



# What Women Wanted and What They Received from Shelter: Findings from the U.S. and Ireland

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# Importance of Hearing from Women Using Shelter/Refuge

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- Hold ourselves accountable to survivors and their children
- Use information to improve services, change policy, and inform research
- Increased scrutiny in many countries from funders
- Two national studies conducted, one in U.S. and one in Ireland



# About the National Domestic Violence Shelter Study – U.S.

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- Collaboration between National Resource Center on Domestic Violence & University of Connecticut School of Social Work
- Funded by U.S. Dept of Health and Human Services, through National Institute of Justice
- Forms modified from Documenting Our Work Project —collaboration with advocates, feedback from survivors

# U.S. National Shelter Study: Surveys

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## ○ **Shelter 1**

- Within 48 hours of entry—not during crisis
- Includes demographic information and survivors' experiences before and immediately upon entry

## ○ **Shelter 2**

- Includes number of days spent in shelter, demographics, and experiences during and outcomes from the shelter stay
- Both surveys ask about services—desired and received

## ○ **Program & community information**

# U.S. National Shelter Study: Inclusivity

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- Each form translated into ten languages:
  - Bosnian, Haitian Creole, Hmong, Korean, Kurdish, Mandarin Chinese (simplified and traditional), Polish, Russian, Spanish, and Vietnamese
- National Domestic Violence Hotline to help survivors to work with their Language Line interpreters

# U.S. National Shelter Study: Participating Programs

<b>Programs participating</b>	215
<b>Average # of staff (FTE) per program</b>	16.5
<b>Average # of volunteers per program per month</b>	15
<b>Average capacity of shelter</b>	25 beds (range: 4 to 102)
<b>Average # of sheltered adults in last year</b>	130
<b>Mean # of sheltered children in last year</b>	114

# U.S. National Shelter Study: Survivors Participating

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Shelter 1 form only	1,852
Shelter 2 form only	948
Both Shelter 1 and Shelter 2 forms	564
<b>Total number participating</b>	<b>3,364</b>

# U.S. National Shelter Study: Racial/Ethnic Background

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<b>White</b>	52%
<b>African American</b>	22%
<b>Hispanic/Latina</b>	12%
<b>Multiracial</b>	6%
<b>Native American</b>	5%
<b>Asian/Pacific Islander</b>	1%
<b>Other</b>	2%

Note: Percentages are of those who provided an answer to this question; not all survivors answered all questions

# U.S. National Shelter Study: When You First Arrived...

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<b>Staff made me feel welcome</b>	95%
<b>Staff treated me with respect</b>	91
<b>The space felt comfortable</b>	83
<b>It seemed like a place for women like me</b>	78
<b>Other women made me feel welcome</b>	71

Note: Percentages are of those who provided an answer to this question; not all survivors answered all questions

# U.S. National Shelter Study: Support and Respect Shown by Shelter Staff

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Shelter staff treated me with respect	73%
My religious views were respected	74
Shelter staff were supportive	72
Shelter staff talked enough about safety	67
Shelter staff talked enough about children's safety	69
Shelter staff addressed needs of disability	69
Sexual orientation was respected*	77
Racial background was respected**	76
Shelter staff addressed needs related to youth or age***	69

# U.S. National Shelter Study: Problems Encountered

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<b>Problem</b>	<b>% who encountered</b>	<b>% of those resolved</b>
<b>Conflict w/other women</b>	32	73
<b>Transportation</b>	24	54
<b>Time limits</b>	16	50
<b>Finding privacy</b>	16	47
<b>Curfew</b>	14	61
<b>Child discipline</b>	13	66
<b>Chores</b>	13	59
<b>Conflict with staff</b>	13	49
<b>Choices of food</b>	13	44

# U.S. National Shelter Study: Who Wanted Help/Who Got Help

<b>Need</b>	<b>% who wanted</b>	<b>% who got all or some</b>
<b>Safety for myself</b>	98	99
<b>Learning about options</b>	98	96
<b>Understanding DV</b>	97	96
<b>Paying attention to own needs</b>	97	95
<b>Safety planning</b>	96	95
<b>Connections to other people</b>	95	91
<b>Emotional support</b>	92	89
<b>Dealing with feelings that upset me</b>	92	87
<b>Dealing with stress</b>	92	85

# U.S. National Shelter Study:

## *Because of Shelter Experience, I Feel...*

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<b>I will achieve the goals I set for myself</b>	<b>93%</b>
<b>I know more ways to plan for my safety</b>	<b>92</b>
<b>I can do more things on my own</b>	<b>91</b>
<b>I know more about my options</b>	<b>91</b>
<b>More hopeful about the future</b>	<b>91</b>
<b>More confident in my decision-making</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>More comfortable asking for help</b>	<b>89</b>
<b>I know more about community resources</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>More comfortable talking about things that bother me</b>	<b>85</b>

# U.S. National Shelter Study: *Because of Shelter Experience, I feel my children...*

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Feel more supported	84%
Have more understanding about what has been happening	78%
Are better able to express their feelings without violence	77%

Many noted they had infants or children “too young to understand”

# Background to Ireland's National Study:

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- The Refuges' Evaluation Modelling (REM) Project was created by a transnational team from Ireland, Portugal and Scotland to develop and pilot test an outcome evaluation model for women's refuges across their three countries.
- Financed by the European Commission's Daphne II Programme to Combat Violence Against Children, Young People and Women (2006-2007).



# The DAPHNE Project

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- NNWRSS was the Irish team member
- Cris Sullivan was the external evaluator
- Two forms were created to evaluate refugees, one for women to complete shortly after arriving and one for women to complete shortly before exiting
- Forms were similar to those being used in the U.S. and were created with survivor and refugee worker input.
- Pilot tested in all 3 countries, found to be useful.



# Ireland National Refugee Study

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- All 18 refuges in Ireland invited to participate
- Data collected over 4 months
- Surveys were in English, Polish and French
- Received 314 *Form 1* Surveys
- Received 201 *Form 2* Surveys

# Ireland National Refuge Study: How Women Heard about Refuge

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<i>Source</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Friend/Relative	34
Other dom violence service	15
Social work	13
Gardai/Police	10
Helpline	8
Housing services	5
Doctor/Nurse	5
Advert	3
Other	7

# Ireland National Refuge Study: Women's Changing Needs

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<i>Type of Help or Support</i>	<i>Percent Wanting At Arrival</i>	<i>Percent Wanting Closer to Exit</i>
Staying safe	73	95
Information and support with housing/accommodation	68	78
Making decisions about my future	64	88
Healing emotionally	63	93
Understanding the impact of d.v.	60	89
Protection from my partner/ex-partner	53	87
Developing a plan for my safety	50	90
Understanding the causes of d.v.	48	91



# Similarities in Findings Across the Two Countries

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- How women heard about the program (most common: friends, relatives, other dv advocates)
- How women treated by staff
- What women wanted and received
- Outcomes achieved (85% or more of all outcomes achieved)



# Next Steps; Implications for Other Countries

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- In both U.S. and Ireland there is interest in evaluating non-shelter support services
- Depending on social context, different countries may evaluate services differently
- Important that evaluations can be done easily and inexpensively
- Critical we hear from women themselves about our services