered women.