



MID-SHORE COUNCIL ON FAMILY VIOLENCE

Chesapeake Crisis to Self-Sufficiency Model

Abuser Intervention Program

Fiscal Year 2023 Annual Report

*Prepared by
Pamela Caudill Jordan, Ph.D.*

July 2023

Abuser Intervention Program Fiscal Year 2023 Annual Report

As one of Maryland's comprehensive domestic violence programs, Mid-Shore Council on Family Violence (MSCFV) operates an Abuser Intervention Program (AIP) serving Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's, and Talbot counties. We utilize the Duluth Model providing a 26-week, virtual, group-based intervention which emphasizes taking responsibility for the abuse that's occurred and learning new skills to avoid abuse and violence. Richards, Jennings, & Murphy (2019) found in their study of Maryland AIPs that participation reduces both domestic violence offenses and other violent offenses.

This report documents AIP trends in fiscal year 2023. We also present data demonstrating the outcomes achieved by the program.

Referrals & Intakes

The AIP process begins when an individual is court-ordered to the program or volunteers. After contacting our agency, they are scheduled for an intake interview with one of our AIP facilitators. Between July 2022 and June 2023, a total of 59 individuals scheduled an AIP intake. This number is notably lower than the 68 intakes in fiscal year 2022 and 75 intakes in fiscal year 2021. In contrast, we saw a 20% increase in victims receiving services during this same period.

I'm hoping that this is going to help with finding alternative ways. Looking for other tools. I don't know what the program entails but I hope I'm getting some redirection to prevent violence between me and her. – AIP Participant

The decrease in those seeking intakes was not consistent across the five counties. In fact, as Figure 1 illustrates, we saw slight increases in Dorchester and Talbot and decreases in Caroline and Kent/Queen Anne's.

Figure 1. All Intake Appointments by County and Fiscal Year.



Most (~80%) of new AIP referrals are court-ordered. Trends indicate that the number of court-ordered intakes from Caroline, Kent and Queen Anne's counties have declined over the past three years. Our data on hotline calls and law enforcement lethality screenings indicate that those numbers have not declined. We intend to conduct awareness activities among the courts and parole & probation particularly in Caroline, Kent and Queen Anne's counties.

Four out of five AIP participants are men. Most are between the ages of 26 and 70, with 40% age 35 to 50. Typically, AIP participants are not married. These data are illustrated in Figures 2 and 3.

Figure 2. Age of AIP Participants.

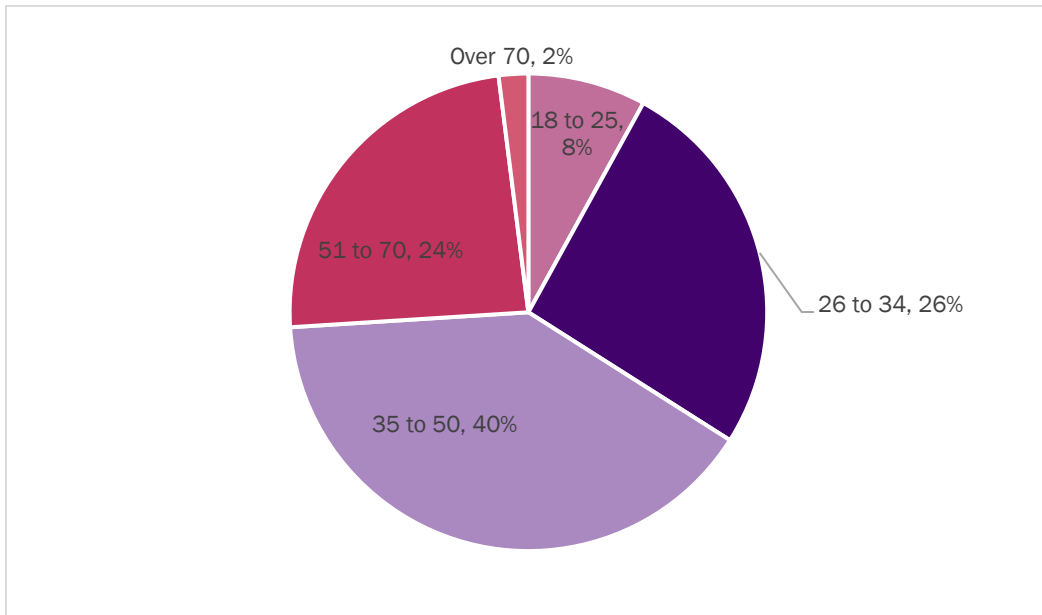
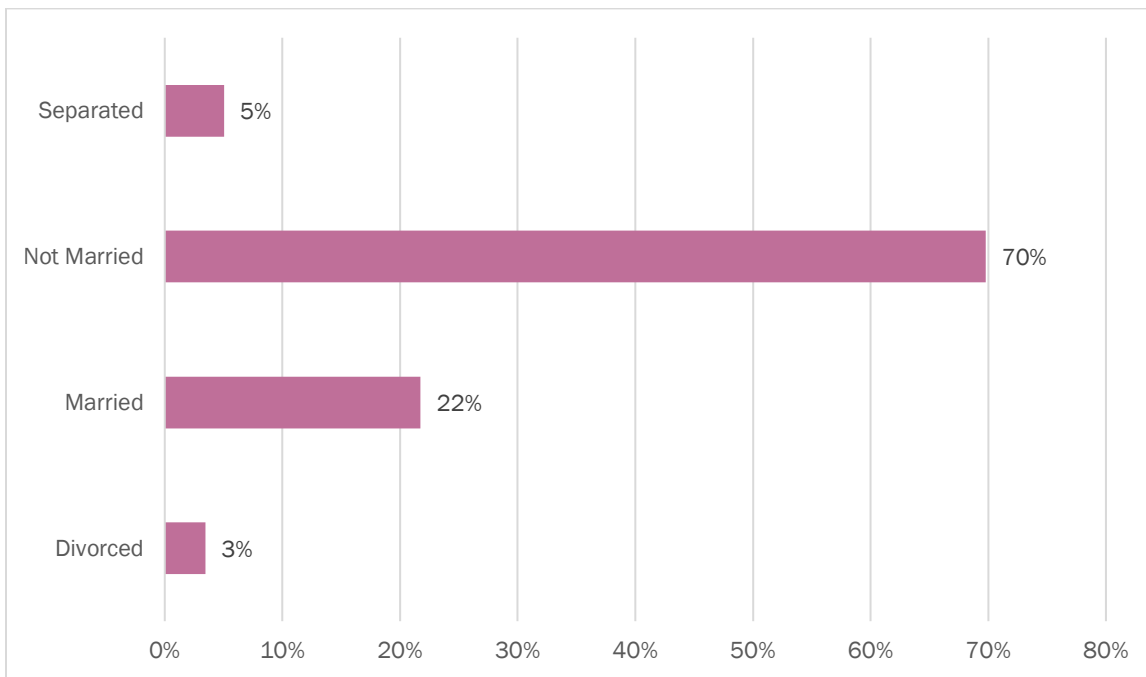


Figure 3. Marital Status of AIP Participants.



Whether they are court-ordered or voluntary, nearly all AIP participants have been charged with 2nd degree assault. AIP facilitators assess that 60% of participants express a “low” amount of resistance to the program at intake. Half have been incarcerated and two out of five have received substance abuse or mental health treatment in the past.

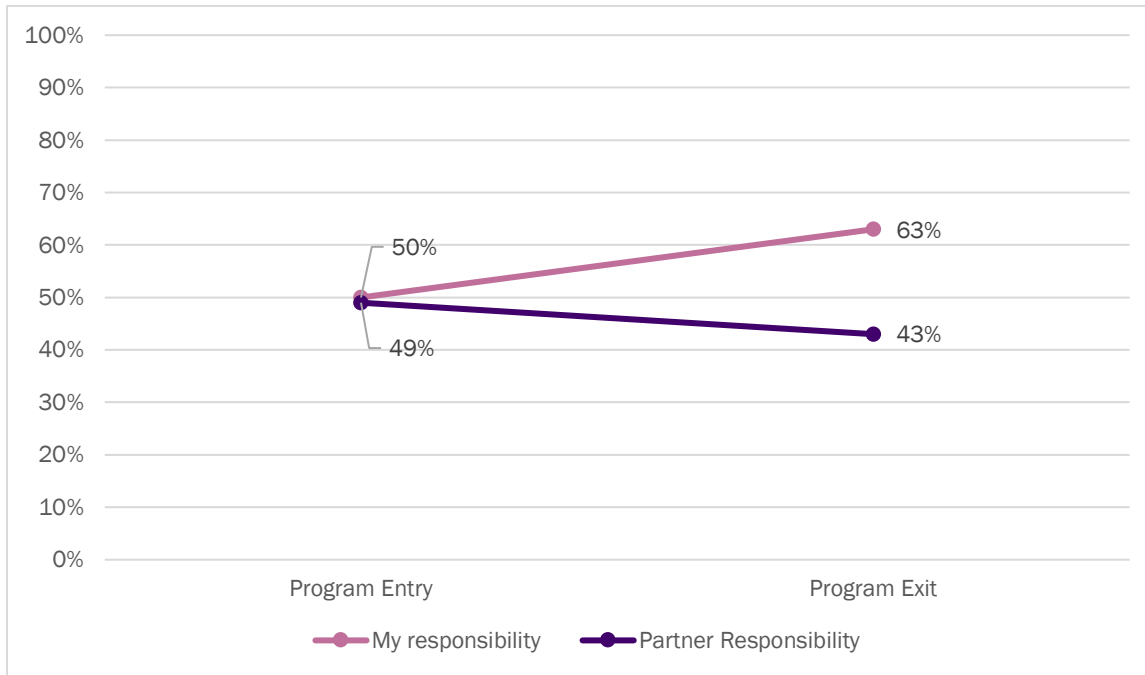
In the past I would just want to get it done. This time I want to take it seriously. I've got to get something out of this. I have to do better than what I was doing before. – AIP Participant

Attendance, Completions, and Outcomes

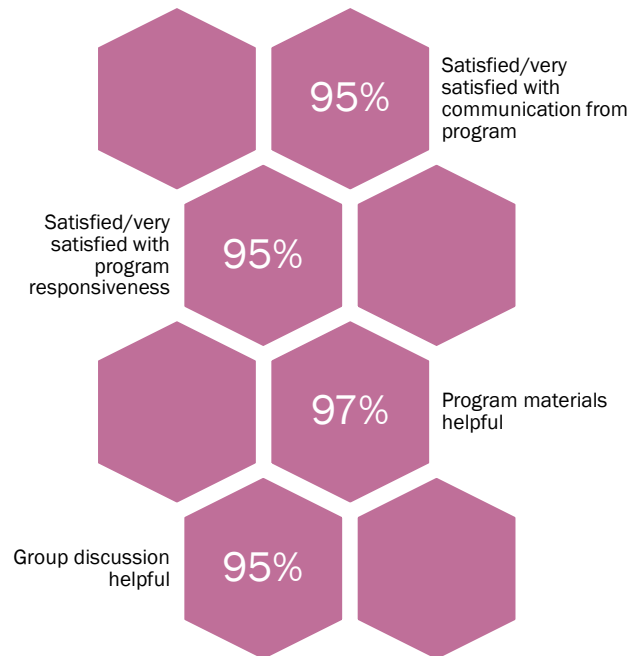
During the most recent fiscal year, 96 individuals attended a total of 1,161 AIP sessions. Thus, on average, each participant attended 12 sessions during the year. We closed out 56 AIP enrollments and 38 (68%) were successful completions.

One key outcome measure that we consider for our AIP is how much responsibility the abuser takes for the abuse. Figure 4 shows the percentage of responsibility AIP participants assign to themselves and their partners at two time points: program start and program exit. It's encouraging to see that over time in the program participants put less responsibility for the abuse on their partners and take more responsibility themselves.

Figure 4. Change in AIP Participants' Perceptions of Responsibility for Abuse.



On our program's exit survey, participants expressed high levels of satisfaction. For example, 95% find the group discussions helpful or very helpful.



When asked what was most helpful about the program, participants talked mostly about hearing from others that face similar challenges, the non-judgmental nature of the group, and learning new skills for managing their anger. Sample comments from AIP participants include:

All of it. Most importantly is the problem solving. How to use safe words. To respect one another and understanding each other's boundaries.

Being able to talk as a group and not having anyone judge.

Changing me and making me a better person overall.

Helping me reevaluate who I am.

Helping you to cope with issues with yourself that you didn't realize that you have.

I'm find my red flags also I know right now what I need to do at any situation.

Leaning how to communicate with others.

Learning tactics for self-control.

Learning to understand yourself first before getting into a relationship.

Learning ways to avoid conflict.

Methods on how to identify a problem before it occurs.

That the only person you can "control" is yourself.

The insight into the different elements of abuse.

The most helpful aspect of the program for myself would have to be the welcoming environment created for the offender. While being labeled as an abuser the program made clear to differentiate abuser actions from who we are actually are as a person.

The most helpful aspect was the I statements it has helped my wife and I to communicate better.

Conclusions

MSCFV's AIP is an integral part of our communities' comprehensive approach to domestic violence. In fiscal year 2023, we served 96 participants and 38 graduated successfully from the program. Our outcome data shows that AIP participation increases participants' willingness to accept responsibility for the abuse in their relationship. Most rate the program as helpful, especially appreciating the group discussions and new skills.

Reference

Richards, T.N., Jennings, W.G., & Murphy, C. (2019). Risk and protective factors for batterer intervention treatment program attrition: How completers are distinct from dropouts and no-shows. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 36.