

In BC, there are over 1000 physical or sexual assaults against women every week

DELTA VIOLENCE RESEARCH PROJECT

A PROJECT OF DELTASSIST - ADVISORY
COMMITTEE – THE DOVE COMMITTEE

Funded by The Department of Justice Canada

Natasha Raey – Fall 2012

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Deltassist Family and Community Services is a community-based, incorporated, accredited non-profit agency that has been providing counselling services, seniors programs, volunteer opportunities and many other community services to the residents of Delta for the past 40 years, at no charge. Deltassist has valid charitable status with Canada Customs and Revenue Agency.

Deltassist, in conjunction with the Delta Opposes Violence Everywhere Coordinating Committee is committed to ending violence in human relationships and its' impact on everyone. Deltassist, and through its membership on the DOVE Committee is working towards improving a coordinated response to incidents of violence in relationships by identifying, and addressing gaps or barriers in service delivery and by promoting respectful and healthy relationships.

The Delta Opposes Violence Everywhere Coordinating Committee is committed to ending violence in human relationships and its impact on everyone. The committee is working towards improving a coordinated response to incidents of violence in relationships by identifying, and addressing gaps or barriers in service delivery and by promoting respectful and healthy relationships.

In 2012, Deltassist embarked on the "Delta Violence Research Project" to meet the following objectives:

- To create increased awareness to the extent of domestic violence in Delta.
- To create awareness of gaps in services for victims of violence.
- To assist all the community agencies in serving the needs of victims of violence.

Through the research gained by distributing and collecting surveys to service providers, clients, the community at large and other agencies that serve women and children, knowledge about the justice system will be increased, gaps in services will be identified, and access to services will be improved.

The Delta Violence Research Project will ultimately serve as a needs assessment from the perspective of clients, service providers and the community at large to determine how best the community of Delta can meet the needs of individuals who are affected by domestic violence. It is important to note here that this project aimed to identify needs from the

perspective of the victim, perpetrator, and the family unit as a whole. Domestic Violence approaches that focus only on the victim are short-sighted and will fail the next victim of the perpetrator if they are not also offered support to ultimately break the cycle of violence.

PROJECT METHODOLOGY:

- Community surveys
- Client surveys
- Focus groups
- Key informant interviews
- Literature review of provincial and national services
- A scan of current services offered to Delta residents *within* Delta

PROJECT INTENDED AUDIENCE:

- Service providers – to determine more collaborative, coordinated and efficient practices
- Decision makers – to be able to make informed policy decisions at all levels of government that will assist all affected by domestic violence
- Law enforcement – to gain knowledge about the issue of domestic violence from the perspective of victims and service providers
- Community members – to gain knowledge about existing services, gaps and information about domestic violence and supports.

KEY FINDINGS

CLIENT SURVEYS (N = 11):

The top areas of support for domestic violence victims as identified by those surveyed were as follows:

- Safety concerns (82% of respondents)
- Counselling (82% of respondents)
- Financial (64% of respondents)
- Housing and Transport (54% of respondents)

When asked about the positive aspects of the programs/ services accessed in Delta, respondents indicated the following (in order of the most mentioned to the least):

- Emotional support, empowerment and receiving education about domestic violence was provided
- Safety concerns were addressed
- Advocacy and assistance with legal issues was received
- Education and information on why abuse happens was provided

100% of surveyed respondents said that they felt respected when accessing programs and services in Delta and anecdotal comments highlighted that many surveyed respondents felt that they were empowered to make their own decisions about their situation.

The most effective personal supports that were of use to respondents during the period that they were experiencing domestic violence were friends and family at 80% and 70%, respectively. Services that were accessed outside of Delta included housing, the faith community, and other mental health supports for counselling.

COMMUNITY SURVEY (N = 102):

Highlights from the community survey included the following:

- Only 37% of survey respondents felt that they were very knowledgeable about where to go in Delta if they were ever in a domestic violence situation
- Only 18.5% of respondents felt that they were very knowledgeable about where individuals who don't speak English can go to access support or services if they are in a domestic violence situation in Delta
- Only 4% of respondents were confident that victims of domestic violence in Delta are able to find and access the support they need. This was in contrast to the majority of clients (from the client survey) who were confident that other victims could find supports. However, it should be noted that the client group was a substantially smaller sample size and were a group who had already navigated the domestic violence system to access supports. 89% of respondents indicated that embarrassment/ stigma would discourage them from speaking to a service provider about domestic violence.
- 61% of respondents indicated that fear of recognition would discourage them from speaking to a service provider about domestic violence

- 90% of respondents indicated that they would speak to a service provider about a domestic violence situation if someone close to them encouraged them to go.

The majority of respondents had at least some knowledge about where to refer individuals who were in a domestic violence situation. Most felt fairly comfortable defining domestic violence. In terms of supports, counselling supports was the area that most respondents felt fairly or very knowledgeable about.

- 85% of respondents thought that they were knowledgeable or very knowledgeable about defining domestic violence and what constitutes domestic violence
- Only 37% of respondents thought they were very knowledgeable about where to go in Delta if they were in a domestic violence situation.
- Close to 40% of respondents had little or no knowledge about where to refer non-English speaking victims of domestic violence
- 30% of respondents thought that they were very knowledgeable about where to access counselling supports in Delta.
- 37% of respondents thought they were very knowledgeable about where to go if they were ever in a domestic violence situation
- 19% of respondents thought they were very knowledgeable about where to access short term housing or food supports in Delta.

AREAS OF STRENGTH FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES IN DELTA

- The Victim Services program does a great job supporting victims of violence with information on the Criminal justice system, court support services, referrals to counselling, and practical supports such as transportation to a transition house etc.
- The DOVE committee works in a coordinated effort to look at all angles of domestic violence from the victim, accused, children and families as a whole.
- There is a great deal of coordination amongst service providers
- There are attempts to provide outreach services to a variety of age groups
- Services aim at empowering clients and providing them with information and supports about their rights and legal services

SERVICES IDENTIFIED AS BEING IN MODERATE TO HIGH NEED FOR DELTA:

- Transition housing and other housing services
- Civil legal services

- Batterer intervention services
- Mental health
- Culturally appropriate services

BARRIERS FACED BY COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND SERVICE PROVIDERS WHEN ACCESSING SERVICES:

- Cultural and language appropriate services
- Community members often need to “jump through hoops” to access services like counselling
- Stigma
- Services are not often offered in the evening
- Transportation
- Lack of promotion and awareness about services
- Engagement of both Corrections and Probation services to coordinate more with other service providers

SERVICES THAT ARE OFTEN ACCESSED OUTSIDE OF DELTA DUE TO A LACK OF ACCESS OR CAPACITY IN THE COMMUNITY INCLUDE:

- Transition housing
- Women’s Support Programs
- Programs for children who witness abuse

RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS:

As identified in “Keeping Women Safe: Eight Critical Components of an Effective Justice Response to Domestic Violence,” a community must include the following eight components in their domestic violence tapestry:

1. Managing risk and victim safety
2. Offender accountability
3. Specialized victim support
4. Information sharing
5. Coordination and collaboration
6. Domestic violence policy
7. Use of specialized expertise

8. Monitoring and evaluation

Recommendations arising from the data gathered in this report will be placed within the structure of the eight critical components above as a best-practice framework for domestic violence in Delta.

CRITICAL COMPONENT	RECOMMENDATIONS
Managing risk and victim safety	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. As many clients and community respondents noted their fear of recognition as a barrier against accessing domestic violence services, domestic violence programs and services in Delta should aim to promote their privacy and confidentiality standards and ensure that such standards are in place and adhered to. (As related to S. Asian women not wanting to see a counsellor from their own culture)
Offender accountability	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. While offender accountability was not highlighted as a key focus area within this research project, the need for healthy relationship support groups and resources for perpetrators of violence was highlighted. Organizations in Delta should work together to lobby for funding for services for perpetrators of domestic violence. 3. More collaboration and coordination should occur between probation services and other service providers to ensure that supports are provided for victims and offenders in a seamless manner.
Specialized victim support	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. A domestic violence triage system should be developed that ensures that victims of domestic violence are offered the following three stages of supports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate supports: Housing, financial, transportation, supportive counselling – this should serve as a “stabilization phase” • Intermediate supports: Employment supports, longer term housing and counselling for the victim to receive education on dynamics of self-abuse. • Long term: Access to victim support groups and support groups for children. Further Counselling if it is needed such as trauma counselling through appropriate referrals or a separate program

Information sharing	<p>5. Law enforcement and service providers should create guidelines and policies that allow for an integrated case management model. This will allow for seamless and enhanced supports of domestic violence supports, while still respecting the issues that clients have with regards to confidentiality and the respective laws that govern this.</p> <p>6. Mainstream and ethnic media should be used for Delta-specific domestic violence awareness campaigns to highlight the issue and to provide information on how community members can recognize and respond to domestic violence.</p> <p>7. School newsletters should also be used as a vehicle for raising awareness about domestic violence and programs/ services in Delta as they affect students</p>
Coordination and collaboration	<p>8. The DOVE committee should play a leadership role in bringing together domestic violence service providers for collaboration, sharing and training sessions.</p>
Domestic violence policy	<p>9. Service providers, law enforcement, city officials and other community leaders to draft and sign off on a Domestic Violence charter or policy that will speak to the vision that the community has in addition to commitments and targets around meeting the needs of victims, and coordination and collaboration between service providers</p>
Use of specialized expertise	<p>10. Organizations in Delta should carry out reciprocal trainings amongst service providers to share skills and expertise.</p> <p>11. The DOVE committee should carry out an audit of stakeholders at the table to see if it is representative of the domestic violence tapestry in Delta.</p>
Monitoring and evaluation	<p>12. A framework for evaluation of domestic violence services, outreach and impacts on clients and the community should be established for measurement. The framework should include targets and qualitative measures to gather experiences and outcomes of the domestic violence service climate in Delta.</p>

NEXT STEPS:

In terms of next steps, it is recommended that Deltassist in partnership with the DOVE committee should carry out the following actions:

- Create opportunities for cross-training amongst service providers to ensure knowledge and skills are being shared and transferred
- Hold a Domestic Violence Coordination Forum with service providers to discuss and create enhanced mechanisms for service coordination
- Develop more services and culturally relevant supports for immigrant women who are fleeing domestic violence situations
- Develop an action-oriented working group made up of decision makers and community leaders in Delta. Possible focus areas for this group include:
 - Lobbying for more funding and Delta based services
 - Fundraising for a Delta Transition Home
- Consider eliciting the support of South Asian businesses to support creating more awareness about domestic violence in the South Asian community.

INTRODUCTION

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Deltassist's Mission Statement:

Deltassist's mission is to respond to the community needs of Delta, BC, in a manner which enhances the social, psychological and physical wellbeing of individuals, families and the community, through the provision of professional and volunteer services in Delta, BC, and surrounding communities. Deltassist holds the following values:

- We are committed to promoting and developing community well-being.
- We are committed to the development and promotion of healthy families.
- We are committed to the development and promotion of healthy lifestyles and relationships that are free from coercion and/or violence.
- We believe that all individuals have the capacity to make changes in order to maintain or improve the quality of their lives.
- We believe that both volunteers and professionals are essential to providing effective, high-quality and cost-efficient services.
- We are committed to providing services in a safe, supportive and friendly environment.
- We are committed to adhering to the highest standards to ethics and integrity.

In 1991 we had a different understanding of abuse issues. Awareness of this Abuse related issues were very limited; most service providers relied on transition house workers to provide a complete service. We believe that it is difficult to engage with clients clinically and therapeutically till they are safe, adequately fed and clothed with a secure roof over their and their children's heads.

Deltassist, in conjunction with the Delta Opposes Violence Everywhere Coordinating Committee is committed to ending violence in human relationships and its' impact on everyone. Deltassist, and through its membership on the DOVE Committee, is working towards improving a coordinated response to incidents of violence in relationships by identifying, and addressing gaps or barriers in service delivery and by promoting respectful and healthy relationships.

In 2012, Deltassist embarked on the “Delta Violence Research Project” to meet the following objectives:

- To create increased awareness of the extent of domestic violence in Delta.
- To create awareness of gaps in services for victims of violence.
- To assist all the community agencies in serving the needs of victims of violence.

It is proposed that through the research gained by distributing and collecting surveys to service providers, clients, the community at large and other agencies that serve women and children, knowledge about the justice system will be increased, gaps in services will be identified, and access to services will be improved.

The Delta Violence Research Project will ultimately serve as a needs assessment from the perspective of clients, service providers and the community at large to determine how best the community of Delta can meet the needs of individuals, couples, and families who are affected by domestic violence. It is important to note here that this project aimed to identify needs from the perspective of the victim, perpetrator and the family unit as a whole. Domestic Violence approaches that focus only on the victim are short-sighted and will fail the next victim of the perpetrator if they are not also offered support to ultimately break the cycle of violence.

The methodology employed for this project included:

- Community surveys
- Client surveys
- Focus groups
- Key informant interviews
- Literature review of provincial and national services
- A scan of current services offered to Delta residents *within* Delta

The intended audience for this project includes the following stakeholder groups:

- Service providers – to determine how to effect more collaborative, coordinated and efficient practices
- Decision makers – to be able to make more informed policy decisions at all levels of government that will assist all affected by domestic violence
- Law enforcement – to gain increased knowledge about the issue of domestic violence from the perspective of victims and service providers

- Community members – to enhance their knowledge about existing services, gaps and information about domestic violence and supports.

THE MUNICIPALITY OF DELTA

With roughly 100,000 residents and four distinct communities (North Delta, Ladner, Tsawwassen and Tsawwassen First Nation) spread over 364 square kilometers; the Municipality of Delta faces a number of unique challenges when serving those affected by domestic violence. Delta is one of the only communities in the Metro Vancouver area that has experienced no population growth over the last number of years. The geography of Delta alone makes service accessibility difficult with farmland, bog, industrial areas, and highways separating the four distinct communities and preventing a cohesive city culture.

In terms of culture, the immigrant population in Delta has increased by 17.5% since 1996 (lower than the provincial average of 24%). The most common home languages in Delta were English, Punjabi and Chinese at 57%, 19%, and 10% of the population, respectively. The top three places of origin for Delta's immigrants were India at 25% of the immigrant population, followed by the United Kingdom and Taiwan at 17% and 5%, respectively. The cultural make-up of Delta has certainly affected the community's ability to respond to domestic violence incidents in a culturally competent way. This will be expanded on further within the results section of this document.

ABOUT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic violence, by definition, is any form of violent or abusive behaviour that happens in intimate relationships (marriage, common law, family, dating, and friends) or after such a relationship ends. Signs of violence or abuse include:

- physical violence (hitting, shoving, restraining, slapping)
- stalking or threatening
- sexual abuse
- controlling or intimidation (hurting or threatening to hurt a pet, threatening to hurt someone else, threatening to commit suicide, destroying property or stealing money, neglect, exploitation or financial deprivation)
- mental abuse (put downs, name-calling, insults, rejection, belittling, isolation)

Relevant recommendations identified in BC's Domestic Violence Action Plan (under the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General) are outlined below. These recommendations provide a context for services gaps that currently exist in Delta and require more supports to better align with the provincial action plan.

1. Before release of high risk accused on bail, properly screened and appropriate sureties must be provided
2. All victims and abusers should be provided with universally available advocacy services that are initiated upon first contact.
3. Risk assessments are to be made at the front end of the process before bail conditions are set
4. Special domestic violence units are to be set up regionally and coordinated with all stakeholders.
5. Ongoing multimedia community based educational advertising program about Domestic Violence is to be expanded and enhanced.
6. Province of BC to provide global funding to accommodate the cost of recommendations.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN BC – SETTING THE CONTEXT

The Ending Violence Association of BC (EVABC) is a resource for community-based services that supports survivors of sexual assault, relationship violence, child abuse and criminal harassment. They provide:

- A vital network for over 200 programs across BC: Community-Based Victim Services Programs, Stopping the Violence Counselling and Outreach programs, and Sexual Assault/Woman Assault Centres
- Essential links between these programs and government, policy makers, legislators and other provincial organizations.

EVABC features the following notable statistics on their website about violence against women in BC. It should be noted here that these statistics do not include incidents against men, and such statistics are also hard to access due to an under reporting of domestic violence from abused males.

- Over half of the women in BC have experienced physical or sexual violence since the age of 16
- Every year in BC, there are over 60,000 physical or sexual assaults against women
- In BC, there are over 1000 physical or sexual assaults against women every week
- Only 12% of sexual assaults against women are reported to the police

- In the 2005/06 fiscal year, spousal assault accounted for more requests for victim services than any other offence.
- 30 to 40 per cent of children who witness the abuse of their mothers, also experience direct physical abuse themselves

Nationally, it is estimated that the financial costs of violence against women to health and social systems is roughly \$5.2 billion a year (Varcoe, 2001).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Data for this project was collected from a variety of sources: focus groups, key informant interviews and community surveys. In addition, a literature search was carried out of similar needs assessments and research studies in other Canadian and US communities to glean commonalities in domestic violence issues, findings and recommendations.

A diverse sample of feedback was collected through the community consultation process and provided a wealth of information about the experiences of the community from a wide range of perspectives such as:

- Service providers who work directly with victims of domestic violence
- Victims themselves who have accessed domestic violence services in the past
- Law enforcement officials and staff
- The faith community including the local Sikh Temple
- Youth
- The immigrant community

In terms of data collection outputs:

- ✓ 102 community surveys were collected
- ✓ 11 client surveys/ interviews were conducted
- ✓ 6 focus groups were carried out with non-profits, the faith community, law enforcement and groups of community members with a total of 30 participating individuals.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

The following table depicts a list of services often required by individuals affected by domestic violence. The table indicates programs available in Delta and which programs/ services that have to be accessed outside of the community. It should be noted that programs such as short-term counselling, accessed outside of the community are sometimes due to capacity issues in Delta and not necessarily because they are not available in the community. Data for the table below was gathered from community consultations in addition to a scan of domestic violence programs and services in Delta.

SERVICE	AVAILABLE IN DELTA	NOT AVAILABLE IN DELTA	ACCESSED OUTSIDE OF DELTA
Mental Health (limited to mood disorders)	X		
Counselling –short term	X		X
Culturally-relevant counselling	X		X
Victim Services	X		
Relationship Violence Prevention Program (Probation mandated)	X		
Police Domestic Violence Unit	X		
Transition House		X	X
Employment Resources	X		X
Youth Resource Centres	X		
Second Stage Housing		X	X
Children Who Witness Violence Programs ***	X	X	X
Legal services ^{1***}		X	X

Deltassist does provide education about legal services and does do accompaniment of clients to court, however this comes at a cost to direct services. These services are usually provided by a Community Based Victim Services Program; however this does not exist in Delta.

Although there are Children Who Witness Violence Services provided in Delta, there is not a lot of awareness of these programs and they often have very long waitlists.

¹ Deltassist does this but is not part of the position so comes at a cost

Surveyed clients indicated that they had difficulties accessing the following types of services in Delta:

- Transition homes in Delta
- Immediate financial assistance
- Housing, finances and other supports during the first few days of leaving home

47% of respondents in the Community Survey indicated that there was a lack of legal services for victims of domestic violence. There is a lack of awareness of services in Delta as related to housing, legal services, mental health, crisis intervention, substance abuse and batterer intervention supports. In addition, some of these services may already be at capacity and be unable to serve the numbers of individuals that require these services.

In terms of longer-term counselling services, Deltassist is aware of the need for longer term counselling for victims of domestic violence and has the desire to provide this service, however, their current contract only allows for shorter-term counselling.

CONSULTATION RESULTS:

Community needs assessment surveys were disseminated to service providers, community members and other relevant stakeholders. A separate survey was also carried out with past clients of Deltassist counselling services to gather more firsthand knowledge on the Domestic Violence Experience in Delta.

The results below are broken into two sections:

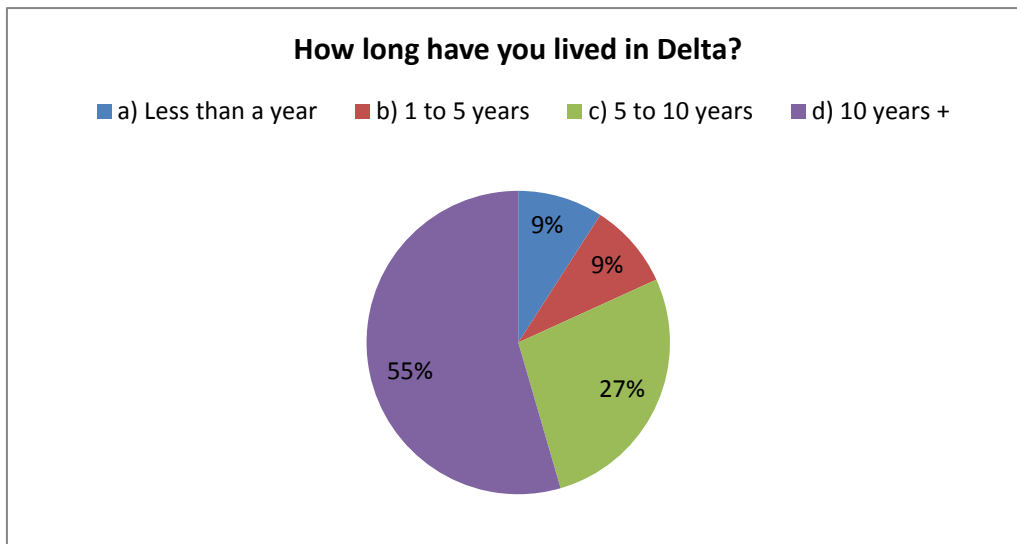
- 1) Client Surveys (n = 11)
 - 2) Community Surveys (n = 102)
- It is recognized that the N for client surveys is small however; many women are extremely reluctant to share their stories out of fear. Deltassist thanks those women who were willing to share their stories with us for this research.

Client Survey

A profile of surveyed clients (n = 11) is below:

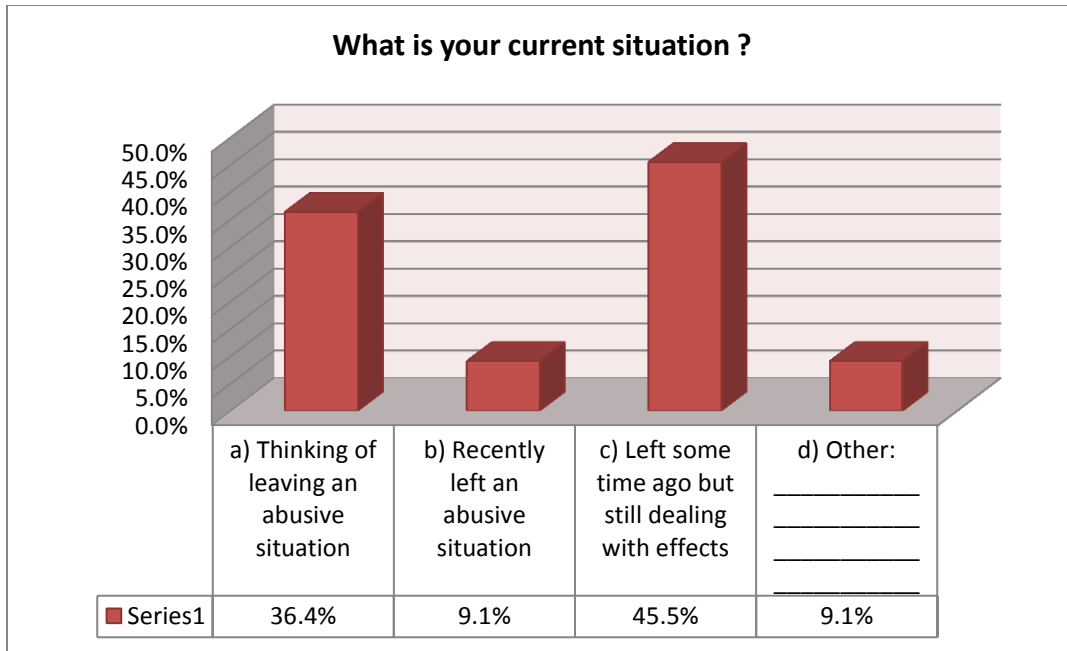
- 55% have lived in Delta for longer than 10 years.
- 27% were landed immigrants
- 100% were female

- 36% were South Asian, 9% were Hispanic and 54% were Caucasian



All clients had accessed Deltassist counselling services in the past and the chart above provides a breakdown of their current situation with domestic abuse. Of the surveyed clients, 45% were still dealing with the effects of domestic abuse despite having left the situation some time ago, and many of these clients spoke to the need for longer term counselling to help them deal with the remnants of their past abusive situations.

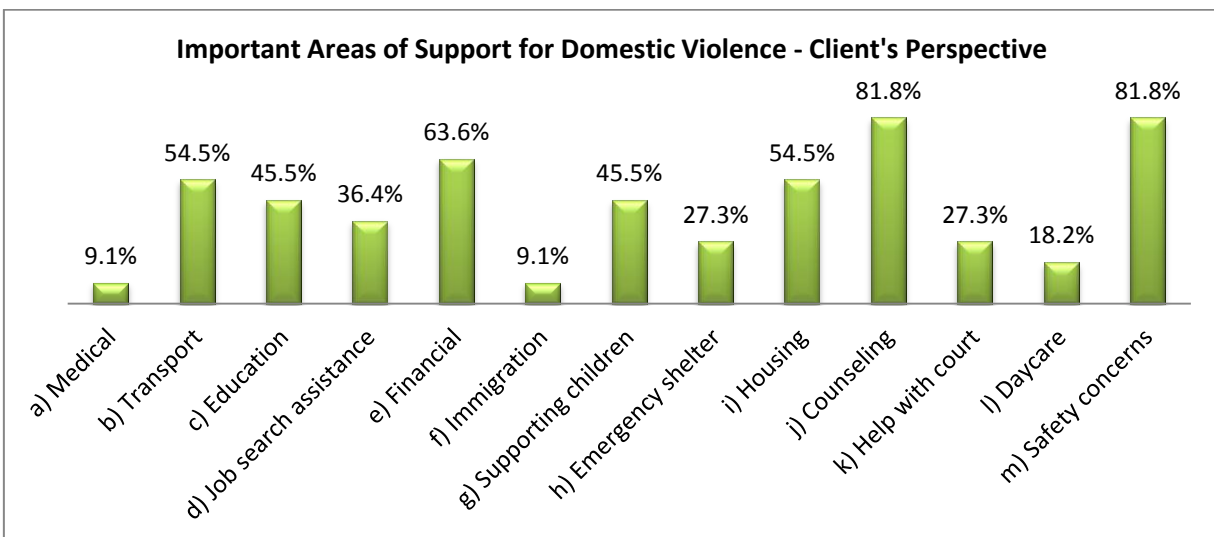
Note: The current contract that Deltassist holds only provides for short-term counselling for women to address their immediate needs, provide education about abuse and its’ dynamics, and assist with skill building such as boundary and limit setting, relaxation skills, self-care strategies, and safety planning for women and children. These services are provided within a trauma informed practice context in that clients are taught skills to manage the effects of their trauma, but trauma counselling is not provided as it requires a much longer term of engagement, one not currently ethically provided due to the short-term nature of the program.



The top areas of support needed for domestic violence victims as identified by those surveyed were as follows:

- Safety concerns (82% of respondents)
- Counselling (82% of respondents)
- Financial (64% of respondents)
- Housing and Transport (54% of respondents)

The graph below provides a more detailed breakdown of the needs for domestic violence areas of support.



When asked about the **positive aspects of the programs/ services accessed in Delta**, respondents indicated the following (in order of the most mentioned to the least)

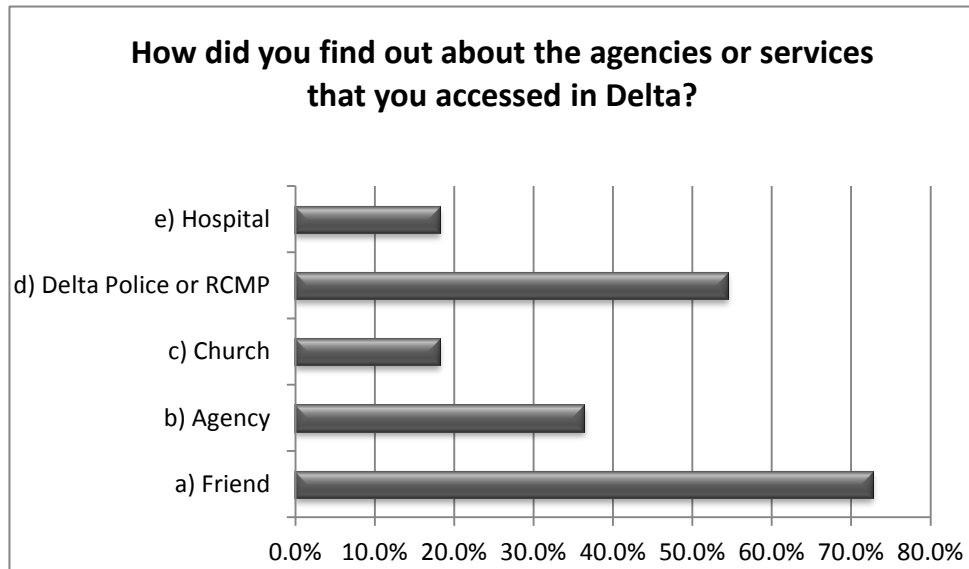
- Emotional support, empowerment and receiving education about domestic violence was provided
- Safety concerns were addressed
- Advocacy and assistance with legal issues was received
- Education and information on why abuse happens was provided

100% of surveyed respondents said that they felt respected when accessing programs and services in Delta and anecdotal comments highlighted that many surveyed respondents felt that they were empowered to make their own decisions about their situation. In addition, 70% of respondents were somewhat confident that other victims of domestic violence would be able to find and access the supports they needed. In terms of areas of improvement for programs and services offered in Delta, respondents offered the following suggestions:

- More long term supports (especially counselling)
- Safer and financially feasible housing options in Delta. As noted by one respondent: “I do not want to move my children out of Delta.”
- More financial supports
- More access to advocacy and legal supports and information

As heard from one program supervisor in Delta, “our staff do accompany women to court visits, but they are already stretched to capacity, so we need more staff funding to support this need in Delta.”

A constant struggle with organizations in most sectors is the challenge with getting program information out to the community; so that they know where to turn to if they ever need supports. When asked how they found out about programs/ services in Delta, respondents indicated that Delta Police/ RCMP and friends were their top sources of information.



In addition, the client survey highlighted that there are sometimes situations where programs and services do exist and victims have knowledge about them, but they may not access them for a number of reasons. Such reasons highlighted by respondents included:

- Worried abuser would find out (100% of respondents).
- Fear of being recognized (75%)

Women who are scared of proceeding with domestic violence charges are often labelled as reluctant, uncooperative or hostile – reasons that are then often used to drop charges or cause low conviction rates for perpetrators (Dawson & Dinovitzer, 2001). Other reasons that women may not move forward with charges are fear of lack of finances, the lack of support from family either due to isolation or cultural pressure, and the overwhelming fear of the huge amount of responsibility and change that they must take on, often alone. In addition, women are still being held responsible when their partners are being abusive and are seen as the protective parent when they cannot make their partners change their behaviours.

As shown in earlier questions, safety and privacy are of utmost concern to domestic violence victims. These statistics should highlight the fact that ensuring privacy, confidentiality and

anonymity for victims accessing services should be a key component of all domestic violence programs and services. When asked about safe and effective ways to disseminate information about domestic violence services in Delta, the following areas were highlighted:

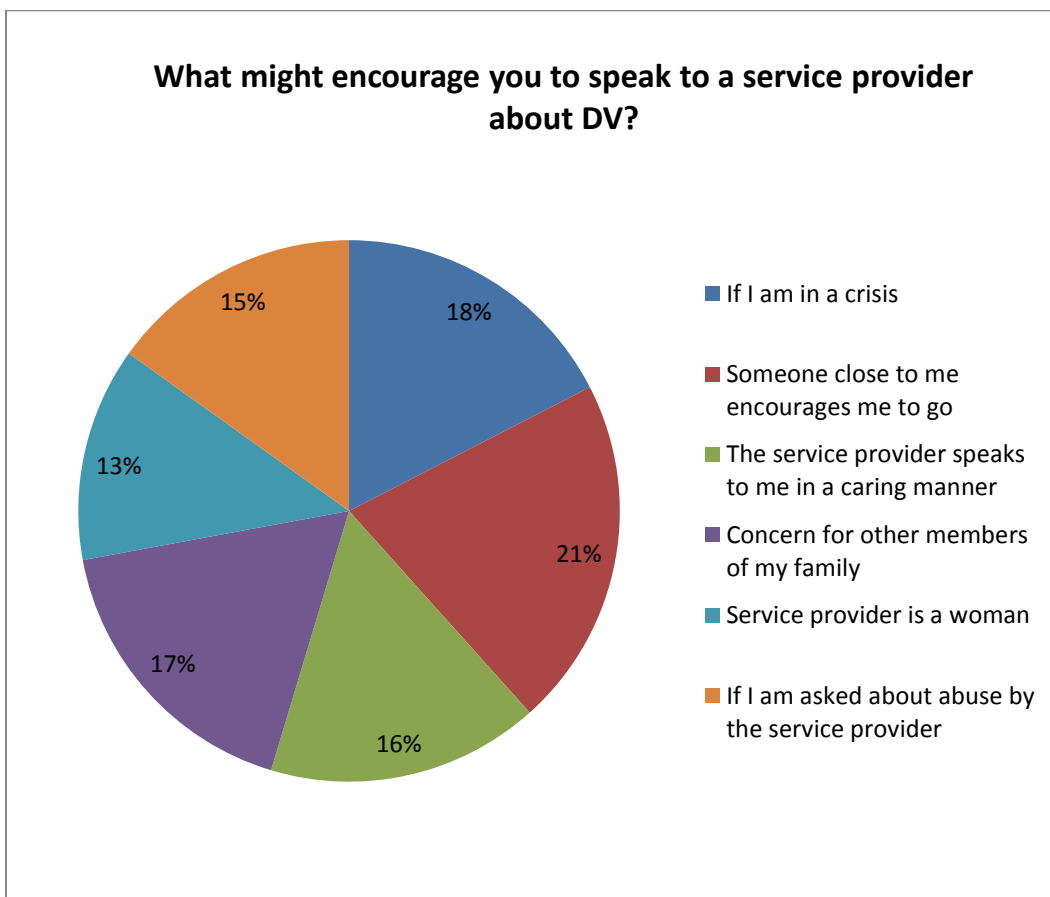
- Newspaper articles
- Ethnic media (radio and television)
- School newsletters
- Community posters and brochures

The most effective personal supports that were of use to respondents during the period that they were experiencing domestic violence were friends and family at 80% and 70%, respectively. Services that were accessed outside of Delta included housing, the faith community and other mental health supports for counselling.

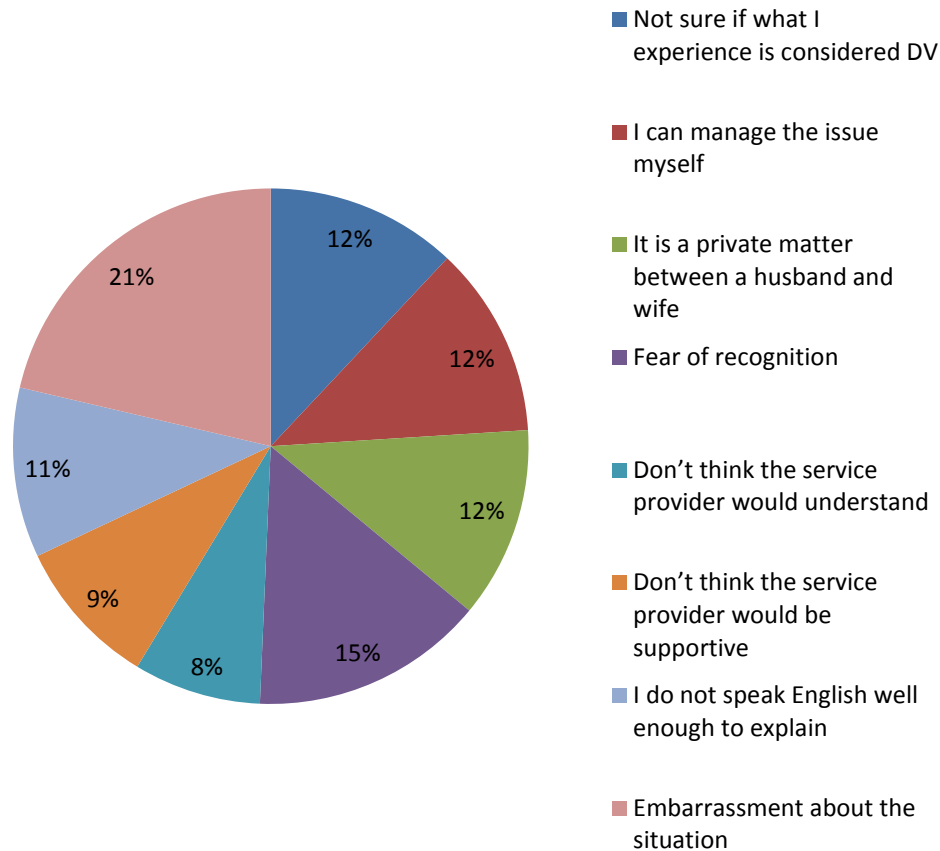
A key gap that was identified over and over again by respondents was the lack of transition housing and other housing supports in Delta for victims of domestic violence.

Respondents were also asked to indicate what factors might discourage them or encourage them to speak to a service provider. The graphs below highlight findings from responses. In terms of reasons for discouragement, responses were fairly evenly spread amongst the reasons. With respect for reasons for encouragement, areas that received more responses included:

1. Someone close to me encourages me to go
2. Service provider speaks to me in a caring manner
3. Service provider is a woman



What might discourage you from speaking to a service provider about DV?



Publications from the Province of British Columbia also highlight a number of additional reasons why victims may not seek help for their situations. Many of these reasons were highlighted in focus groups and key informant interviews that were conducted for this project.

- Fearing that children will be taken away
- Financial dependence on partner (perpetrator)
- Victims may not know their rights or how to get help – as noted by one individual at a focus group with immigrant women: “When you come to this country, you don’t realize that the police are friendly and here to help because it is so different in our home country.”
- Immigration concerns and fear of deportation

COMMUNITY SURVEY:

The profile of respondents for the community survey N= 102 showed that:

- 74% of respondents were female
- 97% of respondents were Canadian Citizens
- 61% of respondents were 30 – 54 years of age
- 28% were South Asian, 53% were Caucasian and 6% were Asian

When asked what the term “Domestic Violence” meant to them, respondents gave a variety of definitions with the most common answers below:

- Conflict between individuals in a domestic partnership/ domestic setting
- An action that diminishes the sense of safety and worth of an individual in an environment
- Includes physical, emotional, sexual, financial and mental abuse

Highlights from the community survey included the following:

- Only 37% of survey respondents felt that they were very knowledgeable about where to go in Delta if they were ever in a domestic violence situation
- Only 18.5% of respondents felt that they were very knowledgeable about where individuals who don’t speak English can go to access support or services if they are in a domestic violence situation in Delta
- Only 4% of respondents were confident that victims of domestic violence in Delta are able to find and access the support they need. This was in contrast to the majority of clients (from the client survey) who were confident that other victims could find supports. However, it should be noted that the client group was a substantially smaller sample size and a group who had already navigated the domestic violence system to access supports. 89% of respondents indicated that embarrassment/ stigma would discourage them from speaking to a service provider about domestic violence
- 61% of respondents indicated that fear of recognition would discourage them from speaking to a service provider about domestic violence
- 90% of respondents indicated that they would speak to a service provider about a domestic violence situation if someone close to them encouraged them to go.

In terms of knowledge of domestic violence services in Delta:

- 85% of respondents thought that they were knowledgeable or very knowledgeable about defining domestic violence and what constitutes domestic violence
- Only 37% of respondents thought they were very knowledgeable about where to go in Delta if they were in a domestic violence situation.
- Close to 40% of respondents had little or no knowledge about where to refer non-English speaking victims of domestic violence
- 30% of respondents thought that they were very knowledgeable about where to access counselling supports in Delta.

The majority of respondents had at least some knowledge about where to refer individuals who were in a domestic violence situation. Most felt fairly comfortable defining domestic violence. In terms of supports, counselling supports was the area that most respondents felt fairly or very knowledgeable about.

The following were identified as areas of strength for Domestic Violence services in Delta:

- The Victim Services program does a great job supporting victims of violence with Information on the Criminal justice system, court support services, referrals to counselling, and practical supports such as transportation to a transition house etc.
- Deltassist, in conjunction with the DOVE committee, works in a coordinated effort to look at all facets of Domestic Violence from the victim, accused, children and families as a whole. The DOVE Committee was mentioned numerous times as an asset for Delta and as a well-known resource. This should be capitalized on by utilizing the committee and its brand to get more information out into the community about domestic violence and for the committee to play more of an advocacy role to get needed supports into the community such as a Delta Transition House. In addition, the committee was commended for its efforts to outreach to a number of age groups (youth, seniors and adults) with domestic violence resources and information.
- There seems to be a great deal of coordination amongst service providers in this area. Service providers felt like they knew who to call on for supports and resources. There also seemed to be a good link with law enforcement but a need to connect and collaborate more with the probation sector.

- As also highlighted by the client surveys/ interviews, empowerment of clients and providing them with information and supports about their rights and legal services was identified as a key asset for domestic violence in Delta.

Common barriers faced by community members when accessing domestic violence services included the following as most commonly mentioned in the Community Survey:

- **Cultural and language appropriate services** that meet the needs of all cultural communities (most notably in Delta, the South Asian community)
- **Community members often need to “jump through hoops”** to access services like counselling and once accessed, the services are not offered on a long enough basis to help victims deal with the long term effects of domestic violence. It should be noted that the recommendations section of this report will speak to a “Triage system” of identifying higher need individuals who may require longer term counselling after they have received other necessary supports.
- **Stigma:** In all communities regardless of culture or socioeconomic status, there is often a fear on the part of the victim that others will blame them for breaking up the family or being the cause of the violence. This stigma is sometimes baseless, but sometimes it is perpetrated by other members of the victim’s or perpetrator’s family. This can certainly serve as a barrier against victims accessing supports.
- **Services are not often offered in the evening/ Lack of promotion and awareness about services:** While this is not necessarily true and programs in Delta are offered in the evening, this speaks to the lack of knowledge around domestic violence programs in Delta and the need for DOVE and other community stakeholders to work together and with the media to get the word out more widely in both the mainstream and cultural communities.
- **Transportation:** As highlighted in both the Client and Community Survey, transportation is a huge need for victims of domestic violence to be able to leave their situation and access supports. This speaks to the need for all programs to offer bus passes and travel subsidies to increase accessibility.
The whole public transit system in Delta is inadequate, as it is infrequent, hard to use with children, and the alternative of taxi use is financially prohibitive.

Due to these transportation issues, there is a definite need for satellite offices of these programs to be located in all areas of Delta.

The community survey overall highlighted the following services as moderate to high need for Delta:

- Transition housing and other housing services – this was mentioned numerous times during the research process. Victims of domestic violence (especially those with children) who need to leave their living situations are not comfortable with going to another community even if there is space. This just adds to the disruption that the family is facing. A local resource is needed to service women and families in Delta.
- Civil legal services: Navigating the legal system is difficult for the layperson, and especially so for people who have difficulties with English. Many respondents spoke to the need for advocacy and accompaniment to assist with legal processes relevant to Domestic Violence.
- Batterer intervention services: While the research gathered in this report has been heavily weighted on the needs of the victim, the needs of the perpetrator are just as important. Education and support around healthy relationships is essential for these individuals so that they can move forward with having healthy relationships in their future. This area also spoke to the need to have better collaboration between probation services and other service providers to ensure seamless supports for all affected by domestic violence situations.
- Culturally appropriate services: For a community as diverse as Delta (especially when looking at the sub-community of North Delta), access to culturally relevant services is essential. The South Asian population comprises a large proportion of the community, and unfortunately also a large proportion of domestic violence incidents. However, anecdotal data highlighted the fact that some South Asian women do not desire South Asian counselors for fear of recognition and fears about confidentiality. While this is not the case for all, it highlights the fact that there is a need for all domestic violence workers (regardless of culture) to have training in cultural competency in order to meet the needs of varying cultures.
- Children who witness violence programs: As referred to in “Batterer Intervention Services”, there is also a need to provide supports in Delta for children who experience domestic violence at home.

Community survey respondents were also asked to note which factors would encourage or discourage them from accessing domestic violence supports. In terms of discouragement, similar to clients, roughly 90% of respondents of the community survey stated that “embarrassment about the situation” would discourage them from seeking services. In terms of encouraging factors, 90% of community respondents stated that they would speak to a service provider if “someone close to them encouraged them to go.”

In many of the questions and data gathering methods throughout this project, respondents indicated the importance that their close friends and family could have in influencing their decision to speak to someone about domestic violence. This may indicate the need for Deltassist and the DOVE committee to also work on a campaign to educate community members at large on how to a) Identify domestic violence and, b) tools on how to encourage friends/ family that they suspect are in domestic violence situations to access supports.

FOCUS GROUP THEMES:

As an augment to the data gathered from the community and client surveys, the following common themes were derived from the community focus groups.

- Cultural differences affect how victims may react to a domestic violence situation. Some may be weary of calling the police because of negative experiences with law enforcement in their home country.
- More resources are needed to provide support, outreach and information to the South Asian community to be able to identify and deal with domestic violence situations.
- Finances are a large barrier for victims. They fear losing their financial security if they report their husbands to the police.
- More, secure funding is needed to provide timely counselling to victims of domestic violence.
- Service providers and law enforcement should be able to communicate more freely for the safety and wellness of clients while still respecting client rights for confidentiality
- Local transition houses in Delta are needed so that victims aren't taken to communities that are further away and remove the family unit from their home environment.
- There is a lack of services and resources for men who are victims of crime and counselling for perpetrators who aren't mandated to receive counselling.

- There is a need for more cultural competency training for frontline service providers and law enforcement officials.
- The DOVE committee and its capacity to invite or inspire coordination, collaboration amongst service providers and awareness-raising within the broader community about domestic violence is an asset to Delta

RECOMMENDATIONS:

As identified in “Keeping Women Safe: Eight Critical Components of an Effective Justice Response to Domestic Violence,” a community must include the following eight components in their domestic violence tapestry:

1. Managing risk and victim safety
2. Offender accountability
3. Specialized victim support
4. Information sharing
5. Coordination and collaboration
6. Domestic violence policy
7. Use of specialized expertise
8. Monitoring and evaluation

Recommendations arising from the data gathered in this report will be placed within the structure of the eight critical components above as a best-practice framework for domestic violence in Delta.

CRITICAL COMPONENT	RECOMMENDATIONS
Managing risk and victim safety	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. As many clients and community respondents noted their fear of recognition as a barrier against accessing domestic violence services, domestic violence programs and services in Delta should aim to promote their privacy and confidentiality standards and ensure that such standards are in place and adhered to. (As related to S. Asian women not wanting to see a counsellor from their own culture)
Offender accountability	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. While offender accountability was not highlighted as a key focus area within this research project, the need for healthy relationship support groups and resources for perpetrators of violence was highlighted. Organizations in Delta should work together to lobby for funding for services for perpetrators of domestic violence. 3. More collaboration and coordination should occur between probation services and other service providers to ensure that supports are provided for victims and offenders in a seamless manner.

Specialized victim support	<p>4. A domestic violence triage system should be developed that ensures that victims of domestic violence are offered the following three stages of supports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate supports: Housing, financial, transportation, supportive counselling – this should serve as a “stabilization phase” • Intermediate supports: Employment supports, longer term housing and counselling for the victim to receive education on dynamics of self-abuse. • Long term: Access to victim support groups and support groups for children. Further Counselling if it is needed such as trauma counselling through appropriate referrals or a separate program
Information sharing	<p>5. Law enforcement and service providers should create guidelines and policies that allow for an integrated case management model. This will allow for seamless and enhanced supports of domestic violence supports, while still respecting the issues that clients have with regards to confidentiality and the respective laws that govern this.</p> <p>6. Mainstream and ethnic media should be used for Delta-specific domestic violence awareness campaigns to highlight the issue and to provide information on how community members can recognize and respond to domestic violence.</p> <p>7. School newsletters should also be used as a vehicle for raising awareness about domestic violence and programs/ services in Delta as they affect students</p>
Coordination and collaboration	<p>8. The DOVE committee should play a leadership role in bringing together domestic violence service providers for collaboration, sharing and training sessions.</p>
Domestic violence policy	<p>9. Service providers, law enforcement, city officials and other community leaders to draft and sign off on a Domestic Violence charter or policy that will speak to the vision that the community has in addition to commitments and targets around meeting the needs of victims, and coordination and collaboration between service providers</p>
Use of specialized expertise	<p>10. Organizations in Delta should carry out reciprocal trainings amongst service providers to share skills and expertise.</p> <p>11. The DOVE committee should carry out an audit of stakeholders at the table to see if it is representative of the domestic</p>

	violence tapestry in Delta.
Monitoring and evaluation	12. A framework for evaluation of domestic violence services, outreach and impacts on clients and the community should be established for measurement. The framework should include targets and qualitative measures to gather experiences and outcomes of the domestic violence service climate in Delta.

NEXT STEPS:

In terms of next steps, it is recommended that Deltassist in partnership with the DOVE committee should carry out the following actions:

- Create opportunities for cross-training amongst service providers to ensure knowledge and skills are being shared and transferred
- Hold a Domestic Violence Coordination Forum with service providers to discuss and create enhanced mechanisms for service coordination
- Develop more services and culturally relevant supports for immigrant women who are fleeing domestic violence situations
- Develop an action-oriented working group made up of decision makers and community leaders in Delta. Possible focus areas for this group include:
 - Lobbying for more funding and Delta based services
 - Fundraising for a Delta Transition Home
- Consider eliciting the support of South Asian businesses to support creating more awareness about domestic violence in the South Asian community.

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