

This project documented how various stakeholders—domestic violence survivors, practitioners providing services to survivors, funders and policymakers—understand and define survivor success, and identified opportunities for strengthening system response for survivors. It was guided by a 21-person National Advisory Council and supported by more than 200 domestic violence advocates, practitioners, researchers, policy advocates and funders. Between December 2012 and October 2013, the Full Frame Initiative (FFI) conducted 46 workshops with more than 150 survivors and more than 185 practitioners in mainstream, culturally specific and underserved communities across California, and 12 interviews with policymakers and funders.

Between March and June 2014, FFI reengaged almost 100 stakeholders across CA to share the project findings and collectively generate recommendations. The final project report, including these field-generated recommendations, was released in November 2014. The findings call into question some of the domestic violence field's basic assumptions and provide valuable information for strengthening systems' response across CA and nationwide.

Summary of Key Findings

1. How survivors define success for themselves:

- More than 55% of survivors' moments of success were about connection to family, friends and other informal networks. The second most common theme was about achieving something for themselves (e.g. securing a car loan, maintaining sobriety, completing school).
- Domestic violence was not central, and success was not achieved through traditional pathways to safety, such as separation. The role of services and professionals were less important than the role of the survivor him/herself and informal connections, in enabling moments of success.
- Seven percent (7%) of survivors mentioned making changes in or leaving the abusive relationship; most often changes in the relationship followed, not preceded, other personal achievement or success.

2. How practitioners define success for survivors:

- The majority focused on survivor transformation from "victim" to "survivor". Thirty-nine percent (39%) of practitioner moments of survivor success involved the survivor separating from the abusive relationship.
- Practitioners overemphasized the role of services and professionals in enabling survivor success, compared to survivors.

Key Recommendations

1. Create a Taskforce of diverse stakeholders to translate project findings into a shared definition of program success and related metrics for program development and outcomes.
2. Develop a train-the-trainer Institute to equip survivors, practitioners and communities to systematically learn from what goes well, moving away from a narrow focus on crisis-response and harm reduction.
3. Provide skill development for practitioners to more explicitly support survivors' informal connections.

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Download the full report at: <http://fullframeinitiative.org/how-do-survivors-define-success-report-recommendations/>

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The Full Frame Initiative's mission is to change systems so that people and communities experiencing poverty, violence and trauma have the tools, supports and resources they need to thrive.