

# **OFFICE FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME SEXUAL ASSAULT SERVICES GRANT**

**Presentation to General Council**

**June 17, 2021**

Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation  
Family Violence Services, Department of Public Safety

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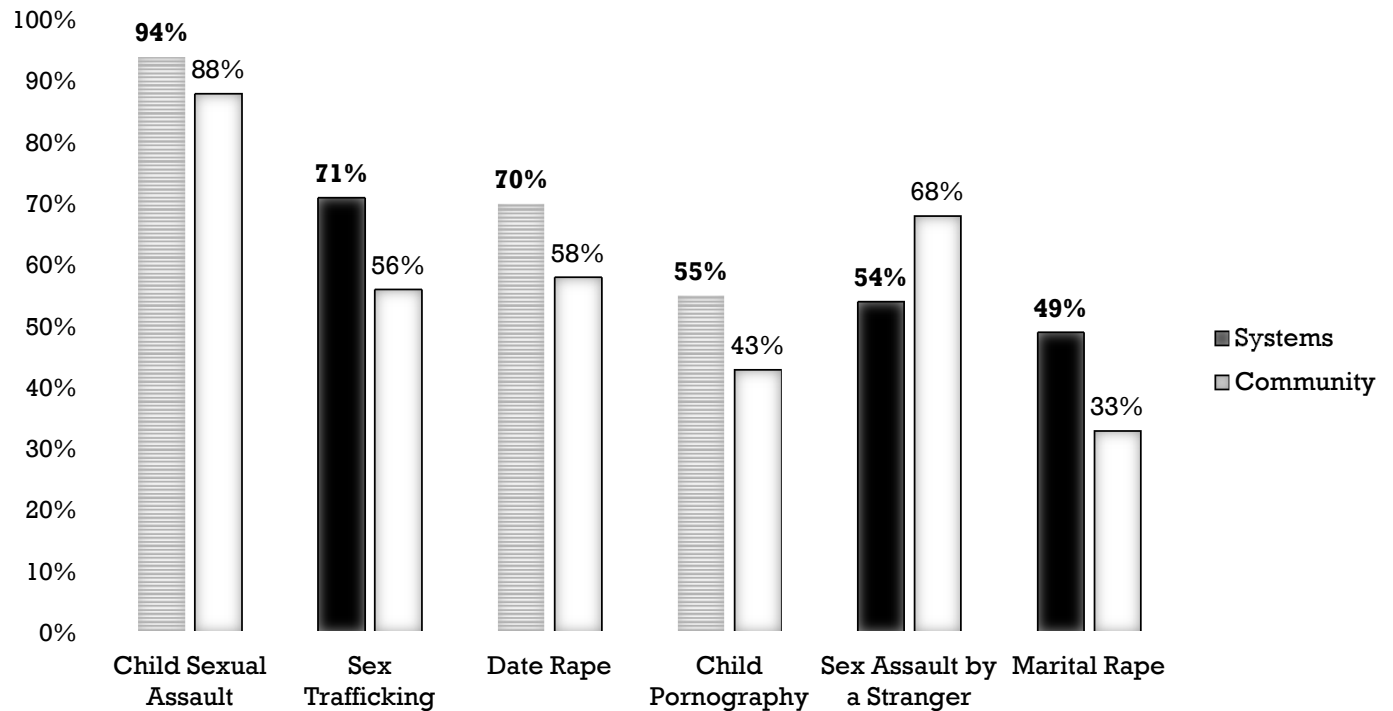
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# SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN THE COMMUNITY

## Awareness of SV in the Community?

- 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of the System and a little less than half of the Community reported they were “somewhat aware”
- A third (37%) of Systems and (53%) of the Community respondents reported they were “very aware”

## TYPES OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE OF MOST CONCERN



# IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY

## ➤ Generational and Life Long

*“Sexual abuse of minors and rape are an epidemic that no one wants to talk about but it is common to the point that predators aren’t ostracized even though everyone knows who they are.”*

*“Lots of secrecy, which leads victims to believe assault is something normal, like a horrible rite of passage, therefore not worth talking about or having services to address the problem from prevention to intervention to recovery.”*

*“My friends have shared their personal sexual violence experiences with me that they experienced as children, teenagers, and adults.”*

*“I am a survivor of sexual abuse at a young age, then as an adult in a domestic violence relationship and now know a few that have dealt with sexual abuse at a young age or survivors like myself. This has been happening for years and now some are beginning to speak about their experiences and not wanting this to continue for everyone.”*

*“I have seen the revolving door sexual assault within families and they keep it quiet if it’s another family member.”*

*“Personally, there have been several females in my immediate family who experienced sexual assault. I know there are many things that go on at the casino or behind closed doors that severely impact the community.”*

## ➤ Shame

*“There is a fear of reporting such offenses as it may place a bad outlook on the person reporting it. Often I feel that sexual violence occurs without anyone knowing.”*

*“Secrets, violence, and retaliation.”*

*“I have seen lives derailed by the untreated trauma. The victim is ashamed and they use unhealthy behaviors to numb themselves. It leads to future trauma in the household of the victim. Although I never experience any sexual assault, being around those who had, left me hypervigilant as a young person. I was also anxious and untrusting.”*

## IMPACT CONTINUED

### ➤ Ignored, Unaddressed, Normalized

*“I believe this is a hidden crime. People do not stand up to protect the victims.”*

*“I have a sister who has been in a violent sexual relationship for a while now. She is so beat down, she does not even talk to us anymore. I have heard of other complaints on the streets against people of power and no one listens.”*

*“Many people live in fear and more often than not, sexual assault has become normalized.”*

*“Child molestation runs rampant here and most are not reported, therefore the abusers go unpunished.”*

*“It is scary to let our kids go out and play.”*

### ➤ Drug/Alcohol Addiction

*“PTSD that causes victims to use drugs and alcohol as a coping mechanism, not enough reporting especially among family members, children becoming victims at young ages without proper treatment to help them navigate their own wellbeing or future.”*

*“People become drug addicted or use alcohol just to deal with what has happened to them.”*

*“The use of drugs and alcohol contribute. There are predators that use these things to commit their acts.”*

*“I saw my friends go through it when we were in high school, they lost their way due to no help or support and turned to hard core drugs to escape what happened to them.”*

## **HOW HAS IT CHANGED?**

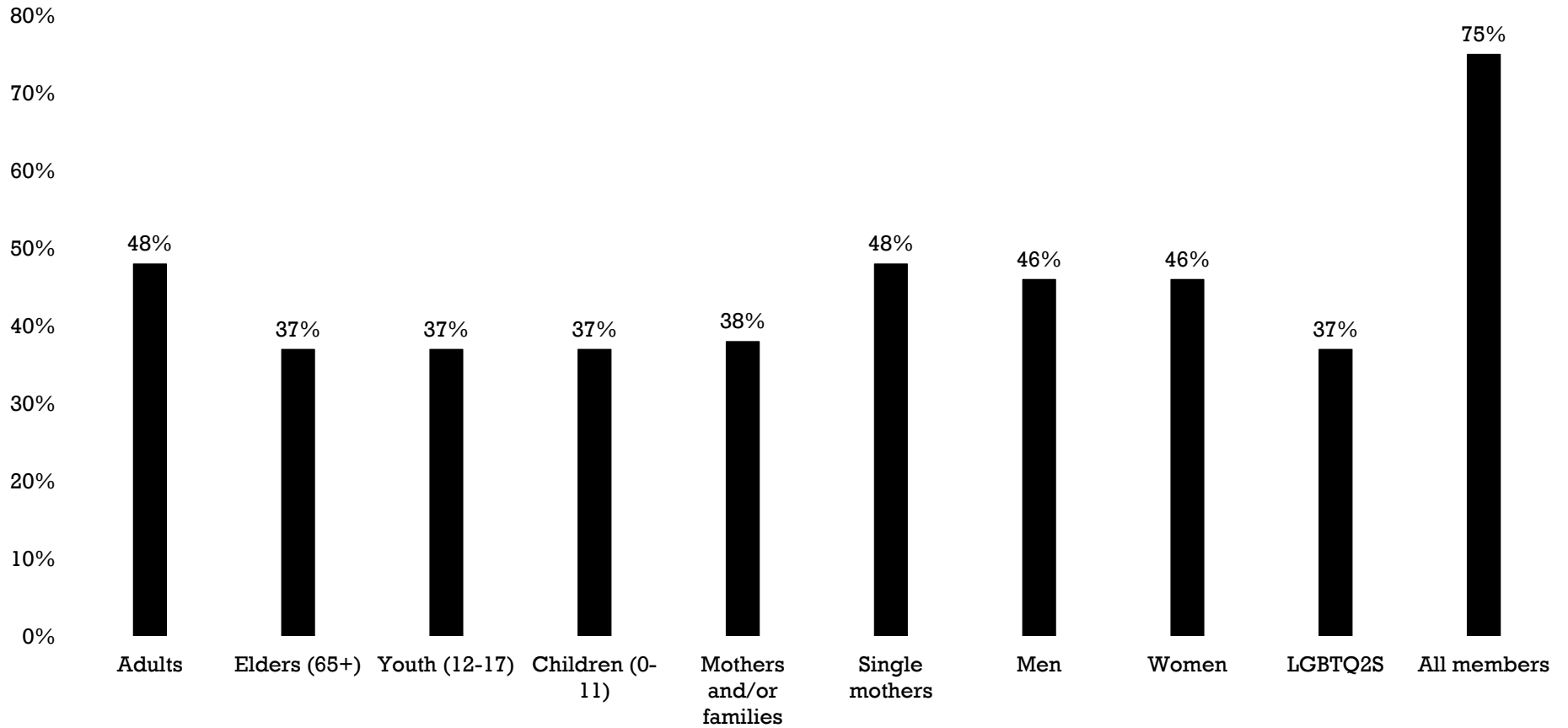
- 55% (Systems) and 46% (Community) believe it has remained about the same;
- 35% (Systems) and 35% (Community) believe it has become much worse over time.
- ❖ People believe the presence of drugs and alcohol has increased the amount of sexual violence;
- ❖ Women are afraid to come forward so because of that, it can't improve;
- ❖ It is still being ignored and victims are being shamed and offenders are not being held accountable;
- ❖ Not enough data being collected and reported to help show how bad the issue is and how it can be improved.

# QUOTES

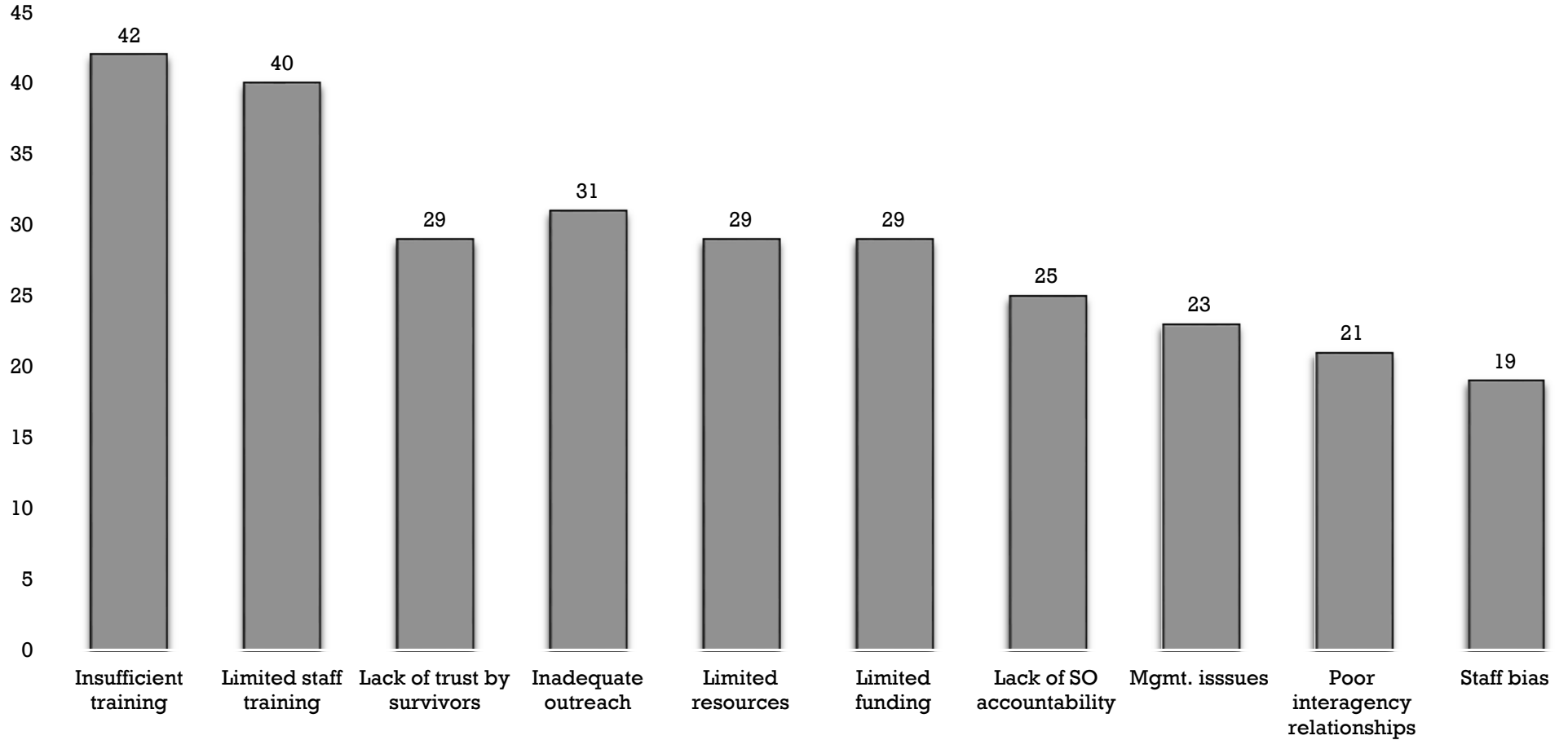
- *“With drugs like meth and heroin, it’s gotten worse because predators are lowering their inhibitions even more.”*
- *“Youth that are under the influence of intoxicants have been assaulted by adults providing the minors alcohol or drugs.”*
- *“Still hear about parties on the rez and girls getting taken advantaged of go hangout with a friend and end up getting gang raped by many known people. It is still going on to this day. Some people just turn the other way because they are not aware or don’t know how to help the one asking for help.”*
- *“I don’t have any data. The case of the non-Native sexual victim on the Rez got a lot of attention. But where is the same intensity for prosecuting Native cases?”*
- *“That would have to be surveyed just because we don’t hear of it does not mean it is not happening. We have predators that when women are passed out they prey on them. One in general who has done that to 12 women and is still walking around free, bragging about his conquests.”*
- *“Well, there was a business down the road that had over a lifetime of child porn that got caught. Now I keep an eye out for strange people.”*
- *“There are three known sexual predators that victims haven’t come forward and told their stories due to fear and no follow up by the police.”*

# WORKPLACE

## PEOPLE SERVED BY RESPONDENTS WORKPLACE



# BARRIERS TO PROVIDING SERVICES TO VICTIMS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE





## COMMENTS

*“The only training that comes to mind is sexual harassment training, but there is nothing easily accessible that you can reference for the process (i.e., bulletin boards, posters, etc.). Since children are allowed on casino property, I feel there should be a more rigorous process to vet out any sex offenders. Gaming employees must go through background checks, but non-gaming employees don’t.”*

*“Offenders are prosecuted to the extent of the crime and often released from jail within days of being arrested. Staff turnover means newly hired do not have training or experience to deal or hard situations. Lot of tribal members are not willing to seek or even report abuse and this is where trained or experienced staff are most needed in such positions.”*

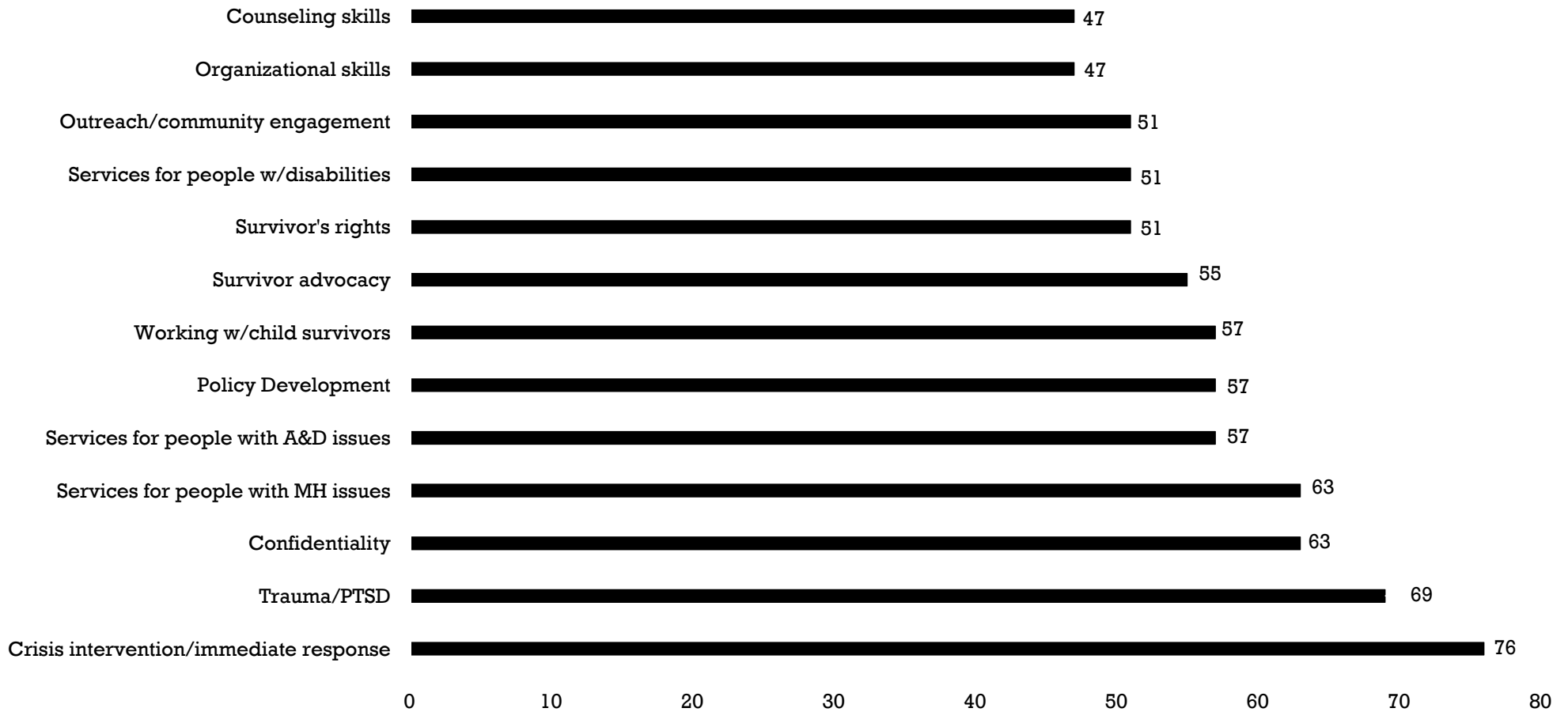
*“Gaming industry views taking a stance on sexual violence in the gaming industry would hurt business.”*

*“When there is a lack of sex offenders being held accountable for their actions, it causes mistrust in the system by victims and contributes to employee burnout and turn over. When there are no good working relationships with other departments due to bias and prejudice this results in victims falling through the cracks to get the needed services after an assault.”*

## COMMENTS CONTINUED

- *“The harassment training applies only to workplace interactions. I think that there needs to be more trauma informed training for all staff. I work with mostly men and they don’t always understand what is offensive but they are receptive to education on the topic.”*
- *“HR does their annual Sexual Harassment training but I feel like that is more for them to check off the box that they did the training. Just follow the chain of the command basically and appeal within like 5 or ten days. There's like no trainings in providing support to survivors so am assuming its the normal procedures in the work I do. I would definitely sign up for a training if one is offered, I only know of the awareness walks at this time. There was also that conference that one time a few years ago in partnership with the county and state.”*
- *“We are interrelated and families work with or for abuser or family member and do not step up to confront or protect let alone follow up and reporting of crime so no matter how much resources we will get it will just be training that provides training as families will not step up to stop or help convict their family member. It will too get pushed under rug of shame.”*
- *“Staff are not involved with the community per say. There is a lack of empathy or understanding for tribal members.”*
- *“When there is lack of sex offenders being held accountable for their actions it causes mistrust in the system by victim and contributes to employee burnout and turn over. When there is not a good working relationship with other departments due to bias and personal prejudice among other personnel in tribal programs this results in victims falling threw the cracks to get the needed services after a sexual assault.”*

# TYPES OF TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDED



# COMMENTS

- *“Training should not be limited to social workers, healthcare workers, etc. but as many as possible. FVP would be able to build up a volunteer base for the entire community.”*
- *“Again, this is not just about serving a victim. It's about trying to PREVENT sexual assault to begin with. Need training to take place and invite young people to attend. Even writing a column for helpful ideas to stay safe.”*
- *“Whatever it is going to take to get the survivors trust. If they hear no on anything, they are going to stay in the same cycle. Because at least they know what to expect.”*
- *“Mark sure the person who is hired gets the training they need to provided the services to assist these people who need help and provide safety . Someone needs to be hired who can do grant writing so additional funds can be looked for and money will be available to keep your programs moving in the right direction.”*
- *“Maybe with more awareness for victims they will find the inner spirit to report and stand against their families to protect the next victim of this. But it will take culture change as it is generational and has had the blind eye of change for so very very long.”*
- *“Find a way to protect those who report it!”*
- *“I think there are many well intentioned community members but sometimes their need to ‘know what happened’ puts the victim in a place of shame and possible identity exposure. So there is a need for confidentiality training.”*
- *“Immediate sexual response advocate that keeps story confidential and is an expert in PTSD to make sure the victim feel comfortable reporting. Empower local child survivors to tell their story, recovery, and how others can get help. This will allow victims to not feel alone and who they can reach out to for help.”*

## **COMMUNITY NEEDS**

### *Top 5 services most needed but missing..*

- 1. Mental health services**
- 2. Emergency shelter/transitional housing**
- 3. Housing assistance/low income housing**
- 4. Drug/alcohol treatment**
- 5. Sex offender accountability**
- 6. SANE's**

### *Would address those needs..*

- 1. Training for staff/capacity building**
- 2. Funding/money (more staff)**
- 3. Community education**
- 4. Cooperation and collaboration among agencies**
- 5. Prevention efforts**

### **Most underserved populations..**

- 1. Child sexual abuse survivors**
- 2. Child abuse survivors**
- 3. Youth (12-17)**
- 4. Survivors of domestic violence and dating violence**
- 5. Children (0-11)  
Sex trafficking/sexual assault survivors**

# SUGGESTIONS

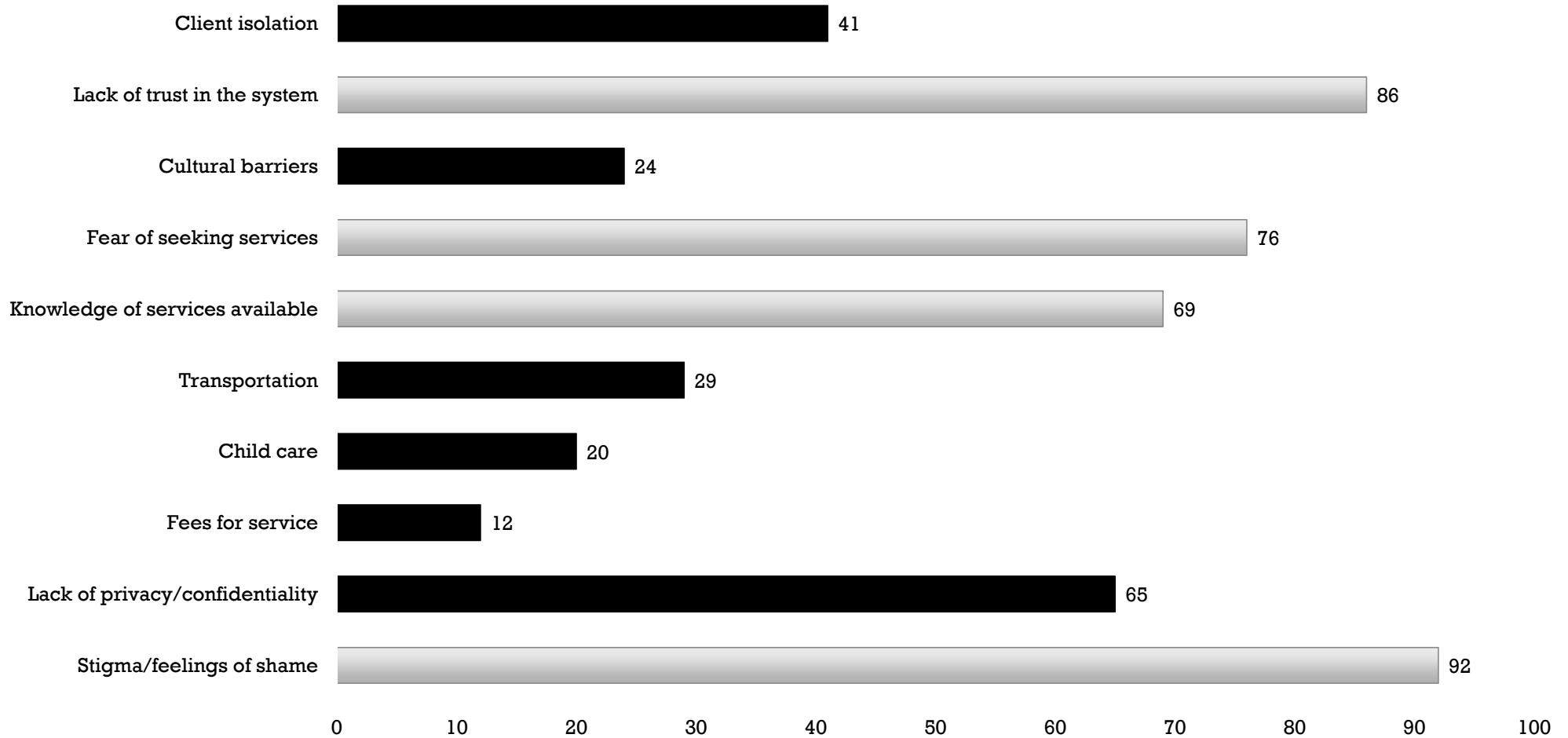
*“We need funding to bring in trainers. The children need to know what is safe and acceptable behavior. This is especially important if they have been confused by exposure to unsafe behavior in the past. They need to know so that they can do better when they grow up. When I was a peer counselor all through my school years I learned a lot about what others had gone through and I learned how to make them feel heard. It gave me confidence. It also let me do good. I was able get those who needed more professional help the information and confidence to seek more help. It was very rewarding and important.”*

*“Prevention education is so, so important. If we can't talk about it in a prevention frame of mind then how are we going to make a change? If sexual violence isn't being talked about for fear of stigmatization or stereotyping or whatever, then how are we going to know how to advocate and help people who are dealing with the after effects? How are we going to educate our young children about what sexual violence is...because I'm sure they witness it. Let's take the blinders off and talk about it because it sure as hell isn't being talked about right now.”*

*“Moving beyond grant or external funding, and funding as a key health and safety (basic human rights) protection and service goal.”*

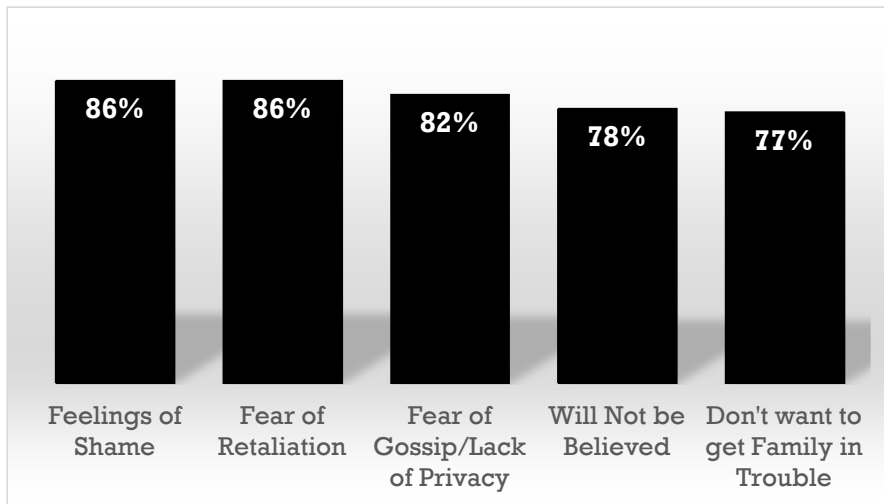
*“Staff/Officer training to be able to see this type of issue. Instead of jumping to their own conclusion. Education - I think everyone could use education on this. How do we help our loved ones when they cannot trust us anymore? And they do not trust the agencies either anymore. They go back to what they know.”*

# BARRIERS FOR SA VICTIMS/SURVIVORS AS REPORTED BY SYSTEM RESPONDENTS

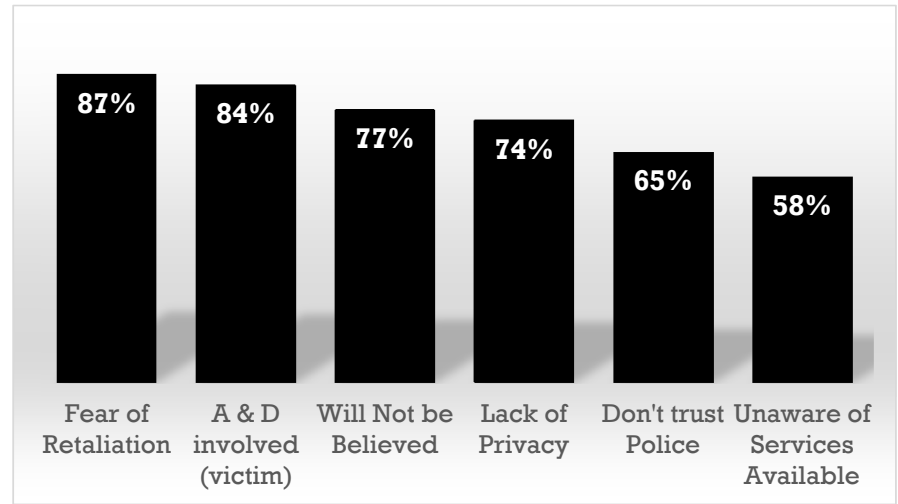


# REASONS COMMUNITY RESPONDENTS BELIEVE A VICTIM WOULD NOT REPORT TO:

## Family or Friends

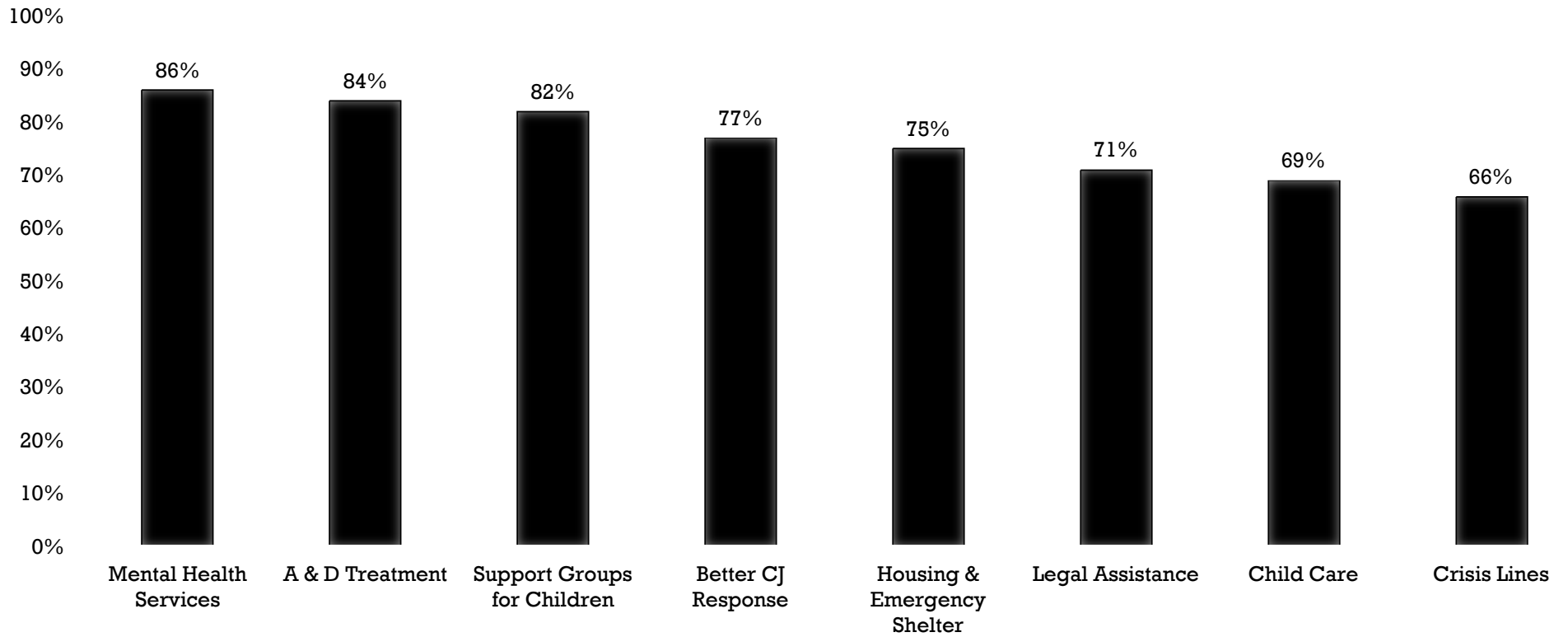


## Law Enforcement or Health Services





# SERVICES MOST NEEDED



# FINAL THOUGHTS

*“The stats are way lower than they actually are. I don’t know a single female friend that hasn’t been a victim of physical or sexual violence. I would put the stat at 19 out of 20 at least.”*

*“Need more teeth for victims who are made to feel twice violated when their abuser is not held accountable.”*

*“Hiring a culturally sensitive, educated and conscientious person to a position of sexual assault /DV investigator.”*

*“We have no programs whatsoever that address the needs of children and young adults. The Prevention program at YellowHawk has ended and so with it is gone the suicide prevention program, high school gathering, prevention community events and programming. There needs to be services and programs to educate the kids and young adults. Our elders are important but so is the younger population as well.”*

*“A SANE would be amazing to have here locally. I’ve heard victims have to go to Hermiston for exams. That is awful.”*

*“Would like to see sexual violence prevention services to grow and incorporate more leadership voices speaking within the community, both men and women. Having just 1 or 2 faces lends to the tendency to box that as a personal issue, rather than to be a broader effort. I am grateful for the existing services - it just seems like a staggering burden to place on just a few folk when it’s such a pervasive issue, and warrants far more resources. Even with a positive support system - the impacts of SA from my youth stay with me for a lifetime, and I continue to work on those issues to this day.”*

*“More community awareness to assure sexual assault is not normal and it is not shameful to be a victim.”*

*“If there is no trust among the organizations, we will continue to fail.”*

*“I take this subject very serious being a sexual assault survivor myself and knowing others personally who have experienced it and I think more accountability needs to happen when someone reports an incident.”*

# **COMMUNITY INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS**

# **THEMES**

- **Overall lack of faith in law enforcement but most would still urge them to report so they have a record;**
- **Sexual violence has become normalized – so much so that some don't even know to report it or have the words to describe it;**
- **Need to be believed and provided access to services even if they have alcohol and drug issues;**
- **Most know about FVS even if they weren't familiar with all of the services provided – Desireé is the face of that program;**
- **Wrap around services are needed;**
- **Increase in gang activity which has increased sexual violence against women and men;**
- **Need traditional healing activities – but not sure what that looks like;**
- **Most people think it is getting worse over time;**
- **Most had faith in the medical system although a few felt like the medical system treats them like they are just looking for meds;**
- **Families will protect their own to the detriment of the victims/survivors.**

## SELECT QUOTES

- *“The silent are screaming! It is a blessing that they are able to pull out but they are walking in deep hopelessness. They are silently wondering where they can go what can they do, who can they trust. Even the parents. They are living alone in their silent fears. That is why these victims are trying to decide if they should kill themselves.”*
- *“Four out of five ladies I recently spoke to shared they have been sexually abused as a child or raped.”*
- *“My abuse was invalidated because I was using. There is no faith in law enforcement.”*
- *“A woman who has been raped or sexually abused as a child doesn’t want to take all of her clothes off and get in a sweat lodge.”*
- *“I think a lot of punishment is now put on the victim because they are the ones punished for life. Mentally, emotionally, spiritually...whatever their abuse entails. They are punished for life.”*
- *“Because everybody is related, because we have our own government, people will overlook stuff because they are relatives. They don’t want them punished or turned in.”*
- *They aren’t reporting. They are made to shut up. There are being used by their own family members or incested and so people just want them to shut up.”*
- *“People don’t always have the word. That was the case for me. In your own home, if you see it happening to other kids, you think is a natural, normal thing. Some don’t realize it isn’t until they are adults and someone tells them.”*
- *“People don’t have faith in the police. They believe that they are in on the sex trafficking and making money off of it. No one trust them because they do nothing about nothing.”*
- *“I still have to see the person who raped me. Nothing was done. I have 2 years sober now and I just go to work and home so I don’t have to see him because I don’t know how to deal with seeing him.”*

# QUOTES CONTINUED

- “Most men don’t sit around and talk about it. A lot of girls will talk to each other. When you are sober, it’s like having that really bad pain in your arm. You don’t just sit with the pain, you take a pill so you can forget about it a while. That’s why I drank. I could forget about it a while. We are programmed not to say anything. Keep it in. We don’t know how to talk about our feelings. I still have a hard time feeling sorry for myself. It sucks! That’s just how men are raised.”
- “We were raised that what happens in our house stays in our house. You don’t run your mouth to the teachers.”
- “When I was 7, they pushed it under the carpet and moved me away when my grandpa did that to me. I always felt like I wasn’t important enough for someone to help me.”
- “What happened to that man was brutal, four other guys raped him. He walked down the hell and they all stood on the top of the hill and laughed at him. They called it the walk of shame. This also happened to women. I went across the field and jumped a fence so I didn’t have to go through that. Then I hitchhiked with a trucker.”
- “A lot of perpetrators were victims as children. Some by the priests at the church that I know of. They don’t like to talk about it though.”
- “They aren’t reporting it to police because they don’t want more shame. They don’t do anything anyway. I know other people who have experienced rape and they didn’t want to feel more shame so they just carry it for the rest of their lives and take it to the grave.”
- “The gangs are targeting youth who are about to get their 18 money. They jump them in when they are 18 and then take over their lives. The girls start at about 14, having sex with gang members, dropping out of school and ending up on alcohol and drugs and then the gangs turn them out and make money off of them. They never finish school.”

# **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- More community education – target youth in schools. Teach them how to recognize grooming, what is consent and what real love looks like;
- Create more safe spaces for victims to go to get away from the abuse even if they are using substances – need runaway shelters and safe houses;
- Create specialized support groups for survivors – maybe separate one for child sexual abuse survivors;
- A change in attitude – stop accepting this as normal;
- Counselors who work after normal working hours;
- Educate parents about sex trafficking and how to recognize the signs;
- Educate community members and business about sex trafficking and how to recognize the signs;
- Get our culture back in the schools;
- Outreach in the jails – they are eventually going to come back;
- More banishment of those hurting others or shame them by telling the community what they have done (put it in the newspaper);
- Teach the community about how to acknowledge this is really happening here and the harm that ignoring it does;
- Have professionals who can actually address PTSD;
- Host more community conferences;
- More campaigns that tell people how to recognize signs, who to go to for help, where to go to get safe, etc.;
- Actively seek out and close the known drug houses and find a way to get rid of the gangs – most aren't from our tribe.

## **NEXT STEPS**

- Presentation to CCWIC, Health Commission, General Council, Law & Order
- Week of June 21 - Focus Groups, Optional Individual Interview, Projects Advisory Board Meeting
- August 2021 Community Presentation-Final Report

Q - Thoughts or recommendations regarding prelim findings; thoughts on Community Presentation

Q - Engaging service providers; actions steps; benchmarks

**Thank you!**



# **INCREASING ACCESS TO SERVICES BY SEXUAL ASSAULT SURVIVORS: THE VOICES AND PERSPECTIVES OF THE TRIBAL COMMUNITY**

**We are nearing the end of our survey process and have another opportunity for you to provide concerns and recommendations. First time Focus Group participants eligible to receive \$50.**

## **Meeting dates - all meetings at NGC L101A Walla Walla:**

<b>June 21</b>	<b>9 a.m. to 11 a.m.</b>	<b>Elders</b>
	<b>2 p.m. to 4 p.m.</b>	<b>18+ years of age</b>
<b>June 22</b>	<b>10 a.m. to noon</b>	<b>18+ years of age</b>
<b>June 23</b>	<b>6 p.m. to 8 p.m.</b>	<b>18+ years of age</b>
<b>June 24</b>	<b>6 p.m. to 8 p.m.</b>	<b>18+ years of age</b>

**For more information or if you prefer to meet individually outside of the focus groups, contact Desireé Coyote at 541-240-4170.to arrange for week of June 21<sup>st</sup> thru June 24<sup>th</sup>.**