



Arab-American Family  
Support Center

# ANTI-VIOLENCE PROGRAM EVALUATION RESULTS

Examining the impact of culturally responsive  
crisis intervention, support, and advocacy for  
survivors of domestic and gender-based violence

**OCTOBER 2021**



**Published by the AAFSC Research Institute**

# ANTI-VIOLENCE PROGRAM

The Arab-American Family Support Center (AAFSC) provides culturally and linguistically competent, trauma-informed, resiliency-based services to immigrants and refugees across New York City. While our services are available to anyone in need, we have gained special expertise supporting Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim, and South Asian (AMEMSA) communities. Our staff speak **27 languages**, enabling us to effectively serve communities that mainstream providers struggle to reach. AAFSC's **Anti-Violence Program (AVP)** provides culturally responsive and linguistically accessible case management services to survivors of domestic and gender-based violence from low-income Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim, and South Asian immigrant communities of NYC. Operating with a **social resiliency model**, the program equips victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, sex trafficking, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, and all forms of gender-based violence with the tools they need to heal and empower themselves. AAFSC's AVP takes on deep-seated attitudes about gender, relationships, and cultural expectations that inhibit growth and development. We work to **empower survivors** and balance inequitable relationships. In addition to crisis intervention and individual counseling, we offer support and empowerment groups, information and referrals, court accompaniments, safety plan development, translation, assistance with orders of protection, community outreach and education, and training for professionals. The Anti-Violence Program works to **end partner violence**, create **equitable relationships**, and **challenge gender stereotypes**.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 public health crisis, AAFSC has witnessed a **40% increase** in demand on our Anti-Violence Program. Vulnerable communities, like the immigrants and refugees we serve, are facing acute difficulties because of pre-existing housing, food, and economic insecurity. Compounding these challenges, stay-at-home measures had dire consequences for victims of domestic and gender-based violence, who were forced to remain at home with their abusers in a high-stress environment with minimal opportunity to leave. Responding to increased need, we served **1,862 survivors of domestic violence** in the past year while the COVID-19 public health emergency added a new dimension of risk and severity. As survivors experience the lingering impact of COVID-19 and work through compounding trauma, we continue to see **unprecedented demand** for our services.

Working in partnership with our suite of complementary services, AAFSC's Anti-Violence Program provides **holistic support** to survivors through referrals to mental health counseling, immigration-based legal services, adult education and job readiness classes, caregiver-child bonding support, and more.



# PROGRAM EVALUATION STYLE

Few scientific studies detail domestic violence among AMEMSA populations in the U.S., but what we do know is troubling. For example, a 2011 survey of 801 Muslim women in the U.S. found that 31% of respondents reported that they had experienced intimate partner abuse and 53% had experienced domestic violence.[1] Recognizing the dearth of available data and research on domestic violence in AMEMSA communities, the AAFSC Research Institute seeks to fill this gap by conducting culturally appropriate evaluations, the results of which inform our strategic approach and elevate awareness for stakeholders and policymakers.

We understand that because of fear associated with reporting violence, as well as linguistic and cultural barriers, the vast majority of victims do not receive appropriate help. It is not uncommon for imams, priests, or other AMEMSA community leaders to silence victims and side with abusers when contacted for council because their value system places a priority on preserving the family unit. The Anti-Violence Program overcomes these barriers by adopting a culturally responsive outreach approach, and working individually with survivors to build trust and tailor service plans. In so doing, we are reaching underserved populations to challenge harmful attitudes, break cycles of violence, and ensure that all community members have the opportunity to live safe, healthy lives. AAFSC's Anti-Violence Program prioritizes the attainment of **knowledge**, development of survivor **agency**, and access to **support**.

AAFSC measures the success of our Anti-Violence Program through the lens of **Safety-Related Empowerment**, which is defined by Goodman, Thomas & Heimel as the “extent to which a survivor has the internal tools to work towards safety, knows how to access available support, and believes that moving towards safety does not create equally challenging problems.” We adapted the nationally recognized Measure of Victim Empowerment Related to Safety (MOVERS) tool to fit our program and client needs. We administer the evaluation following the client's first meeting with a Case Manager and subsequently every three months during their service journey, asking questions orally to clients in their preferred language. Results indicate that our clients are **successfully gaining tools to move towards safety, understand the resources available to them, and feel more empowered to utilize those resources**. Beyond formal assessments, we track client progress and satisfaction on an ongoing basis through client self-reporting and Case Manager observation.

The following report summarizes evaluation results from 1,484 responses collected between October 1, 2019 and September 30, 2021.

[1] “Attitudes of Muslim Men and Women Towards Domestic Violence,” Domestic Violence Survey by Peaceful Families and Project Sakina, 2011.



# IMPACT SNAPSHOT

IN THE PAST YEAR

**1,862**

**SURVIVORS SERVED**

**17%**

OF SURVIVORS ARE AT  
HIGH-RISK WHEN  
ENROLLING IN SERVICES



**6,640**

MEETINGS WITH SURVIVORS  
TO ENSURE ONGOING SAFETY  
AND SUPPORT

**4,246**

HOURS SPENT SUPPORTING  
AND ADVOCATING FOR  
SURVIVORS

**99**

COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN  
REPRESENTED BY  
SURVIVORS



# EVALUATION RESULTS: KNOWLEDGE

"I feel as though I have gained information about available resources that can support me."

98%

of survivors surveyed feel "confident" or "very confident" as a result of receiving Anti-Violence Program services

Not confident at all

Not very confident

Neutral

Confident

Very Confident



After first visit:

97.24% confident

After one year:

100% confident



# EVALUATION RESULTS: AGENCY

**"I feel that I am more aware of the steps that I need to take to obtain safety."**

**97%**

of survivors surveyed feel **"confident"** or **"very confident"** as a result of receiving Anti-Violence Program services

Not confident at all

Not very confident

Neutral

Confident

Very Confident



**After first visit:**

**97.24% confident**

**After one year:**

**100% confident**

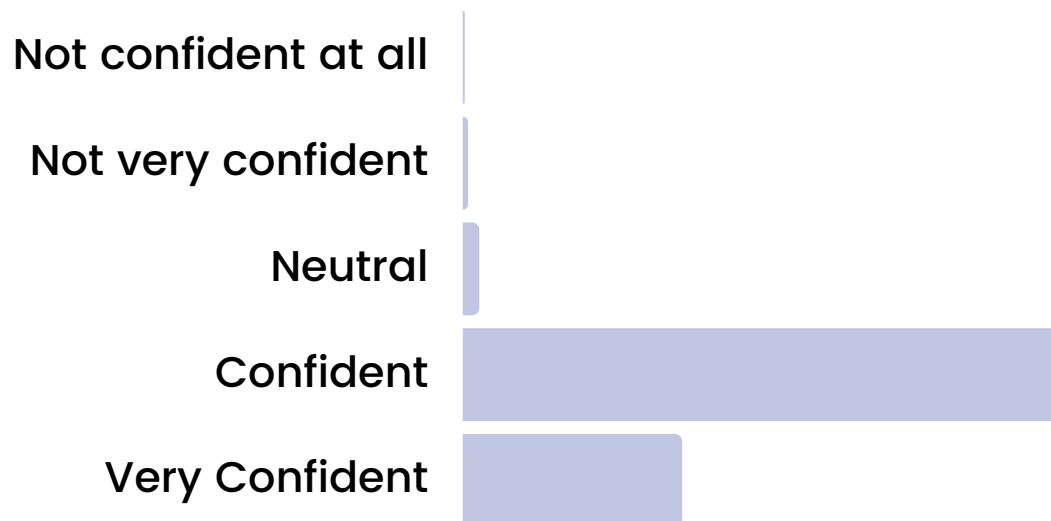


# EVALUATION RESULTS: SUPPORT

"I feel comfortable asking for help from others if I need more support."

98%

of survivors surveyed feel "confident" or "very confident" as a result of receiving Anti-Violence Program services



After first visit:  
**97.86% confident**

After one year:  
**100% confident**



# CONCLUSION

Findings from the MOVERS Evaluation strongly support the effectiveness of AAFSC's Anti-Violence Program services in promoting empowerment-related outcomes for survivors of domestic and gender-based violence. Furthermore, there is evidence that survivors feel more empowered over the course of their service journey as they receive additional advocacy support, information & wrap-around referrals, safety planning, and emotional support while navigating out of harmful situations and into a safe environment.

The Anti-Violence Program is filling a critical gap, providing services that are responsive to the particular cultural context and linguistic needs of New York City's AMEMSA populations. Positioned as a unique resource within each of the five Family Justice Centers, our Case Managers deliver services that sensitively consider the stigmas and cultural values of each survivor, thereby tailoring a case management approach that meets their particular needs and is adaptive to their concerns. Leveraging the linguistic capabilities of our staff, the Anti-Violence Program is able to support survivors in navigating complex and onerous legal processes, overcoming barriers related to linguistic competency, technological literacy, and trauma. These outcomes are evidence that our practices lead to meaningful and sustainable impact for the individuals served.

As a learning organization, AAFSC strives towards continuous quality improvement, and we leverage our evaluation results and program utilization trends on an ongoing basis to maintain quality, drive strategic expansion, and adapt to emerging challenges. We are steadfast in our commitment to ensuring survivors receive the support and advocacy needed to stay safe.



AAFSC's Research Institute is a hub for research & evaluation that measures community needs and analyzes the impact of culturally and linguistically-responsive programs and initiatives. For more reports and insights, visit our Impact page at [aafscny.org/our-impact](https://aafscny.org/our-impact).





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