

# Re-Envisioning a Response to Domestic Violence



# Re-Envisioning a Response to Domestic Violence



Following our collective learning and relationship building, the Idaho Coordinated Response Team began a process to re-envision a response to domestic violence that was centered on marginalized and underserved communities. Rather than rework and adapt existing responses in Idaho, our Team initiated a process of envisioning a response based on our hopes for all involved and impacted by domestic violence. We used the following prompts to generate a shared vision for a domestic violence response that was both victim-centered and emphasized the needs of marginalized and underserved communities:

1. What are our hopes for everyone involved in a domestic violence response?
  - For the people being harmed?
  - For the people causing harm?
  - For family and friends?
  - For first responders?
  - For the broader community?
2. What should happen at the first response for all involved?
3. What should be put in place for the future or all involved?

These prompts helped our team identify core values and strategies for a re-envisioned response to domestic violence. We developed the following recommendations for a response centered on marginalized and underserved communities, which can be used as a guide in developing policies and practices at the local and/or state level:





## Re-Envisioning a Response to Domestic Violence

---

### **Recommendation: Mobile Crisis Teams**

Create multi-disciplinary teams of health and safety professionals to meet the specific needs of all individuals and communities impacted by domestic violence in partnership with and beyond the criminal legal system.

**Why it's important:** Mobile Crisis Teams reduce the reliance on traditional criminal legal remedies and can respond to a broader range of needs for both the individual being harmed and causing harm. By addressing the root causes of violence, Mobile Crisis Teams are able to find creative, empathetic, victim-centered solutions which limit the direct and indirect costs of the criminal legal system.

### **Recommendation: Community-Based Advocate Partnerships**

Facilitate partnerships between law enforcement and community-based advocates to provide crisis services to individuals impacted by violence during the initial response.

**Why it's important:** Law enforcement and community-based advocates serve very different roles in the response to violence. Access to a community-based advocate in the initial response to domestic violence can connect all involved to supportive and healing services, whether or not the person who was harmed chooses to pursue criminal legal solutions.

### **Recommendation: Coordinated Community Response Teams**

Create and/or diversify local Coordinated Community Response Teams centered in partnership with leaders and organizations serving communities most impacted by violence.

**Why it's important:** Coordinated Community Response Teams need to include both system based and community based partners, particularly those serving historically marginalized communities. All meaningful responses to violence require diverse perspectives to meet the unique needs of every individual involved. Responses centered on criminal legal solutions have caused harm to individuals impacted by violence, and diverse teams are more able to foster a broader community based support for all involved.

### **Recommendation: Housing First Service Model**

Implement domestic violence service models which prioritize stable permanent housing for individuals impacted by violence.

**Why it's important:** Safe, affordable housing continues to be the foundation of healing for individuals impacted by domestic violence. Access to housing enables all individuals involved to pursue all other necessary pathways to healing and thriving, based on their unique needs.



## Re-Envisioning a Response to Domestic Violence

---

### **Recommendation: Diversion Programs and Policies**

Implement policies and programming focused on preventing both incarceration and recidivism for individuals causing harm, prioritizing victim safety and community health.

**Why it's important:** Over reliance on punitive solutions to violence, including incarceration, has caused harm to individuals, families, and communities, particularly those who have been historically marginalized. In order to fully meet the needs of all impacted by violence, we must create solutions including and beyond the criminal legal system.

### **Recommendation: Policies and Practices Centered on Underserved and Marginalized Communities**

Co-create policies and practices in partnership with leaders and organizations serving marginalized communities to reduce unintended harm and better meet the needs of individuals impacted by violence.

**Why it's important:** Policies and practices in response to domestic violence have largely been created by mainstream systems and organizations. These responses were not developed to consider the unique barriers and needs of historically marginalized communities and therefore continue to cause unintended harm. Co-creating policies and practices with leaders and organizations from marginalized communities will enable a more dynamic, victim-centered, holistic response to domestic violence.

### **Recommendation: Idaho Risk Assessment of Dangerousness**

Implement the Idaho Risk Assessment of Dangerousness in all system and community-based responses to domestic violence.

**Why it's important:** The Idaho Risk Assessment of Dangerousness is an evidence-informed practice utilized in some Idaho communities. Expanding the consistent use of this tool by all those involved in domestic violence responses, will create a more aligned approach and clearer communication between community and system based partners.



## Re-Envisioning a Response to Domestic Violence

---

### **Recommendation: Safe and Predictable Communication**

Create safe and predictable response to SA and DV that increases trust between people experiencing harm and service provided in the community and criminal legal systems.

**Why it's Important:** For any victim service agency or community organization working with survivors of domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, maintaining confidentiality is paramount to preserving the safety, privacy, and trust of those seeking services. When survivors seek services, they take huge personal risks. If an abuser should discover that a victim is seeking services, the abuse could increase in frequency and severity. There can also be potential societal and personal repercussions from being identified as a victim, such as housing or job discrimination.

*\*\* Note: [Legislation](#) was passed in the 2022 legislative session to protect confidential communications to align state and federal laws.*

### **Recommendation: Safe and Predictable Communication**

Provide extensive list of resources for survivors of sexual violence similar to what is supported in Idaho code for survivors of domestic violence.

*\*\* Note: [Legislation](#) was passed in the 2022 legislative session to require law enforcement to provide victim services information for survivors of sexual assault similar to what we do with domestic violence.*

**Why it's Important:** Create safe and predictable response to SA and DV that increases trust between people experiencing harm and service provided in the community and criminal legal systems.