

Survivors FIRST

Facilitating Interventions and Resources for Survivors of Trauma



Survivor-Defendant

Survivor of domestic violence, sexual violence, or trafficking/prostitution

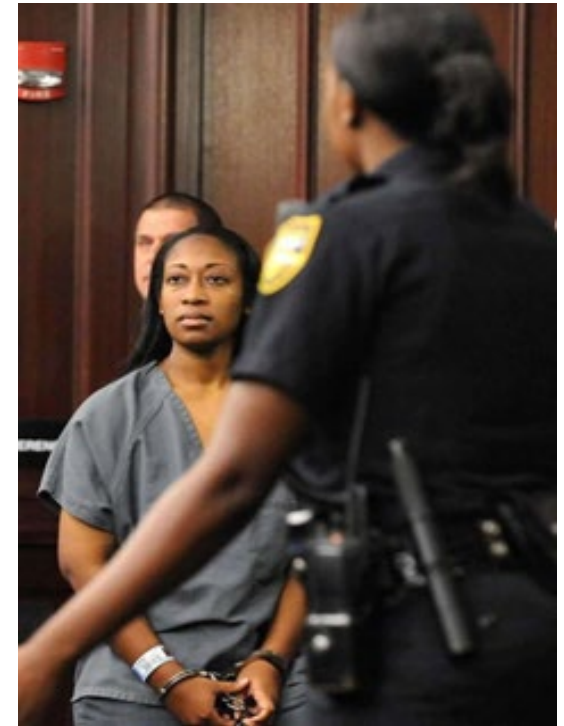
Has been arrested and now facing criminal charges

Survivors FIRST Program

- ▶ Partnership between YWCA and KCPAO
- ▶ Diversion program for survivor-defendants with intervention services
- ▶ Voluntary engagement model
- ▶ Referral sources: KCPAO, city prosecutors, defense attorneys, community
- ▶ National model

Why Survivors FIRST?

- ▶ Black survivors face many barriers to finding safety, justice, and accessing supportive DV services
 - ▶ IP violence 35% higher than White Women
 - ▶ Police response after calling 911
 - ▶ Stereotype of the “Angry Black Woman”
 - ▶ Not appearing to be a “victim”
 - ▶ More likely to be arrested/charged when seeking safety
 - ▶ Visibility of injuries
 - ▶ Mandatory arrest laws



Why Survivors FIRST?

- ▶ Race and gender
 - ▶ Women are disproportionately survivors of domestic violence & sexual violence
 - ▶ Black women experience domestic violence at higher rates than others
 - ▶ Black women and women of color are disproportionately criminalized and incarcerated
 - ▶ Black women charged are overwhelmingly survivors of gender-based violence

Why Survivors FIRST?

- ▶ Abuse to prison pipeline
 - ▶ Behavioral reaction to abuse and trauma is criminalized
 - ▶ 71% - 95% of incarcerated women have experienced domestic violence
 - ▶ 76% - 81% of girls in juvenile justice system have experienced sexual violence
 - ▶ Sexual abuse is one of the primary predictors of girls' entry into the system
- ▶ Drug Court, Mental Health Court, Veterans Court
 - ▶ But nothing for survivors of gender-based violence
 - ▶ Identify and address the unmet needs of criminalized survivors

Sources:

Women's Experience of Abuse as a Risk Factor for Incarceration: A Research Update
The Sexual Abuse to Prison Pipeline: The Girls' Story

Why Survivors FIRST?

- ▶ Service needs
 - ▶ Provide survivor-defendants with a coordinated response to be referred for equitable access for direct services
 - ▶ Survivor-defendants face legal problems that have a direct impact on every aspect of their lives (family, health care, credit, housing, education and access to services)
 - ▶ Black survivor-defendants have the greatest unmet service needs across the board

Why Survivors FIRST?

- ▶ Lose job and unable to get a new job with criminal record
 - ▶ 72.7% of survivors suffered barrier to employment
- ▶ Lose housing and ineligible for new housing
 - ▶ 57.6% of survivors suffered barriers to housing
- ▶ Lose children and must fight abuser in court to regain custody
- ▶ Unable to leave abuser → abuse takes control again
- ▶ Unable to get a job → criminal activity

Sources:

[National Survivor Network Members Survey: Impact of Criminal Arrest and Detention on Survivors of Human Trafficking](#)

Pathways from Victimization to Incarceration

- ▶ Self-defense: did they use violence to protect themselves and fight back against an abuser?
 - ▶ Ex: Charged with Assault 4 DV after fighting back against an abuser
- ▶ Entrapment: did the abuser falsely accuse the victim of criminal activity?
 - ▶ Ex: Charged with Harassment DV after abuser lies to police
- ▶ Coercion: were they coerced by an abuser to participate in a crime or take blame for a crime?
 - ▶ Ex: Charged with Possession of Stolen Vehicle when victim accepts blame out of fear of further violence from abuser

Sources:

[Women's Experience of Abuse as a Risk Factor for Incarceration: A Research Update](#)

Pathways from Victimization to Incarceration

- ▶ Trauma response: Is their behavioral reaction to abuse and trauma criminalized?
 - ▶ Ex: Charged with Theft 3 when homeless and without resources after fleeing domestic violence
 - ▶ Ex: Charged with VUCSA when drug use is the result of PTSD from trafficking and prostitution

Sources:

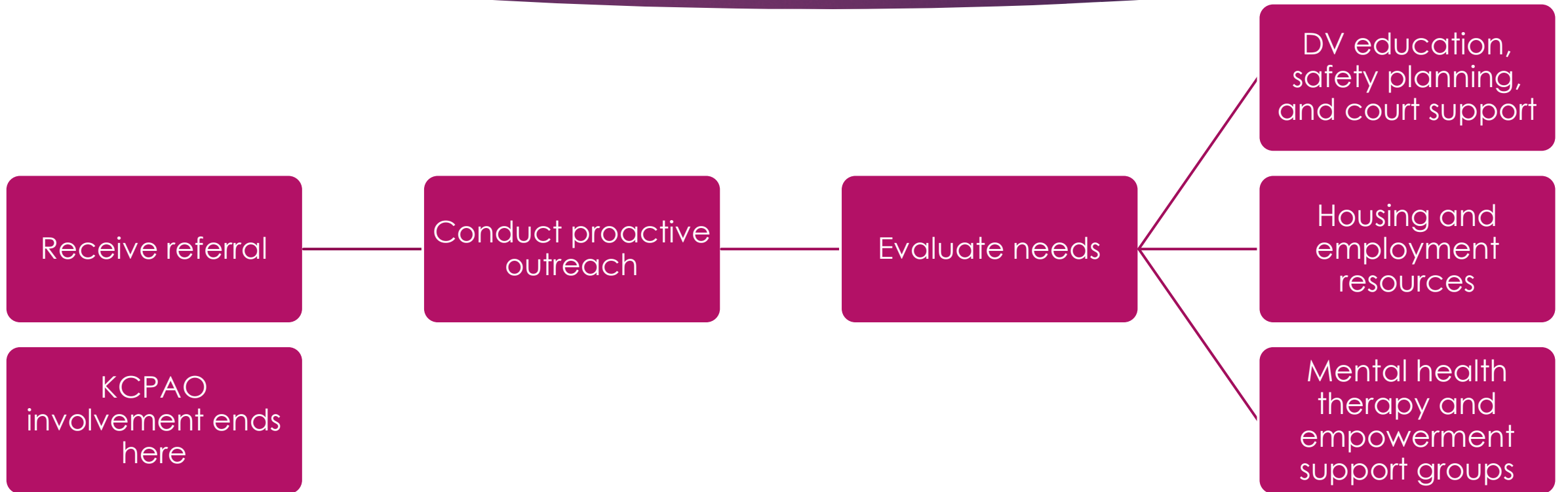
[Women's Experience of Abuse as a Risk Factor for Incarceration: A Research Update](#)

Eligibility for Survivors FIRST

1. Legally recognized as victim of gender-based violence (domestic violence, sexual violence, trafficking/prostitution) – any of the following:
 - ▶ Victim in criminal case or police report (even if declined or dismissed)
 - ▶ Protected party in NCO, DVPO, or SAPO (even if denied)
 - ▶ Prostitution criminal history
 - ▶ Victimization verified by trusted community-based victim service agency
 - ▶ Facts of current case indicate victimization
2. Facing criminal charges in King County (pre-filing or post-filing):
 - ▶ Misdemeanor (with some exceptions, ex: DUIs, assaults against minors)
 - ▶ First-time nonviolent felony (with some exceptions)

*Eligibility does not result in automatic acceptance. Prosecutorial discretion still applies and the prosecutor on the case and their supervisor must agree.

How it Works at the YWCA



Questions?

Refer cases to: survivorsfirst@kingcounty.gov

To learn more: <https://www.ywcaworks.org/programs/survivors-first>

Doris O'Neal | YWCA

doneal@ywcaworks.org | (206) 280-9961

Ariana Orford | King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office

aorford@kingcounty.gov | (206) 477-7169