Executive Director's Note:

A Year for the Books

by: Vanessa Kulick Price

Choices had a transformative year. Many staff, several clients, and loved ones came down with COVID-19, but we thankfully managed to keep our doors open without fail. In fact, we capitalized on the changing reality of the pandemic to reimagine our agency’s vision for the future. Choices brought in trauma and domestic/sexual violence experts across the state to reshape our vision, mission statement and activities for more inclusive and robust support to persons experiencing and at-risk of experiencing domestic and sexual violence in our community.

Our revived vision for Page County is strengthened community resilience and freedom from violence. Choices’ updated mission is to prevent intergenerational violence and provide trauma informed services to persons experiencing domestic and sexual violence. In that vein, Choices will focus on strengthening our role as a valued and accountable partner within a network of well-trained first responders, resulting in trauma sensitive care to adult, child, and youth survivors. We will equally ensure our policies and practices reflect a consistent commitment to trauma informed healing and resilience services focused on safety, trustworthiness and transparency, peer support, collaboration, empowerment, and addressing cultural, historical and gender issues. Finally, Choices will work to measurably shift our core community norms that support the ongoing perpetration of domestic and sexual violence.

This is a tall order for us and the community. But the need for change is greater than any obstacle towards realizing our vision. According to the Center for Disease Control, there are several major contributing risk factors to domestic and sexual violence: culture of violence, strict gender roles, lack of coping skills, lack of accountability, low income, rampant drug use, low educational attainment and cultural norms that discourage reporting abuse. Page County’s average unemployment rate is 2% higher (6.5%) than the state average. One out of ten people in Page County are in poverty while 15% have a bachelor’s degree or higher (Census, 2019). According to United Way, 35% of our community members are employed, but asset-limited and income-constrained. That equals to 45% of our community struggling to make ends meet.

It is not surprising then that Page County experiences elevated levels of domestic and sexual violence for our population size. Each year, Choices provides services to 600 people experiencing domestic and sexual violence. In 2021, we provided 182 clients (133 adults and 49 children) with advocacy services and 114 clients with emergency shelter (65 adults and 49 children). 85% of these individuals were at risk of imminent danger when entering our services. We unfortunately turned away between 6-8 clients per month due to lack of space.

Based on unmet needs, Choices decided to expand our capacity to provide shelter and comprehensive support services in early 2022. We added two new spaces – a one-bedroom apartment that accommodates four people for emergency shelter and an office space for our new Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW), Elisabeth Alger. Elisabeth offers licensed therapy to shelter and community clients affected by (not just immediately impacted) domestic and sexual violence. This wider aperture of support reflects our recognition that mental health needs in our community are wide-ranging and that for every person in imminent danger, there are one if not more who would benefit from licensed therapy while not requiring emergency shelter/crisis services. Elisabeth will soon also offer psychotherapy support groups for those who prefer group to individualized counseling services.

Finally, following a break in our services due to COVID-19, Choices reentered the school system to provide two after-school programs supporting youth to develop safe and healthy social emotional learning (SEL) skills. Advanced SEL competencies bulwark against contributing risk factors for domestic and sexual violence and are crucial to de-normalizing violence in our community for future generations. In 2021, Choices provided 25 Social Emotional Learning sessions for 800 kids at Page County Public (PCPS) schools and 8 weekly Social Emotional Learning sessions to 280 children at the West Luray Recreational Center. (Continued on next page)
A Year for the Books

CONTINUED

In early 2022, we added a monthly program working with high school athletes on bullying prevention and emotional resilience. Looking ahead, Choices hopes to expand our partnership with PCPS, kick-start SEL programming with faith communities, and elevate anti-violence as a core principle in our community through public awareness campaigns.

We are deeply grateful for the ongoing community support to our mission. We have enjoyed in-kind and financial donations for over 50-years from every corner of this county. This past year, the community answered the call during our letter campaign in October and again over the holidays with an influx of support. A special note to Blue Ridge Bank for their $10,000/year three-year commitment.

We humbly ask supporters to open their arms yet again as we continue to expand to meet the needs of our community and make concerted efforts to truly reduce pervasive domestic and sexual violence in Page County. We can and must do better - and cannot do it without you. We are particularly interested in expanding local business financial sponsorship for operations. If you or your business/organization are interested in expanding support, please use this link (https://www.paypal.com/fundraiser/charity/1210884) or reach out directly: vanessa@choicesofpagecounty.org | 540-743-4414 | 216 W. Main Street, Luray, VA, 22835

Thank you for the honor of allowing us to serve year after year.

All my gratitude:

Vanessa C. Kulick Price

Therapist's Corner:

Trauma Spotlight

by: Elisabeth Alger, LCSW

Trauma is the result of experiencing a deeply disturbing or distressing event. These events can look different for each person. They range from severe injury and threat of death to stressful non-life-threatening events. Though the events may differ, the effects of these experiences often lead to similar results. Trauma affects an individual’s ability to cope with daily life and typically leads to reduced capacity to regulate emotions and feelings of helplessness. Anxiety and depression are largely connected to trauma. One may notice behavior changes, such as isolating, avoiding people and/or places, irritable or aggressive behaviors, impulsive and/or self-destructive behavior, insomnia, vigilance of surroundings, changes in diet, and an increase in use of alcohol or other substances. One may also begin to have panic attacks, negative ideas about oneself, lose interest in things they typically enjoy, trouble concentrating and feel detached from others.

Many persons who experience trauma have a decline in their cognitive functioning. They begin to have a hard time recalling details of their past and often cannot put past experiences in a sequential order. This jumbled memory is not just related to the traumatic event, but to most of the events in their past. A unique feature of trauma is the physical changes to the brain. Most mental health illnesses cannot be seen, but brain scans show the changes that occur after trauma is experienced. In some cases, the trauma returns in the form of intrusive thoughts, flashbacks, and night terrors relating to the event. These reactions can be triggered by sights, smells, feelings, sounds, or tastes.

choices is pleased to announce the addition of an on-site therapist available to offer services to persons who have experienced Domestic and/or Sexual Violence. Trauma changes everything. Counseling can help explain those changes and restore the peace that was once experienced. Individual and family sessions are currently offered. Group sessions are planned for the near future.

ALL SERVICES ARE FREE! (YES! THAT INCLUDES THERAPY!)

SEE HOW WE'RE CHANGING WITH IT ON THE NEXT PAGE!

Email: Elisabeth@choicesofpagecounty.org

CURIOUS & WANT TO LEARN MORE?
A New Chapter: Trauma-Informed Principles
by: Rebecca “Becca” Frasier

Considering renewed focus on implementing Trauma-Informed Principles across our work, it is worth breaking down the core concepts. Originating within the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) works on the assumptions that (1) we realize that trauma occurs everywhere, every day, on a continuum (2) we recognize the signs and pervasive impacts of trauma (3) we respond to said trauma, and most importantly (4) we resist re-traumatization when delivering services, making policies, generating procedures, creating graphics, interior design, decorations — you get the point. SAMHSA coined these assumptions as “Four Rs” of Trauma-Informed Care.

Trauma-Informed Care also operates under six (6) key principles that—when satisfied—can create space for true healing. These principles mingle, intertwine, and dance together to build individualized, collaborative, truly transformative services for all persons who experienced domestic and sexual violence. TIC is not prescriptive; there’s no “checklist”. It is pure awareness, intention, and sensitivity. So, next time you build a program, make a policy, structure a meeting, or provide a service—consider these Trauma-Informed Care Guiding Principles (right sidebar):

1. **Safety**

Seems simple enough, but have you ever thought about what safety means? Safety comes in many forms, and its meaning is as unique as someone’s traumatic experience. As an agency, we are expanding our ability to foster emotional, psychological, physical, and spiritual safety across all services and interactions.

2. **Transparency & Trustworthiness**

Being upfront with procedures—the “why” behind our work—creates an environment of transparency which levels power. You can level power differentials by sharing info upfront. For example, in our new operating structure, everyone knows what to expect from all parties or procedures and how we deal with outlying issues—upfront, direct, and sensitive. This helps build advocate-client relationships and encourages trust, which in turn increases feelings of safety.

3. **Peer Support**

We are a grassroots organization built on the shoulders of clients and allies. Peer support runs deep through our agency. It uplifts the voices of clients as advocates. The wisdom of lived experience cannot be taught; by sharing experiences, we create a network, a community of strong people on their journey to thriving! And within that community—trust.

4. **Collaboration & Mutuality**

Using lived experiences, we are working with clients and walking along with them on their journey. We collaborate with clients about current services, the shelter environment, future goals, avenues for feedback, and ways to foster healing. We know they are worth it, and we are invested in their unique journey to discover their truth and find their voice!

5. **Empowerment, Voice & Choice**

Engaging with clients collaboratively and transparently enables clients to rediscover their voice and make choices about services they receive and how the agency interacts with them. Reclaiming this power is pivotal in trauma-informed care. Empowered thrivers empower survivors.

6. **Cultural, Historical & Gender Issues**

Science has shown pervasive trauma spanning generations can become hardwired into DNA and passed through generations. It is imperative to understand the systemic issues leading to large pockets of marginalized and oppressed persons and how those oppressive systems impact help-seeking behaviors, the brain, and overall community health and wellness.

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TRANSITIONING TO A NOVEL APPROACH COMES WITH ITS OWN CHALLENGES, REQUIRING CONSTANT REVIEW AND REALIGNMENT OF POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND SERVICES TO REFLECT THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND THE NEEDS OF SURVIVORS.

BUT— TO BEAR WITNESS TO MEANINGFUL CHANGE, NO MATTER THE GROWING PAINS, IS A PRIVILEGE AND SO WORTH IT.

WANT TO EXPLORE TRAUMA-INFORMED CHANGES TO YOUR AGENCY, BUT NOT SURE WHERE TO START?

EMAIL: REBECCA@CHOICESOFPAGECOUNTY.ORG
Entering Our Doors

What a Survivor Can Expect

by: Felicia Housden

The idea of showing up at a domestic and sexual violence emergency shelter can be scary. The below case study walks us through what clients may expect step-by-step:

Janice and her 10-year-old son arrived on Choices’ doorstep at her brother’s prodding. She rang the doorbell unsure of who we were, what we did, and what services we would offer. Two staff met Janice at the door and helped her and her son feel comfortable. Staff assessed that Janice had been in a physically and emotionally abusive relationship for 10 years. She was ready to leave and start a new life. Janice sought shelter for her and her son. Unfortunately, our shelter was full at the time. Through a special Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) grant, we were able to put Janice and her son in a hotel until shelter availability opened. Thankfully, a shelter resident moved into permanent housing within the week. Janice relocated into the shelter after five days at the hotel.

The Residential Services Coordinator (RSC) soon met with Janice and conducted a Goal Planning Assessment. This process helps the client set a course of action for their next steps and identify what services within the agency they might need. Janice called upon Choices’ staff unique expertise (court, housing, community referrals, therapy) for comprehensive support services. One staff provided transportation to the Health Department using United Way funds for Janice to purchase birth certificates that helped her find employment and housing. Janice then worked with staff on the application for Social Security cards (her husband kept these vital records under lock and key to coerce and control her). We also helped Janice amend her SNAP/Medicaid and update her address.

Beyond logistical support, Choices staff offered Janice a range of healing services. Janice entered our Healing Trauma Group to learn about the neurobiology of trauma and grounding techniques that she used regularly when she was triggered and anxiety spiked. Working with the Court Advocate (CA), Janice was granted an Emergency Protective Order and a warrant for her husband’s arrest. She was eventually awarded a two-year Permanent Protective Order. The CA also worked with Janice to file for custody and child support for her son and successfully complete an application for Blue Ridge Legal Service to legally represent her case.

Janice additionally received supportive services for her 10-year son. Following an initial intake assessment, the Children Service’s Coordinator (CSC) helped Janice enroll her child into the public school system and find day care, as needed. The Associate Advocate (AA) supported Janice and her son with frequent transportation to medical appointments, the magistrates’ office, grocery store, etc. She also played games with the son, offered homework support, and general emotional support for both Janice and her child. Janice enjoyed round the clock services in part due to our Shelter Managers (SMs) - staff working overnight and weekends to support clients while day staff are off. The SMs offered Janice support when experiencing sleep trouble, issues putting her son to bed, and grounding techniques when Janice experienced a panic attack early in her stay at the shelter. (CONTINUED NEXT COLUMN)

Finally, in support for her transition from the shelter to permanent housing, our Housing Coordinator (HC) met with Janice and placed her into our Rapid Rehousing (RRH) program. Through the DHCD, RRH supported Janice with rent until she became fully self-sufficient and graduated from the program. The HC met with Janice every month to go over her budget and offer emotional support on her journey to become financially independent and able to cover rent and household costs.

We are grateful for the opportunity to serve people in our community like Janice – offering them an opportunity to reclaim their lives. Our hope is that more persons suffering from domestic and sexual violence will have a greater understanding of what they can expect when they reach out for help and will be inspired to do so.

From crisis intervention, safety planning, peer counseling, emergency transportation, accompaniment and beyond – Choices’ expert staff will support you on your journey.

Courage starts with showing up and allowing ourselves to be seen.

- Dr. Brene Brown

Managing Hope Amidst the Housing Crisis

by: Jacalyn Lee

If you or someone you know has attempted to rent a home since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, you know about the housing crisis: there are drastically fewer, affordable homes available for rent. While this trend began before the pandemic, the pandemic’s economic impact accelerated the trend.

Consider availability: As many folks began working remotely, they moved out of congested city apartments into more spacious rural homes. Housing sales have spiked, including many formerly rented homes. Other former rental homes have been transformed into vacation rentals, which tends to bring in more income for the owners and are not subject to the eviction moratorium. Rent payments with grant money have traditionally had to meet Fair Market Rent Limits (FMR) set by the government to be able to spend any grant money helping a household move into their own home. The trend since 2018 has been that most rents are above the limit. (CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)
Managing Hope

CONTINUED

So even with more housing grant money available (due to the pandemic) than we have ever seen before, all housing programs still struggle to spend the money. Hope arrived with the announcement in February 2022 that the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) is waiving the FMR limit until further notice. This is extremely exciting news!

Consider affordability: Of the ten households for whom Choices’ Rapid Rehousing Program (RRH) grant paid rent for when the pandemic shutdowns began, nine had their income eliminated or reduced. To keep these households from returning to homelessness, we carried them in the program long past the time normally expected. We have also seen rent rates spike as costs for everything have risen and landlords are flooded with applications for the units that come open. Income is still an issue for many households to bring in enough for the standard formula of three times the rent that landlords like to see.

APRIL: Sexual Assault Awareness & Child Abuse Prevention Month

by: Maddie Wells

Since the 1980s, April has been nationally recognized as Sexual Assault Awareness Month. According to the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN), every 68 seconds an American is sexually assaulted. RAINN also reports that 1 in every 6 American women have been the victim of a completed or attempted rape in her lifetime (2022). Sexual violence remains a persistent issue that impacts our community and clients. Our latest statistics show that within the last year, over ten percent of our clients experienced some form of sexual violence. We also saw an increase of sexual coercion by 271%. Sexual Assault Awareness Month is a time to honor those who have experienced sexual assault and listen to their stories. Throughout the month of April, we are dedicated to raising public awareness, quashing misconceptions about sexual assault, and continuing to educate our communities about sexual violence.

April is also National Child Abuse Prevention Month. During April, we place focus on preventative measures and stress the importance of communities coming together to support families and our youth. Child abuse is both a local and national issue. Latest reports show that there were over 300 referrals made to Virginia CPS due to suspected child abuse and neglect in Page County from July 2020 to June 2021. The National Child Maltreatment 2020 Report concluded that nationally, there were around 618,000 victims of child abuse and neglect for FY 2020. Of these victims, an estimated 1,750 children died from abuse and neglect.

WEAR BLUE DAY: Kick-off Child Abuse Prevention Month on April 1st. Wear blue to acknowledge the work needed in your community and across the country to provide a safer future for children. Use #WearBlueDay2022!

DIGITAL ADVOCACY DAY: Along with Denim Day, April 27th is also Digital Advocacy Day! Take time to contact your local officials to advocate for policy changes that are vital to bettering childhood experiences.

Households with children are the hardest hit when schools and childcare providers send them home to quarantine, which impacts parental employment. Employers also continue with interrupted job schedules for quarantines. We see our clients find part-time jobs that do not provide living wages and with schedules that fluctuate in such a way that makes it difficult to piece together several jobs.

The reality for Choices and other shelters is that we are keeping residents in shelter much longer than we have in the past. This means we can shelter fewer survivors in our building. The benefit for those residents is that longer shelter stays enable them to continue our in-house trauma-healing sessions and other forms of emotional support are accessed more regularly when they live on site. Thankfully, despite extended stays, we have supported more survivors since July 2021. Our new hotel funds offer flexibility to support clients with a hotel stay if experiencing imminent danger and no shelter availability. We continue to navigate the complexities of the housing crisis for our clients. The new addition of a one-bedroom apartment and waived FMR grant us expanded capacity for sheltering clients and moving them towards stable housing situations.

TAKING ACTION & SHOWING SUPPORT

SAAM DAY OF ACTION 2022: The first Tuesday of April, April 5th, is Sexual Assault Awareness Month Day of Action. Wear the color teal to show your support for survivors of sexual assault.

DENIM DAY 2022: Be a part of the movement and on April 27th wear denim to raise awareness and protest against the misconceptions that surround sexual violence.

History of Denim Day: The Italian Supreme Court in 1992 ruled that because a victim was wearing tight denim jeans at the time of her assault, she must have helped the perpetrator remove them, therefore consent was implied. The next day, women of the Italian Parliament wore denim in solidarity with the victim (Peace over Violence, 2022). Victim blaming mentalities and damaging misconceptions such as this one contribute to harmful gender biases.

MYTH BUSTERS

Common misconceptions about sexual violence

MISCONCEPTION: Sexual assaults occur due to sexual urges & desires.
TRUTH: Sexual assaults are not often sexually motivated; there is a desire to exert power and control over the survivor.

MISCONCEPTION: Men cannot be victims of sexual assault.
TRUTH: Men CAN experience sexual assault and violence. At least 1 in 6 men have experienced some type of sexual assault or abuse (1in6.org, 2022).

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NEW PROGRAM ALERT: Lethality Assessment Program (LAP) Explained
by: Josh Dyke

Choices, the Luray and Stanley police departments, Page County Sheriffs Office, Commonwealth Attorney's office, and representatives from the Office of the Attorney General met at the West Luray Recreation Center in Luray on March 16th and 17th for training and collaboration on the launch of the Lethality Assessment Program (LAP). This joint effort will improve services within Page County to provide additional safety protocols to reduce the risk of homicide amongst intimate partners. As part of the community, Choices is excited to announce the LAP’s implementation and look forward to a more victim-centered approach to intimate partner violence.

What is the Lethality Assessment Program (LAP) and how does it work? What are the benefits? Dr. Jacquelyn Campbell designed the LAP for first responders of intimate partner violence (IPV) to utilize at the scene of a domestic violence call. The first responders’ protocol involves taking aside the IPV victim and asking them a series of questions to evaluate their risk and safety according to national research on homicides. These questions will immediately flag if the victim is in lethal danger or not, and if deemed so, allows first responders to contact the local domestic and sexual violence agency (Choices) on behalf of the victim.

According to a National Institute of Justice study published in June 2018, the benefits of the LAP are tremendous. They concluded that the LAP (see below):

1. **Significantly reduced the severity & frequency of the violence survivors experienced.**
2. **Increased victims seeking help and safety planning:** which includes obtaining formal services for domestic violence, establishing safety strategies, and increasing protection against their partner.
3. **Greatly increases the survivor’s satisfaction** with the law enforcement’s response.

A COMMUNITY RESPONSE: Intro to Sexual Assault Response Team (SART)
by: Josh Dyke

A passing tourist might recognize Page County’s breathtaking landscapes and charming towns, but like rural areas across the country, some of our wounds and issues — such as sexual violence — are not seen but felt across the community. Sexual violence is an invisible problem we must confront. A Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) is a mechanism that brings a community together to take on these serious problems.

A SART is a coalition of agencies within a community that handle individual cases of sexual violence or set out to address systemic problems related to sexual assault. Each SART is tailored to the community it serves, but typically includes victim advocate groups, medical examiners, law enforcement, and prosecutors. This multidisciplinary team has a significant role; it evaluates the jurisdictional responses to sexual violence, addresses gaps in availability and community support, provides cross-agency training, and maintains a strategic collaboration within the community increasing communications.

We are happy to announce that Page County relaunched a SART on March 22nd. We look forward to working with other professionals in addressing the needs of the community and the clients we serve in our own special community.

Stepping Up for Survivors
by: Tina Knupp

Isla came into shelter with her mother fleeing domestic violence. She had directly witnessed and heard the violence. Upon arrival, Isla was very frustrated with her mother and their circumstances. She had to change schools and finds communal living uncomfortable. To make matters worse, Isla’s father refused to provide her clothing and shoes and she had to settle for two bags of donated clothes and shoes. Isla’s first days of school were rough. She came home crying every day from students bullying her.

Choices stepped in and provided licensed crisis therapy, school supplies, new clothing, homework assistance, arts and craft supplies, and supportive counseling sessions. We are seeing incremental progress and hope in Isla. It will be a long journey, but Choices staff will be walking beside her every step.

NEED COURT OR FORENSIC EXAM ASSISTANCE, ACCOMPANIMENT, OR INFORMATION? CALL: 540-743-4414
Generations of Hope
Building Social Emotional Learning Skills in our Youth
by: Makala Tate

In Fall 2021, we did an emotional needs assessment for the afterschool students at Luray Elementary School (LES) and Page County Middle School (PCMS). The assessment showed widespread low self-esteem. In response, we introduced a new curriculum to build confidence and learn to show empathy to others. At LES, we are using a workbook called “Magnificent Marvelous Me” that focuses on identifying and building one’s positive traits. “Magnificent Marvelous Me” is published by “Art With Heart” which uses the healing power of creative expression.

At PCMS, we are using the Virginia Sexual & Domestic Violence Action Alliance’s “Do You” curriculum. This program focuses on each student’s positive traits and what makes them unique as a person. The students really enjoy working out of their own workbook. We have seen a huge improvement in their attitudes and behaviors since starting the new curriculum.

We look forward to continuing to support students in Page County build their social emotional learning skills and hope to expand our work to other schools and students in 2022.

Calling All Volunteers!
by: Maddie Wells

Choices is excited to announce a revamp of our volunteer program.

If you are looking for ways to give back to your community consider volunteering for Choices!

Some of our current volunteer needs include:

- Client transportation
- Empowerment/preventative afterschool programming assistance
- Shelter and hotline coverage
- Administrative duties like shredding and organizing
- Creative content for social media initiatives
- Special event and booth volunteers

Interested?
Get in touch with Maddie Wells

Call: 540.743.4414

Email: maddie@choicesofpagecounty.org

Fill out the online application (https://bit.ly/3qro7uj)

Training will be provided.

AT A GLANCE: SEL Competencies*

1. Self-Awareness
   - Ability to understand your own emotions, thoughts & values & how each affects your behavior.
   - Traits & Skills: growth mindset, self-efficacy, honesty, integrity; linking emotions, thoughts & values; integrating personal & social identities, etc.

2. Self-Management
   - Ability to manage your emotions, thoughts & behaviors effectively in situations to achieve certain goals.
   - Traits & Skills: emotional regulation, self-disciplined, self-motivated, setting personal & collective goals, planning, organizational skills, courage to have initiative, etc.

3. Social Awareness
   - Ability to understand the perspective of & empathize with others, including those with different cultures.
   - Traits & Skills: taking others’ perspectives, recognizing strengths in others, empathy, compassion, understanding & expressing gratitude, identifying social norms, etc.

4. Relationship Skills
   - Ability to form & maintain healthy, supportive relationships & navigate settings with diverse groups.
   - Traits & Skills: effective communication, cultural competency, teamwork, collaboration, resisting peer pressure, leadership, help-seeking, supportive, etc.

5. Responsible Decision-Making
   - Ability to make caring & constructive choices about your behaviors & social interactions.
   - Traits & Skills: curiosity, open-minded, analytical, demonstrates good judgment, evaluates institutional impacts, evaluates consequences before taking action, etc.

*According to CASEL’s Social-Emotional Learning Framework
We collected the following statistics from Virginia Sexual & Domestic Violence Action Alliance VAdata (VAData) beginning in February 2021 to March 2022 focusing on hotline data, caller risk and victimization, and advocacy services Choices provided.

Compared to last year, more callers experienced financial stress and homelessness as a result of intimate partner and family violence. Many had to relocate.

VAData provides a brief risk assessment similar to the Lethality Assessment Program (LAP). It highlights 14 questions that are strong indicators of lethality in intimate partner violence (IPV). Compared to last year, 93% of all lethality indicators increased, with sexual coercion increasing by 271 percent!
from caller to client...

ADVOCACY in ACTION

SEEKING SAFETY

Choices received **302 requests** for shelter during the reporting period (Feb. 2021 to March 2022); Choices could not fill shelter requests for **33 survivors** of domestic or sexual violence due to agency funding and/or shelter capacity.

Of those requesting shelter, **40.1%** were homeless due to domestic and/or sexual violence; **40.1%** were **in imminent danger due to domestic and/or sexual violence**, and **19.9%** were experiencing homelessness unrelated to domestic or sexual violence.

WHERE & WHO?

- **Shelter**: 54.3%
- **Hotel**: 45.7%

Thanks to new funding, we were able to place **63 households** in a non-congregate, hotel shelter.

Of the **140 survivors** sheltered, **121** were in imminent danger due to domestic and/or sexual violence. CHOICES provided a total of **6,011 bed nights**!

IMMINENT DANGER

- **Children**: 46.4%
- **Adults**: 53.6%

During the reporting period, Choices sheltered **75 adult survivors** and **65 child survivors**, doubling last year.

The data below does not represent unique individuals; it represents what support services **209 survivors** (in shelter, hotel, or community) received from advocates and the number of times advocates provided services.

SURVIVORS SERVED*

**209**

NUMBER OF SERVICES PROVIDED

- **Crisis Intervention**
- **Financial Support**
- **Hotline Services**
- **Housing Services**
- **Transportation**
- **Licensed Therapy**

**TYPE OF ADVOCACY PROVIDED**

- **Info & Referrals**
- **Emotional Support**
- **Basic Needs**
- **Skill/Personal Dev.**
- **Safety Planning**

*COMMUNITY MEMBERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO SEEK SUPPORT EVEN IF THEY DON'T NEED SHELTER.
IN THE COURTS

During the reporting period of February 2021 to March 2022, Choices’ Court Advocate assisted 95 individuals or families in filing requests/affidavits for protective orders and petitions for child custody, visitation & support. This is an overall increase of 15% from last year! Of these 95 individuals or families, 64 requested & received court accompaniment.

The following data illustrates what court services the 95 survivors & families received from Choices and the outcomes (denied/awarded) of their petition(s) and filing(s), when possible.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SERVICES BREAKDOWN</th>
<th>Last Year</th>
<th>This Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JDR EPO/PPO</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GD EPO</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JDR PO</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVS</td>
<td>37.9%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filing Assistance</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1%Filed for Victim Compensation
2% Accompanied to Prosecution Interviews
3% Accompanied to Police Interviews

67.4% requested & received court accompaniment (civil or criminal).

If you or someone you know could use support throughout the legal process, please call 540-743-4414. Choices offers court (civil or criminal) accompaniment, law enforcement interview accompaniment, and forensic exam accompaniment. We do not offer legal advice.
Joshua (Josh) Dyke, our Court Advocate, joined Choices in December 2021. Josh has fifteen years’ experience providing case management in our region. He has hit the ground running supporting a record number of court clients.

Elisabeth joined Choices as our first Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) on staff in mid-February 2022. We are thrilled to provide in-house licensed therapy to clients of all ages (for free!). A Page County native, Elisabeth’s welcoming demeanor and top-notch skills already have her quite busy with new clients.

Madison (Maddie) Wells also joined Choices in mid-February 2022. Maddie hails from across the mountain in Rappahannock. She recently graduated from George Mason University with a B.A. in forensic psychology. Maddie’s role as the Operations and Volunteer coordinator ensures smooth operations and will expand our volunteer reach and capacity to provide services in the community.

COMINGS & GOINGS
by: Vanessa Kulick Price

Sadly, we said goodbye to Leona Dean last November. As our Court Advocate, Leona revitalized our court services with her easy-going attitude and sharp analytical skills. Leona found green pastures working for DSS in Rappahannock. We wish her the best of luck.

On a happier note, we are incredibly pleased to announce the addition of three new staff since our October newsletter.

In order of arrival:

Meet Josh

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Meet Elisabeth

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Meet Maddie

Madison (Maddie) Wells also joined Choices in mid-February 2022. Maddie hails from across the mountain in Rappahannock. She recently graduated from George Mason University with a B.A. in forensic psychology. Maddie’s role as the Operations and Volunteer coordinator ensures smooth operations and will expand our volunteer reach and capacity to provide services in the community.
April is
SEXUAL ASSAULT & CHILD
ABUSE PREVENTION
AWARENESS MONTH

SAAM DAY OF ACTION 2022: The first Tuesday of April, April 5th, is Sexual Assault Awareness Month Day of Action. Wear the color teal to show your support for survivors of sexual assault.

DENIM DAY 2022: Be a part of the movement and on April 27th wear denim to raise awareness and protest against the misconceptions that surround sexual violence.

WEAR BLUE DAY: Kick-off Child Abuse Prevention Month on April 1st. Wear blue to acknowledge the work needed in your community and across the country to provide a safer future for children. Use #WearBlueDay2022!

DIGITAL ADVOCACY DAY: Along with Denim Day, April 27th is also Digital Advocacy Day! Take time to contact your local officials to advocate for policy changes that are vital to bettering childhood experiences.