# ANNUAL DATA REPORT

**Sexual & Domestic Violence** in Whatcom County

Published: October 2022

Data Period: 2021\*

\*This is the most recent year for which crossdiscipline data is available





# **Contents**

Introduction	2
Definitions	2
Background & Purpose of the Data Report	3
Local and National Events Impacting Survivors, Responses, and Prevention	4
Law Enforcement Calls for Service: Sexual Assault	6
The Validity of Sexual Assault Reports	6
Sexual Assault as Reported by WASPC	6
Sexual Assault as Reported by Individual Agencies	7
Law Enforcement Calls for Service: Domestic Violence	9
Protection Orders	11
Forensic Exams	12
Intimate Partner Homicides	13
Community & Tribal-Based Advocacy Services	14
Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services	14
Survivor Advocacy Services at Western Washington University	16
Lummi Victims of Crime	17
Tl'ils Ta'á'altha Victims of Crime	18
Domestic Violence & Homelessness	19
Snotlight Report: Themes from Interviews with Survivors on Restorative & Transformative Justice	20

# Introduction

The Bellingham-Whatcom County Commission on Sexual & Domestic Violence inspires and coordinates our community's efforts to address domestic and sexual violence.

To fulfill this vital mission, we:



**Foster** safety, justice, and well-being for survivors and communities.



**Connect** institutions, stakeholders, and communities to collectively increase understanding and effectiveness of community responses for sexual and domestic violence.



**Transform** systems to ensure best practice prevention and interventions for sexual and domestic violence.

#### **Definitions**

**Domestic violence (DV)** "(also referred to as intimate partner violence [IPV], dating abuse, or relationship abuse) is a pattern of behaviors used by one partner to maintain power and control over another partner in an intimate relationship."<sup>1</sup>

Sexual assault (SA) "occurs when a person is forced, coerced, and/or manipulated into any unwanted sexual activity. [It] is an umbrella term that includes a wide range of victimizations which may or may not involve force or be illegal." Sexual assault or sexual abuse often appears in domestic violence relationships. In fact, it has been estimated that two-thirds of survivors experiencing intimate partner violence (IPV) have been sexually assaulted by their abusive partner.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> https://www.thehotline.org/identify-abuse/understand-relationship-abuse/

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> https://www.wcsap.org/help/about-sexual-assault/what-sexual-assault

# **Background & Purpose of the Data Report**

When the Bellingham-Whatcom County Commission Against Domestic Violence was created in 1998, one of the functions was to develop community benchmarks for monitoring domestic violence and to prepare an annual report to share throughout the community. Although this data cannot illustrate a full picture of the prevalence or impacts of domestic and sexual violence in our community, we share this data to provide key indicators on the scope of these issues locally. In 2018, as part of our efforts to acknowledge the intersection of sexual and domestic violence, the Bellingham-Whatcom County Commission on Sexual & Domestic Violence (S/DV Commission) changed our name and expanded our mission to include addressing sexual violence.

The data in the Snapshot Report is just that—a snapshot of what domestic and sexual violence look like in our community. It cannot represent a comprehensive view but is an important piece of the puzzle. What can you learn from this data? How can you apply this information within your own agency or system?

**Sexual and domestic violence are common in our community.** In Washington State, 41% of women and 31% of men experience physical violence, sexual violence, or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime.<sup>3</sup> Domestic violence includes other controlling behaviors, so likely even more people are impacted. In the United States, one in five women experience rape or attempted rape in their lifetime, and almost 25% of men experience sexual violence.<sup>4</sup> Less than a quarter of sexual assaults were reported to police in 2018.<sup>5</sup> You can play a role in ensuring that survivors receive the support they need when they reach out. Healthcare providers, schools, churches, employers, family members, and friends can all offer resources, listening, and care.

All systems and individuals in our community can be part of fostering safety, justice, and well-being for survivors.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> https://assets.speakcdn.com/assets/2497/washington\_fc\_revised.pdf

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> https://www.nsvrc.org/statistics

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> https://www.nsvrc.org/statistics

# Local and National Events Impacting Survivors, Responses, and Prevention

In 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic continued to impact our entire community.

See the 2020 Data Report, including the Spotlight on COVID-19's Impact on Survivors, for more information on how isolation, financial challenges, and substance use decreased survivor safety and well-being; how remote and limited services created challenges for survivors and practitioners; and how the lack of appropriate support is impacting local BIPOC survivors. Into 2021, COVID-19 protocols and advocates' safety concerns continued to impact advocate responses to forensic exams at St. Joseph Medical Center. Community- or Tribal-based advocates are called to respond to survivors who are having a forensic exam at the hospital. Advocates were providing phone support at times, and in 2021 changes were made to protocols to ensure that advocates would be

November 2021 brought devasting floods to Whatcom County, displacing over 500 households. Experiencing homelessness, whatever the cause, can increase vulnerability to domestic and sexual violence. Survivors impacted by flooding experienced additional traumas, had fewer resources to access safety and support, and experienced increased burden on the resources they did have.

welcome in-person again at the hospital.

Threats to reproductive justice, nationally and in communities around the country, are threats to bodily autonomy that particularly impact survivors of sexual and domestic violence—for whom bodily autonomy has already been attacked by the people who caused them harm. Survivors deserve "the human right to maintain personal bodily autonomy, have children, not have children, and parent the children we have in safe and sustainable communities." Survivors may become pregnant because of rape, including sexual assault within a domestic violence relationship. Abusive partners sometimes coerce their partner to become

sustainable communities." Survivors may become pregnant because of rape, including sexual assault within a domestic violence relationship. Abusive partners sometimes coerce their partner to become pregnant, sabotage birth control to control the survivor, coerce a survivor to either continue a pregnancy or get an abortion, or physically harm a survivor to cause a miscarriage. Experiencing domestic violence during pregnancy negatively impacts maternal and newborn health. Not all survivors are impacted equally by efforts to ban abortion access. People who already have limited access to pregnancy prevention methods, abortion, prenatal care, postpartum care, and supports for raising children (including Black, Indigenous, and other people of color, people with disabilities, low-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> https://whatcomcf.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/WCF Flooding-Briefing-Slide-Deck-5.17.22.pdf

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Reproductive Justice, as defined by Sister Song https://www.sistersong.net/reproductive-justice

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> https://www.acog.org/clinical/clinical-guidance/committee-opinion/articles/2012/02/intimate-partner-violence

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/70764/WHO RHR 11.35 eng.pdf

income people, people experiencing homelessness, LGBTQ people, and people living in rural areas) are disproportionally impacted. **Healthcare providers can make a difference by asking patients about experiences of violence and connecting survivors to resources.** 

In the Washington State Legislature, HB 1320, signed into law in 2021, and HB 1901, signed into law in 2022, created massive changes to protection orders in Washington

**State**. In HB 1320, legislators emphasized the importance of survivors' ability to access these civil protections outside the criminal legal system and outlined their intent to "clarify and simplify these civil protection order statutes to make them more understandable and accessible to victims seeking relief and to respondents who are subject to the court process." All six protection order statutes in Washington State are now included in RCW 7.105. Updates are extensive, but include:

- Combining and reconciling differences between six protection order statutes
- Expanding the use of technology for applications, service, and hearings
- Revising jurisdiction
- Adding **coercive control** to the definition of domestic violence in RCW 7.105.010
- Encouraging training for judicial officers<sup>10</sup>

Most portions of these statutes are effective as of July 2022.

Washington State has made progress in testing the backlog of sexual assault kits, and establishing protocols to ensure kits are tested promptly. 11 Legislation passed in Washington State in 2019 ensured that beginning in May 2022, law enforcement must submit a request for testing within 30 days of receiving the kit, 12 and then Washington State Patrol will test sexual assault kits and share results within 45 days. 13 Survivors can now track the status of their kit once it is submitted to Washington State Patrol. 14

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> See pre-recorded training, slides and resources:

https://www.courts.wa.gov/?fa=home.sub&org=gjc&page=Education&layout=2&parent=work

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> https://www.q13fox.com/news/ending-the-backlog-how-washington-state-is-working-through-10000-untested-sexual-assault-kits

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> https://lawfilesext.leg.wa.gov/biennium/2019-20/Pdf/Bills/Session%20Laws/House/1166-

S2.SL.pdf?q=20220505160857 (p. 10 – Sec. 6 (1))

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> https://lawfilesext.leg.wa.gov/biennium/2019-20/Pdf/Bills/Session%20Laws/House/1166-

S2.SL.pdf?q=20220505160857 (p. 11 – Sec. 6 (2))

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> https://www.wsp.wa.gov/sak-tracking/

# Law Enforcement Calls for Service: Sexual Assault

# The Validity of Sexual Assault Reports

The 2019 Sexual Assault National Demonstration Audit, which described strengths and gaps in how our community's criminal legal system meets the justice needs of sexual assault survivors, described how "Survivors not only fear that they won't be believed—in many cases they are not believed." <sup>15</sup>

The International Association for Chiefs of Police (IACP) recommends that police "do not rush to decide if a report is an information or crime report." However, the decrease in sexual assault reports corresponds with Bellingham Police Department's implementation of the Sex Crime Investigation category in May 2018.

# Sexual Assault as Reported by WASPC

According to the Washington Association of Sheriffs & Police Chiefs' (WASPC) Crime in Washington 2021 Annual Report,<sup>17</sup> in 2021 there were 122 reports of sexual assault offenses to Whatcom County's law enforcement agencies. This is part of a general decrease since 2017, even though Lummi Tribal Police data was included in the 2021 WASPC Report, but in 2019 and 2020 it was not included. See graph on next page for the trend from 2017-2021.

"I felt like the questions they're expected to ask don't have a survivor's mental state in mind. I know they're just trying to get succinct information or evidence, but it's really intimidating, and it feels like an interrogation." –Local Survivor

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> https://www.dvcommission.org/sanda (p. 7)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> https://www.theiacp.org/sites/default/files/all/s/SexualAssaultGuidelines.pdf

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> The data WASPC uses come from the FBI National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS). You can visit this resource to learn more about how Washington State RCWs relate to the categories set forth by the FBI: https://www.waspc.org/assets/CJIS/trainingmanualsandreference/nibrssexoffensegrid0817.pdf

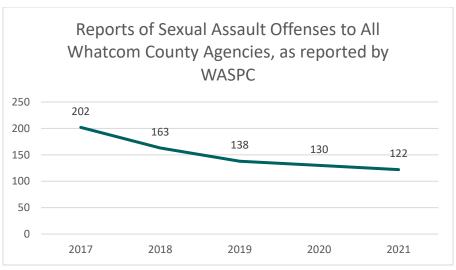


Figure 1

How local law enforcement agencies categorize reported crimes may not always match how those numbers are reported by WASPC because "All offenses are classified on the basis of law enforcement investigation in accordance with national UCR [Uniform Crime Reporting] offense definitions and are not necessarily identical to the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) or local ordinance definitions." Please see *Table 1* on the next page for data reported by individual law enforcement agencies.

# **Sexual Assault as Reported by Individual Agencies**

Depending on the agency's capacity and record management system, some Whatcom County law enforcement agencies provided more detailed information about reports of sexual violence in 2021. These numbers may not match the WASPC *Crime in Washington 2021 Annual Report*, due to differing classifications between legal definitions in Washington and how the FBI classifies offenses (see *Footnote 17* on page 6).

Sexual Assault Reports, as Reported by Local Agencies

	Bellingham	Blaine	Everson	Ferndale	Lynden	Sumas	WWU	Total
Rape (1st, 2nd, & 3rd Degree)	32	0	0	3	6	1	2	44
Sex Crime (No Rape)	0	3	0	21	7	0	0	31
Rape of a Child (1st, 2nd, & 3rd Degree)	28	0	0	1	2	0	0	31
Child Molestation	11	0	2	0	1	0	0	14
Indecent Liberties	3	0	0	1	1	1	1	7

<sup>18</sup> https://www.waspc.org/assets/CJIS/2021%20CIW.pdf (p. 3)

	Bellingham	Blaine	Everson	Ferndale	Lynden	Sumas	wwu	Total
Incest	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
Internet Crimes Against Children	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	10
Voyeurism	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	7

Table 1

Bellingham Police Department (BPD) also uses an additional category: "sex crime investigations." In 2021, 130 cases were classified as sex crime investigations, up from 93 in 2020. BPD categorizes a report as a sex crime investigation when the patrol officer believes that further investigation is needed to determine what if any crime occurred. This category can also include reports that came to BPD through a third party such as the Department of Children, Youth, and Families, but was later determined that the event did not occur in BPD's jurisdiction, or there was no disclosure from the child. The anonymous Sexual Assault Kits (evidence collected at sexual assault exams) are also included in this category.

We know that **most (65-74%) sexual assaults are not reported to law enforcement**<sup>19</sup> so a lower rate of reports does not indicate lower rate of offenses. We can wonder: What impacts reports of rape in our community? Trust in law enforcement? Support of family and friends? Belief that "something" will be done in response?

8

<sup>19</sup> https://bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/rsarp00.pdf

# Law Enforcement Calls for Service: Domestic Violence

In 2021 there were **3,185 domestic violence calls for service** to Whatcom County's law enforcement agencies.<sup>20</sup> Of these calls for service, there were **1,789 incidents that did NOT result in an arrest** (56%) and **1,396 domestic violence offenses where at least one party was arrested** (44%). Incidents that do not result in an arrest are sometimes referred to as "DV verbals" or "domestic disputes." In those calls for service, police determine that the legal definition of domestic violence has not been met.

Until July 2022, Washington State's RCW 26.50.010 defined domestic violence as "Physical harm, bodily injury, assault, or the infliction of fear of imminent physical harm, bodily injury or assault, sexual assault, or stalking..." of an intimate partner, or family or household member.<sup>21</sup>

This means that even in those calls where no arrest was made, an abusive person could have still caused harm to a survivor because the tactics used to establish power and control are harmful, even when they are not illegal. Overall, the 2021 totals for all of Whatcom County, and the percentages of arrest vs. non-arrest calls, are similar to 2019 and 2020. See *Figure 2* on next page.

Individual law enforcement agencies saw changes in offenses and non-arrest calls (See *Figure 2* on next page). Notably, Lynden, Blaine, and Ferndale Police Departments have had an increase in non-arrest calls, while Everson PD has had a decrease. Lummi Tribal Police and Ferndale PD have had an increase in DV arrests, while WCSO has seen a decrease.

"It felt like he lied to the police so he doesn't get in trouble. The police believed him over me, which made me feel alone and unheard, and validated that no matter what I did at the time I was not going to be heard by who needs to hear me." –Local Survivor

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Data collected from WASPC Crime in Washington 2020 Annual Report and individual law enforcement agencies.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> https://app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=26.50.010; See the updated definition: https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=10.99.020

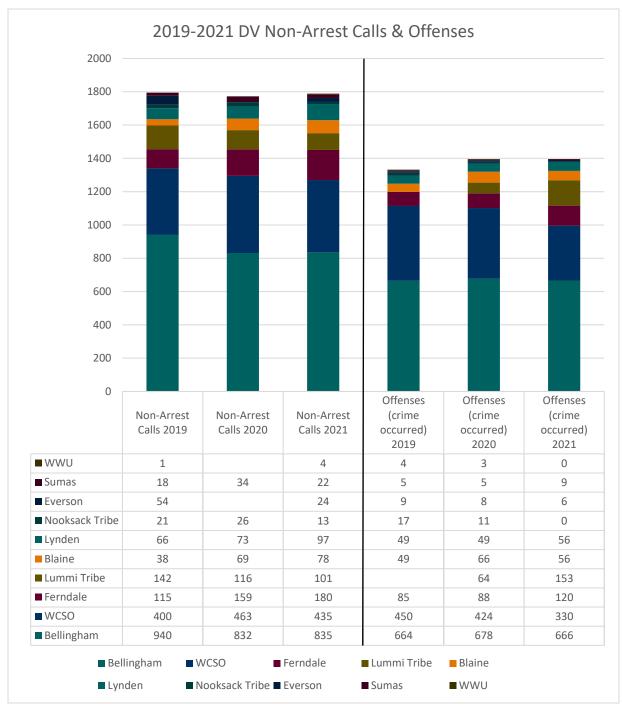


Figure 2

	Non-Arrest	Non-Arrest	Non-Arrest	Offenses	Offenses	Offenses
	Calls 2019	Calls 2020	Calls 2021	2019	2020	2021
Total	1795	1772	1789	1332	1396	1396

Table 1

Please Note: Blank portions of the chart indicate that data was unavailable to the SA/DV Commission. Non-Arrest Call data is provided by agencies. Offense data are provided by the WASPC Crime in Washington Annual Reports.

# **Protection Orders**

In 2021 there were a total of **206 requests for temporary orders of protection** against domestic violence and sexual assault in Whatcom County District and Superior Courts, and Nooksack Tribal Court.<sup>22</sup> Of those requests, approximately:

- 58% (120) were granted (became temporary orders)
- **32%** (66) became permanent (one-year) orders

Temporary protection orders prohibit the respondent (typically the offender) from contacting or approaching the petitioner (typically the survivor) in the period preceding the court hearing for a permanent order. Permanent orders typically last one year, although Judicial Officers have the authority to grant protections for shorter or longer periods of time. Violations of temporary or permanent orders can result in criminal charges. Reporting violations is the responsibility of the petitioner.

The percent approved for a permanent order was very similar to 2020, when 33% were approved, but a decrease from 2019 when 40% were approved. Of the 66 permanent protection orders granted in Whatcom County District and Superior Courts in 2021, approximately:

- 95% (63) were Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs)
- 5% (3) were Sexual Assault Protection Orders (SAPOs)

Denial of a temporary order does not always end a petition for a protection order. Data from Whatcom County District Court shows that of the 35 requests for a temporary Domestic Violence Protection Order, **15 were denied a temporary order, but granted a hearing** in front of a judicial officer. Of those 15, 5 were granted a permanent order. This means that for those 5 petitioners, even though their petition was ultimately approved, they did not have the protection a temporary order provides before a hearing. One Sexual Assault Protection Order case followed this pattern as well: a temporary order was denied, a hearing was granted, and then a permanent order was granted. We do not have data on how common this is in Superior Court.

"I was floored in court, hearing him talk about me and tell lies." -Local Survivor

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Lummi Tribal Court was not able to provide this data on their protection order applications

## **Forensic Exams**

In 2021 PeaceHealth St. Joseph Medical Center performed **124 forensic medical exams** (including sexual assault exams, domestic violence exams, and consults), an increase from 116 in 2020. The 2021 total includes **86 sexual assault forensic exams**, of which 22 were child sexual assault examinations for children 12 and younger. The remaining 64 sexual assault exams were for adults and adolescents ages 13 and above. 20 exams were categorized as consults, meaning the patient did not want a forensic collection kit or did not want a full forensic workup—sometimes survivors request prophylactic medications, sometimes they want to document the event in the medical record, sometimes it is outside the window for evidence collection. Of the 124 exams, **18** were domestic violence forensic exams.

Of those sexual assault incidents where the survivor sought a forensic exam:

- 18 survivors chose to have an anonymous kit collected. Anonymous kits are sent to the Washington State Patrol lab but will not be tested until "the incident has been reported to law enforcement."<sup>23</sup>
- 80 occurred in Whatcom County
  - Bellingham 46
  - Unincorporated Whatcom County 17
    - Ferndale 8
      - Lvnden 5
    - Lummi Reservation 4
- 11 occurred in Skagit County, 11 occurred somewhere else, and 5 were unknown location (either it was unclear from the patient's chart or the patient was unsure of the location).

"I didn't go directly after to get [a sexual assault exam] because I was in denial and pretending everything was normal." –Local Survivor

"I think there are only a few people in Bellingham who can help with a rape exam. The nurse was really, really good at her job."—Local Survivor

12

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> https://www.wsp.wa.gov/sak

# **Intimate Partner Homicides**

In Whatcom County in 2021, there were no homicides related to intimate partner violence (IPV).

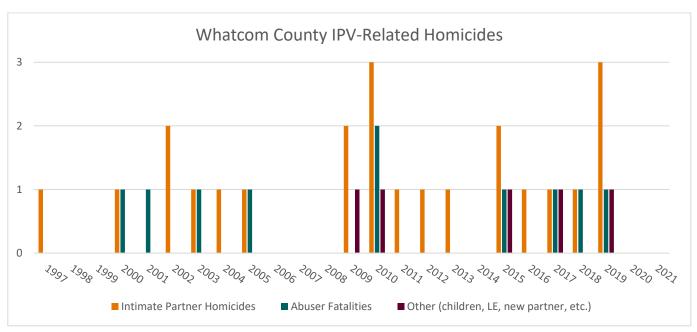


Figure 3

# **Community & Tribal-Based Advocacy Services**



# **Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services** of Whatcom County (DVSAS)

served a total of **1,247 unduplicated clients in 2021**. 1,074 of those clients were survivors of domestic violence and 247 were survivors of sexual assault or commercial sexual exploitation (SE). Those totals add to more than 1,247 because some of those clients received services for both domestic violence and sexual assault. In the same year, **67 clients utilized DVSAS' safe shelter services**. 886 students in Whatcom County received education on consent and healthy relationships. Services include:

#### **IMMEDIATE HELP**

- 24-hour helpline
- 24-hour forensic exam support

#### **SAFE HOUSING**

- Confidential shelter
- Homelessness prevention services
- Housing case management

#### **ONGOING SUPPORT**

- Advocacy counseling
- Legal advocacy
- Support groups

#### **EDUCATION PROGRAM**

- Teens Against Abuse peer advocacy
- The Empowerment Project: 3-session prevention program for middle & high school students

The number of clients DVSAS served dropped significantly from pre-COVID (2019), but **the number** of contacts per client has been rising (see *Figure 4* below, and *Figures 5 & 6* on page 15).

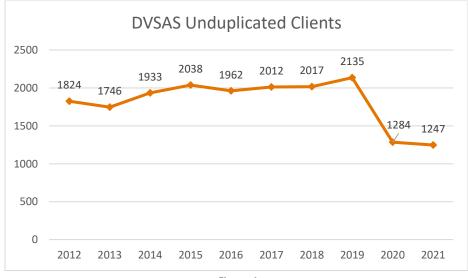


Figure 4

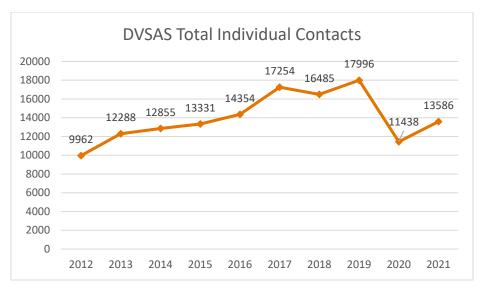


Figure 5

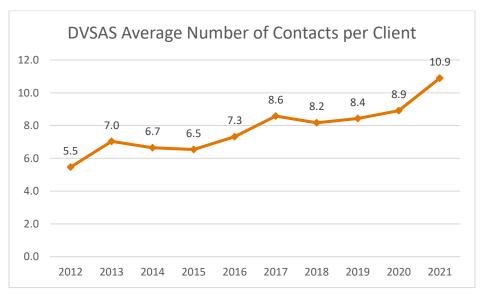


Figure 6



# **Survivor Advocacy Services at Western Washington University**

(WWU) served **92 students** in 2021. Almost all students served in 2021 were survivors who experienced intimate partner violence and/or sexual violence, but the students also include a small number of survivors who experienced stalking, sexual harassment, family violence, roommate concerns, and secondary survivors.

- 86 students received individual advocacy support
- 17 students attended virtual support groups (some students received both individual support and attended support group)

Survivor Advocacy Services is a confidential resource for WWU students who are experiencing or have experienced relationship (domestic, dating, intimate partner) violence or abuse, sexual violence, stalking, and/or sexual harassment.<sup>24</sup> Services include:

#### **ADVOCACY & SUPPORT**

- Support groups
- Reporting options
- Academic support
- Confidential 1-on-1 support
- Sessions with advocate

#### **REFERRAL & INFORMATION**

- Protection orders
- Medical assistance
- Legal assistance
- Financial aid solutions
- Housing solutions
- Emergency leave
- Counseling referrals

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> https://cwc.wwu.edu/survivorservices



Lummi Victims of Crime (LVOC) helps "any adult or adolescent who has been affected by domestic violence, sexual assault, elder abuse, assault & battery, survivor of homicide, child abuse, and sexual assault."<sup>25</sup> Services include:

#### **CRISIS COUNSELING**

- In-person or via telephone
- 24-hour hotline
- Safety planning and information
- On-scene advocacy for DV and SA crimes

#### **LEGAL ADVOCACY**

- Court hearings
- Protection and restraining orders

#### TRANSPORTATION & REFERRALS

- Therapy referrals sweats, smudges
- Traditional healing
- Transportation to medical, legal, and therapy appointments

#### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SHELTER

Ne-Alis Tokw (My Sister's Place)

#### **EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE**

- Replacement of house door locks and car windshields, broken due to DV incidents
- Boarding up house windows broken due to DV incidents

#### **EDUCATION**

- Teen Girls groups
- Free annual conferences
- Annual Missing and Murdered
   Indigenous Women Awareness Walk

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> https://www.lummi-nsn.gov/Website.php?PageID=399



**Tl'ils Ta'á'altha Victims of Crime**, a program of the Nooksack Indian Tribe, started in 2020. The mission of Tl'ils Ta'á'altha program "is to provide relief and support to community members who have suffered physical, emotional, or financial abuse as a result of domestic violence, sexual assault, and/or elder abuse; or who have otherwise been victimized."<sup>26</sup> Services include:

#### **CRISIS COUNSELING**

- In-person or via telephone
- 24-hour hotline
- Safety planning and danger assessment
- Active listening and support
- Information and referral

#### **EMERGENCY HOUSING & ASSISTANCE**

- Hotel/motel vouchers for participants and their dependents
- 24-hour emergency transportation

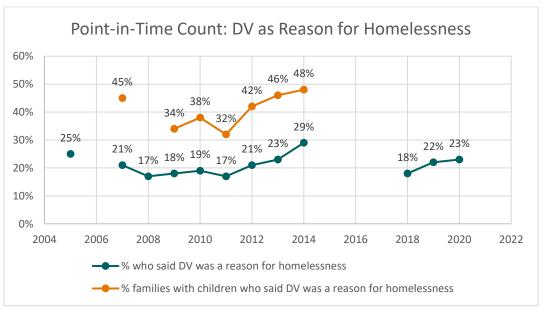
#### **LEGAL ADVOCACY**

- Attorney assistance with: protection orders, divorce or legal separation, spousal and child support, child custody, and visitation in state or tribal court
- Cooperation with law enforcement to assist participants and dependents

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> https://nooksacktribe.org/departments/youth-family-services/tlils-taaaltha-victims-of-crime-program/

## **Domestic Violence & Homelessness**

In January 2021, Whatcom County conducted the annual Point-in-Time Census of Homeless Residents.<sup>27</sup> To reduce disease transmission during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development called to limit the number of questions asked to reduce face-to-face interaction. The question about reasons for homelessness was not included. However, looking at past data, we see that domestic violence is a common reason that Whatcom County residents experience homelessness, especially impacting families with children. The graph below shows the percentage of Point-in-Time census respondents who said that DV was a reason they experienced homelessness, for years that data was reported in the Whatcom County Annual Report on Homelessness.



Fiaure 7

In 2021, **55% of young adults (18-24)** who utilized the young adult housing programs with Northwest Youth Services shared that they **had experienced domestic violence** at some point, slightly more than the 50% who said the same last year. **11% reported that they were fleeing domestic violence**, down from the 16% who said they were fleeing domestic violence in 2020.

"No place felt like home, no place felt safe."

-Local Survivor

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> https://www.whatcomcounty.us/DocumentCenter/View/57826/PIT2021

# **Spotlight Report:**

# Themes from Interviews with Survivors on Restorative & Transformative Justice

## **Coming Soon!**

From July through October 2022 an S/DV Commission workgroup has conducted interviews with more than 40 survivors of sexual and domestic violence to learn what justice and healing mean to them, and to guide a pilot project on restorative and transformative justice responses to domestic and sexual violence. Themes from those interviews will be published in early 2023.

## **Bellingham-Whatcom County Commission on Sexual & Domestic Violence**

October 2022

Community Appointments: Designated Government Representatives:

Beth Boyd, Greg Baker,

PeaceHealth Medical Center Bellingham Public Schools

Christina Byrne, William Elfo,

Western Washington University Whatcom County Sheriff's Office

Christina Kobdish, Starck Follis,

Unity Care Northwest Whatcom County Public Defender

Ken Levinson, Greg Hansen,
Nooksack Tribe City of Ferndale

Jason McGill, Erika Lautenbach,

Northwest Youth Services Whatcom County Health Department

Jessyca Murphy, Rebecca Mertzig,

Make.Shift Art Space Bellingham Police Department

Moonwater, Alan Marriner,

Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center Bellingham City Attorney

Emily O'Connor Diane Miltenberger,

Lydia Place Department of Social & Health Services

Katie Olvera, Darlene Peterson,

KPO Counselling Bellingham Municipal Court

Chris Roselli, Dave Reynolds,

Western Washington University Whatcom County Superior Court

Garret Shelsta, Eric Richey,

Stuff You Can Use Whatcom County Prosecutor

Krista Touros, Adrienne Renz,

PeaceHealth Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Services

Raquel Vernola, Donnell Tanksley,

Whatcom Community College Blaine Police Department

Pamela Wheeler, Annie Taylor,

Opportunity Council Department of Children, Youth, and Families

Bruce Van Glubt,

Whatcom County District Court

### dvcommission.org