



ILLINOIS YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES

DOVES PROGRAM - SOARING HIGH

WHAT MAKES THE DOVES MODEL DIFFERENT?

A colorful peer-to-peer learning guide for organizations serving victims of domestic violence and their children



OUR DIFFERENCE IS THE CONNECTION BETWEEN SERVICES.

DOVES brings together crisis response, practical help, advocacy, children's needs, culturally responsive engagement, community presence and long-term stabilization.

Designed for organizational learning, collaboration and replication of promising practices.

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THE WHOLE-FAMILY DIFFERENCE

We do not see domestic violence as a single-service problem.

WHOLE FAMILY	Victim services intentionally include the needs of children affected by violence.
CRISIS + PRACTICAL HELP	Safety planning is paired with housing, transportation, food, utilities, relocation and other concrete supports.
MULTIPLE HEALING PATHWAYS	Counseling and groups are complemented by creative activities, movement, family outings and positive experiences.
COMMUNITY PRESENCE	We show up outside the office through outreach, public education, peaceful demonstrations, neighborhood events and partnerships.
CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE	We recognize barriers affecting Black survivors and create pathways for Black women and men to be seen and supported.
CONTINUITY	We stay focused from immediate crisis through safety, stability, healing, connection and self-sufficiency.
PEER-TO-PEER QUESTION: What could your organization adapt, strengthen or partner on from this practice?	

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FROM FIRST CONTACT TO LONGER-TERM STABILITY

One survivor may need several supports at the same time.

STAGE	DOVES RESPONSE
FIRST CONTACT	Outreach - referral - resource line - community event - direct request
IMMEDIATE SAFETY	Crisis intervention - individualized safety planning - emergency housing
STABILIZATION	Transportation - food - utilities - rent/deposit - relocation - household and personal-care needs
ADVOCACY	Case management - court/OOP support - victim rights - systems navigation - warm referrals
HEALING	Counseling - support groups - trauma education - creative and movement-based wellness
CHILD & FAMILY	Child-focused support - preschool/school continuity - positive family activities - field trips
LONGER-TERM	Housing connections - case-plan progress - community resources - continued safety planning

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CHILDREN ARE PART OF THE RESPONSE

Domestic violence is treated as a family safety and healing issue - not only an adult service.

COMMON SERVICE GAP	DOVES FAMILY-CENTERED RESPONSE
ADULT-ONLY FOCUS	Ask what each child needs for safety, stability and continuity.
EMERGENCY MOVE	Consider school/preschool, transportation, routines, basic needs and emotional support.
COUNSELING ONLY	Add family experiences, creative expression, movement, peer connection and enrichment.
SYSTEMS ALONE	Use case management and referrals to coordinate housing, education, behavioral health and basic needs.
CRISIS-ONLY CHILD FOCUS	Include children in longer-term stabilization and family-strengthening planning.

OUR QUESTION: What does this victim AND their children need to become safer, more stable and better supported?

PEER-TO-PEER QUESTION: What could your organization adapt, strengthen or partner on from this practice?

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BLACK COMMUNITY: CULTURE, TRUST & ACCESS

Population data should guide access and service design - never stereotype individual families.

53.6%

CDC reported 53.6% of non-Hispanic Black women experienced lifetime contact sexual violence, physical violence and/or stalking by an intimate partner.

**BLACK
MEN**

Men experience IPV too. DOVES intentionally discusses pathways for Black male survivors who may be overlooked in domestic-violence conversations.

TRUST

Culturally responsive care recognizes how discrimination, institutional mistrust, financial barriers, family/community concerns and stigma may affect help-seeking.

WHAT OTHER ORGANIZATIONS CAN BORROW: trusted community-facing staff - relationships before crisis - inclusive pathways for men - concrete resources - asking survivors what safe and respectful service looks like to them.

Source note: CDC National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS), 2016/2017 reporting.

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WE TAKE THE WORK INTO THE COMMUNITY

Visibility is part of access. Families may meet us before they ever identify themselves as needing DV services.

COMMUNITY PRACTICE	WHY IT MATTERS
PEACEFUL PROTESTS + ADVOCACY	Break silence, make anti-violence messages visible, center victims and communicate that abuse is a community concern.
OUTREACH + CANVASSING	Meet people in familiar spaces and reduce the distance between residents and helping professionals.
COMMUNITY POP-UPS	Food, coffee and neighborhood events create low-barrier opportunities for trust and resource connection.
CREATIVE + MOVEMENT	Use joy, culture, expression and connection as engagement pathways alongside formal services.
FAMILY EXPERIENCES	Field trips and activities help families rebuild positive experiences outside the crisis context.
PARTNERSHIPS	Create pathways to legal, housing, health, behavioral-health, education and basic-needs resources.

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PEER ORGANIZATION SELF-AUDIT

Use this with your team. Check what is strong and choose one area to build.

QUESTION	YES	BUILD
Can survivors reach us without knowing the 'right' program name?	■	■
Do we ask about children as part of family safety?	■	■
Can we address practical barriers - not only make referrals?	■	■
Do we have warm handoffs for housing, legal, health and behavioral health?	■	■
Are our services culturally responsive to Black survivors?	■	■
Would a Black male survivor recognize that our services include him?	■	■
Do we build community trust before crisis?	■	■
Do we offer healing and connection beyond formal counseling?	■	■
Do we use participant feedback and outcome data to improve?	■	■
Can staff explain our full survivor pathway in one minute?	■	■

One idea we will take back: _____

One possible partnership with IYFS/DOVES: _____

PEER-TO-PEER QUESTION: What could your organization adapt, strengthen or partner on from this practice?

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THE DOVES TAKEAWAY

What makes the model different is not one activity. It is how the pieces work together.

SAFETY	Emergency response, housing, safety planning and advocacy.
STABILITY	Case management plus concrete supports that remove barriers.
HEALING	Counseling, groups, creative expression, movement and family experiences.
CHILDREN	Children's needs remain visible throughout the family journey.
COMMUNITY	Outreach, protests, education, events and trusted partnerships.
CULTURE	Culturally responsive engagement that recognizes barriers and strengths.

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