



MID-SHORE COUNCIL ON FAMILY VIOLENCE

**Chesapeake Crisis to
Self-Sufficiency Model**

Fiscal Year 2023 Annual Report

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

July 2023

Fiscal Year 2023 Annual Report

During fiscal year 2023, Mid-Shore Council on Family Violence (MSCFV) has witnessed remarkable increases in the number of hotline calls received and the number of domestic violence victims receiving services. Our caseloads have been running 20-30% higher than in previous years. For example, we had as much as 56% more hotline calls than the previous three-year average in six months of fiscal year 2023.

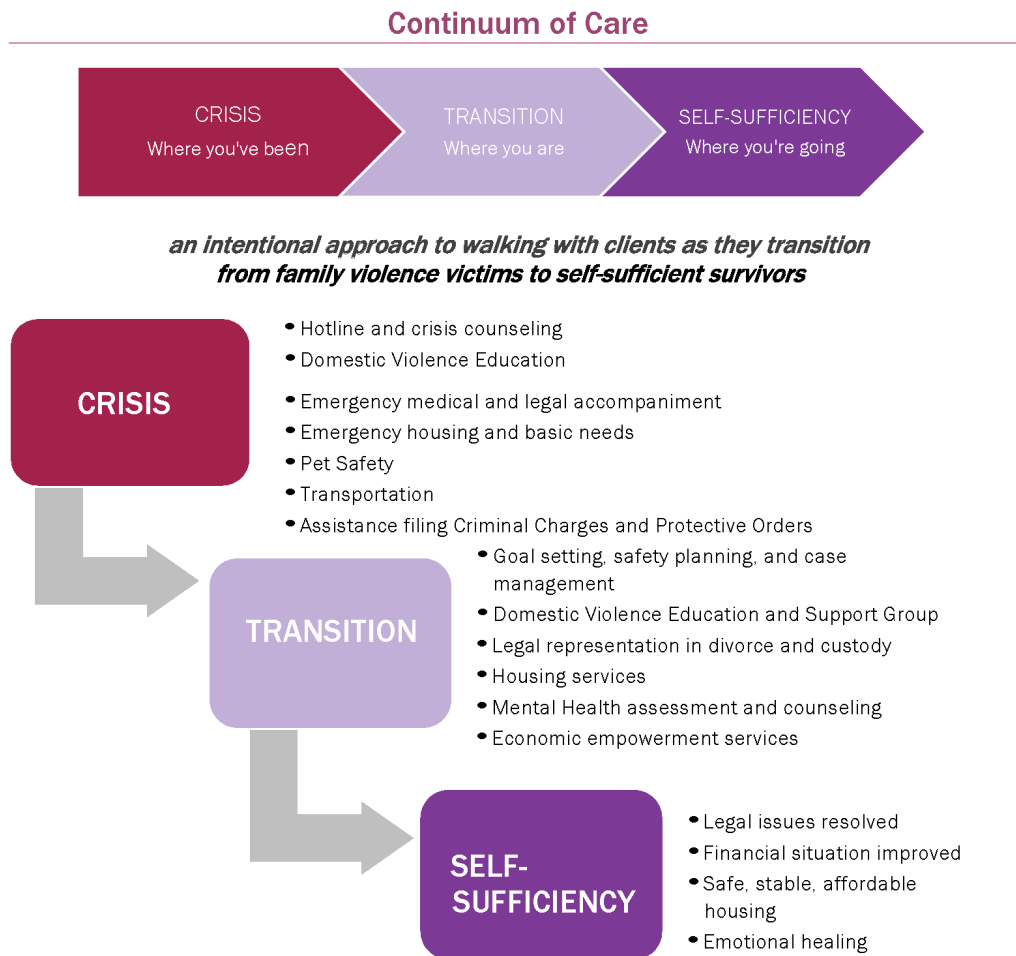
This reality, compounded with the fact that our clients stay with our agency for an average of four months, translates to historically high caseloads for our case managers. In the first six months of 2023, our monthly caseloads have averaged 20 to 30 more clients than average.

This report focuses on these trends, describing services provided from July 2022 through June 2023. We also present data on the outcomes achieved for, and by, our domestic violence survivors.

Our Program Model

The agency operates the Chesapeake Crisis to Self-Sufficiency Model (CCSSM), a holistic approach providing a continuum of comprehensive services & supports to break the cycle of domestic violence and empower victims. The CCSSM includes continuums of care covering all aspects of a survivors' life in order to help them achieve safety, emotional healing, and financial stability:

The Chesapeake Crisis to Self-Sufficiency Model



MSCFV's 24-hour crisis hotline often serves as the first point of contact with victims, directly or through referrals from other professionals such as law enforcement or therapists. Trained client advocates help victims address their immediate crisis by providing services such as crisis counseling, safety planning, information & referral, emergency shelter, pet safety, food pantry, and accompaniment to protective order hearings.

Clients are then assigned to a Case Manager in their county of residence. Their first meeting focuses on meeting immediate basic and legal needs, reviewing safety planning, identifying the next steps in the victims' transition to self-sufficiency, and coordinating MSCFV programs and services. Throughout the client's journey with MSCFV, their Case Manager provides critical supports and services.

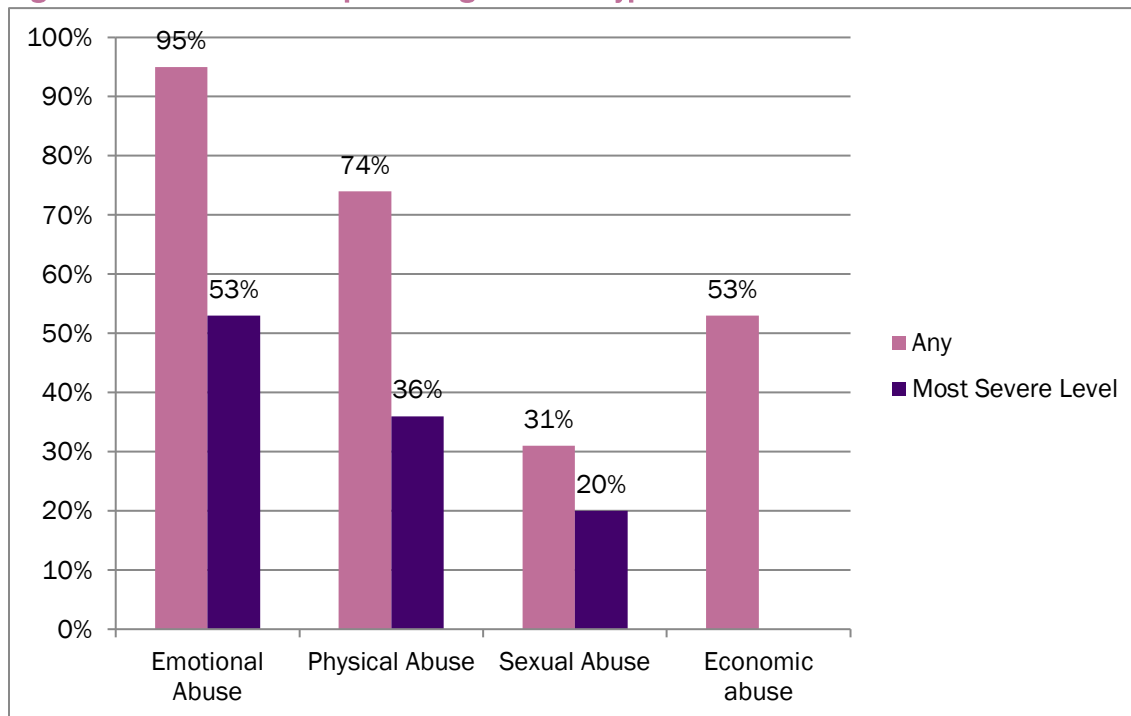
Who We Serve

During the most recent fiscal year, our agency responded to 600 hotline calls and helped 499 individuals begin the journey from victim to survivor. This represents a 20% increase in total hotline calls and a 29% increase in clients served over previous years. Caroline, Dorchester and Talbot counties each account for about 25% of our clients. Another 16% come from Queen Anne's and 7% from Kent.

Victims enter services with MSCFV after experiencing various forms of abuse. Figure 1 shows that emotional abuse is nearly universal. More than half of all victims have experienced the most severe level of emotional abuse to the point that they feel filled with fear and dread. Most victims have also been physically abused. For 36% of the victims, this physical abuse has resulted in serious injury or attempted homicide.

Survivors have often experienced other abusive tactics as well. Half of all victims report some forms of economic abuse and 31% have experienced sexual abuse. In addition to the growing frequency of technology abuse, MSCFV clients have often experienced confinement, destruction of property, abuse of pets, and stalking.

Figure 1. MSCFV Clients Experiencing Different Types of Abuse.



Our typical client is a 40-year-old woman with one or two children and 16% are Hispanic. Seventeen percent have some type of disability. Utilizing the lethality assessment developed by Jacqueline Campbell (Weisberg, 2019), we find that four out of five victims score in the “high danger” range, indicating that they are likely to be killed by their abuser.

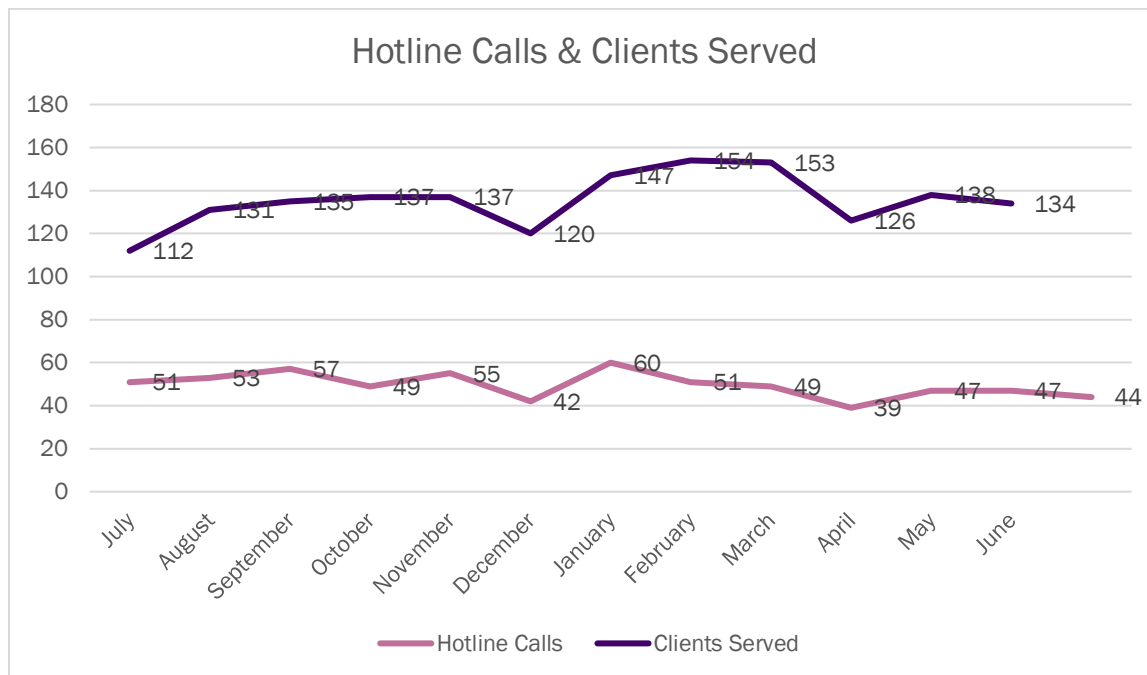
Table 1. Client Demographics by County.

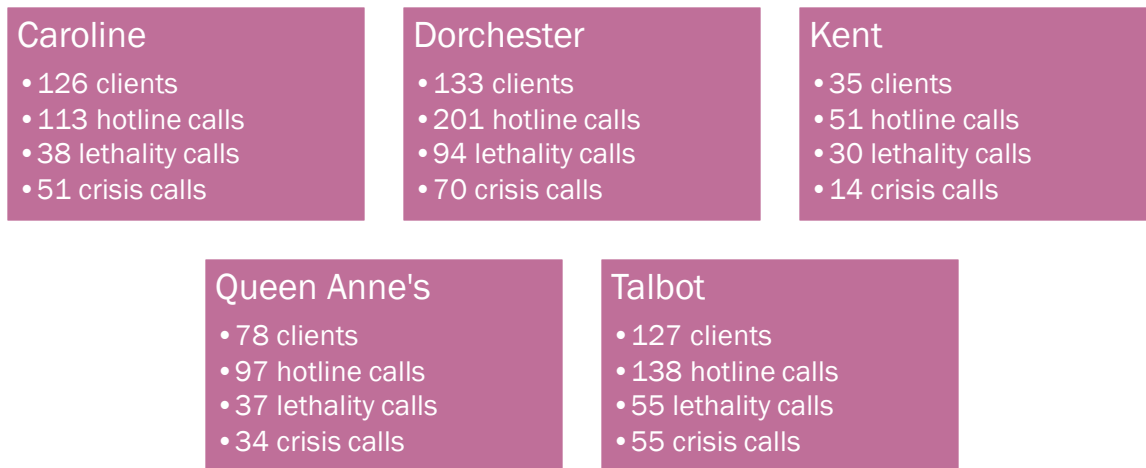
	Caroline	Dorchester	Kent	Queen Anne's	Talbot	Total
% women	98%	95%	97%	95%	97%	96%
Ethnicity/Race						
African American	12%	34%	6%	9%	21%	19%
Caucasian	68%	50%	77%	69%	55%	61%
Hispanic	17%	7%	9%	23%	25%	16%
Primary Language						
Spanish	14%	2%	9%	19%	23%	13%
Age						
18-25	4%	9%	16%	6%	12%	9%
26-35	36%	33%	28%	24%	39%	34%
36-45	29%	27%	34%	32%	31%	30%
46-55	15%	17%	6%	17%	10%	14%
56 and older	15%	14%	16%	21%	8%	14%
Marital Status						
Not Married	42%	45%	40%	36%	57%	46%
Married	44%	30%	56%	53%	30%	39%
Separated/Divorced	14%	24%	4%	11%	13%	15%
Disability						
Developmental	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%
Mental	12%	13%	12%	8%	9%	10%
Physical	8%	10%	12%	7%	7%	8%
High danger	80%	79%	90%	75%	81%	80%

Services Provided in Fiscal Year 2023

Between July 2022 and June 2023, MSCFV served 499 victims of domestic violence and their 826 children. Our staff answered 600 hotline calls, including 254 from law enforcement regarding lethality screenings. Figure 2 displays the number of clients served and calls answered monthly. Each month MSCFV staff serve about 135 clients and respond to 50 hotline calls. Typically, around 42% of all calls are from law enforcement who have completed a lethality screening with a domestic violence victim. Lethality screenings occur when an officer responds to an incident deemed to be associated with domestic violence.

Figure 2. Clients Served and Hotline Calls - FY2023.





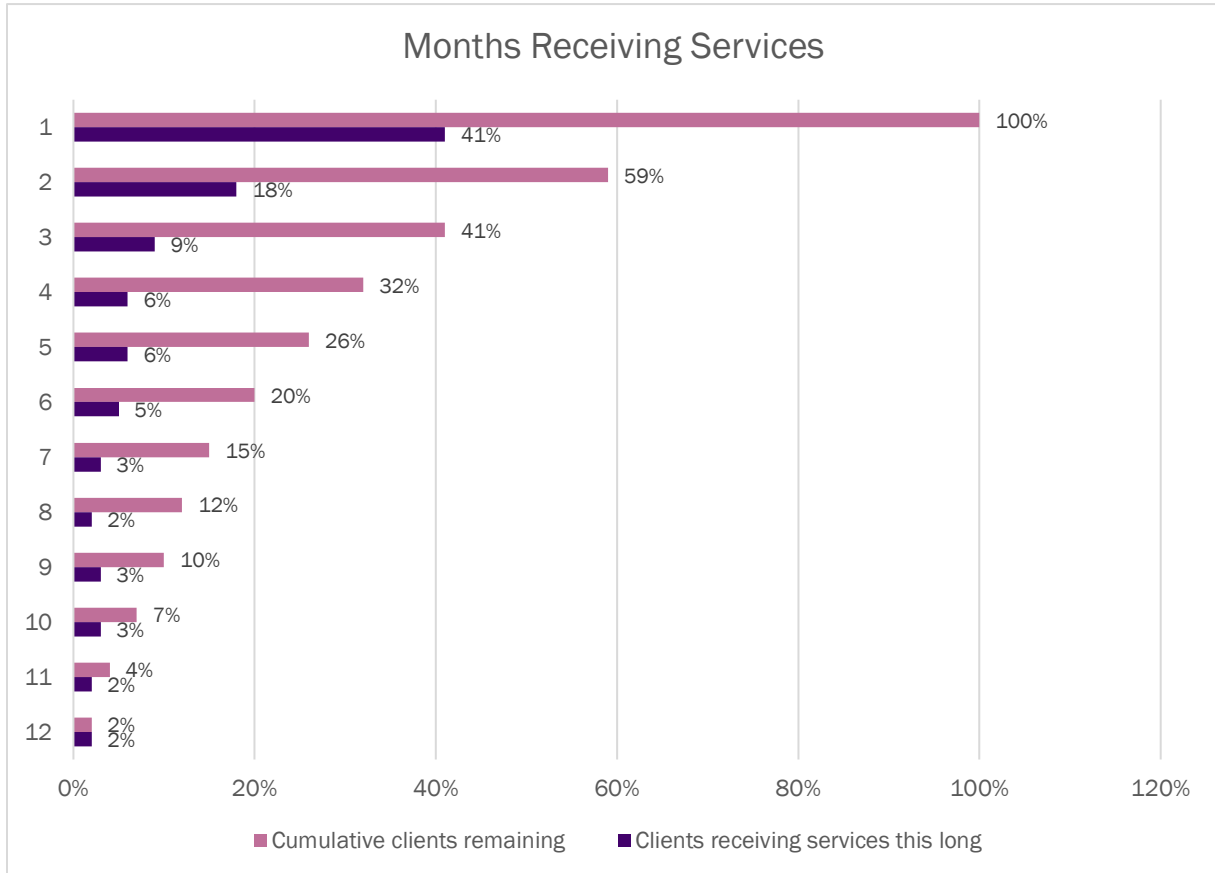
Considering all services for all clients during FY 2023, MSCFV staff provided:

- 571 crisis counseling sessions
- 1,677 safety planning sessions
- 4,943 non-crisis counseling sessions
- 5513 information & referrals
- 8353 follow up contacts
- 3645 legal advocacy services
- 3435 legal information & referrals
- 484 medical or legal accompaniments
- 73 VINE Protective Order referrals
- 568 medical advocacy services
- 1188 housing advocacy services
- 756 financial advocacy services
- 889 personal advocacy services
- 590 translation services
- 327 food boxes & food cards
- 71 gas cards
- 105 pet services

Figure 3 shows that clients vary in how long they remained in contact with MSCFV during FY2023. Two out of five clients received agency services for roughly one month. The same percentage (41%) received assistance for three months during the year. It's important to note that these data underestimate how long clients stay with the agency over their lifetime. They only take into account services received in FY2023 and don't include services received before July 2022 and after June 2023. Clients who received legal assistance with a divorce case receive services for significantly

longer. A previous analysis that examined how long clients receive services in a three-year period revealed that 20% do so for more than 7 months.

Figure 3. Length of Time Receiving Assistance.



In the past year, the typical MSCFV client received the following services during the time with MSCFV:

- 1 hotline call
- 1 crisis counseling session
- 3 safety planning sessions
- 10 non-crisis counseling sessions
- 7 information & referrals
- 16 follow up contacts
- 6 legal advocacy services
- 7 legal information & referrals
- 1 medical or legal accompaniment
- 3 housing advocacy services
- 1 financial advocacy services
- 2 personal advocacy services

The Difference Our Program Makes

Measuring client outcomes has been an important part of MSCFV's program for more than twenty-five years. Through client surveys and advocate assessments, the agency monitors if the services they provide are helping domestic violence victims move from Crisis to Transition to Self-sufficiency. Our primary markers focus on:



Increasing Safety

MSCFV utilizes two measures to gauge victim safety. Advocates complete a Safety Planning Score for clients at various contact points, indicating if the victim is engaged in short- or long-term planning.

Clients complete the Survivor Check In at specific points in their transition including intake, first goal setting meeting, and monthly check in. This measure contains questions about their knowledge of and confidence in their safety plans.

Figure 5 shows that, during their time with MSCFV, the percent of clients engaged in long-term safety planning increases. At intake, only 9% of victims are thinking long-term. That increases dramatically to 39%, where those who have been with the agency for at least a month are engaged in long-term safety planning.

My CM makes me to understand that I am not guilty of his bad behavior and that I am valuable as a woman and as a mother. I shouldn't allow my husband to treat me badly. I know now that I have rights and options.

Figure 4. Change in Safety Planning Over Time.



This year we added a question to our Safety Planning Score where case managers could indicate what stage a client is in: Crisis, Transition, or Self-Sufficiency. Figure 6 shows the trends we are seeing. As clients work with our agency, the percentage in Crisis decreases, and the percentage in Transition or Self-Sufficiency increases.

Figure 5. Client Stages Over Time.

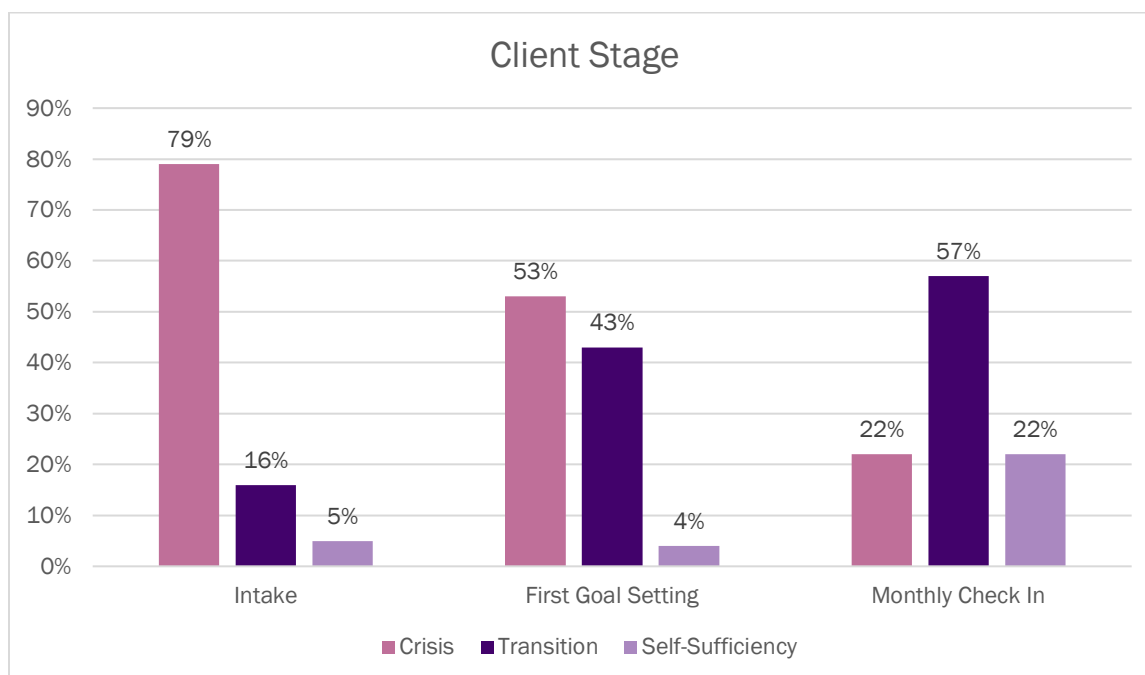
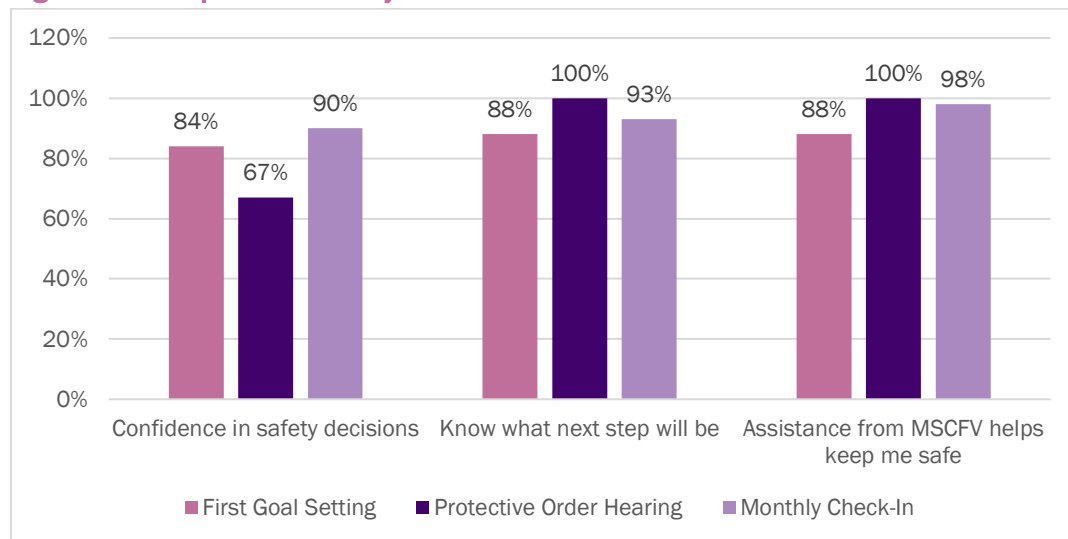


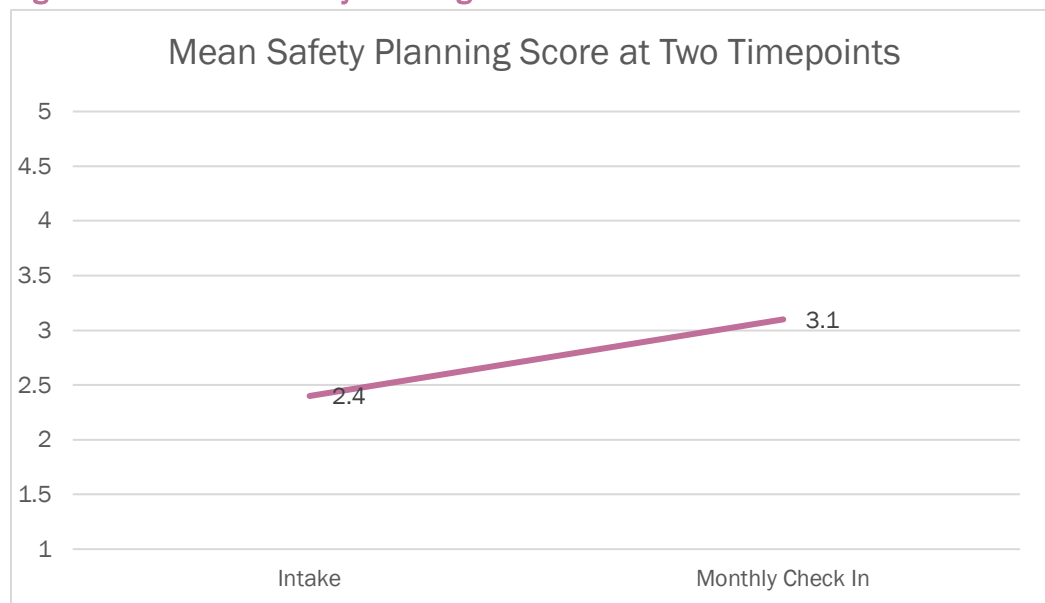
Figure 7 displays the percentage of victims who “agree” or “strongly agree” with each statement at the different time points in their journey. The majority of MSCFV clients feel confident in their safety decisions, know what to do in response to threats, and know what their next step will be.

Figure 6. Perceptions of Safety.



The data presented thus far provide a cross-section of outcomes. That is, they are snapshots of clients at each point. A strong test of the CCSSM is to examine changes evidenced by comparing safety for the same client at different time points. Since 2015, our staff has completed 1,610 Safety Planning Scores at Intake for 1,396 victims and 684 Safety Planning Scores at monthly check-ins for 279 clients. Comparing Safety Planning Scores for the same clients, we find that scores significantly increase, indicating that clients become safer as they work with MSCFV longer. On average, clients are pursuing only one safety option at intake and multiple options at their monthly check-in.

Figure 7. Increase in Safety Planning Over Time.



Healing Emotionally

Emotional healing represents another key outcome for clients as they move from crisis to transition and self-sufficiency. MSCFV provides several services that specifically address the emotional and mental consequences of abuse including:

- Crisis counseling
- DV counseling and education
- Support groups
- One-on-one therapy with a licensed clinician

Our first emotional healing measure focuses on how much control survivors feel they have over their lives and how much control they feel the abuser has. Client surveys demonstrate that, during their time at MSCFV, victims increasingly gain control over their lives, while the abuser's control decreases (see Figures 9 and 10).

Figure 8. How much control do you feel your abusive partner has over your life?

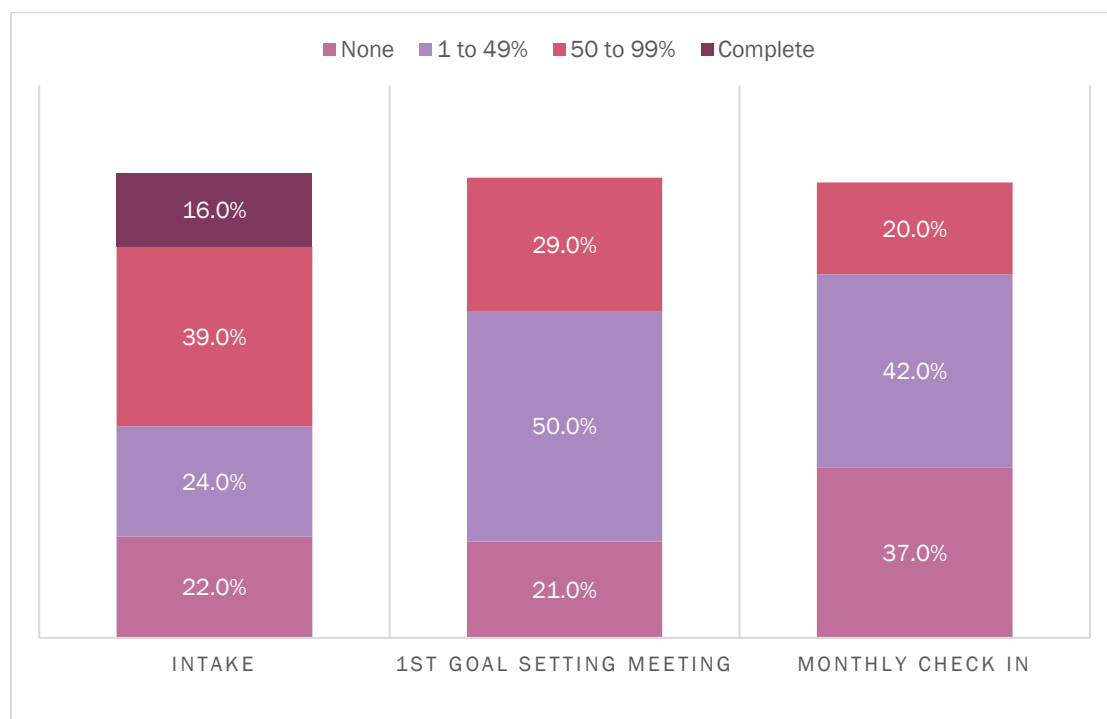
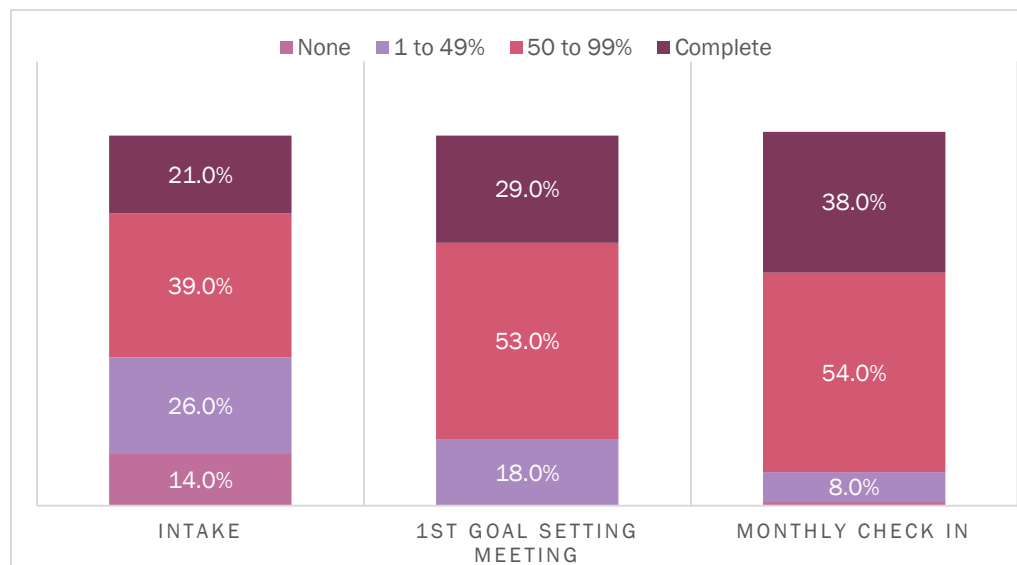


Figure 9. How much control do you feel you have over your life?



Clients who receive counseling from a licensed therapist also indicate that they benefit emotionally from these services. For example, after 6 sessions, 89% of survivors say they are making progress towards their goals, 89% say they are healing emotionally and 85% feel less distressed. They indicate that the supportive environment of therapy gives them a safe space to process what they've experienced and begin to move on. For example, survivors participating in therapy in FY 2023 said:

I think it has helped really well and it has been good to work through some issues. With things still lingering in the courts, it has really been good to talk to a therapist, because this situation is very stressful, with it being dragged out like this. I have made a lot of progress, though. I have been discussing the possibility of doing another contempt charge against my abuser, or just move forward with the same process of addressing child support, and see what happens.

Therapy has helped me to better manage my feelings of stress that I feel when my ex calls our children, or when he wants to see them for visits, and decides he wants to yell and scream at me. He is still very angry and bitter because I left and divorced him, and he is taking it out on our children. I finished my therapy sessions and I really enjoyed being able to talk about my feelings and get feedback that let me know that I am not crazy, and that there is nothing wrong with me.

It helped me to get over my trauma. I learned to have more confidence in myself. I understand more about domestic Violence. The therapist showed me how to manage my anxiety. She taught me how to love myself and now I understand that I am worthy. That I am capable to overcome negative things.

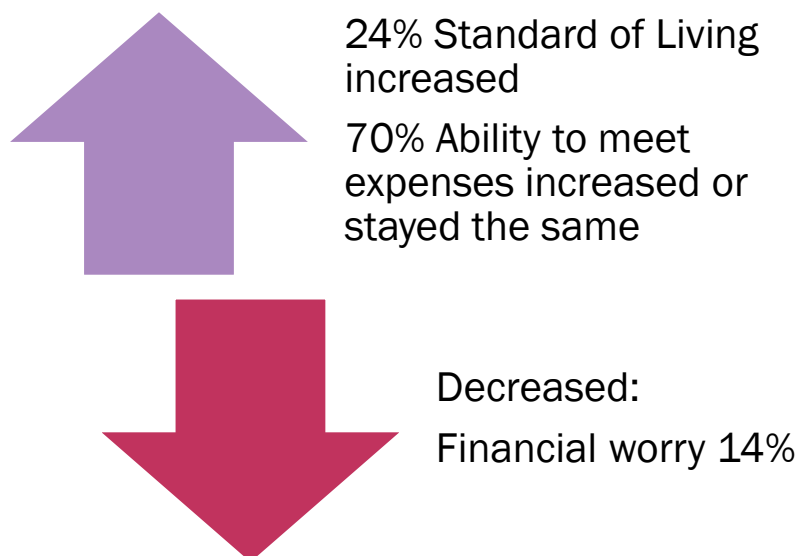
Increasing Economic Stability

MSCFV's legal program provides critical legal information, counseling, and representation in protective order and divorce/custody cases. We also provide services to address the challenges of economic abuse that can have a devastating, lasting impact on a victim's ability to recover from an act of violence, leave an abusive situation or achieve financial independence. These services include representation in a variety of legal situations that impact victims' financial well-being, in addition to financial counseling/education, information, and referrals.

From July 2022 to June 2023, a total of 55 legal cases for which MSCFV provided attorney representation resulted in a financial benefit for a survivor. These include:

- Spousal Support - \$17,000 lump sum & \$1200 monthly
- Child Support - \$14,800 lump sum & 15,577 monthly
- Emergency Family Maintenance - \$7,550 lump sum & \$26,110 monthly
- Marital Property - \$737,614

Our Survivor Check In measure also includes questions regarding the survivors' financial situation. By the end of the first month of working with our agency, we find:

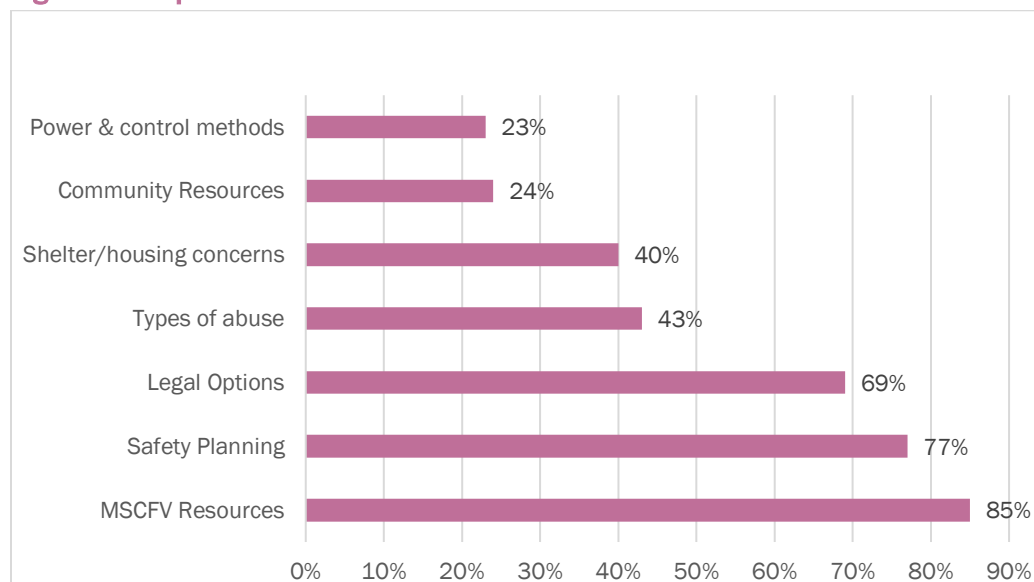


Increasing Knowledge of Resources & Preparing to Take the Next Step

Hotline calls are often a victim's first connection with MSCFV. At this crisis point, advocates provide support and actionable information about MSCFV resources, legal rights, and possible next steps for ending the violence. MSCFV advocates answered 600 hotline calls in FY 2023. During these calls,

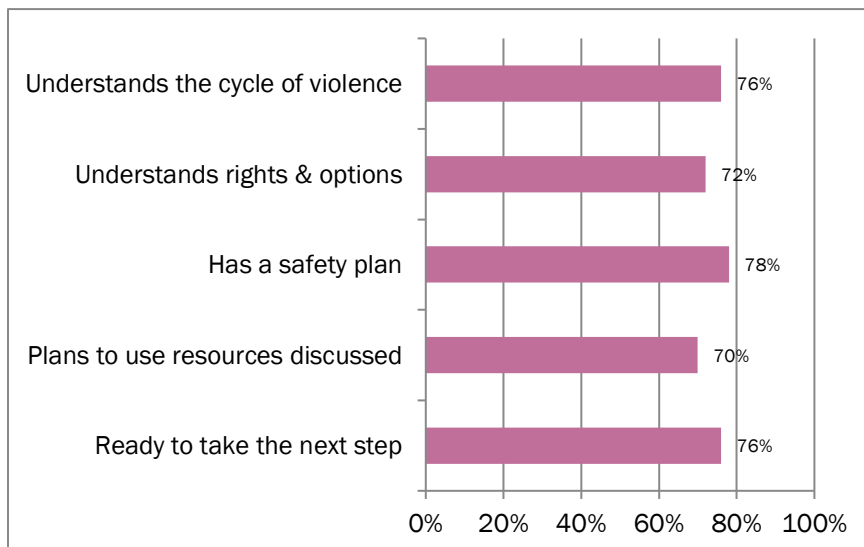
advocates often discuss Safety Planning, Community Resources, and Legal Rights & Options (see Figure 11).

Figure 10. Topics Discussed in Hotline Calls.



As Figure 12 illustrates, the majority of victims achieve positive outcomes in these calls, including a better understanding of the cycle of violence, a better understanding of their rights and options, and a readiness to take the next step in ending the violence in their lives. We know from our services data that most hotline callers go on to receive our other services. For example, 96% received additional counseling, 92% received follow-up services, and 63% received legal advocacy services.

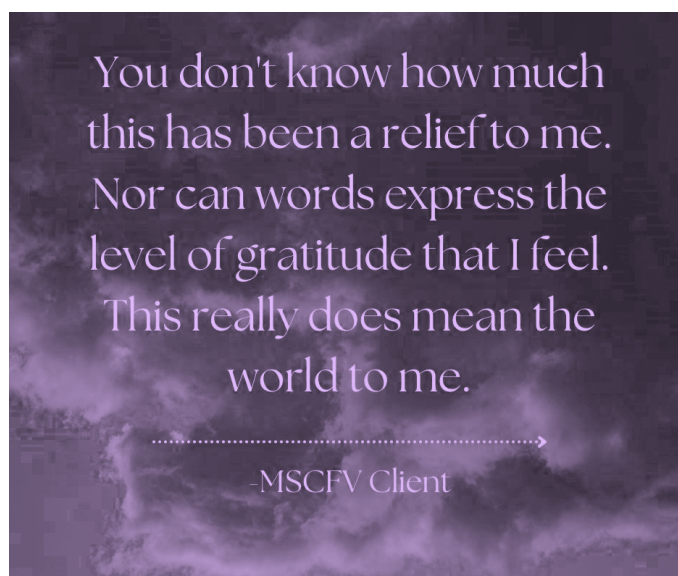
Figure 11. Hotline Call Outcomes - FY2023.



Conclusions

Fiscal Year 2023 has been a historic year for MSCFV with our staff responding to 600 hotline calls and serving 499 clients. On average, clients received agency services for four months in a one-year period. Stays with the agency are significantly longer for many clients, especially those receiving representation for divorce and custody cases.

MSCFV's Chesapeake Crisis to Self-Sufficiency Model allows clients to participate in a continuum from crisis services (e.g., hotline, crisis counseling, emergency legal advocacy) to transitional services (e.g., information & referral, legal assistance with divorce and custody, housing advocacy) to self-sufficiency (gaining a protective order, safe & stable housing, as well as financial benefits). Each client's situation is unique and MSCFV's staff take a holistic approach, connecting them with the resources and services that meet their needs. Through the use of these services and supports, survivors increase their safety, heal emotionally, and become more financially stable. Moreover, as our data show, they are able to move from crisis through transition to self-sufficiency.



Reference

Weisberg, D.K. (2019). Lethality assessment: An impressive development in domestic violence law in the past 30 years. *Hastings Women's Law Journal*, 30, 211-240.