

2015-2016 Domestic Violence in the Prairie Province's Jewish Community

Jewish Canadians often experience unique barriers towards seeking support when experiencing domestic violence (DV) such as fear of stigmatization and domestic abuse being overlooked by religious clergy. This study explored the perspectives of service providers in the Canadian prairie provinces on DV in the Jewish community, with the aim of understanding the community needs for addressing DV. A mixed methods approach was taken for data collection with an emailed survey collecting demographic information and thoughts of Jewish participants, followed by a focus group of 5-10 participants who were mostly service providers. The focus groups consisted of participants sharing their perspectives from the findings in the questionnaire and recommendations to address DV in the Jewish community. 183 participants completed the online survey with 77% of participants identifying as female. Of that, 28% of participants reporting being a survivor of abuse, and 5% report current abuse. 22% of service providers shared that someone from the Jewish community disclosed domestic violence to them. During the focus group with service providers, common barriers to accessing supports were concerns of financial security (67%), worries about disrupting the family (80%), and not having a shelter where Shabbat could be observed (27%).

From the focus groups, four primary recommendations were made: (1) the need for awareness and education to decrease stigmatization, (2) making DV a priority to address in the community, (3) creating safe and culturally competent housing for victims of DV, and (4) creating connections between Jewish and non-Jewish services to facilitate culturally sensitive supports for Jewish people facing DV.