

ANNUAL REPORT FY 2021

Council on Domestic Violence for Page County

- CHOICES -

JULY 2020 - JUNE 2021

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Mission

Prevent domestic and sexual violence through public awareness and education, and to serve as a resource and safe haven for those affected. Choices supports domestic and sexual violence victims through our 1) comprehensive emergency shelter program 2) 24-hour confidential hotline 3) education and supportive counseling, and 4) an environment that encourages safety, wellness and empowerment.

Services

- Emergency shelter and services for intimate partner and sexual violence survivors
- Crisis intervention counseling and emotional support
- Information and referral services
- Housing services
- Court advocacy services
- Licensed therapy
- Group support
- Community education
- Youth violence prevention

The Director's Note

It has been a year filled with tragedy and resilience. Our doors remained open through the pandemic while operating emergency shelter services at half-capacity. Our outstanding team provided counseling, housing opportunities, court advocacy, case management, support groups, education, prevention training and many more countless services. We pride ourselves in helping domestic and sexual violence survivors stabilize their lives. This year, we began to take it a step further - expanding our focus beyond the shelter into communities through non-shelter counseling services and violence prevention work.

We are thrilled at our growing partnership with the Luray, Stanley and Page County Sheriff police departments on a new Lethality Assessment Program aimed at lowering murder rates in cases of intimate partner violence. Expanding collaboration with Valley Health aids our quest to support clients suffering from addiction and physical ailments, while our free licensed therapy services support emotional recovery.

This year has not been without it's difficulties. We turned away many calls for shelter due to lack of space in adherence with COVID-19 health requirements. Our clients also faced countless new challenges (unemployment, housing crisis, health issues, slowed court system) on their journeys to freedom from domestic and sexual violence. But, we remain humbled with our community support and clients' transformation toward stable, healthy individuals and families.

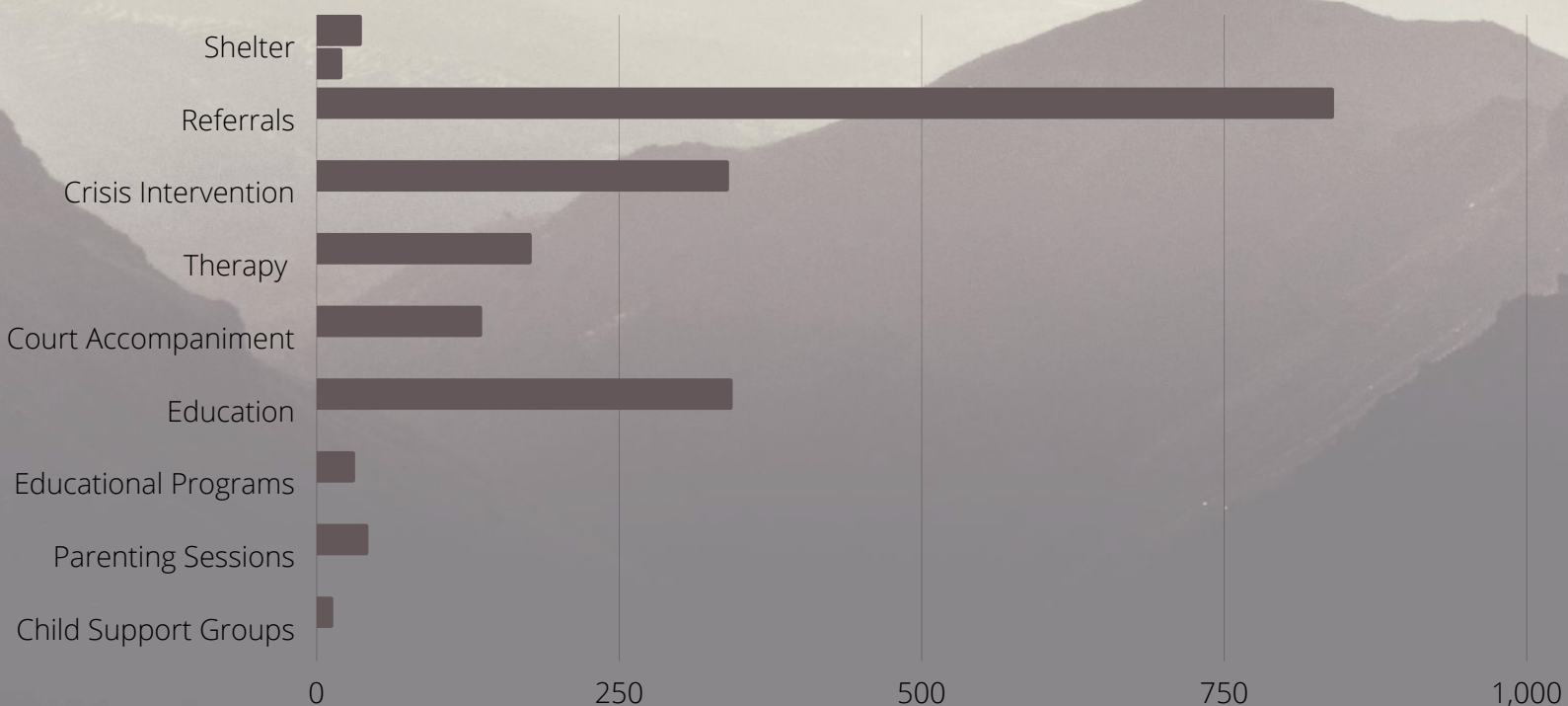
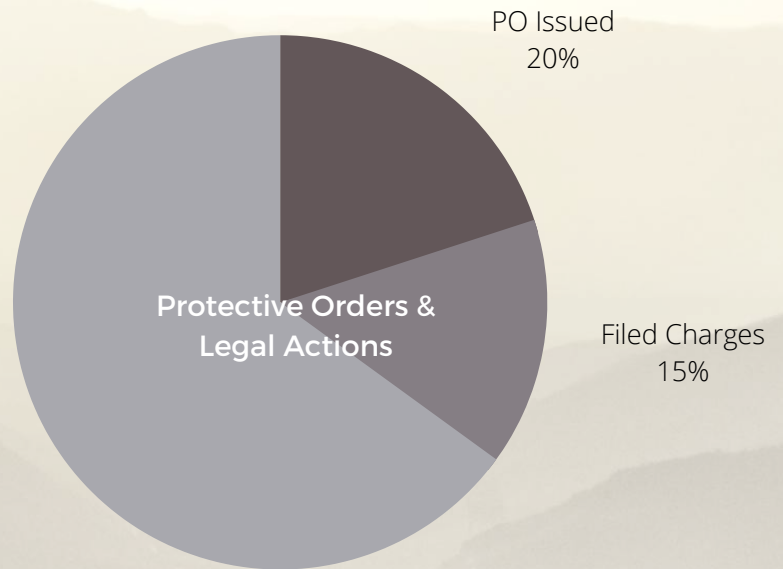
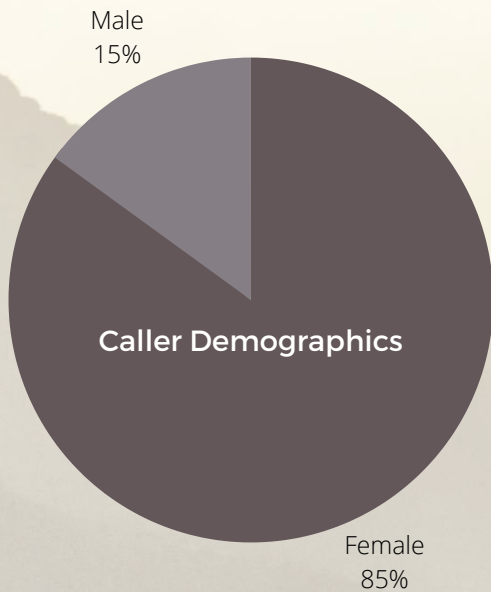
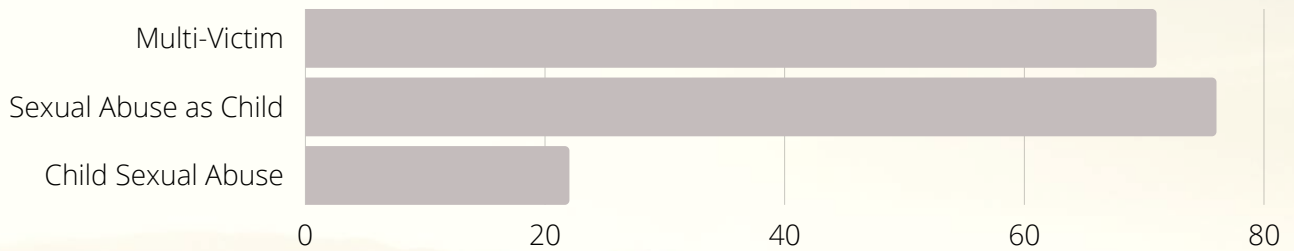
Our commitment to provide a safe haven and advocate for safe spaces in our community is stronger than ever. Our unfortunate truth remains that until we begin to truly address and transform the violence in our homes, we will struggle to develop, grow and profit at the levels our children deserve. Thank you for standing with us. Your support enables us to keep going when the times get tough and remember why do this work.

Best,

Vanessa Kulick
Executive Director

By the Numbers

Of the 177 new clients served in FY21, 71 had multi-victimizations, 76 clients experienced sexual abuse as children and 22 were children that were sexually abused or exposed to sexual abuse.



By the Numbers

Statistics

- Of the 177 new clients served in FY21, 71 had multi-victimizations, 76 clients experienced sexual abuse as children and 22 were children that were sexually abused or exposed to sexual abuse (see chart on previous page).
- 15% of clients are male (see chart)
- 24% experienced child/youth abuse/neglect
- 50% suffer from chronic substance abuse
- Abuse occurred within past 30 days for 37% of survivors
- Protective orders issued for 20% of survivors and 15% have charges filed against perpetrator (see chart)
- 13% of victims had a weapon used against them
- 8% sustained physical injuries requiring medical attention

Services

- Shelter for 37 women and 21 children for a total of 2,094 nights
- 840 referrals for services
- 340 callers received crisis intervention support via the hotline
- 177 licensed counseling sessions to 57 clients
- Case management to 37 shelter residents.
- 42 parenting sessions and 13 support groups for children
- 136 criminal justice accompaniment services
- 343 Domestic Violence Education awareness services
- 31 educational programs

TREND ALERT

The first year of COVID-19 saw a record low of Protective Order requests. We saw a spike in requests in April 2021 that has remained steady as COVID restrictions lifted.

Court Spotlight

We provided court advocacy to 31 survivors - 84% of whom experienced domestic violence while 15% were stalked.

We supported 10 protective orders, 8 of which were granted.

Housing Spotlight

Our housing program successfully placed 13 clients into housing.

100% were able to pay full rent after exiting our program.

TREND ALERT

In FY21, "Fair Market" housing availability went from slim to gaunt. We had a seven month gap with no housing placements.

COVID-19-related unemployment led clients requiring extensions on rental stabilization programs far beyond norms in previous years.

Shelter Services

Impact

94% received necessary support to meet their basic financial needs

83% received necessary support to find safe, affordable housing

100% :

- had their emotional needs met/supported
- received support to mitigate the impact of violence on friends and family
- are more hopeful about their lives
- believe their children are having more positive interactions with others

Feedback

"My children and I would have stayed in a very dangerous situation or I would have had to sleep in my vehicle."

"My abuser found where I was. I didn't think I would ever be able to escape. I would have kept running."

"I have really enjoyed the Healing Trauma group and didn't realize how much my past was affecting me now."

"Goal planning and budgeting were new to me. But they [staff] helped me focus on the important stuff in my life. I am not just getting by anymore."

Trend Alert

We have seen an increase in women coming into the shelter with addiction issues. These same women either have a pending custody case to keep their children, have lost custody of their children, or may have had their parental rights taken away from them with their children placed with relatives or foster care.

Community Corner

In the Press

Washington Post:

Domestic violence shelters
are in a state of
emergency.

(June 2021)

Page News and Courier:

Choices Director retires
after 24 years

(February 2021)

Partnerships

- New partnership with Valley Health supports clients suffering from addiction.
- Growing partnerships with Luray, Stanley and Page County Sheriff police departments on the Lethality Assessment Program.
- New partnership with Page Alliance for Community Action and the West Luray Rec Center on social emotional learning to support domestic violence prevention among youth.
- New partnership with 4H Youth Development Program on domestic violence prevention.
- Ongoing collaboration with courts, Department of Social Services, and town and county representatives.

Inside Stories

Hotline Healing

Penny has three children and has been an ongoing Choices client for ten years. She continues to reach out for support through our hotline services even when relocated to another state. Penny reports our hotline services are invaluable in helping to keep her grounded and remind her of how far she has come. She knows that she can call anytime and always find support, a sounding board, or someone she can vent to.

Throughout the years Choices has helped her with emergency shelter, rapid rehousing services, and seeking out special education services for her developmentally delayed twins during the pandemic when she needed to home school.

Most recently Penny's participation in the Healing Trauma Group via zoom has given her a better grasp on noticing red flags in relationships and has restored her confidence in herself. She is so thankful for staff working to help meet her needs all these years.

Housing Hope

Susan knocked on our door and asked for help, ready to regain control of her life after the death of her husband led her into a period of bad relationships, substance use and unemployment. This period also estranged her from her three grown children. She says asking for help was the hardest thing she ever did.

Upon entering shelter, Susan was approved for the housing program, began a new job and began a housing search. She completed our in-house curriculum for Healing from Trauma, and now processes her grief in a healthy way. Susan is managing her addiction and rebuilding relationships with her children.

Our Housing Coordinator advocated with a landlord for her character, offering proof (not just promises) of making positive life choices. The Coordinator also helped Susan collect donated furnishings for her new home. Susan is very grateful for all of the support and to re-stabilize her life.

Financial Report

Grants

Department of Criminal Justice Services

- \$398,000.00 -- VOCA/direct services
- \$27,659.00 -- VSTOP/court services

Department of Housing and Community Services

\$67,477.00 -- Rapid Rehousing/Utilities

Department of Social Services

\$157,000.00 -- direct services/prevention

United Way

\$8,000.00 -- client financial assistance

Local/ Government

Page County

\$5,000.00

Town of Shenandoah

\$500.000

Other

Warren & Katherine Coopersmith

Foundation

\$20,000.00

Andersen Foundation Grant

\$7,000.00

Individuals

• \$39,777.00

Faith-based organizations

• \$8,974.00

Businesses

• \$5,416.00

Fundraising

• \$15,888.00