



# A Comprehensive Design and Policy Toolkit to Better Serve Survivors of Domestic Violence in New York City: Learning from Covid-19

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**A Comprehensive Design and Policy Toolkit to Better Serve Survivors of  
Domestic Violence in New York City: Learning from Covid-19**

By

Gabrielle Joan Redding

Bachelor of Architecture, New York Institute of Technology, 2019

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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Risk and Resilience**

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Signature of the Author



Gabrielle Joan Redding

Harvard University Graduate School of Design

Certified by



Dr. Diane Davis

Charles Dyer Norton Professor of Regional Planning and Urbanism

Harvard University Graduate School of Design

## **A Comprehensive Design and Policy Toolkit to Better Serve Survivors of Domestic Violence in New York City: Learning from Covid-19**

The unprecedented crisis of the Covid-19 pandemic has brought into the limelight what many have unfortunately already known to be true, that times of extreme change, urgency, and tension too often correlate to a rise in domestic violence.<sup>1</sup> This thesis attempts to address this recent amplification of cruelty, and how it has manifested in the largest public housing agency in North America, NYCHA (The New York City Housing Authority), to advocate for an interdisciplinary reform of both policy and design of shelters and public housing that use care to encourage non-violent, inclusive environments and access to care and healing.<sup>2</sup>

In many ways, the Covid-19 pandemic has intensified conditions that already exist within the realm of domestic violence, including but not limited to isolation, economic insecurity, and trauma. Through an exploration of these connections, as well as a critique of the existing conditions of housing and emergency sheltering in New York City which allow domestic violence to thrive, this thesis provides way to address the current crisis while also both prevent future instances of violence. By doing so, its aim is to aid in the long-term health and healing of survivors and their families.

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<sup>1</sup> "Ending Violence Against Women & Girls". *Unicef.Org*, 2010, <https://www.unicef.org/evaw.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> "Sexual Harassment | HUD.Gov / U.S. Department Of Housing And Urban Development (HUD)". *Hud.Gov*, 2020, [https://www.hud.gov/program\\_offices/fair\\_housing\\_equal\\_opp/sexual\\_harassment](https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/fair_housing_equal_opp/sexual_harassment).

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## **Introduction:**

In times of crisis, the rate of domestic violence rises as the social structures that we grow accustomed to swiftly change and everyday stresses become heightened,<sup>3</sup> and resultingly, partners already prone to committing acts of domestic violence become more likely to lash out.<sup>4</sup> As the Covid-19 pandemic sweeps through the United States, it has also created a series of new factors contributing to this violence, amplifying risks for victims as many are confined to the private sphere and subject to unprecedented time in isolation with their abusers. While we have seen rises in domestic violence play out in a variety of emergency situations before, rarely do those conditions leave victims and abusers in such close quarters and in this level of seclusion, which suggests we are at the precipice of an immense rise in domestic violence.

There are unique factors of the Covid-19 pandemic that have overlapped to create an environment that is conducive to higher rates of domestic violence, which need to be explored in a time sensitive matter, and in depth. In order to create a series of programs and policy recommendations to both respond to, and attempt to halt, domestic violence in the private sphere during this unprecedented time, initiatives should place care at the forefront.

Housing for survivors, in the form of shelters and transitional units, has been a topic of much discussion in New York City- with related initiatives often pointed at increasing the quantity of units. However, accessibility does not equate solely to

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<sup>3</sup> Throughout this paper 'domestic violence' is used to refer to all instances of domestic violence, including against children, whereas 'intimate partner violence' refers to just occurrences of domestic violence between spouses or partners.

<sup>4</sup> "Ending Violence Against Women & Girls". *Unicef.Org*, 2010, <https://www.unicef.org/evaw.pdf>.

availability. One issue frequently overlooked is danger, and how these spaces can be settings of cruelty for historically disadvantaged groups, particularly women (especially women of color) and members of the transgender community.

A prevalence of domestic violence, sexism, and harassment in Public Housing, Section 8, and shelters creates hostile living environments that disproportionately effect some residents more than others. However, through ongoing and comprehensive reform of both policy and design of public housing, we can move to more equitable and just housing.

Sociologists, criminologists, psychologists, public health scholars, and legal scholars, among others, have studied domestic violence for decades. These studies typically have involved analysis of health and crime data, court statistics, and interviews with survivors and their families. However, the existing work has focused primarily, although not exclusively, on individual and institutional responses, such as suggested police interventions or personal strategies for identifying and escaping interpersonal violence.<sup>5</sup> Some work has been done by architects in regards to design possibilities for domestic violence shelters, notably at University of California Berkeley through their 2019 'Exhibition: on Sanctuary,'<sup>6</sup> and by the Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence's 'Building Dignity' project. However, these initiatives do not focus on the

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<sup>5</sup> NCJRS Abstract - National Criminal Justice Reference Service. <https://www.ncjrs.gov/App/Publications/abstract.aspx?ID=118430>. Accessed 4 Jan. 2021.

<sup>6</sup> UC Berkeley College of Environmental Design. <https://ced.berkeley.edu/events-media/events/architecture-exhibition-on-sanctuary-architectural-possibilities-for-domest>. Accessed 4 Jan. 2021.

unique challenges faced when the shelter is located in New York City, and have yet to include considerations for a post-Covid-19-pandemic way of living and working.

What is missing, and what this thesis seeks to address, is an approach that utilizes a policy and design framework simultaneously, with a deep analysis of the spatial conditions in which the policy solutions take place. This paper is structured as follows; an introduction of the unique impact that the Covid-19 pandemic has had on contributing factors of domestic violence, followed by a review of how the effect is unique to New York. Both of those sections discuss existing efforts and new policy suggestions that may be implemented in some form within policy as best practices. These policies are then used to help inform a shelter design toolkit that seeks to prioritize the long-term wellness of residents by removing external stressors and allowing a focus on healing.

## **Background:**

### **Contributing Factors**

The Center for Disease Control has acknowledged that the outbreak of coronavirus can provoke stress and overwhelming emotions. As a health condition, stress has the ability to cause a domino effect, triggering a worsening of chronic physical and mental health conditions. Stress can also cause a significant change in anxiety and eating patterns, all of which can circle back to more compounded

tension.<sup>7</sup> This pressure, as well as untreated mental conditions, can serve as triggers for perpetrators of domestic violence.<sup>8</sup>

This stress can also be heightened when events feel out of the perpetrators' control. They use abuse as a way of regaining that control over one aspect of their lives, and when that abuse is not physical the actions are sometimes referred to as 'coercive control.' Coercive control presents itself in behavior meant to isolate the victim, regulate their actions, and deprive them of independence. In March of 2020, at the beginning of Covid-19's rise in the United States, the National Domestic Violence Hotline noted that more and more callers stated that their abusive partners were using the coronavirus as a means of isolating, and thus controlling, them more.<sup>9</sup>

Many adults have turned to alcohol as a means of coping with the stress and uncertainty which comes as a result of the pandemic. According to market research firm Nielsen, wine, beer and spirits sales in the US have risen as a response to the coronavirus.<sup>10</sup> This can be troubling for households prone to family violence, as a 2020 study of calls from domestic abusers showed that frequent alcohol and drug use often plays a role in aggression and escalation of arguments.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> "Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)". *Centers For Disease Control And Prevention*, 2020, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html>.

<sup>8</sup> T, Buddy. "Stressors That Can Play A Role In Domestic Violence Attacks". *Verywell Mind*, 2020, <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-triggers-a-domestic-violence-attack-66536>. Accessed 2 May 2020.

<sup>9</sup> "How Coronavirus Is Affecting Victims of Domestic Violence". *Time*, 2020, <https://time.com/5803887/coronavirus-domestic-violence-victims/>.

<sup>10</sup> Press, Associated. "U.S. Online Alcohol Sales Jump 243% During Coronavirus Pandemic". *Marketwatch*, 2020, <https://www.marketwatch.com/story/us-alcohol-sales-spike-during-coronavirus-outbreak-2020-04-01>.

<sup>11</sup> Stressors.

As we are confined to our domestic realms due to stay-at-home orders in nearly every state,<sup>12</sup> this leads to simply more time for the abusers and their victims to be in the home together. Previously, when abusers or victims may have left for work or school, or children left for school as well, the separation created a break in the cycle of abuse. However, now that there is unprecedented time in isolation, the opportunity to enact violence or control every aspect of the day is dominant.

This time at home also deprives people of their ability to casually disclose emotions to friends, coworkers, peers, or others who do not live at home with them. Studies have shown that regularly discussing unresolved stressful experiences can help emotional growth and reduce hostility, among other symptoms such as anxiety and depression.<sup>13</sup> Without this release (as a result of isolation away from the typical third parties that may have been vented to, such as colleagues and friends) these emotions may be suppressed and lead to more outbursts directed towards partners and family. Also, while many mental health resources have begun virtual sessions, patients may not feel comfortable expressing their situations while at home with their victims, or abusers.

As of April 2020, the pandemic had also caused over three quarters of Americans to have concern over their personal financial situation.<sup>14</sup> Financial insecurity has a high correlation to domestic violence, as both a stressor that may cause

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<sup>12</sup> "See Which States and Cities Have Told Residents to Stay at Home". *Nytimes.Com*, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/coronavirus-stay-at-home-order.html>.

<sup>13</sup> Slavin-Spenny, Olga M et al. "The effects of different methods of emotional disclosure: differentiating post-traumatic growth from stress symptoms." *Journal of clinical psychology* vol. 67,10 (2011): 993-1007. doi:10.1002/jclp.20750

<sup>14</sup> "COVID-19 Concerns Survey". *Nefe.Org*, 2020, [https://www.nefe.org/\\_images/research/Polls/COVID-19-Concerns-Complete-Survey.pdf](https://www.nefe.org/_images/research/Polls/COVID-19-Concerns-Complete-Survey.pdf).

aggressive outbreaks as well as a factor into why 74% of victims stay with abusers.<sup>15</sup> One study found that 97% of survivors of intimate partner violence had experienced some form of economic control or abuse, which can include tactics such as sabotaging employment, intentionally generating debt, destroying property, or preventing the victim from obtaining a source of income at all.<sup>16</sup> Economic dependence is often the primary obstacle faced when victims attempt to leave an abusive relationship. As this obstacle compounds, from general economic insecurity as a result of the pandemic, and an increase in economic abuse from the perpetrator, this becomes significantly more of a hurdle. Outside of the pandemic, an estimated 21-60% of victims of domestic violence have experienced job loss as a result of the abuse or control.<sup>17</sup> If the abuse does escalate to the point of ruined credit, empty bank accounts, or loss of job then even if victims find it possible to escape their situations, it becomes difficult to rent an apartment, get a loan, and find new employment.<sup>18</sup>

For those who are able to escape a violent domestic situation, the abuse does not always end with the relationship. In a two-year long review of people who had previously spent time at a battered women's shelter, over one third of participants were assaulted by a former abusive partner throughout the duration of the study. For 72% of these women, the abuse was potentially lethal, and 8% of participants who were

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<sup>15</sup> DuMonthier, Asha, and Malore Dusenbery. "Intersections Of Domestic Violence And Economic Security". *Iwpr.Org*, 2016, <https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/B362-Domestic-Violence-and-Economic-Security-1.pdf>.

<sup>16</sup> Postmus, Judy L. et al. "Understanding Economic Abuse In The Lives Of Survivors". *Journal Of Interpersonal Violence*, vol 27, no. 3, 2011, pp. 411-430. *SAGE Publications*, doi:10.1177/0886260511421669..

<sup>17</sup> Rothman, Emily F. et al. "How Employment Helps Female Victims Of Intimate Partner Violence: A Qualitative Study.". *Journal Of Occupational Health Psychology*, vol 12, no. 2, 2007, pp. 136-143. *American Psychological Association (APA)*, doi:10.1037/1076-8998.12.2.136. Accessed 11 May 2020.

<sup>18</sup> "How Money Traps Victims Of Domestic Violence". *Theatlantic.Com*, <https://www.theatlantic.com/sponsored/allstate/how-money-traps-victims-of-domestic-violence/750/>.

assaulted were shot or stabbed during the duration of the study. 25% of all participants experienced this, or a comparable, level of severity in the abuse at least once a month throughout the two-year review period.<sup>19</sup> Unfortunately, the pandemic has made it easier for abusers to stalk and/or locate victims, as they can be sure that they will continuously be in their households due to stay-at-home orders.

For victims who attempt to leave violent domestic situations, securing emergency housing is often a necessary first step. However, in times of economic hardships, it can be difficult to guarantee rent, and victims can be subject to another form of aggression. A BuzzFeed article went viral in April of 2020, outlining various cases of landlords propositioning their tenants in exchange for free housing. It also featured a quote by the executive director of the Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women, Khara Jabola-Carolus, stating that they had “received more [related] cases at [their] office in the last two days than [they] have in the last two years.”<sup>20</sup>

## **Identity**

While it is impossible to address the full range of complexities in identity that impact risk and impact of intimate partner violence in this paper, it is important to note that sex and gender play a major role in domestic violence cases, as an estimated 35.6% of women and 28.5% of men experience some form of domestic violence. This abuse ranges from physical assault, to sexual violence, to severe intimate partner stalking. These numbers are higher when they are specific to LGBTQIA+ persons, as

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<sup>19</sup> Fleury, Ruth E et al. "When Ending The Relationship Does Not End The Violence". *Violence Against Women*, vol 6, no. 12, 2000, pp. 1363-1383. *SAGE Publications*, doi:10.1177/10778010022183695.

<sup>20</sup> Jamieson, Amber. "Landlords Said To Be Sexually Harassing Tenants Unable To Pay Rent". *Buzzfeednews.Com*, 2020, <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/amberjamieson/landlords-sexual-harassment-coronavirus>.



roughly 40% of lesbian women, 60% of bisexual women, 20% of gay men, and 33% of bisexual men will experience some form of intimate partner violence. When it comes to homicide, 34% of female victims were killed by a past or present intimate partner of the opposite sex, compared to 2.5% of male victims. Additionally, there is a proven history of discrimination against members of the transgender community when it comes to housing. This institutionalized, intersectional, judgement creates unfair access to affordable housing, leaving those who fall into these groups with less options and often forcing them into less-desirable housing, or even unsheltered homelessness.

The Covid-19 pandemic is also believed to be contributing to an increased wage gap, simulating a reversal of gender pay equity, as many jobs traditionally held by women are at a high risk than those traditionally held by men. A survey conducted by Google found that women who worked from home in the United States were more likely than to spend time on both childcare and homeschooling, when compared to men who were also working from home. According to The National Women's Law Center, women have disproportionately suffered from job losses during the pandemic, accounting for 55% of overall job loss, and as of July 2020 only 1/3 of jobs lost at the start of the pandemic (February to April) had returned. And Black and Latina women have been the most devastatingly affected, as 14% of Black women and 15.5% of Latinas remained unemployed in June, when the unemployment rate was at 11.1%.

When this discrimination and reversal of equity progression is layered with other pandemic difficulties and violence, the impact can amplify to be greater than the sum of its parts.

**Children:**

When children are involved, and childcare, schooling, and their own community ties become more of a concern, victims may be less likely to risk their children's situations than they would be if they were acting just for themselves. In a Forbes article, Nathaniel Fields, president and CEO of the Urban Resource Institute stated that for adult victims, their choices often come to the following: "either risk staying in an abusive relationship, or risk becoming homeless and facing poverty."

Children also need to be recognized as victims of this abuse as well, not just witnesses. A 2017 study of the effects of the 2008 US economic recession found that a 1% increase in the national unemployment rate correlates to a 20% increase in instances of child neglect, and their preliminary study suggested a 12% increase in physical abuse, with the neglect being most severe towards children ages 0-4 years old, and physical abuse being even towards children of all ages. Jeffery Edelson, professor and dean emeritus at the University of California-Berkeley's School of Social Welfare, noted in a CNN interview that the social ties that children typically rely on to buffer the impact of domestic violence at home have been severed due to the virus. These resources would have included having conversations supportive teachers and coaches, escaping to a friend's house and family, or spending time with other relatives.<sup>21</sup> Now that children are unable to rely on these external parental figures, they are truly isolated with their abusers.

### **Existing Efforts:**

In the past few years, coinciding with the rise of the #MeToo movement, we have seen a growth in media discussion around domestic violence, as well as

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<sup>21</sup> Brown, Dan, and Elisabetta De Cao. "The Impact Of Unemployment On Child Maltreatment In The United States". *Institute For Social And Economic Research.*, vol 18, no. 4, 2017

constructive ways of combatting it. However, many of these movements, including; screening for domestic violence during routine doctors' visits,<sup>22</sup> placing posters with warning signs and hotline numbers in public bathrooms,<sup>23</sup> and protective measures on campuses and in workplaces,<sup>24</sup> are no longer effective due to self-isolation measures that have been put in place.

Many victims of domestic violence can spend months developing exit strategies in secret, sometimes coordinating with friends, family, and therapists. However, the quick changes that the pandemic has ignited have shattered some of these plans. Additionally, as of late 2020 requests for restraining orders have been delayed indefinitely, as many courts nationwide have closed.<sup>25</sup>

Shelters meant to temporarily house victims of domestic violence quickly reached capacity, with organizers worried about over occupying the spaces for fear of causing an outbreak within the facilities. Some shelters had also cancelled programs, such as counselling and volunteer training, as a way of limiting the flow of people in and out of the buildings. <sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Marcus, M.D., Erin N. "Screening for Abuse May Be Key to Ending It". *Nytimes.Com*, 2008, <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/20/health/20abus.html>.

<sup>23</sup> Spencer, Naomi. "Posters Raise Domestic Violence Abuse Awareness". *Kentonbee.Com*, 2011, <https://www.kentonbee.com/articles/posters-raise-domestic-violence-abuse-awareness/>.

<sup>24</sup> Niolon, P. H., Kearns, M., Dills, J., Rambo, K., Irving, S., Armstead, T., & Gilbert, L. "Preventing Intimate Partner Violence Across the Lifespan: A Technical Package of Programs, Policies, and Practices." Atlanta, GA: *National Center for Injury Prevention and Control*, 2017. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

<sup>25</sup> Andrew, Scottie. "Domestic Violence Victims, Stuck at Home, Are at Risk During Coronavirus Pandemic". *CNN*, 2020, <https://www.cnn.com/2020/03/27/health/domestic-violence-coronavirus-wellness-trnd/index.html>.

<sup>26</sup> Lang, Marissa J. "Domestic Violence Will Increase During Coronavirus Quarantines and Stay-At-Home Orders, Experts Warn". *The Washington Post*, 2020, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/domestic-violence-will-increase-during-coronavirus-quarantines-and-stay-at-home-orders-experts-warn/2020/03/26/04e63d6a-6d37-11ea-b148-e4ce3fbd85b5\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/domestic-violence-will-increase-during-coronavirus-quarantines-and-stay-at-home-orders-experts-warn/2020/03/26/04e63d6a-6d37-11ea-b148-e4ce3fbd85b5_story.html).

## Data Issues:

Due to the inherent privacy of the crimes of domestic violence, data regarding its prevalence has been generally inaccurate. And, in more normal times, only about an estimated half of victims are expected to have called the police upon being assaulted by a family member. So, while statistics for domestic violence reports in 2020 may have directly shown a decrease in overall reports this isn't indicative of less violence, rather it suggests that the ability to report abuse using typical channels is especially limited.<sup>27</sup> For example, the New York Police Department citywide monthly reports of radio runs for domestic violence for June, July, August and September 2019 were 16,512, 16,717, 15,905, and 15,504, respectively. When compared to the 2020 numbers for the same four months; 15,770, 16,247, 16,303, 15,026, it may appear that, other than the outlier month of August, that domestic violence in New York has actually declined. The numbers for January-June domestic violence calls originating specifically from NYCHA developments were at 14,930 in 2019, versus a significantly lower 6,998 in the first half of 2020.<sup>28</sup> However, it is widely suspected that this decline in reports is in fact due to an inability to safely contact resources when in the close confines of an abuser.

This suspicion is substantiated by data collected by Safe Horizon, an organization that provides social services for victims of abuse and operates the New York City domestic violence hotline, who found that while calls decreased by 11% in March of

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<sup>27</sup> Ramjug, Peter. "COVID-19 Is Making Things Harder For Victims Of Domestic Abuse. Here'S A Way To Help.". *News.Northeastern.Edu*, 2020, <https://news.northeastern.edu/2020/06/30/covid-19-restrictions-made-things-harder-for-victims-of-domestic-abuse-heres-a-way-to-help-them/>.

<sup>28</sup> *Reports - Domestic Violence - NYPD*. <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/nypd/stats/reports-analysis/domestic-violence.page>. Accessed 18 Dec. 2020.

2020, use of their online chat service increased.<sup>29</sup> The Met Council, a New York based Jewish charity, noted that while they typically receive about 70 new cases of domestic violence a month, in April of 2020 that number nearly doubled to 135, and reached 145 in May and 146 in June. In an interview with the New York Post, Nechama Bakst, senior director of the Met Council's family-violence program noted that they "have seen people who never experienced violence starting to experience violence, and people who have experienced violence experience worse violence," and said that the severity of the crimes has worsened, noting that "[they] see more choking, more sexual violence, kind of much more intense and serious acts of crime."

So, while initial data may imply that domestic violence rates have not worsened during the pandemic, a more comprehensive look shows a much different story. It is imperative that we understand the difficulty of collecting accurate and thorough data regarding these crimes, and do not underestimate the impact the pandemic has had upon victims and their families.

### **Global Precedents:**

The Covid-19 pandemic spread across other continents before it made its way to North America, creating the same heightened instances of domestic violence. This allows policy makers in the United States to observe what has worked, as well as what has failed, in other global instances and develop our own responses using these cases as a precedent.

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<sup>29</sup> Southall, Ashley. "Why a Drop in Domestic Violence Reports Might Not Be a Good Sign." *The New York Times*, 17 Apr. 2020. *NYTimes.com*, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/17/nyregion/new-york-city-domestic-violence-coronavirus.html>.

As Covid-19 first swept China, the country saw a massive surge in reports of domestic violence. Wan Fei, founder of an anti-domestic violence nonprofit in the Hubei Province, noted that calls to a local police station roughly tripled in February of 2020, compared to February the year before.<sup>30</sup> The Chinese government had hoped that their new domestic violence law, which took effect in March of 2016, would help regulate responses to this spike in abuse.<sup>31</sup> However, the law has proved to be non-specific and difficult to enforce, especially in the time of the pandemic.<sup>32</sup>

In Spain, calls to the national domestic violence hotline rose by 18% in the time immediately following the country's outbreak, and France reported a 30% rise in reports nationwide.<sup>33</sup> As a result, women in Spain worked to create their own codeword to use in pharmacies to communicate a need for assistance with domestic violence. The phrase, 'Mask-19,' soon spread to women in France, who used the codeword



**Make Yourself Heard**

In danger, need the police, but can't speak?

- 1 Dial 999
- 2 Listen to the questions from the 999 operator
- 3 Respond by coughing or tapping the handset if you can
- 4 If prompted, **press 55**  
This lets the 999 call operator know it's a genuine emergency and you'll be put through to the police.

IOPC women's aid NPCC

Figure 1: Code for silent communication of domestic violence to police in the United Kingdom  
Credit: Independent Office for Police Conduct

<sup>30</sup> Allen-Ebrahimian, Bethany. "China's Domestic Violence Epidemic". *Axios*, 2020, <https://www.axios.com/china-domestic-violence-coronavirus-quarantine-7b00c3ba-35bc-4d16-afdd-b76ecfb28882.html>.

<sup>31</sup> "China Has A New Domestic Violence Law. So Why Are Victims Still Often Unsafe?". *Chinafile*, 2017, <https://www.chinafile.com/reporting-opinion/viewpoint/china-has-new-domestic-violence-law-so-why-are-victims-still-often>.

<sup>32</sup> "Domestic Violence Law 2015". *China Law Translate*, <https://www.chinalawtranslate.com/%e5%8f%8d%e5%ae%b6%e5%ba%ad%e6%9a%b4%e5%8a%9b%e6%b3%95-2015/?lang=en>.

<sup>33</sup> "A New Covid-19 Crisis: Domestic Abuse Rises Worldwide". *Nytimes.Com*, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/06/world/coronavirus-domestic-violence.html>.

to signal a threat of danger by mentioning it in both pharmacies and grocery stores.<sup>34</sup>

The French government also announced that they will cover the cost for 20,000 nights in hotel rooms across the country for victims of domestic violence who need to leave their housing quickly. They have also committed to opening 20 counselling centers within stores and essential buildings so that victims may visit under the guise of running errands.

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A campaign in the United Kingdom, which also relies on quiet and discrete communication, is allowing victims who are isolated with their domestic abusers to communicate with law enforcement without having to speak out loud.<sup>36</sup>

Adriana Mello, a Rio de Janeiro judge specializing in domestic violence estimated a rise of "40-50%" in domestic violence.<sup>37</sup> However, there was a lack of national response, so women in Brazil started a grassroots movement. They began by placing flyers outlining signs of domestic violence and resources available to victims in apartment building elevators. The program then advanced as more women got involved, creating a codeword system to be used when ordering or receiving groceries.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Kottasová, Ivana, and Valentina Di Donato. "Women Are Using Code Words at Pharmacies to Escape Domestic Violence". *CNN*, 2020, <https://www.cnn.com/2020/04/02/europe/domestic-violence-coronavirus-lockdown-intl/index.html>.

<sup>35</sup> Godin, Melissa. "French Government to House Victims of Domestic Violence in Hotels, Amid Rising Number of Cases". *Time*, 2020, <https://time.com/5812990/france-domestic-violence-hotel-coronavirus/>.

<sup>36</sup> See Figure 1.

<sup>37</sup> Graham-Harrison, Emma et al. "Lockdowns Around the World Bring Rise in Domestic Violence". *The Guardian*, 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/mar/28/lockdowns-world-rise-domestic-violence>.

<sup>38</sup> Pereira, Bruna, and Macerena Aguilar. "Black Brazilian Women Take Bold Action Against Gender-Based Violence". *Opendemocracy*, 2020, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/5050/black-brazilian-women-take-bold-action-against-gender-based-violence/>.

In the United States, some social media platforms have been flooded with people posting codes on their feeds and media stories.

These codes can indicate to followers and friends in their social networks

that by direct messaging certain words or phrases, that person can be made aware that the sender of the message is in an abusive situation that they may need help getting away from. The trend began in early April 2020, when a Facebook user asked victims to message her about eyeliner. The post had been shared 74,000 times on the platform within a month.<sup>39</sup>

In the same month, the Canadian Women's Foundation announced launched a social media campaign raising awareness of a 'Signal for Help,' an online

initiative meant to aid victims of gender-based crime who need to discretely seek aid. The signal, which can be silently displayed during video calls, does rely on the other parties on the call being aware of both the signal and the resources in place to help victims.<sup>40</sup>

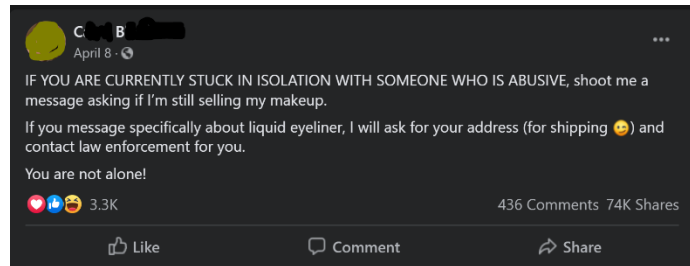


Figure 2: Facebook post with instructions for discrete communication of domestic violence. Credit: Facebook

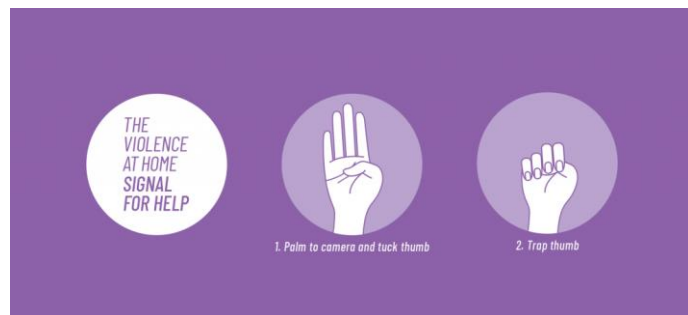


Figure 3: Signal for Help instructions. Credit: Canadian Women's Foundation

<sup>39</sup> See Figure 2.

<sup>40</sup> "Signal For Help | Use Sign to Ask for Help." *Canadian Women's Foundation*, <https://canadianwomen.org/signal-for-help/>. Accessed 18 Dec. 2020.



While these smaller movements are undoubtedly useful and can inspire a more widespread awareness of domestic violence, they are dependent on both the victim and the recipient of the 'code' to be aware of these smaller movements.

### **Domestic Violence In New York**

New York's public housing system is home to some of the city's most vulnerable population, and that vulnerability has only been heightened by the Covid-19 pandemic. It is for this reason, this concentration of some of those in the most precarious situations, that I decided to focus on the public housing system and particularly domestic violence shelters. This is not to say that others in more advantageous positions do not experience domestic violence - in some cases those survivors may reside in the shelter system as well – but these institutions are in place with the general intention of serving those most disadvantaged. An understanding of the authorities and policies currently governing public housing in New York is necessary before suggesting any revisions to it.

### **NYCHA**

The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) is home to roughly 5% of New Yorkers and is the largest public housing agency in North America, between NYCHA and Section 8, over 560,000 people are served. NYCHA public housing represents 7.9 percent of the city's rental apartments.<sup>41</sup> About two thirds of those served live in conventional public housing (as opposed to Section 8 units with private landlords).

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<sup>41</sup> (2017 NYC Housing and Vacancy Survey)

These households are often headed by women, as is true in 3 out of 4 families in public housing and 4 out of 5 utilizing Section 8.

Rent is based on 30% the family income, and often (but not always) includes electricity and gas. The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) subsidizes the remainder of the rent. To be eligible for NYCHA housing; one member of the unit must be either a citizen or a legal immigrant, and must be 18+ years old, or an emancipated minor. A 'family' is considered by NYCHA to be either a single person or 2+ people related by blood, marriage, domestic partnership, adoption, guardianship, or court-awarded custody.

The average NYCHA family income is \$25,007, and the average 'family's' monthly rent is \$533. 46.1 percent of NYCHA families are working and 13 percent of NYCHA families receive public assistance. The NYCHA lottery system has been known to take anywhere from a few months to years, and securing an interview through the lottery does not mean that the applicant will be accepted. As of March of 2019, there were 181,000 families waiting for public housing and another 138,000 waiting for section 8. that number is expected to have risen due to the economic impact of the pandemic.

The waiting list has priority to homeless individuals, those residing in a nursing home, or persons experiencing overcrowding, substandard living, mobility impairment, rent burden, or those who are victims of a hate crime, or are elderly, or disabled and victims of domestic violence. If the applicant does not have proper documentation to be considered an emergency applicant, they are able can enter as a non-emergency and in some cases be on that list for over a decade. Once placed in NYCHA, residents stay for an average of 23 years.

Domestic violence occurrences citywide has been steadily rising, from 821 to 1642 cases annually when comparing 2009 and 2014.<sup>42</sup> Even if we can assume that part of this increase is a result of a heightened comfortability reporting domestic violence, that number is still shockingly high. Out of these crimes, 14% of reports occurred within NYCHA, despite less than 5% of the city's population residing within said developments, and 40% of major felony crimes taking place in NYCHA developments are tied to domestic violence.

Domestic violence is frequently not the only threat facing residents living in NYCHA. There's a pattern of abuse from landlords and superintendents, who often have access to the victims' apartment as part of the lease agreement. This type of threatening behavior is categorized as either quid pro quo (for example; a landlord may refuse to fix a broken heater unless a tenant preforms sexual favors) or creating a hostile environment (for example; repeatedly harassing a tenant.) The Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence (ENDGBV) has put programs in place to begin to counteract the gender inequity in NYCHA and Section 8 housing, but we can see that do to the continued rise in numbers they have not been completely effective. Additionally, their most prominent program, the Family Justice Centers Buildings, had to halt in person service due to the pandemic. While their offered services (free legal advice, assistance with planning, job training, and more) remain available over the phone, this can be impossible to access for someone stuck in isolation with their partners. For victims facing abuse from their partners, this additional harassment from

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<sup>42</sup> *Public Housing in New York City: An Overview*. Women's City Club of New York, 2018, [https://wccny.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/HousingBrochure\\_FNL\\_singlepages.pdf](https://wccny.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/HousingBrochure_FNL_singlepages.pdf).

landlords and superintendents can create a compounded feeling of an unsafe environment.

### **VAWA and HUD**

In 1994 Congress passed the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA 1994) to address the severity of sex and gender motivated crimes, including domestic violence. This bill was the first of its kind, a comprehensive approach to ending violence specific to women. Although as of Fall, 2020, VAWA is still awaiting reauthorization, it does not encompass a 'sunset provision,' meaning that the legal protections, including those pertaining to housing, are still in effect. However, that expiration is relevant when concerning authorizations for grant programs included in VAWA. Congress has continued funding for programs through 2020.

VAWA impacts survivors seeking housing due to the fact that it prevents a housing provider from requiring that someone provides court documentation of abuse. If they do seek proof then they must accept one of the following forms of documentation: self-certification, police report, court record, or a statement from a service provider, like as a counselor or lawyer.

An exception to this may be when a housing provider requires third-party documentation if they receive conflicting information about the domestic violence, such as two household members each naming each other as the perpetrator. A statement from a service provider, for example, a case manager, counts as third-party documentation.

New York State laws prohibit housing discrimination based on status as a domestic violence victim/survivor, except when they are in, or applying to live in, a building where the owner also lives and that only has one or two units. In that case, the

resident would need to prove to the court that the landlord would not try to evict them if you were not a domestic violence victim.<sup>43</sup>

### **Social Policy Recommendations:**

The following suggestions attempt to work in addition of existing policies which seek to address domestic violence before it happens, and to aid in the healing of survivors after an instance, or repeated instances, of violence. They take into account special considerations that the Covid-19 pandemic has brought to light, such as an increased economic insecurity or amplified time in isolation.

### **Stakeholders:**

An understanding of those who play a role in domestic violence, whether as participants, victims, or allies, can better position where to direct policy initiatives. Currently the fragmentation of existing efforts against domestic violence have prevented a larger uniformed approach. The Office on Violence Against Women has advocated for a coordinated community response to combat domestic violence, relying on a variety of stakeholders to come together.<sup>44</sup>

1. In the time of the pandemic, domestic violence hotlines and websites can be useful for not only responding quickly to emergencies of intimate partner violence, but also keep track of the data behind these communications to better tailor future planning.

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<sup>43</sup> "History Of VAWA | Legal Momentum". *The Women's Legal Defense And Education Fund*, 2020, <https://www.legalmomentum.org/history-vaawa>.

<sup>44</sup> "About the Office on Violence Against Women". *Justice.Gov*, 2020, <https://www.justice.gov/file/29836/download>.

2. Survivors of domestic violence have the ability to provide powerful insight into the tactics used by perpetrators, as well as the unique challenges faced by persons who are trying to liberate themselves these situations.
3. Families and friends of victims and survivors of intimate partner violence may be able to specify patterns and warning signs that the victims and survivors themselves may not have noticed, giving perspective as to what a third party should be on alert for.
4. Former perpetrators of domestic violence have been useful in previous studies in determining motives behind their actions, as well as possible triggers. This is not to suggest that their actions are justified, but rather gain a better sense of how to regulate against this behavior. <sup>45</sup>
5. Law enforcement officers, as well as other responders to calls of domestic violence, can also help identify patterns in instances of violence, and be helpful in implementing new forms of responding.
6. Community leaders, such as figures of local government, faith-based leaders, sports coaches, or well-liked educators have influence over a community and are often well connected.<sup>46</sup>

## **Youth Education**

One of the most effective ways to stop intimate partner violence from ever starting is by educating youth early on. By incorporating social-emotional learning into youth education, students can learn how to properly approach each other.

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<sup>45</sup> Soriano, Lisa, "Male Perpetrators Perspectives on Reasons for Domestic Violence in Heterosexual Relationships." *Electronic Theses, Projects, and Dissertations*. 2017, 466.

<sup>46</sup> About the Office.

Additionally, teaching healthy, safe dating and intimate relationship skills to adolescents at the age where they typically begin dating can show students what signs to look out for and how to ensure they are entering a healthy relationship. This can also help children identify unhealthy behavior between their parents or in their home lives during the time of the pandemic.<sup>47</sup> However, particularly for vulnerable grade school aged children, its imperative that this is taught quickly and adapted to virtual education, as they may be witnessing episodes of domestic violence, as victims or a third party, at home. A brief, age-appropriate, prerecorded seminar, conducted by the experts in the New York City Mayor's Office to End Gender-Based Violence or can be shared within the NYC public school system by the New York State Department of Education to allow teachers to incorporate into their virtual courses.

### **GPS Monitoring / Check Ins**

Social isolation and stay-at-home orders have eliminated the majority of natural witnesses to crimes, otherwise known as 'eyes on the street,' which has proven to be a deterrent to many criminals.<sup>48</sup> To combat this temporary loss, GPS monitoring is an option which may be utilized for known violent offenders, particularly ones with restraining orders. This method has been shown to reduce repeat offenses by 95%.<sup>49</sup> However, not all known offenders are estranged from their partners, and many families are still in isolation with their abusers. In the United Kingdom, Home Secretary, Priti Patel,

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<sup>47</sup> Taylor, Ph.D., B., Stein, Ed. D, N., Woods, Ph.D., D. and Mumford, Ph.D., E. 'Shifting Boundaries: Final Report on an Experimental Evaluation of a Youth Dating Violence Prevention Program in New York City Middle Schools.' *Police Executive Research Forum*. 2017, Available at: <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/236175.pdf>

<sup>48</sup> Jacobs, Jane. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York: Vintage Books, 1992. Print.

<sup>49</sup>Raddi, Gianmarco. "How GPS Tracking Technology Can Curb Domestic Violence". *Wired*, 2019, <https://www.wired.com/story/gps-tracking-technology-can-curb-domestic-violence/>.

has urged law enforcement officers to make random check ins to known households with records of domestic violence or domestic disturbance calls.<sup>50</sup> Often, severe instances of domestic violence come from households already on local law enforcement's radar. For example, 39.3% of domestic violence related homicides in New York City in 2018 occurred in relationships that the NYPD had been called to check in on previously.<sup>51</sup> In a time where intimate partner violence is on the rise, and in-person check ins can be disguised as Covid-19 related ones, having officers do random visitations can end up being lifesaving.

### **Police Intervention**

It's been shown in a large proportion (39.3%) of domestic violence homicides that took place in 2018, the New York Police Department (NYPD) had already been made aware of a history of violence in the relationship. With this being the case, the NYPD has the opportunity to intervene in these situations and provide more immediate resources to the victims before it escalates to homicide. The National Domestic Violence Hotline suggests that police can help by providing immediate, tangible help like helping obtain 'protective orders, transporting victims to safety or connecting them with victim advocates.'<sup>52</sup>

This should also highlight how essential it is for police to take claims of domestic and gender-based violence seriously, as the cases too often repetitive and escalating.

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<sup>50</sup> Hymas, Charles. "Police Mount Random Home Checks on Domestic Abusers to Combat Fears of Rise in Attacks During Lockdown". *The Telegraph*, 2020, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2020/05/07/police-mount-random-home-checks-domestic-abusers-combat-fears/>.

<sup>51</sup> Noel, Cecile. "New York City Domestic Violence Fatality Review Committee: 2018 Annual Report". *Www1.Nyc. Gov*, 2019, [https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/ocdv/downloads/pdf/2018\\_Annual\\_FRC\\_Report\\_Final.pdf](https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/ocdv/downloads/pdf/2018_Annual_FRC_Report_Final.pdf).

<sup>52</sup> "New York City Domestic Violence Fatality Review Committee: 2018 Annual Report". *Www1.Nyc.Gov*, 2018, [http://file:///C:/Users/gabby/Downloads/2018\\_Annual\\_FRC\\_Report\\_Final.pdf](http://file:///C:/Users/gabby/Downloads/2018_Annual_FRC_Report_Final.pdf).



The International Association of Chiefs of Police suggests that “responders and investigators should always look for and be open to evidence suggesting co-occurring, serial, and interconnected crimes.” This means that the NYPD should, particularly when responding to a call from victims with a history of gender-based violence, be aware of signs of repeated abuse, both visible (such as bruising and swelling) but also nonvisible (disorientation, difficulty breathing etc..)<sup>53</sup> By encouraging NYPD to act in thorough, nonjudgmental ways when investigating these crimes, they can increase the ability to notice patterns, and stop violence before it escalates.

In November of 2020, the NYPD announced a pilot program to replace police officers with a team of mental health and crisis professionals, including social workers, as the primary responders to the majority of 911 calls.<sup>54</sup> This program could prove successful in encouraging victims who may not feel comfortable dealing with police officers to still reach out to emergency services.

### **Firearm Restrictions**

When male perpetrators of domestic violence have access to a firearm, the chance of their female victims being killed increased 500%.<sup>55</sup> As the pandemic has created a dangerous, even deadly time for victims, this statistic should speak to the importance of enforcing stricter gun regulations, particularly for perpetrators of domestic violence. In order to reduce the risk of domestic homicide, those convicted of

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<sup>53</sup> "Sexual Assault Response Policy And Training Guidelines". *Theiacp.Org*, <https://www.theiacp.org/sites/default/files/all/i-j/IACP%20Sexual%20Assault%20Response%20Policy%20and%20Training%20Content%20Guidelines.2017.3.23.pdf>.

<sup>54</sup> Miller, Ryan W. "Pilot Program Will Replace NYPD for Mental Health 911 Calls in 2 Neighborhoods." *USA TODAY*, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2020/11/10/nypd-replaced-911-mental-health-calls-pilot-program/6234305002/>. Accessed 18 Dec. 2020.

<sup>55</sup> Campbell, Jacquelyn C et al. "Risk factors for femicide in abusive relationships: results from a multisite case control study." *American journal of public health* vol. 93,7 (2003): 1089-97. doi:10.2105/ajph.93.7.1089

an act of domestic violence such as abuse and stalking, or someone with a restraining order against them, should be barred from owning firearms. Furthermore, local governments should enforce the turning in of firearms by people who fit this criterion. Additionally, known abusers should be logged into the National Instant Criminal Background Check System, allowing for a strict background check prior to all gun sales.<sup>56</sup> Doing so can prevent more firearm related domestic homicides during this pandemic.

### **Reputation Forgiveness**

Because the effect of Covid-19 is expected to have a long-lasting economic impact, we cannot expect the rise in domestic violence to fall as the world appears to make its return to normalcy. It is possible that victim's credit scores, resumes, education, and mental and physical health will continue to suffer. This should not prevent victims from being able to move on and create a more stable and healthy life for themselves and their families. Therefore, leniency in regard to these credentials should be granted to survivors as they apply for housing or new employment, and programs to address common challenges facing families after leaving a situation of domestic violence should be instated. These initiatives can work to match survivors of domestic violence with more permanent housing following time in a shelter or hotel, help them understand their legal rights, encourage property managers to accept these families, conduct counselling, and help them with job placement and applications.

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<sup>56</sup> Gerney, Arkadi, and Chelsea Parsons. "Women Under the Gun - Center for American Progress". *Center for American Progress*, 2014, <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/guns-crime/reports/2014/06/18/91998/women-under-the-gun/>.

## **Housing Policy Recommendations**

While instating the previously outlined recommendations would have the possibility of benefitting victims of domestic violence regardless of the severity of the crime or the socio-economic position of the victim, this section focuses on policies specific to those who need to, or choose to, leave their current housing situation, and seek some form of sheltering from domestic violence.

### **Providing Rapid Rehousing Support**

While the Fair Housing Act protects against quid pro quo and hostile environments, it does not do much to help victims in the days immediately following a unwelcome interaction (whether it be domestic violence, or unfair treatment from housing staff or other tenants.) Cases of harassment and assault in housing are particularly insidious because, for many, they are impossible to escape without threat of homelessness. Particularly, in cases where children are involved, many victims stay in unsafe situations instead of moving with their children into shelters. To prevent victims from having to choose between living in hostile environments, or homelessness, rapid rehousing support can be put into place.<sup>57</sup>

Rapid re-housing can be provided through emergency hotel vouchers for victims of domestic violence, sexism, and harassment, as well as their children and dependents. These measures act as an alternative to emergency shelters and allow victims to leave unjust situations immediately without having to first search for alternate living conditions or worry about homelessness. This system, has proved successful in creating long term

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<sup>57</sup> "Rapid Re-Housing - National Alliance To End Homelessness". *National Alliance To End Homelessness*, 2020, <https://endhomelessness.org/ending-homelessness/solutions/rapid-re-housing/>.

housing stability for those effected.<sup>58</sup> For example, the State of Oregon has provided rapid re-housing “through emergency hotel vouchers and subsidized housing assistance,” for victims of domestic violence, sexism, and harassment, and their children. These measures act as an alternative to emergency shelters and allow victims to leave unjust situations immediately without having to first search for alternate living conditions or worry about homelessness.

During the Covid-19, many hotels are either closed or almost-completely empty (barring those being used for healthcare workers) and these vacancies can be utilized for temporary housing. This system is effective for immediate care, and can provide reassurance to victims worried about the initial impact that leaving their abusers may have. This approach is not dissimilar to the French government’s previously mentioned approach in the ‘global precedents’ section, and can be adapted to post-pandemic rehousing as well.

A study of New York City hotels showed that they typically have an occupancy rate of 86%,<sup>59</sup> and as of August 2020 that number had lowered to 41%.<sup>60</sup> In effort to alleviate the pressure typically felt by victims looking to leave hostile situations, victims could be provided vouchers for vacant rooms that would allow families to stay out of shelters while arranging alternate living conditions.

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<sup>58</sup> Niolon, Phyllis Holditch et al. "An Innovative Approach to Serving the Needs of IPV Survivors: Description of A CDC-Funded Study Examining the Volunteers of America Home Free Rent Assistance Program". *Journal of Women's Health*, vol 18, no. 6, 2009, pp. 775-778. *Mary Ann Liebert Inc*, doi:10.1089/jwh.2009.1461.

<sup>59</sup> "NYC Hotel Market Analysis Existing Conditions And 10-Year Outlook". *Www1.Nyc.Gov*, 2017, <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/planning/download/pdf/plans-studies/m1-hotel-text/nyc-hotel-market-analysis.pdf?r=a>.

<sup>60</sup> Manrodt, Alexis. "Hotel Occupancy Rates Hit 50 Percent". *The Real Deal New York*, 2020, <https://therealdeal.com/2020/08/20/us-hotel-occupancy-hits-highest-point-since-mid-march/#:~:text=In%20New%20York%20City%2C%20occupancy,the%20same%20time%20last%20year.>

## **Reinstating Project Safe Home**

From 2008 to 2011, New Destiny Housing (a New York City based non-profit) ran a program called 'Project Safe Home,' or 'Project Home' which worked to address common challenges facing families after leaving a situation of domestic violence. This initiative matched survivors of domestic violence with more permanent housing following time in a homeless shelter, helped them understand their legal rights, and encouraged property managers to accept these families. Within their three-year run, they "conducted individual counseling for survivors alongside group workshops to help them understand their options to access available apartments and prepare for the application process "and placed 122 families into permanent housing. (New Destiny Housing) <sup>61</sup>

By supporting a reinstatement of Project Safe Home, or alternatively, incorporating the same principals into a permanent initiative within NYCHA, the families effected by gender-based violence can be more seamlessly transitioned into permanent and safe housing solutions.

## **Increased Training of NYCHA Employees**

One advantage New York City has when it comes to combatting the dangers living in affordable housing sometimes imposes on victims and survivors of domestic violence is that the staff is all unified by one organization, dissimilar to the majority of apartments run by independent, private landlords. This gives NYCHA the opportunity to enforce a more robust, authority-wide, training that can cover biases, warning signs for domestic violence, and anti-harassment and abuse practices. While The Mayor's Office

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<sup>61</sup> "Project HOME Final Evaluation Report". *Newdestinyhousing.Org*, 2018, [https://newdestinyhousing.org/wp-content/uploads/ProjectHOME\\_FinalEvaluation\\_ActKnowledge201803.pdf](https://newdestinyhousing.org/wp-content/uploads/ProjectHOME_FinalEvaluation_ActKnowledge201803.pdf).

to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence (ENDGBV) currently provides training for NYCHA staff, helping to identify signs of domestic violence and abuse with their residences, it is yet to become a mandatory and foremost part of the NYCHA training process.

While the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 has provided a general national framework for the training of various city and state housing programs, it's ultimately up to NYC government to determine the length to which they will train NYCHA employees. Through the creation of a standard and agency-wide training program, they would be able to provide more immediate support for victims of domestic violence within the NYCHA system utilizing their existing staff. Additionally, this may reduce the risk of NYCHA staff from being the perpetrators of gender-based crime.<sup>62</sup>

For example, in 2009 the San Francisco Housing Authority partnered with Women Organized to Make Abuse Nonexistent, Inc, which provided a series of services that included training San Francisco Housing Authority Employees. According to a HUD report, within a year of the partnership beginning, the San Francisco Housing Authority "answered 3,833 crisis line calls; held one forty-hour training for fifteen volunteers; held five continued education meetings; and mentored fifteen volunteers to enter into the next phase in their Domestic Violence education process." Through a similar initiative, NYCHA can begin to further train employees to handle these types of crises.

### **Transgender Inclusivity**

One historically discriminated against group, that is often excluded from the conversation regarding inclusive public housing is the transgender community. In a

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<sup>62</sup> "S.47 - 113Th Congress (2013-2014): Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act Of 2013". Congress.Gov, 2020, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/senate-bill/47>.

study of over 27,000 transgender people, it was found that “23% of respondents experienced some form of housing discrimination in the past year...30% of respondents have experienced homelessness... and 26% of those who experienced homelessness in the past year avoided staying in a shelter because they feared being mistreated as a transgender person.” And that fear is not unsupported, as 7 out of 10 sheltered homeless transgender individuals suffered mistreatment. <sup>63</sup>

Some of this mistreatment comes from a general misunderstanding, however part of it is a result of aggression and discrimination. As an effort to better serve the transgender persons who do seek out services, NYCHA employees should incorporate the following policies- outlined by The Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition, into a restructuring of their employee training. <sup>64</sup>

1. Allow check in procedures for shelters to be ungendered and require staff to always ask the person checking in to specify gender instead of assuming.
2. Shelter staff who refuse to meet the needs of transgender residents, or who assault them, either verbally or physically, should be immediately terminated.
3. Shelter staff should receive training on how to meet the needs of transgender residents
4. Preventive care, screening, and treatment for HIV/AIDS should be accessible to all shelter residents.

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<sup>63</sup> "2015 US Transgender Survey". *Transequality.Org*, 2015, <https://transequality.org/sites/default/files/docs/usts/USTS-Full-Report-Dec17.pdf>.

<sup>64</sup> "Shelter For All Genders". *Masstpc.Org*, 2013, <https://www.masstpc.org/wp-content/uploads/Shelter-for-All-Genders-1.pdf>.

## **Design Recommendations**

While policy recommendations may prove effective in beginning to address the surge of domestic violence, and its existing prevalence, it is difficult to tell how these recommendations will impact survivors in their own homes. And, considering the Covid-19 pandemic, what these initiatives have shown is that actionable, discrete methods are working well for victims who are spending unprecedented time under surveillance of abusive partners but they rely on individuals being aware of these more detached systems. Additionally, for survivors who are beginning the healing process after leaving an abusive situation, that idea of 'home' may be changing, or in transition, or new. If they are seeking sheltering, it may exist in a space of limbo unimpacted by the permanence of policy solutions but important to future trajectories and possibilities of either healing and pursuing a life less impacted or unsuccessful in creating more opportunities for stability.

For these reason, policy or design cannot work alone, or in silos, without an understanding of the importance and impact that the other plays. To fully and comprehensively address the issues of domestic violence, I felt as though it was necessary to also outline spatial policies to address aesthetic and architectural qualities of a shelter and transitional housing space, one that would allow this time of transition serve as this space of 'healing,' and more seamlessly become something of permanence.

Although it is not specific to the needs of survivors who live and work in New York City, the 2008 study, 'Meeting Survivors Needs: A Multistate Study of Domestic Violence Shelter Experiences' and it's finding are essential to this portion of the paper. 84% of



survivors noted that they wanted help finding affordable housing upon entering the shelter.

Asher Harris, Director of Capital Projects and Facilities at Safe Horizon generously assisted with framing of these design recommendations within the current efforts being implemented by existing shelters within New York City, as well as the unique challenges they face. Safe Horizon operates eight domestic violence shelters throughout the five boroughs, as well as child advocacy centers, counseling programs, and young adult drop in shelters. Notes from our interview, conducted December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020 are utilized throughout these chapters and always attributed to Mx. Harris.

## **Background**

Between 22% and 57% of homelessness among women is caused by domestic violence. More than 90% of homeless women experience severe physical or sexual violence at some point in their lives, and 63% have been victims of intimate partner violence.<sup>65</sup> 87% of domestic violence programs provide housing advocacy to survivors throughout the year,<sup>66</sup> however, 84% of survivors in domestic violence shelters have reported that they needed help finding affordable housing.<sup>67</sup> On a single day, out of nearly 12,000 unmet requests for domestic violence services, an estimated two-thirds are for housing and shelter.<sup>68</sup> In a nationwide study, more than half (51.5%) of the

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<sup>65</sup> Domestic Violence, Housing, and Homelessness: <https://nnedv.org/resources-library/domestic-violence-housing-homelessness/>

<sup>66</sup> National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV), "11th Annual Domestic Violence Counts Census," <https://nnedv.org/content/domestic-violence-counts-11th-annual-census-report/>

<sup>67</sup> Lyon, E., & Lane, S. 2009. Meeting survivors' needs: A multi-state study of domestic violence shelter experiences. Harrisburg, PA: National Resource Center on Domestic Violence. Retrieved from <http://vawnet.org/sites/default/files/materials/files/2016-08/MeetingSurvivorsNeeds-FullReport.pdf>

<sup>68</sup> Domestic Violence, Housing, and Homelessness:

victims who identified a need for housing services did not receive them.<sup>69</sup> In New York at least one-third of families using the family shelter system are survivors. While at least 31% of homeless families in NYC are homeless because of domestic violence, less than 1% of supportive housing in NYC is designated for domestic violence survivors.

80% of domestic violence shelter residents who exited the emergency shelter system in 2011 were unable to secure permanent housing or a transfer to a transitional shelter, leaving them with no safe place to go. Only 28% of domestic violence emergency shelter residents are eligible for NYCHA'S Domestic Violence priority, greatly reducing their ability to obtain public housing. Of those that are eligible for Domestic Violence priority, only 3% are placed in NYCHA housing before their emergency shelter stay ends. The cost to house a family in a shelter for one year is \$36,000, compared to an average of \$12,000 per year in rent for permanent affordable housing.<sup>70</sup>

If survivors do eventually receive placement into New York City's domestic violence shelter system, they are typically allowed to stay for up to 180 days, a limit set forth by New York State regulation. Steven Banks, Commissioner of the Human Resources Administration and Department of Social Services stated in a 2014 press hearing that shelters are required to provide "individual counseling, advocacy, psycho-educational groups and trauma-focused interventions... childcare services, and [to] assist clients with housing, benefit entitlement assistance, financial development

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<sup>69</sup> National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): <http://www.preventconnect.org/2014/02/need-to-prevent-intimate-partner-violence/> ; <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/nisvs/>

<sup>70</sup> "Homelessness And Domestic Violence In New York City". *Newdestinyhousing.Org*, 2017, [https://newdestinyhousing.org/wp-content/uploads/homelessness\\_dv\\_nyc\\_2017.pdf](https://newdestinyhousing.org/wp-content/uploads/homelessness_dv_nyc_2017.pdf).

services and workforce development and employment readiness services to maximize self-sufficiency..."<sup>71</sup>

For survivors looking to enter emergency housing in New York City, they can apply to housing by calling the domestic violence hotline (1-800-621-HOPE) or by going to the Prevention Assistance and Temporary Housing (PATH) Office in person at 151 East 151<sup>st</sup> Street, in the Bronx. While the office is open 24/7, survivors who arrive late in the evening may be placed in a shelter for the night and brought back to the office the next day to finish paperwork.<sup>72</sup> While it is not required for an applicant seeking shelter from domestic violence to have to have a police report or order of protection, it is more likely they will avoid traditional homeless shelters and be placed into a domestic violence shelter if they have that documentation.<sup>73</sup> If found illegible, applicants can immediately reapply. If the applicant is seeking shelter as a result of domestic violence and the abuser lives in the last place they stayed, or could easily find them, the City must provide emergency sheltering.<sup>74</sup>

The Human Resources Administration administers the domestic violence shelter system, which consists of 55 confidential facilities, and 2,514 emergency shelter beds. Of those 55 facilities, 9 are designated as 'Tier II' sheltering, or 'family sheltering.' These

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<sup>71</sup> Steven Banks. *Joint Hearing Of The New York City Council Women's Issues, General Welfare, And Courts And Legal Services Committees*. 2014, [https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/hra/downloads/pdf/news/testimonies/2014/Oct\\_2014/DVAM\\_Testimony\\_2014.pdf](https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/hra/downloads/pdf/news/testimonies/2014/Oct_2014/DVAM_Testimony_2014.pdf).

<sup>72</sup> "Homeless Families Know Your Rights!". *Coalitionforthehomeless.Org*, 2014, <https://www.coalitionforthehomeless.org/uploads/2014/03/PATH-KYR-Booklet-LAS1013.pdf>.

<sup>73</sup> Hallum, Mark. "Number of Domestic Violence Victims in NYC Homeless Shelters Spikes, Stringer Says Not Enough Is Done to Aid Them." *AmNewYork*, <https://www.amny.com/news/number-of-domestic-violence-victims-in-nyc-homeless-shelters-spikes-stringer-says-not-enough-is-done-to-aid-them/>. Accessed 8 Dec. 2020.

<sup>74</sup> "Homeless Families Know Your Rights!".

transitional sheltering buildings have a total of 362 units, as of September of 2019.<sup>75</sup> Ms. Harris noted that these Tier I shelters are typically for emergency situations with a short-term stay, where as Tier II shelters commonly have stays for 1-2 years and will tend to look more like a typical apartment.

Successful applicants will typically enter directly into the first of the two 'tiers' of housing for survivors, which provides a bed, access to nutritional meals, supervision, and health services. The second tier of housing provides everything included in the first tier, except with private rooms, and also includes permanent housing preparation services, recreational services, child care services, and referrals. Tier II shelters typically help survivors prepare to move into a more permanent housing situation.<sup>76</sup>

### **Designing High Quality Shelter Spaces:**

A 2008 study by New Destiny Housing analyzed reasons why survivors who are placed in sheltering decide not to stay. For those who left the shelter within the first 15 days after initially entering, they cited difficulty adjusting to life in the shelter as a primary reason for leaving, and noted a fear of unknown situations in the shelter and an inability to uphold the same quality of life for their children.<sup>77</sup> I believe that by creating a more safe, personal, and just space for survivors and their families, and making it easier to transition into more permanent housing, survivors will feel more comfortable staying in

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<sup>75</sup> "Council Examines Gaps in City Shelter Services for Domestic Violence Survivors." *Safe Horizon*, 25 Sept. 2019, <https://www.safehorizon.org/safe-horizon-in-the-news/shelter-domestic-violence-tgnc-survivors/>.

<sup>76</sup> 900.2 Definitions. <http://www.wnylc.com/resources/regs/900.2.htm>. Accessed 8 Dec. 2020.

<sup>77</sup> "Length Of Stay Report". *Newdestinyhousing.Org*, 2008, <https://newdestinyhousing.org/wp-content/uploads/LengthOfStayReport.pdf>.

the shelter and continuing to seek help that will prevent a continued cycle of abuse and allow them to create a more secure life.

When designing spaces for survivors of domestic violence, it is important to consider the journey they may take, from the initial decision to leave, to sheltering, and eventually to housing. In this case, we are examining the hypothetical journey of someone who would look for public housing following their stay in the shelter. However, the shift from a temporary stay in a shelter into more permanent housing can cause additional stress, a repeated loss of community, and the high possibility that housing may not be found. To help combat this, I recommend a design toolkit to be implemented for combination tier I and tier II model within the same building, with the units looking similar to a regular apartment, but with access to the same services and community provided in an (ideal) shelter. This also would facilitate healing that can slowly transition into independence, rather than a shocking change.

To aid in the goal of longer-term healing, the toolkit also ultimately seeks to remove what may be considered an 'external stressor,' such as a need to leave the shelter to gain access to fundamental food and hygiene products, meet with case managers, or go to the gym, all creating moments of vulnerability for someone who may feel unsafe outside of the security of the shelter. As a result, the redesign of the shelter is inspired by the concept (the aesthetics, proportions, or unit layout) of Le Corbusier's 'Unité d'Habitation,' the first of a series of his apartment complexes throughout Europe built with the idea that community can be fostered primarily within

the confines of the building by providing the amenities typically delivered by a neighborhood, a 'city within a city.'<sup>78</sup>

Unité d'Habitation, located in Marseille, France, consists of 18 stories, 337 apartments, as well as shopping, a gym, hotel, hospital, school, and a restaurant.<sup>79</sup> The idea in transferring this into shelters is that the inhabitants would have basic needs met without having to fear leaving the security of the complex, and therefore be given a greater opportunity to focus on healing and becoming self-reliant. This concept is one that can be scaled up, so while in this instance, the toolkit will be applied to one large building, the concepts could be scaled down to a few floors or scaled up to a block or neighborhood.

However, to help prioritize functions within the shelter, a theory of needs hierarchy has been considered in the layout. The most famous example of needs hierarchy is Maslow's, which consists of five tiers, beginning with essential physiological requirements and moving up to self-actualization.<sup>80 81</sup> Upon immediate exit of an abusive relationship, survivors should have access to the bottom tier of said needs to sustain survival, which includes basic physiological requirements such as food, water, shelter, and somewhere to sleep. After those needs have been addressed, it is possible

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<sup>78</sup> "AD Classics: Unite d' Habitation / Le Corbusier." *ArchDaily*, 5 Nov. 2010, <https://www.archdaily.com/85971/ad-classics-unite-d-habitation-le-corbusier>.

<sup>79</sup> Easton, Kenneth. "Views on Le Corbusier's Unite d'Habitation." *Architectural Review*, 8 May 1951, <https://www.architectural-review.com/essays/views-on-le-corbusiers-unite-dhabitation>.

<sup>80</sup> "A Guide to the 5 Levels of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs - 2020." *MasterClass*, <https://www.masterclass.com/articles/a-guide-to-the-5-levels-of-maslows-hierarchy-of-needs>.

<sup>81</sup> This has since been disputed and replaced with other hierarchies that are more inclusive. Kenrick, Douglas T et al. "Renovating the Pyramid of Needs: Contemporary Extensions Built Upon Ancient Foundations." *Perspectives on psychological science : a journal of the Association for Psychological Science* vol. 5,3 (2010): 292-314. doi:10.1177/1745691610369469

to move issues of safety needs. Those are of particular importance to someone seeking housing after leaving a violent relationship, as safety and security concerns are likely one of the most prominent reasons for leaving.

Applying Maslow's hierarchy to design is not a new move,<sup>82</sup> but I believe that this prioritization of needs could be transferred into shelter / housing design in order to inform spatial decisions and arrangement of amenities in a way that enables survivors to move beyond sustaining basic needs and towards healing and betterment.

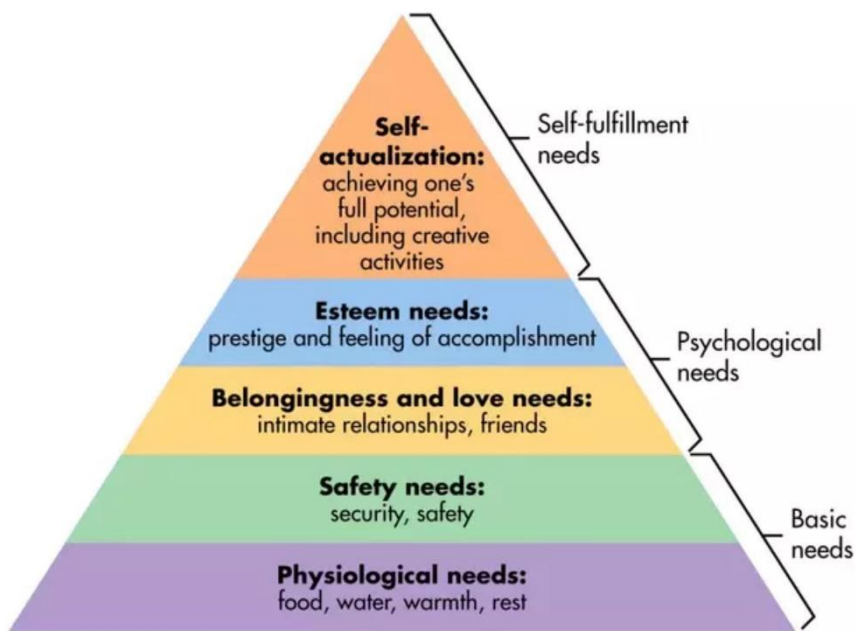


Figure 4: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.

Credit: Mcleod, Saul. "Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs." *Simply Psychology*, <https://www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html>.

While in most cases, we can assume a shelter will provide survivors with basic physiological needs and safety needs, survivors have stated that they typically do not have an opportunity to move beyond that during their (typically brief) shelter stay. 11% of participants in a Safe Horizon survey returned to living with their abusers after their stay in one of the New York City shelters, and 30% of respondents reported an increase

<sup>82</sup> "A Sense of Wonder." *BVH Architecture*, 22 Aug. 2016, <https://bvh.com/sense-wonder/>.

in PTSD symptoms.<sup>83</sup> These statistics demonstrate that there is not the proper allocation of resources within shelters. The goal of these locations should be giving survivors of domestic violence the tools and care they need to be able to improve their quality of life in the long term and not just in the immediate.

First, it is essential to outline the specific needs of women who have entered the shelter, understanding what needs are already addressed directly through integrated services, and what is lacking. Subsequently so we can begin to outline what's missing in the immediate shelters that survivors of domestic violence enter into and then the elements that they might need as they continue onto in a more permanent setting. It could be useful for the New York City Housing Association to use the elements that work successfully in shelters when considering placing victims into a longer term housing they might find a successful arrangement in allowing women to stay adjacent to the shelter system semi-permanently so that they are able to benefit from the environment long term.

**Location:**

Confidentiality of location is one of the most important factors of a successful, and safe, shelter and the security that comes with that confidentiality classifies it as a basic need of domestic violence shelters. The majority of these shelters in New York City have their locations intentionally unavailable in order to protect residents. It is important for both the actual and perceived safety of residents that the building chosen to house

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<sup>83</sup> Stylianou, Amanda, and Kirsten McGinnis. *Beyond Shelter: What Do Domestic Violence Survivors Need?* Safe Horizon, <https://www.safehorizon.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/5-Recommendations-Better-Support-Domestic-Violence-Survivors-Safe-Horizon-Lang-Report-2018-FULL.pdf>.



the shelter and housing units, whether new construction, renovation or remodeling, be inconspicuous and fit with the architectural character of the surrounding buildings and neighborhood. For that reason, the following toolkit does not contain standards for the exterior of the shelter / housing units, as it is highly dependent on the location.

While the location is private and the exterior appearance remains inconspicuous for facilities, Mx. Harris did state that Safe Horizon prioritizes safety and security in selecting a building. They look for spaces that are well lit outside of the shelter, with decent foot traffic. They also consider access to 24/7 bodegas and healthy food options, and look for a neighborhood that feels 'family-centric,' which includes accessible subway stations to prevent complications with strollers and wheelchairs and access to local schools.

**Layout:**

Mx. Harris noted that the buildings used for sheltering are rarely new construction and are often multi-year leases of buildings that have formerly been homeless shelters or hotels. As a result, their shelters all appear, aesthetically, vastly different and modifications are limited by lease agreements and budget constraints. Recently, they were able to construct one building as new development specifically for the shelter. The capacity of these buildings range from 12 units at the smallest to over 100 units at the largest, with the latter having the ability to house roughly 200 residents.

The following graphic helps address differences in needed services designated for survivors in Tier I emergency sheltering versus those in Tier II housing units. While the majority of services exist in the overlap, strengthening an argument for housing units that feel like 'home' but retain access to services made available to shelter residents, there

are particular services that are of a greater importance to new residents. This diagram was the first step in determining layout of services within the shelter, with an emphasis on recreating a sense of community for survivors who may otherwise have had to sever ties from their previous communities. This is particularly important considering that regulations for domestic violence shelters within New York City prohibit residents from living in a unit in the same zip code as their abuser, and the challenges accompanying this lack of feeling 'home' is often a reason why residents leave the shelter early.

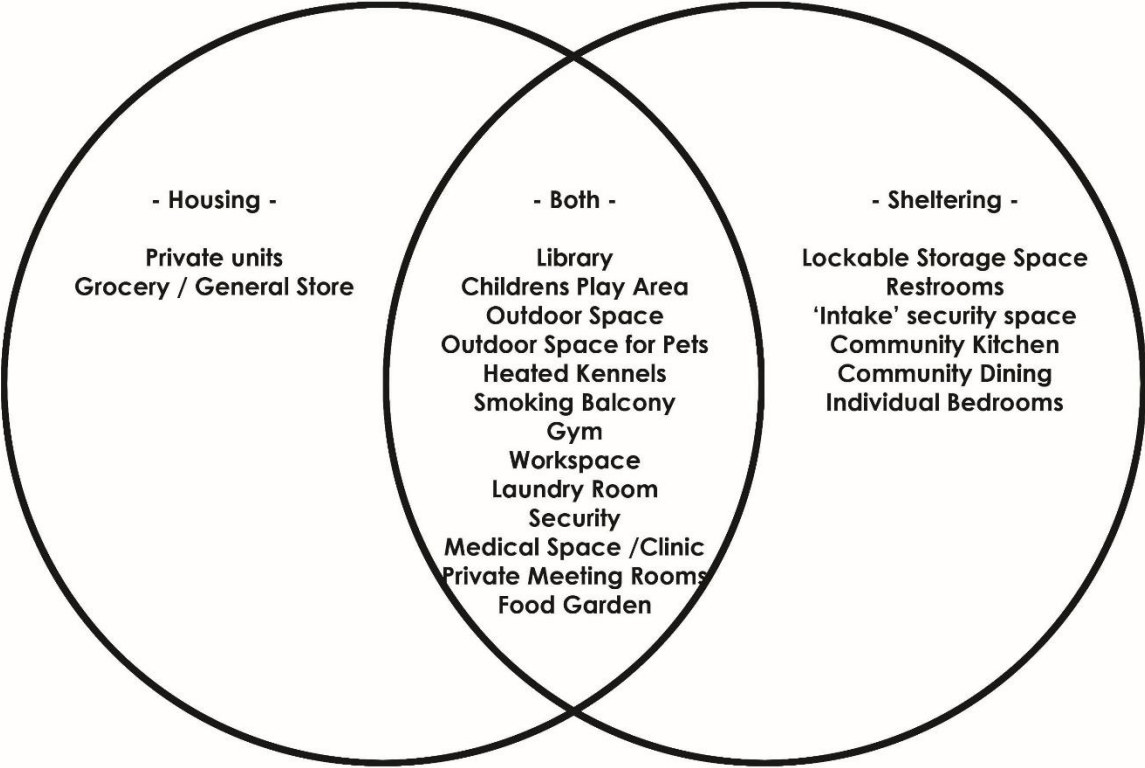


Figure 5: Venn diagram of housing and sheltering programmatic needs

One immediate challenge comes in addressing the size challenges of housing for survivors of domestic violence. While there is a significant need for more shelter beds

and permanent housing units in New York City, survivors become less likely to find the space comfortable as the space becomes larger. While 93% of survivors in a 2008 study noted that they were comfortable in their shelters consisting of up to 10 beds, that rate dropped to 74% for those in shelters with over 41 beds. The study suspected that this could be because respondents felt more comfortable in shelters that felt like home.<sup>84</sup>

This raises the question, how can we simultaneously expand the number of beds to accommodate survivors, while also maintaining comfort. The answer lies somewhere in preserving a feeling of welcomeness and community, while also giving residents space to have a feeling of ownership over. By placing a series of 'community' resources on each floor,

Mx. Harris underscored the challenges faced by shared facilities, such as kitchens and bathrooms, as this can create stress and conflict between residents. However, the layout and ability for completely private units within the shelter is restrained by the space that that Safe Horizon 'inherits.' As a response, this proposed toolkit begins with recommendations for general spaces that would apply to any sheltering system and then provides considerations for both 'dormitory style' units, which would be most applicable for Tier I housing, and 'apartment style' units which would be most applicable for Tier II housing. The aim of this thesis is to provide recommendations that could be applied where possible to any 'inherited space' with an understanding that in most cases, not every suggestion will apply to each building.

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<sup>84</sup> Lyon, Eleanor et al. "Meeting Survivors' Needs: A Multi-State Study Of Domestic Violence Shelter Experiences, Final Report". *Ncjrs.Gov*, 2020, <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/225025.pdf>.

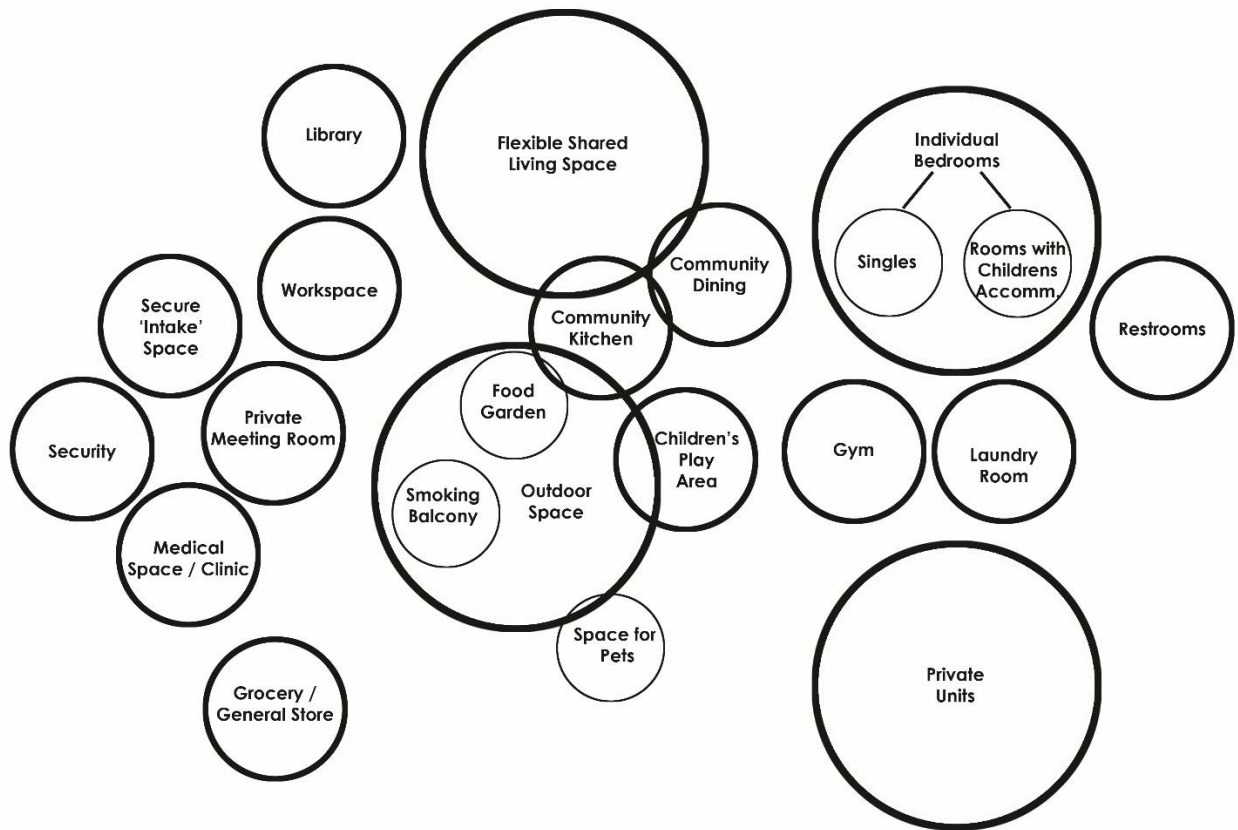
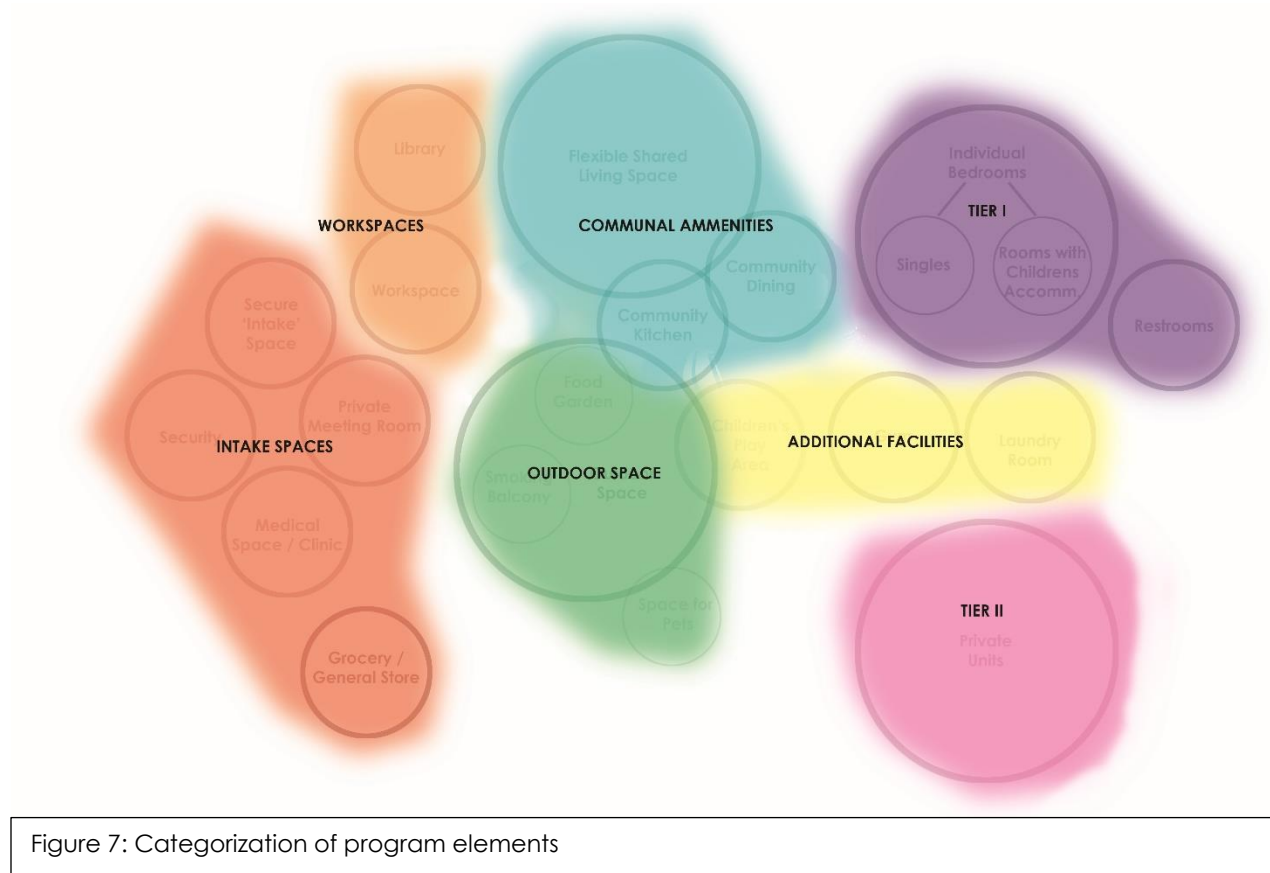


Figure 6: Program Bubble of spaces within the building

The above program bubble helps to define the 'journey' that a resident may undertake when entering the shelter, coming into contact with **'Intake Spaces'** such as security, clinic space, and a general store. Residents may choose to work from home, utilizing libraries or **'Workspaces'** within the shelter. **'Additional Facilities'** encompass as childcare, gym, and laundry. Residents also have the option of using the **'Outdoor Space'** as it fits their needs, whether that be a space for pets, a smoking area, or a place for community healing and gardening. Finally, there are also suggestions for the

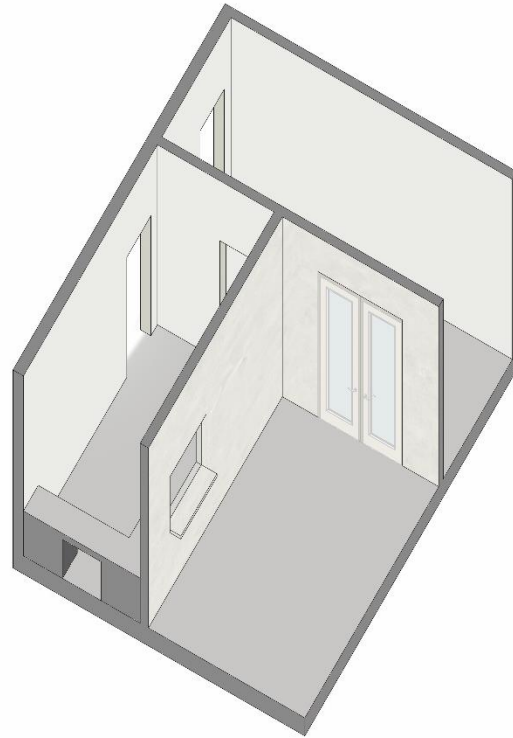
'Tier I' and 'Tier II' spaces, with Tier I having access to 'Communal Amenities' such as a shared living, dining, and kitchen space.<sup>85</sup>



<sup>85</sup> These categorizations are generalized for readability of this thesis, but some spaces may blur lines between grouping. For example, the general store may be considered an intake space for residents receiving basic needs items as they first arrive and then later viewed as an additional facility as they gain comfort in using outside stores for everyday groceries and this space as a more optional convenience. Also, while it is assumed the communal amenities are used primarily by Tier I residents, that is not to say that other residents couldn't share a meal in the shared dining space. There are not strict boundaries between categories.

## Intake Spaces

Security: Security is one of the most important factors in domestic violence shelters, and the fear that the abuser may attempt to find survivors is a fundamental concern. A series of 2009 interviews with survivors showed the extreme caution they take, finding that many residents left the shelter to complete tasks early in the morning in an attempt to avoid their abusers. When it came to measures that



increased their perception of safety, respondents also stated that multiple security checkpoints added to overall feelings of safety.<sup>86</sup> Because of this, I would suggest a security desk that is staffed constantly, with a series of locked doors past that desk that can only be opened with approval from the shelter and housing staff. Other than required emergency-only, alarmed and monitored egress doors, having only one point of access to the shelter makes it easier to control who has access in and out of the buildings.

By placing the most private spaces in the complex, such as private units and shelter bedrooms, children's play areas, and the shared living spaces, furthest away

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<sup>86</sup> Prestwood, Laura Elizabeth. *Architectural Design Factors Of Domestic Violence Shelters That Affect Outcomes For Female Domestic Violence Victims*. Texas A&M, 2010, <https://oaktrust.library.tamu.edu/bitstream/handle/1969.1/ETD-TAMU-2010-05-7819/PRESTWOOD-DISSERTATION.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y>.

from the entrance, there can be an increased feeling of safety. There is also the ability to add another level of security through series of doors locked to all but specific residents before access to the living spaces.

In hallways, by using reflective materials on the walls, residents can anticipate when someone else is coming their way or is walking behind them, which may reduce feelings of paranoia and anxiety, and allow users to feel more comfortable leaving their units and accessing other parts of the space.

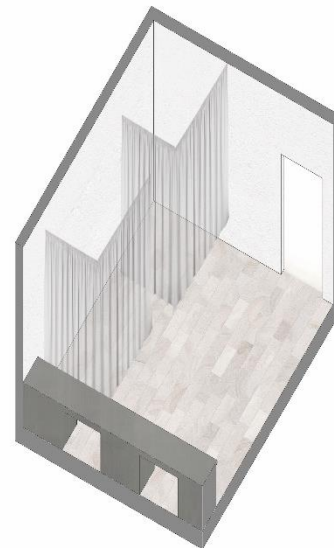
Additionally, by using other 'slightly visible' ways of communicating whether or not someone is occupying a space, users can experience privacy while also not being caught off guard or surprised when crossing paths with other residents. This can be accomplished through the use of frosted glass between spaces that are not private residences, such as work spaces and hallways. Additionally, using flooring that makes a slight sound when a resident walks can allow others to anticipate how far away another is. This space should feel highly secure, as it is possibly the first place a survivor will be in after a particularly violent encounter.

When possible, the use of cameras in hallways, any entrances onto balconies and higher floors, and other public spaces such as shared living spaces can increase security.

Secure Intake Space: The intake space should provide enough desk space for staff of the shelter to be able to set up a computer and phone to answer calls from victims looking to seek services from the shelter. This space should be past initial shelter security, but still simple to access. The space should also provide comfortable seating for potential new residents, considering that they may be bringing children and/or a pet with them. This space should also be located closely to the clinic space, for instances where the incoming resident may require immediate medical assistance.



Medical Space / Clinic: It is incredibly common for survivors to enter sheltering with injuries as a result of their abuse. A 'National Prevention Toolkit on Domestic Violence for Medical Professionals' outlined various conditions and injuries that survivors may suffer from, which includes but is not limited to; chronic pain as a result of repeated physical injuries, traumatic brain injury from falls or assault, hypertension and heart disease from stress and anxiety caused from domestic violence, and ulcers and other intestinal issues from intense physical stress. Its essential that when survivors enter the complex, they have access to medical care- which could be provided through a regular pop-up style clinic in a dedicated medical space that has

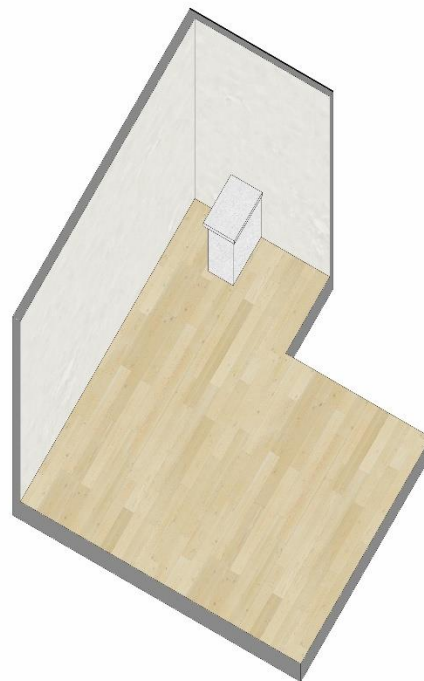




the ability to be regularly sanitized.<sup>87</sup>

In some cases, it may be necessary for survivors to receive medical care while in residence. While not all services can be performed outside of an official medical space, a sanitary, private space with beds, a sink, storage, and some basic medical equipment can be used to provide necessary services without residents having to leave the building. This may include psychological monitoring, testing for sexually transmitted infections, distribution of emergency contraception, and monitoring of minor injuries, all of which may be required after an instance of domestic violence. It is essential that this space is quiet, safe, and very clean. Hygiene can be aided by non-porous, light colored surfaces that are both easy to clean, and make it easy to notice when unclean.

Grocery / General Store: A small store located within the shelter can allow residents to purchase their own snacks and drinks, with vouchers or credit given to those who may need it. This can give incoming residents a chance to access basic hygiene items such as shampoo, toothpaste, and soap if they were unable to pack those items before coming into the shelter, and also allow them to select their own choice of feminine

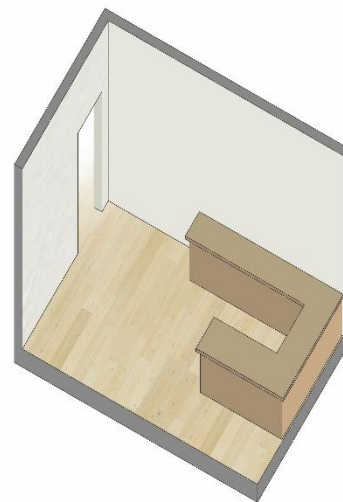


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<sup>87</sup> Florida State University. *Conditions and Injuries Related to Domestic Violence*. Verizon Foundation, 2014, <https://dvmedtraining.csw.fsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Conditions-and-Injuries-2014.pdf>.

hygiene products and keep them in their rooms. It can also enable residents to purchase their choice of food items to also keep in their rooms so they can eat at their own schedules, allowing a greater comfort in observing religious and cultural traditions without feeling uncomfortable using the kitchen areas at inopportune times. By keeping this market space within the housing complex, residents can resume agency and feelings of normalcy- being able to shop on their own- without having to face the risk of leaving the shelter before they may be ready. This also provides greater flexibility in the overall location of the sheltering complex, as it removes a crucial need to ensure proximity to a market or grocery store (though this is still a factor to consider, particularly for longer term residents looking to slowly return to 'normal' habits such as typical grocery shopping.)

Private Meeting Room: While residents often enter the shelter as a means of gaining privacy and a professional support system, this does not mean that residents should be completely isolated from their 'safe' family members and existing support system. A study by Safe Horizon found that upon entering the shelter system, while many survivors (73%) wanted to form connections with resources that could help them, 67% of residents felt



“emotionally distant or cut off from their support network.” There is currently a lack of flexibility for survivors, as many domestic violence shelters do not allow visitors of any kind. Survivors are then faced with having to leave the shelter if they want to meet with

friends and family.<sup>88</sup> However, by introducing a partially open shelter, with a room accessible in between initial security measures and the 'resident only' area, shelters can reduce the existing barriers between residents and their support systems. However, its still necessary, for the safety of all residents, that this meeting area is still only available to visitors who are pre-approved and pass security measures.<sup>89</sup>

Additional private meeting rooms are important for residents who may need to meet with lawyers, case managers, victim advocates, or other confidential resources. Larger meeting rooms can also be used for support meetings, such as one for survivors of sexual assault or those overcoming addiction. These spaces should serve a different purpose than the general living areas or work spaces in the shelter by being more secure and private, with lockable doors and dedicated desk space. Similar to other semi-private spaces within the complex, it can add to the comfort of users if the doors clearly show whether or not the space is occupied, and when possible avoid having furniture layouts that would situate residents so their backs face the door.

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<sup>88</sup> *What to Expect When Going to a Shelter or Safe House | Day One - Crisis Hotline.* <https://dayoneservices.org/going-to-a-shelter/>. Accessed 6 Dec. 2020.

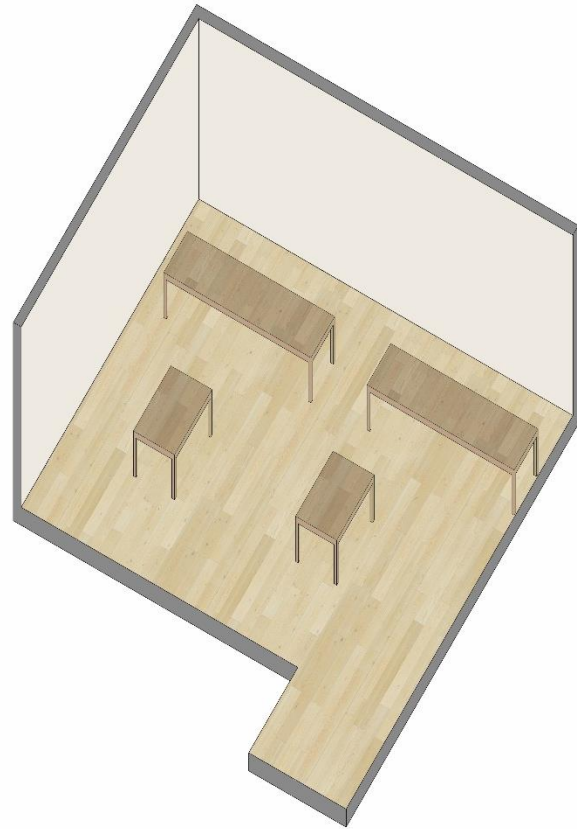
<sup>89</sup> Stylianou, Amanda, and Kirsten McGinnis. *Beyond Shelter: What Do Domestic Violence Survivors Need?* Safe Horizon, <https://www.safehorizon.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/5-Recommendations-Better-Support-Domestic-Violence-Survivors-Safe-Horizon-Lang-Report-2018-FULL.pdf>.

## Workspace

Economic abuse is extremely common across cases of domestic violence, a survey by Safe Horizon found that 92% of their participants experienced some form of it before entering one of their New York Shelters.

73.7% experienced employment sabotage, 87.5% experienced economic control, and 73.7%.<sup>90</sup> In residential spaces, there should be enough space for women to set up a laptop on the counter of their homes to

work while keeping an eye on their children, however office space with printers / fax machines and secure computers should be provided. In addition to this, breakout rooms for large meetings such as resume building events and smaller spaces for confidential meetings (such as private conversations with lawyers) should be available in addition to this. Ample lighting, comfortable desk chairs, and plenty of outlets are also important to a well-functioning office space, and if possible, the space should be located far enough away from busier areas of the building, such as a daycare center or communal living space, to avoid noise concerns.



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<sup>90</sup> *Beyond Shelter: What Do Domestic Violence Survivors Need?*

Mx. Harris noted that while the recent utilization of 'work from home' and 'study from home' due to the pandemic may prove promising for shelter residents, it has placed a major strain on the internet capabilities for shelters. In order for residents to truly be able to function as a part of their virtual communities from within the shelter, not only is a functioning library and workplace necessary, but also the wireless internet to support a full capacity of residents.

Library: Across various studies, women have noted that they found time where they could bond with others

highly valuable, but

they still required alone

time to read a book or

religious text without

feeling pressured to

interact with others. The

library should have

materials for residents of

all ages and

backgrounds, and be

inclusive of material of

different languages.

When creating a

section of the library for

children, the National

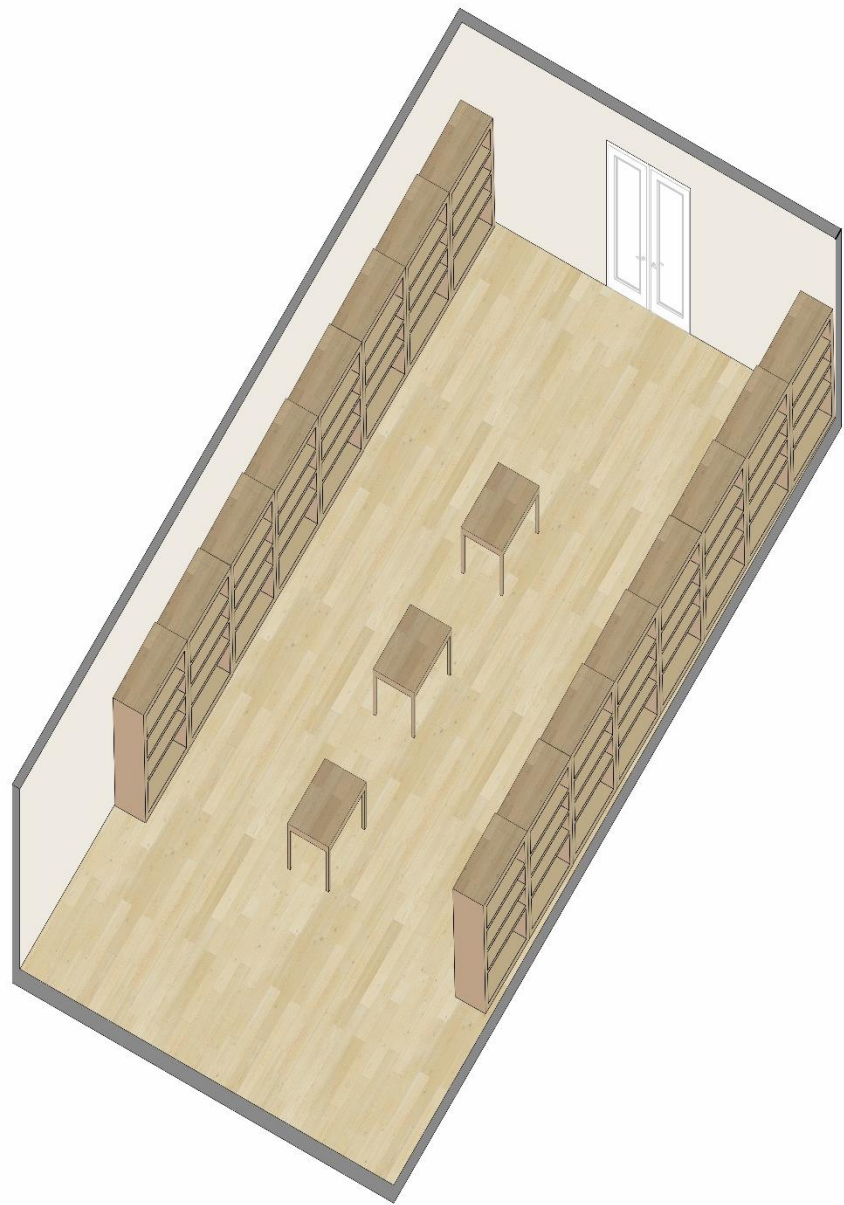
Library Initiative, a

program spearheaded by Jewish Women International, suggests creating a space that

is both comfortable and colorful, using furniture, rugs, computers and toys.<sup>91</sup> This space

should be separate from the other areas in the library as to not disturb adults, but visible

enough so that parents can keep an eye on children when reading or working.



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<sup>91</sup> "National Library Initiative." JWI, <https://www.jwi.org/nli>. Accessed 7 Dec. 2020.

Other sections of the library should include comfortable seating, internet access, outlets and tables or desks to allow for residents to be comfortable and be able to relax or do work as needed.

## Outdoor Space

Outdoor space is highly encouraged whenever possible, as 95% of shelters say that their residents' recovery would be aided by an outdoor area.<sup>92</sup>It is important that these spaces are enclosed and hidden from view so that the residents of the shelter can ensure that their children are safe from the view of someone, possibly an abuser, passing by. This can be accomplished through boundaries such as fences or tall hedges, but in New York it may be common for these outdoor spaces to be elevated off the first floor,



which would provide an additional level of security and ensure that the space is only accessed by residents. The outdoor space should also be well lit and easy to navigate,

Food Garden: Access to a source of nature, including a garden, has been shown to have a wide range of health benefits, including an impact on depression,

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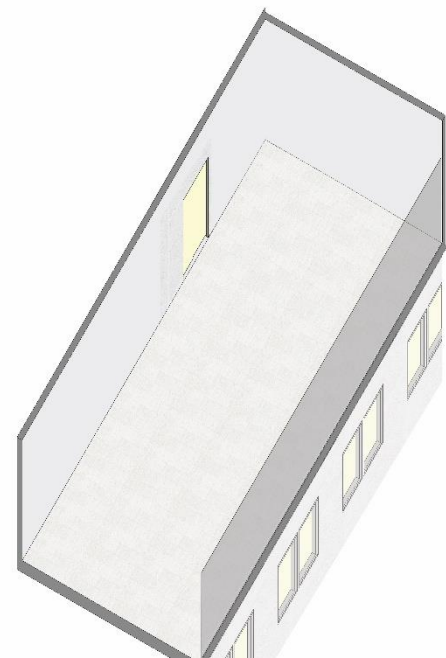
<sup>92</sup> Mary Kay (2011). "Mary Kay Truth About Abuse" Survey : National Findings from Third Survey of Domestic Violence Shelters in the United States. [online] Available at: [http://www.ncdsv.org/images/marykay\\_truthaboutabusesurvey\\_2011.pdf](http://www.ncdsv.org/images/marykay_truthaboutabusesurvey_2011.pdf).



anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Gardening has also been shown to increase a sense of community, which could be vital to survivors readjusting to a new home.<sup>93</sup> The garden space, similar to the rest of the outdoor space, should be secure and hidden so that residents, despite their fear of being seen in the housing complex, will feel comfortable accessing it. Also, by providing an indoor space for washing, trimming, and storing food and seeds directly near the garden, residents can avoid having to carry large or dirty produce throughout the rest of the building.

Smoking Balcony: An outdoor space that functions just for adults is a crucial bonding area, and resident should not feel pressured to have to give up smoking upon entering the facility, unless they want to. A private, secure, smoking balcony should be available to all residents while also being far enough away from residents who may be bothered by odors associated with smoking. The following quote was included in a 2010 study of domestic violence shelter residents, and highlights

the community significance of a smoking area. "Participant Observation, June 26, 2008: The smoking porch appears to be a gathering place in the evenings for many women – even some nonsmoking clients will go out and sit and chat. I've spent some time on the smoking porch visiting with clients during my shift. Tonight I was out there on three



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<sup>93</sup> Soga, Masashi, et al. "Gardening Is Beneficial for Health: A Meta-Analysis." *Preventive Medicine Reports*, vol. 5, Nov. 2016, pp. 92–99. *PubMed Central*, doi:[10.1016/j.pmedr.2016.11.007](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pmedr.2016.11.007).



different occasions to deliver clothing items to individuals and to relay messages from Client Services Center (CSC). Each time I appeared on the smoking porch, the group of women (approximately ten) greeted me by name and invited me to come out and visit. They were sitting on the picnic table benches, the picnic table tops, and in rocking chairs. One or two women were standing beside or leaning against the porch columns. Tonight the women were laughing and enjoying the company of others. They appeared happy and as if life was “normal”. I began to wonder why the smoking porch might have this affect. Surely it was not the nicotine alone that created this atmosphere. The more I observed the smoking porch the more I realized that this is the only “adult only” area on site. This is the one place that mothers can disappear for some space while leaving their children either in supervised childcare or alone in their room. The women seemed “free” out here: this area seems to give them some independence.”<sup>94</sup>

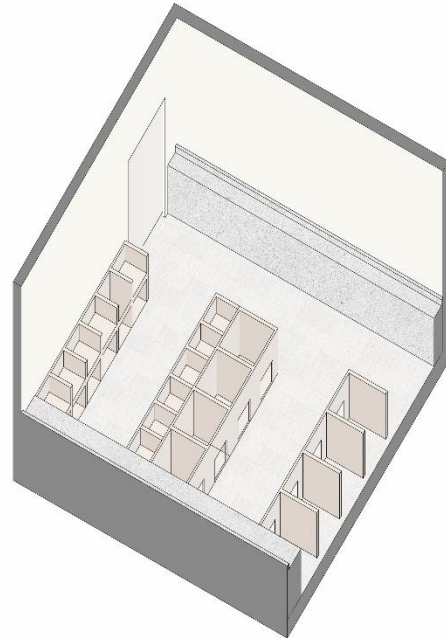
Mx. Harris also underscored the unique importance of the smoking area, because if the designated area is not sufficient residents may feel as though they either must smoke in their rooms or in front of the shelter. This first option could lead to detrimental health impacts alongside an overall deterioration of some of the materials within the unit. <sup>95</sup>However, the second option could lead to suspicion of the otherwise discreet shelter, with many residents lingering outside in view of the public and / or vulnerable.

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<sup>94</sup> Prestwood, Laura Elizabeth. "Architectural Design Factors Of Domestic Violence Shelter That Affect Outcomes For Domestic Violence Shelters". Texas A&M University, 2010.

<sup>95</sup> *A Guide to the New York State Clean Indoor Air Act*. <https://www.health.ny.gov/publications/3402/>. Accessed 4 Jan. 2021.

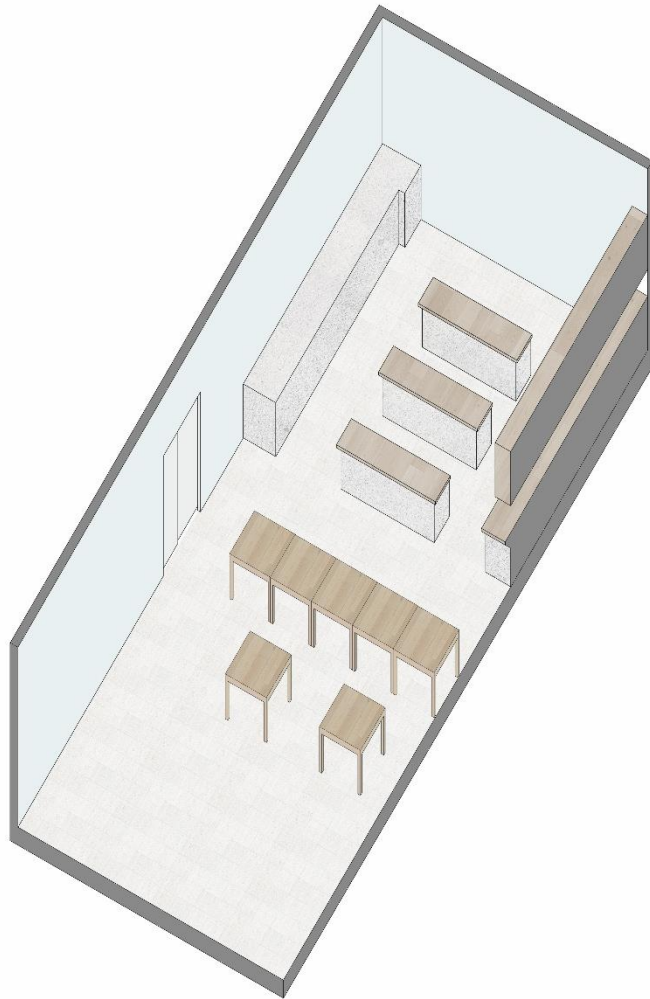
Pet Care: It is uncommon for shelters to allow pets, however they can be a crucial part of the healing process for survivors. By designating certain units, or floors, as 'pet safe' with easy to clean surfaces and furniture, it can be possible to create a shelter space that functions for pet owners. Additionally, a separate, formal pet care space for residents can provide additional support from professionals who can serve as an added resource, taking care of minor grooming and short-term pet-sitting and walking without residents having to leave the building. Indoor and outdoor space for resident's pets and service animals should include kennels and dedicated outdoor space for pets to relieve themselves and walk.



## Communal Amenities

Flexible Shared Living Space:  
Living spaces throughout the residence should include both spaces for gathering and spaces for solitude.

When it comes to communal space in shelters, as well as apartment complexes in general, both visual access and flexibility play major role in a resident's comfort. For example, giving residents the ability to see who is in a shared area, whether that be through design elements such as interior windows, glass walls, or cut outs, residents can determine whether they want to interact with



those already inhabiting it. Doing so restores both security and personal agency. Abuse and trauma can result in a mistrust of spaces lacking visibility, both through a conscious or subconscious fear of not knowing who inhabits these spaces, or a fear of not being seen by an ally in a time of crisis. Therefore, incorporating common spaces with high levels of transparency can help alleviate these anxieties.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> *Building Dignity | Design Strategies for Domestic Violence Shelter.* <https://buildingdignity.wscadv.org/>. Accessed 8 Dec. 2020.

Making these spaces easy to navigate, whether it be through simplified layouts or clear signage, increases sensitivity to those going through trauma or anxiety. In focus groups, a quiet space outside of the individual dwelling unit was almost always identified by both adults and children as the favorite space in post-domestic violence shelters.<sup>97</sup>

Community Dining / Kitchen: If possible, in the kitchen and dining area at no point should the users back be facing the entrance / hallway. The kitchen should have ample space so multiple families can cook at once. Additionally, there should be enough storage space to designate a set of cooking utensils for various religious and dietary requirements.

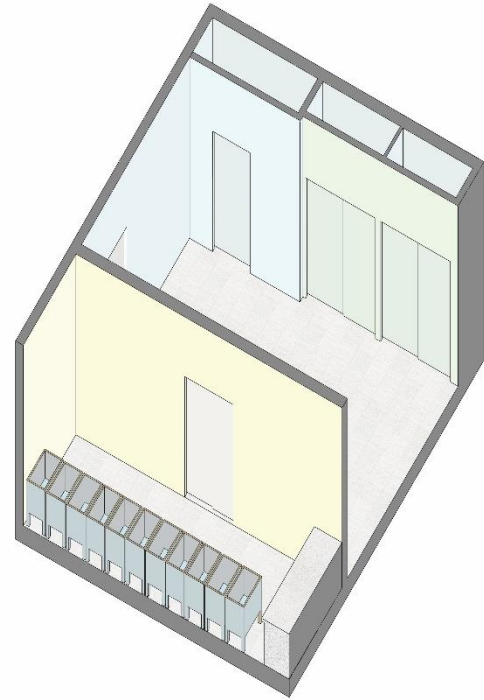
For dining areas, some faculty of shelters have noted that survivors have benefitted greatly from being able to connect with others. Flexible dining furniture allows for group meals, but also smaller family configurations and private meals. Furniture should also be light enough that residents can move it by themselves, also considering that some of them may be suffering physical injuries.

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<sup>97</sup> *Building Dignity*

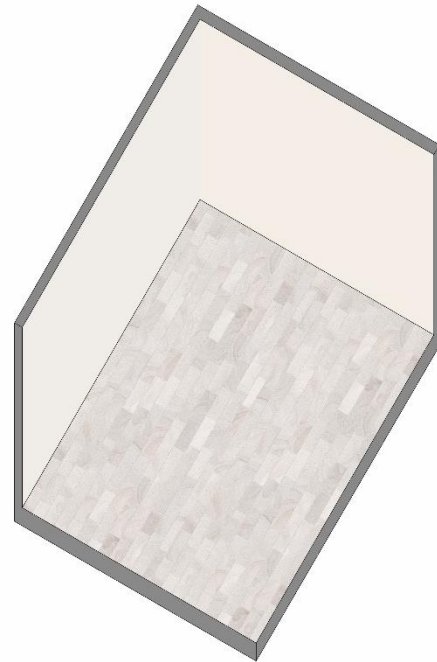
### **Additional Facilities:**

Children's Play Area: Often for women who are trying to prepare for life after sheltering, the transition back into the workforce, finding affordable housing, and navigating legal hurdles can prove time consuming and challenging. By providing a childcare space within the building, survivors can focus on attending to these needs without having to worry about their children. This space should be able to accommodate children



of various ages, from infancy to pre-teenage years. If possible, the space should also be visible from shared living and workspaces so survivors can keep an eye on their children if they would feel more comfortable doing so- while also being able to do work in quiet.

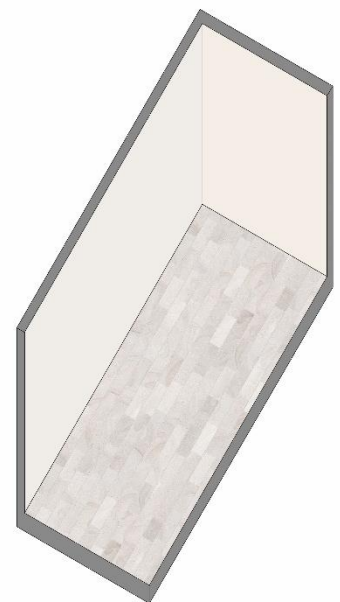
Gym: A 2004 study of survivors of domestic violence survivor's exercise habits and preferences showed that physical exercise had an improvement on their mental health and self-confidence, with one participant noting that it was a means of "eliminating nervous energy" and feeling as though they are able to care for themselves. However, participants also noted that they had altered their exercise schedules to choose times where they felt the least fear of an overcrowded facility or being



seen by their abuser. <sup>98</sup>By placing an exercise room within the shelter complex, residents can work out without fear of being harassed at a different facility or having to interact with or see their abuser. It also removes the need for locker room or public shower use, which may make survivors feel vulnerable, since they would then be able to use their own rooms and units to shower and change.

An in-facility dedicated exercise space also allows for group fitness session, particularly self-defense courses. While self-defense courses have faced criticism for placing responsibility of avoiding assault on survivors, when done correctly they can prove to be empowering and a way of preventing future instances of violence or assault. <sup>99</sup>

Laundry: Having laundry within the shelter / housing complex allows residents to avoid having to leave the shelter. By placing the laundry facilities away from any residential units, residents can utilize them at any time without having to worry about disturbing others trying to sleep or work. A 2015 study found that this agency and flexibility correlated to a more positive experience for residents. <sup>100</sup> Safe Horizon provides laundry in all of their shelter facilities,



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<sup>98</sup> Concepcion, Rebecca Yahnke. *The role exercise may play in how survivors of domestic violence feel and view themselves*. Oregon State University.

<sup>99</sup> Hollander, Jocelyn. (2016). The importance of self-defense training for sexual violence prevention. *Feminism & Psychology*. 26. 10.1177/0959353516637393.

<sup>100</sup> Rutledge, Katrina. "Rules, restrictions and resident empowerment in domestic violence shelter design: An exploration and response." (2015).

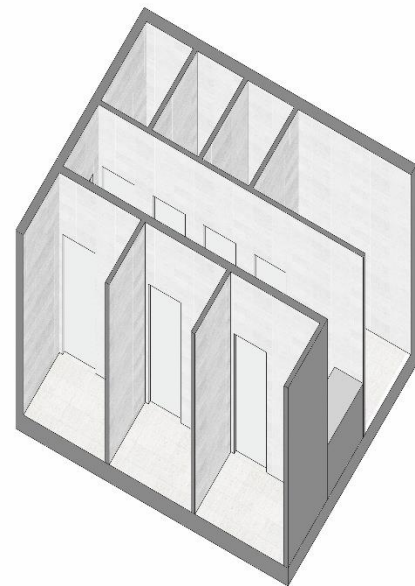
with the washer / dryers free for residents and detergent provided.

### **Tier I Units:**

Restrooms: Many of the considerations around creating functional, gender inclusive restrooms, relate to privacy. By designing stalls with doors and walls that are full length, you provide discretion to the user inside. For transgender users of the restroom, this allows the user to face in whatever way they need to while relieving themselves, without worry about others being able to see what direction their feet are pointing through gaps in the stall's coverage. Restrooms should also include a lock that clearly states whether the stall is vacant or occupied.

Accessible stalls should be equipped with guard rails, and the accessible shower units should be 'roll in.'

It is also vital that a space dedicated to mothers of young children, which allows for nursing and changing, be available. Liz York, FAIA, has created a series of recommendations to be implemented when designing rooms for lactation. Similar to restroom privacy guidelines, a lock that clearly shows whether or not the room is occupied can prevent uncomfortable knocking or accidental walking in on another resident. Carpeting should be avoided for easy cleanup, and similarly any fabric used for the chair should be non-porous.<sup>101</sup> Ample lighting, outlets, paper towels, basic



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<sup>101</sup> *Recommendations for Designing Lactation/Wellness Rooms - AIA.* <https://www.aia.org/best-practices/17116-recommendations-for-designing-lactationwelln?tools=true>. Accessed 7 Dec. 2020.

cleaning supplies, and a sink should also be provided, along with a trashcan that is fit for soiled diaper disposal. If units that would be serviced by these rooms already contain refrigerators, then it may not be necessary to include one within the lactation room itself, but if possible, it can provide convenience to the users.

Housing Units: For families that are placed into sheltering, the units they stay in are often cold and unwelcoming, emphasizing the existing feeling that they have been displaced from home. Agency becomes increasingly important, and residents should be in spaces that both feel safe, but also not too dissimilar from an apartment. Residents living in the shelter units should have the ability to chose when they feel comfortable interacting with others, and otherwise have the ability to be in solitude. I propose small private units, with the option of creating adjoining units for families through connecting doors than can be left deadbolted by the shelter or with traditional locks for a connection of family units. This solution also functions particularly well in light of restrictions currently imposed by the current Covid-19 pandemic, as it has less health risks than having multiple beds in one room.





By placing a desk within the units, residents can both do work or take virtual meetings in privacy, but also have their meals in privacy as well should they choose to do so. Additionally, a small fridge in each unit can give residents the ability to choose when they might feel comfortable eating without possibly feeling intimidated by having to go back and forth to the kitchen. It also allows nursing mothers to store bottles in their own rooms rather than a shared lactation room.

While space under a bed can be used for additional storage space for survivors, by having some units designated for accessibility- with beds lower to the ground, wheelchair access can be provided for residents who need it.

A wardrobe or closet allows residents to move out of their suitcases or bags and feel more at home for their duration of stay and can also act as additional storage space for anything they may have brought with them.

An ability to customize the space should be encouraged through pin boards, plants, or taping up posters. Operable windows and ceiling fans also allow residents to alter the temperature of their rooms independently. Units should also be equipped with blackout shades, which would allow residents to sleep whenever they want or need to, and feel an extra layer of security.

By using a peephole on the door, residents can view who may be knocking, whether it be staff or other survivors, and decide whether or not they feel comfortable

By placing the shelter floors highest up in the apartment, residents can have a greater sense of security and be farthest from street view. Additionally, by designating one side of the building for units for single residents, and the other side for residents with children, worries about noise disturbance can be avoided.

## Tier II Units

While the ideal shelter and housing complex features a separate workspace and childcare center, its not always possible for residents to use both these services at all necessary times. However, a home office is often a luxury unincorporated in New York City housing units due to space confinements. Even for homes with the luxury of a designated workspace or home



office, that space is often isolated from the rest of the home. This means that for anyone who takes on the double role of both caretaker and traditional worker ('domestic' work

is still labor, but in this case traditional refers to the way of thinking of employment) they lose the ability to keep an eye on children who may be eating or playing in kitchen, living, or dining areas.

This means that for women needing to work from home, they are often confined to the kitchen table or counter, allowing that to double as desk space. This has the



potential to function well though, if designed correctly. Ample counter space facing the living area, allowing parents to keep an eye on both their work and their children, can enable multitasking. This counter space should also be far enough away from a stovetop and sink to prevent possible incidents that would destroy a computer setup. A kitchen island may work well, and ample lighting access to outlets, and comfortable seating is also necessary.

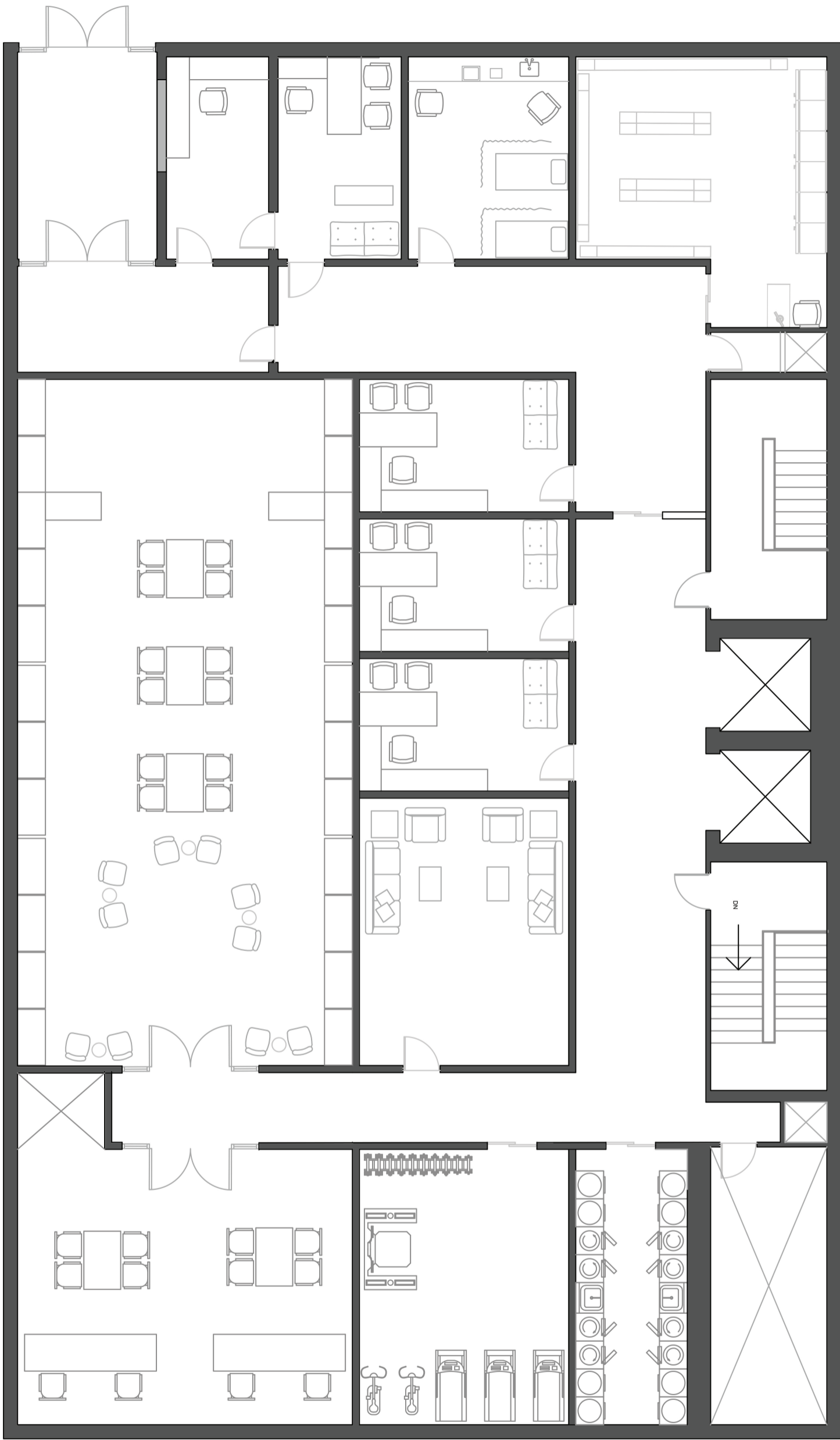
For survivors coming in without children, ample kitchen space still allows them to recreate the feeling of a home office or connect with other residents over dinner in their own homes should they feel comfortable doing so.

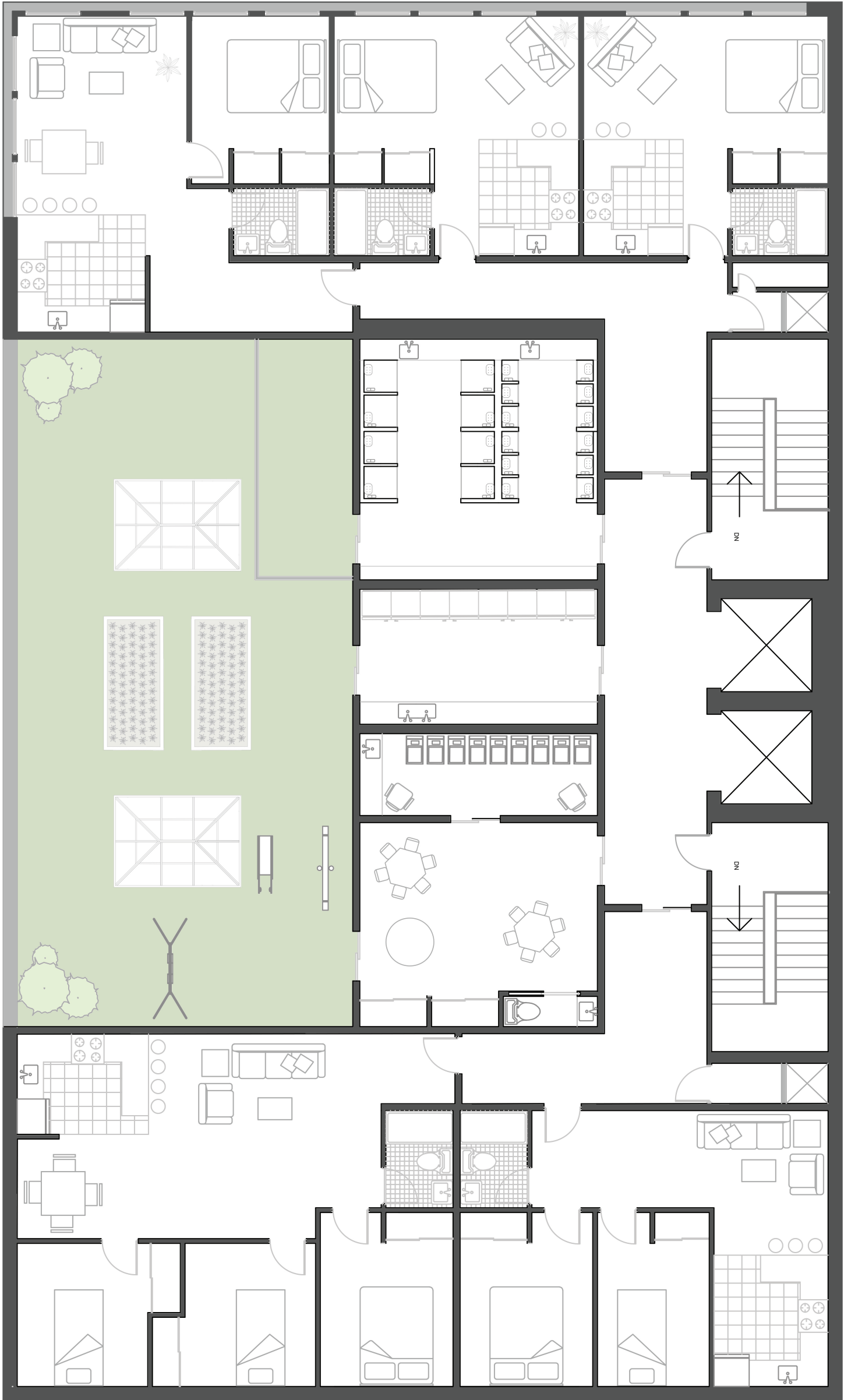
Similar to the Tier I units, blackout shades, peepholes, and avoiding placing units on the bottom floor can all aid with feelings of safety and security of residents. Also, studio and one bedroom units should be located on one side of the building for single adults, and multibedroom units designated for families should be located on the other to prevent noise disturbance.

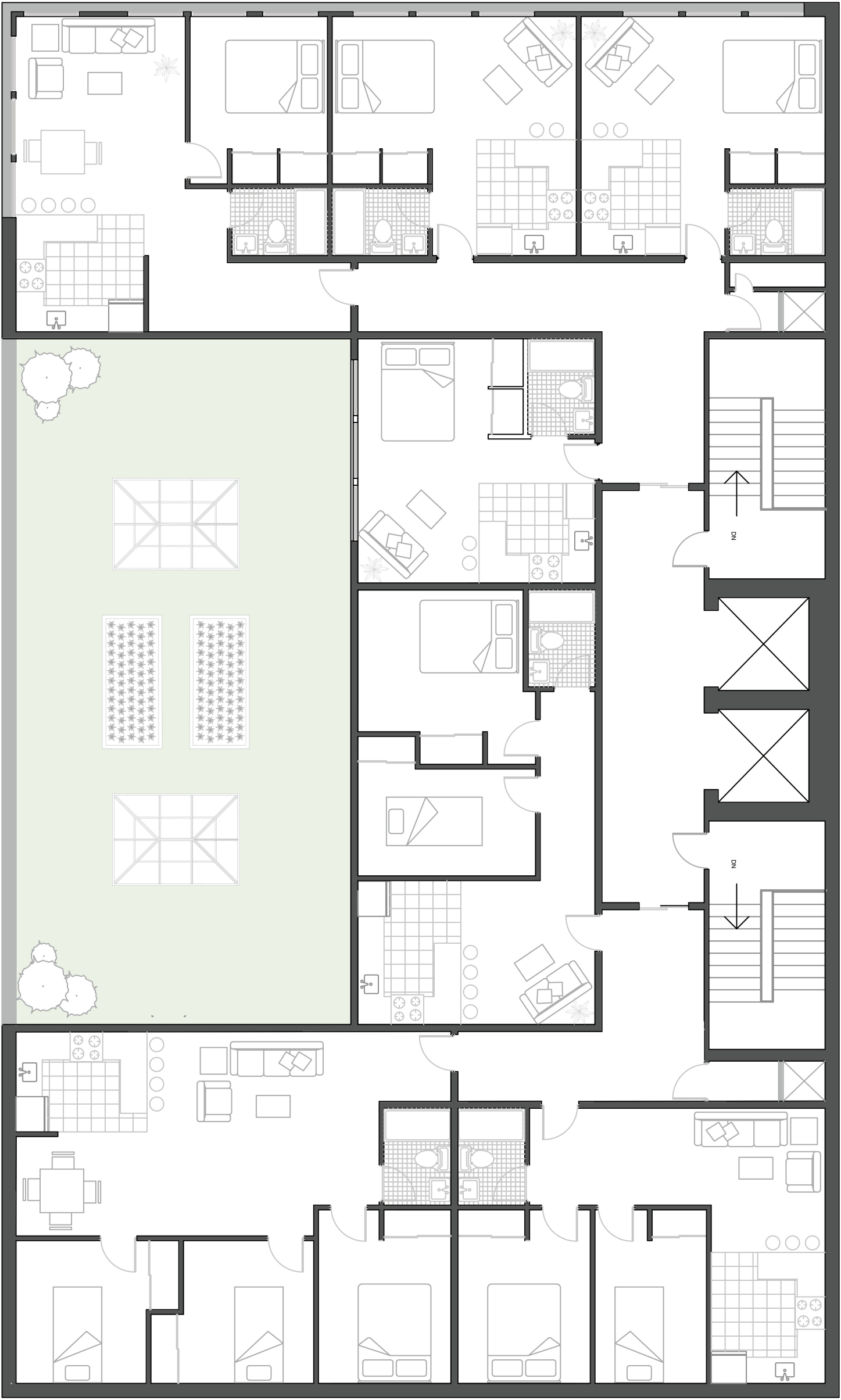
### **Application of Toolkit:**

To demonstrate how the outlined design recommendations would interact together in a building complex, following general layout guidelines, a series of floor plans have been laid out on a sample 60'x100' New York City lot. The lot size was taken as a sample of existing homeless shelter spaces in Manhattan, as they have more publically available addresses and plans. However Mx. Harris noted that while this may be an okay estimate, the lot size will differ depending on the individual building. Also, while these sample plans do not specify building height, floors containing residential units can be repeated as many times as the hypothetical building would allow.

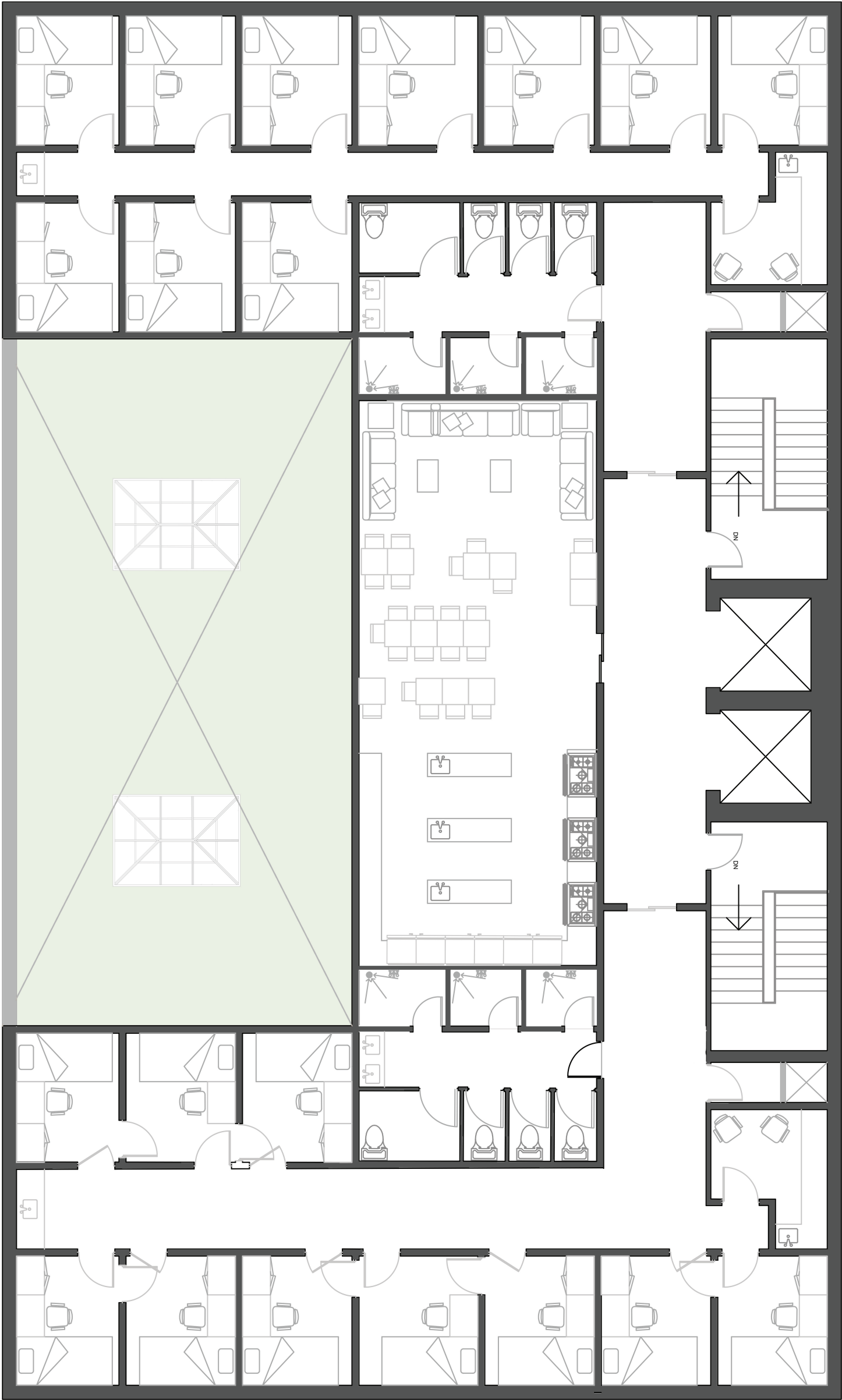
While the hypothetical space utilizes all the spatial recommendations, there is an understanding that the ability to implement the toolkit is dependent on the existing space available for the sheltering complex. Therefore, these should function as a demonstration of the recommendations, rather than proposed building construction plans.











**Conclusion:**

While the Covid-19 pandemic has amplified the impact of existing crises, what it has also done is allowed us to rethink daily routines, whether that necessitates working, attending school, or running daily errands and providing childcare. What previously would have been considered necessary to leave the home for, such as a commute to an office, is being reconsidered as adaptations made to stop the spread of the coronavirus have shown these arrangements to be possible in the longer term. For survivors and their families, this could mean a future where it will be possible to work remotely from temporary sheltering or transitional housing, allowing a greater focus on the healing process rather than a fear of being accosted by the abuser upon each instance of leaving the security of the shelter / housing complex. However, for survivors to truly be able to benefit from this possibility, shelters must accommodate a 'remote' lifestyle, placing emphasis on a feeling of community within their walls. This rethinking of what a shelter could function as, coupled with comprehensive policy driven solutions aimed at preventing violence and repetitive abuse, can not only reduce the risk of continued harm, but foster an environment where survivors can focus on rebuilding and recovery.

**Images:**

The following was done as part of the Punto Urban Arts Museum and the North Shore Community Development Coalition for their Public Safety Art. Inspired by the United Nations Global Call Out to Creatives, PUAM (the public arts program of NSCDC) called upon all Massachusetts based creatives to partake in a paid opportunity to use their artistic powers of communication, empathy, and advocacy to develop Public Service Announcements (PSA) for primarily immigrant, non-English speaking, and low-income communities of color. This poster seeks to both confirm and identify abusive actions and then outline steps to take to escape those hostile situations, despite limitations of the pandemic. A graphic/comic-book style is intended to simplify the message and remove comprehension barriers, making it more accessible. While not directly applicable to the toolkit presented in this paper, the poster serves as an example of what an accessible PSA could look like to inform survivors of domestic violence.

# ESCAPING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC



IS THE STRESS OF COVID-19 MAKING YOUR PARTNER ACT OUT?



ARE THEY YELLING AT YOU?



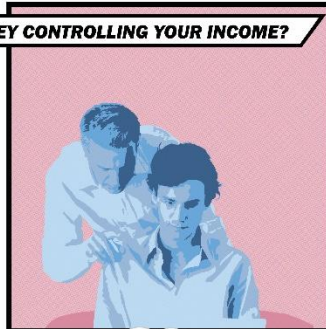
ARE THEY USING PHYSICAL FORCE AGAINST YOU?



IS MONEY GETTING TIGHT?



ARE THEY CONTROLLING YOUR INCOME?



MANY PEOPLE ARE DRINKING MORE ALCOHOL DURING LOCKDOWNS



ARE THEY DRINKING MORE AND BECOMING ANGRY?



THEY SHOULDN'T GET ANGRY WHEN THEY DRINK



ARE THEY USING STAY-AT-HOME ORDERS AS AN EXCUSE TO ISOLATE YOU?

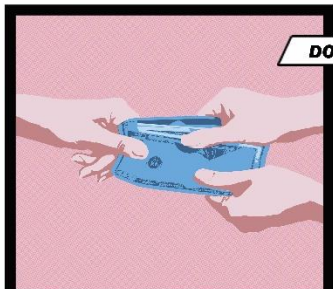


ARE THEY BLAMING YOU FOR EVERYTHING THAT IS HAPPENING?



CREATE A CODE WORD WITH TRUSTED FRIENDS, FAMILY, COWORKERS, AND OR COUNSELORS SO THEY KNOW WHEN YOU NEED HELP.

## ACTION PLANS



ASK TRUSTED FRIENDS TO HOLD MONEY



DOCUMENT AND PHOTOGRAPH ABUSE



CONTACT YOUR LOCAL SHELTER TO FIND OUT LAWS AND OTHER RESOURCES RELEVANT TO YOU



# ESCAPANDO DE LA VIOLENCIA DOMÉSTICA DURANTE LA PANDEMIA DE COVID-19



¿EL ESTRÉS DE LA PANDEMIA DE COVID-19 HACE QUE SU PAREJA REACCIONE?



¿LE ESTÁN GRITANDO?



¿ESTÁN USANDO LA FUERZA FÍSICA CONTRA USTED?



¿ESTÁN APRETADOS DE DINERO?



¿ESTÁN CONTROLANDO SUS INGRESOS?



MUCHAS PERSONAS BEBEN MÁS ALCOHOL DURANTE LOS ENCIERROS



¿ESTÁN BEBIENDO MÁS Y SE ESTÁN ENOJANDO?



NO DEBERÍAN ENOJARSE CUANDO BEBEN



¿ESTÁN USANDO LA ORDEN DE QUEDARSE EN CASA COMO UNA EXCUSA PARA AISLARLO?

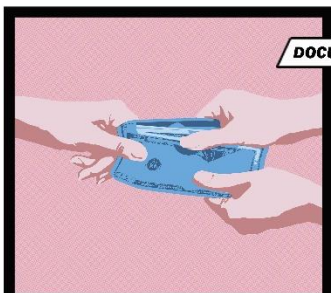


¿LE ESTÁN CULPANDO POR TODO LO QUE ESTÁ SUCEDIENDO?



CREE UNA PALABRA CLAVE CON AMIGOS, FAMILIARES, COMPAÑEROS DE TRABAJO Y/O CONSEJEROS DE CONFIANZA PARA QUE SEPAN CUÁNDO NECESITA AYUDA.

## PLAN DE ACCIÓN



PÍDALE A UN AMIGO DE CONFIANZA QUE LE GUARDE DINERO



DOCUMENTE Y HAGA FOTOGRAFÍAS DEL ABUSO



PÓNGASE EN CONTACTO CON SU REFUGIO LOCAL PARA CONOCER LAS LEYES Y OTROS RECURSOS RELEVANTES PARA USTED



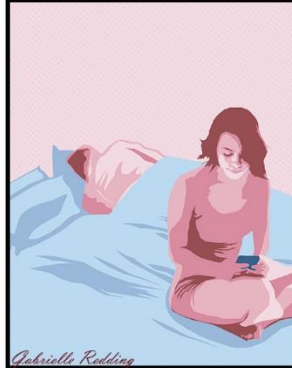
## ACTION PLANS



**ASK A TRUSTED FRIEND TO HOLD MONEY FOR YOU**

**DOCUMENT AND PHOTOGRAPH ABUSE**

**CONTACT YOUR LOCAL SHELTER TO FIND OUT LAWS AND OTHER RESOURCES RELEVANT TO YOU**



**CREATE A CODE WORD WITH TRUSTED FRIENDS, FAMILY, COWORKERS, AND / OR COUNSELORS SO THEY KNOW WHEN YOU NEED HELP.**

## WARNING SIGNS



**IS THE STRESS OF COVID-19 MAKING YOUR PARTNER ACT OUT?**

**ARE THEY YELLING AT YOU?**

**ARE THEY USING PHYSICAL FORCE AGAINST YOU?**



**ARE THEY BLAMING YOU FOR EVERYTHING THAT IS HAPPENING?**

**IS YOUR PARTNER KEEPING MONEY FROM YOU?**

**ARE THEY DRINKING MORE AND BECOMING ANGRY?**

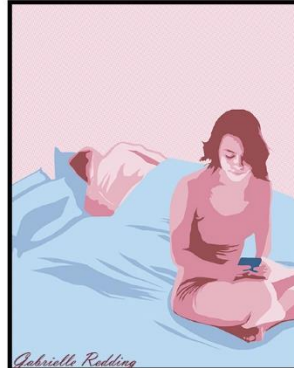
## PLAN DE ACCIÓN



**PÍDALE A UN AMIGO DE CONFIANZA QUE LE GUARDE DINERO**

**DOCUMENTE Y HAGA FOTOGRAFÍAS DEL ABUSO**

**PÓNGASE EN CONTACTO CON SU REFUGIO LOCAL PARA CONOCER LAS LEYES Y OTROS RECURSOS RELEVANTES PARA USTED**



**CREE UNA PALABRA CLAVE CON AMIGOS, FAMILIARES, COMPANEROS DE TRABAJO Y/O CONSEJEROS DE CONFIANZA PARA QUE SEPAN CUANDO NECESITA AYUDA.**

## SEÑALES DE ADVERTENCIA



**¿EL ESTRÉS DE LA PANDEMIA DE COVID-19 HACE QUE SU PAREJA REACCIONE?**

**¿LE ESTÁN GRITANDO?**

**¿ESTÁN USANDO LA FUERZA FÍSICA CONTRA USTED?**



**¿LE ESTÁN CULPANDO POR TODO LO QUE ESTÁ SUCEDIENDO?**

**¿LE ESTÁN CULPANDO POR TODO LO QUE ESTÁ SUCEDIENDO?**

**¿ESTÁN BEBIENDO MÁS Y SE ESTÁN ENOJANDO?**

### **Special thanks to;**

The individuals at Safe Horizon for the tireless work they do for survivors of domestic violence, and for generously sharing their insight and knowledge.

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To Abby Spinak, Dilip da Cunha, and the rest of the Risk and Resilience community for inspiring me with their relentless focus on making the world a kinder place for our most vulnerable- I am amazed by your dedication to exploring and questioning what is truly important, and credit so much of what I have learned here to you all. Thank you for giving me a pseudo-family in Cambridge in Amy, Kira, Tessa, (I deeply appreciate the wine nights) and in Jimmy (I am endlessly grateful for the Jeopardy! and burrito breaks).

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And, to my parents, Susan and Michael Redding, for making my education possible in every sense, and for their unwavering support as I explore difficult topics, I love you.



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  - a. This article, by former human rights lawyer Amanda Taub, outlines the ways in which data has shown that the Covid-19 pandemic has created a parallel public health crisis of increased domestic abuse. Each possible cause is accompanied by an anecdote.
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  - a. This CDC article outlines the effects that stress during the pandemic may have. It also includes crisis resources, a list of persons who may be more strongly effected by pandemic-related stress, and ways to cope with said stress.
3. "COVID-19 Concerns Survey". *Nefe.Org*, 2020, <https://www.nefe.org/images/research/Polls/COVID-19-Concerns-Complete-Survey.pdf>.
  - a. This document outlines the results of a survey conducted by the National Endowment for Financial Education. The survey took place in April, roughly one month after Covid-19 hit the United States, and interviewed 2,018 people over the age of 18. Its most significant finding was that 9 out of 10 people said that the pandemic was causing financial stresses.
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- a. This page provides a translation of laws regarding domestic violence in China, including ones put in place to both prevent and manage domestic violence. The Chinese method of combatting domestic violence states a priority on prevention first, using a combination of education, corrections, and punishment. The laws outline domestic violence as something that is physical or psychological and occurring between family members. These laws were enacted on March 1<sup>st</sup> 2016.
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  - a. United Nations Development Fund for Women compiled this analysis of violence against women and girls in the Pacific Island countries. It features general takeaways and notable risks associated with gender based violence for each country, which have allowed for an outlining of social context and challenges in addressing violence against women and girls in the Pacific, and the access to justice and support services available in each country. The study ends with recommendations for Increasing Women's Access to Justice.
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7. "How Money Traps Victims Of Domestic Violence". *Theatlantic.Com*, <https://www.theatlantic.com/sponsored/allstate/how-money-traps-victims-of-domestic-violence/750/>.
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  - a. This page, updated regularly, from the New York Times outlines how each state is managing plans for reopening or closing among the pandemic. States lie under one of four categories; reopened, reopening, pausing, and reversing. It also features timelines of cases for each state, starting on March 1<sup>st</sup>.
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  - a. This survey was conducted by the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and findings are based on complete interviews of 16,507 adults (9,086 women and 7,421 men.) "The key finding states that Bisexual women had significantly higher lifetime prevalence of rape and sexual violence other than rape by any perpetrator when

compared to both lesbian and heterosexual women. Bisexual women had significantly higher lifetime prevalence of rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner when compared to both lesbian and heterosexual women. Lesbian women and gay men reported levels of intimate partner violence and sexual violence equal to or higher than those of heterosexuals." The findings are from early 2013, and the interviews were collected during the 12 months prior to that.

10. "Statistics". NCADV | National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, <https://ncadv.org/statistics>.
  - a. These statistics are presented by the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence and encompasses many of the base statistics related to domestic violence, including that 1 in 3 women and 1 in 4 men have experienced some form of physical violence by an intimate partner, and 1 in 5 women and 1 in 71 men in the United States has been raped in their lifetime.
11. "China Has A New Domestic Violence Law. So Why Are Victims Still Often Unsafe?". *Chinafile*, 2017, <https://www.chinafile.com/reporting-opinion/viewpoint/china-has-new-domestic-violence-law-so-why-are-victims-still-often>.
  - a. The author of the article, Su Lin Han, is a Senior Fellow at the Paul Tsai China Center, and a Senior Research Scholar in Law and Lecturer in Law at Yale Law School, and her journalistic work is often focused on women's rights and domestic violence. The article analyzes the 2016 domestic violence law adopted in China, and how it has, in many ways, failed victims because it is unenforceable and not complex enough to target abuse from related family members.

12. Allen-Ebrahimian, Bethany. "China's Domestic Violence Epidemic". Axios, 2020, <https://www.axios.com/china-domestic-violence-coronavirus-quarantine-7b00c3ba-35bc-4d16-afdd-b76ecfb28882.html>.

- a. This article highlights how China, despite recently creating a new set of domestic violence laws, has failed to properly enforce them, possibly because of the emphasis put on traditional family values and 'family harmony.' This issue has been amplified during the Covid-19 pandemic, as this article was published in March 2020.

13. Andrew, Scottie. "Domestic Violence Victims, Stuck at Home, Are at Risk During Coronavirus Pandemic". CNN, 2020, <https://www.cnn.com/2020/03/27/health/domestic-violence-coronavirus-wellness-trnd/index.html>.

- a. This CNN article is informed by an interview with the president and CEO of the National Domestic Violence Hotline, Katie Ray-Jones. Ray-Jones states that the hotline has seen upticks in reports before, in 2008 during the recession, but expects the Covid-19 pandemic to have an even greater effect. Ray-Jones outlines reasons why this might be, including financial troubles, increased buying of liquor and firearms, and shelter in place mandates.

14. Brown, Dan & De Cao, Elisabetta, 2018. "The impact of unemployment on child maltreatment in the United States," *ISER Working Paper Series 2018-04*, Institute for Social and Economic Research.

- a. This study, using data from 2004-2012, studies the effect of unemployment on child maltreatment in the United States, using reports of child abuse and neglect made to Child Protective Services. They found that financial strain has a significant and negative effect on child abuse and neglect.

15. Campbell, Jacquelyn C et al. "Risk factors for femicide in abusive relationships: results from a multisite case control study." *American journal of public health* vol. 93,7 (2003): 1089-97. doi:10.2105/ajph.93.7.1089
- a. This 11-city study sought to identify risk factors for femicide in abusive relationships, through interviews with 220 proxies of intimate partner femicide victims and 343 abused women. The study found a number of significant identifiable risk factors for femicide including the perpetrator's access to a gun, having the perpetrators stepchild in the home, and estrangement.
16. DuMonthier, Asha, and Malore Dusenbery. "Intersections Of Domestic Violence And Economic Security". *Iwpr.Org*, 2016, <https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/B362-Domestic-Violence-and-Economic-Security-1.pdf>.
- a. This paper explores the relations between economic insecurity and domestic violence, and the costs of domestic violence itself. It also examines possible economic obstacles some people may face when trying to access resources or escape unsafe situations, and the longer term financial impacts that domestic violence has on survivors. It also provides recommendations for advocates, service providers, criminal justice professionals, campuses and workplaces.
17. Fleury, Ruth E et al. "When Ending The Relationship Does Not End The Violence". *Violence Against Women*, vol 6, no. 12, 2000, pp. 1363-1383. *SAGE Publications*, doi:10.1177/10778010022183695.
- a. This study interviewed survivors of domestic violence over the course of the two years after they had left a shelter for battered women. It found strong correlations between certain behaviors of the batterer (prior violence, threats, and sexual suspicion) and the possibility of an assault during the course of the study. More than 1/3 of women were assaulted by a former partner during those two years.

18. Gerney, Arkadi, and Chelsea Parsons. "Women Under the Gun - Center for American Progress". *Center for American Progress*, 2014, <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/guns-crime/reports/2014/06/18/91998/women-under-the-gun/>.
- a. This article discusses the difference between violence perpetrated towards women, as opposed to towards men. The key findings include that "between 2003 and 2012, 65 percent of female violent crime victims were targeted by someone they knew; only 34 percent of male violent crime victims knew their attackers. Intimate partners make up the majority of known assailants: During the same time period, 34 percent of all women murdered were killed by a male intimate partner, compared to the only 2.5 percent of male murder victims killed by a female intimate partner."
19. Godin, Melissa. "French Government to House Victims of Domestic Violence in Hotels, Amid Rising Number of Cases". *Time*, 2020, <https://time.com/5812990/france-domestic-violence-hotel-coronavirus/>.
- a. This article, by Melissa Godin (a Time magazine journalist who has reported on gender, public health, and human rights) and published at the end of March 2020, explores some of the steps that the French government is taking to accommodate victims of domestic violence during the Covid-19 pandemic. 1 million euros are being allotted to anti-domestic abuse organizations, victims can now alert pharmacists if they are in danger, and the government is paying for hotel nights and the implementation of counseling centers in grocery stores.
20. Graham-Harrison, Emma et al. "Lockdowns Around the World Bring Rise in Domestic Violence". *The Guardian*, 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/mar/28/lockdowns-world-rise-domestic-violence>.

- a. This piece was published by 4 authors, one in Rome and one in Athens, and explores how the initial trend of increased domestic violence seen in the Hubei province, the heart of the initial coronavirus outbreak, where reports tripled after the virus struck. The article references specific instances of abuse and resulting policies in China, Spain, Cyprus, Italy, the UK, India, and Greece.
21. Hymas, Charles. "Police Mount Random Home Checks on Domestic Abusers to Combat Fears of Rise in Attacks During Lockdown". *The Telegraph*, 2020, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2020/05/07/police-mount-random-home-checks-domestic-abusers-combat-fears/>.
22. Jacobs, Jane. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York: Vintage Books, 1992. Print.
23. Jamieson, Amber. "Landlords Said To Be Sexually Harassing Tenants Unable To Pay Rent". *Buzzfeednews.Com*, 2020, <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/amberjamieson/landlords-sexual-harassment-coronavirus>.
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