

**Seeking Safety: A Study
with Domestic Violence
Service Providers about
Seattle's Paid Sick and
Safe Time Ordinance**

Jennifer Morton, MSW/MPHc

Table of Contents

Abstract	i
Executive Summary	ii
Rationale.....	ii
Background	ii
Service Provider Interviews.....	ii
Recommendations.....	ii
Acknowledgements:	iii
I. Background	1
Domestic violence statistics	1
Effect on economic security	1
Effect on employment.....	2
Disclosing experiences in the workplace	3
Workplace support desired by survivors.....	4
Workplace policies and benefits	4
Importance of paid leave	6
Seattle’s Paid Sick and Safe Time Ordinance	6
II. Rationale	7
III. Methods	8
Participants	8
Procedures.....	8
Analysis	9
IV. Results	9
Service Providers	9
<i>Demographics</i>	9
<i>Role</i>	10
<i>Clients</i>	11
Domestic Violence and Employment.....	11
<i>Survivor Needs</i>	11
<i>Employment Interference</i>	12
PSSTO in practice	13
<i>Provider Awareness</i>	13
<i>Provider Knowledge</i>	14
Anticipated effects on survivors.....	15
<i>Benefits of the Ordinance</i>	15
<i>Challenges of the Ordinance</i>	16
V. Discussion	20
VI. Recommendations	22
VII. Strengths	23
VIII. Limitations	23

IX. Conclusion	24
References.....	25
Appendix A: Logic Model of PSSTO Intended Consequences	27
Appendix B: Safe Time Evaluation Demographic Form	28

Abstract

Previous studies have found that experiencing domestic violence (DV) negatively impact survivors' employment and economic security. The Paid Sick and Safe Time Ordinance (PSSTO) passed by the City of Seattle in 2011 seeks to lessen the effects of DV on the economic well being of survivors.

Rationale

This study explores the knowledge level of domestic violence service providers regarding the PSSTO, if these service providers have discussed the PSSTO with their clients, and how the service providers anticipate the PSSTO will affect DV survivors.

Methods

To conduct this study, I interviewed eight domestic violence service providers from organizations that serve survivors in Seattle and analyzed the interviews for thematic relevance.

Results

This study found that the PSSTO provides multiple benefits for survivors of domestic violence, including allowing them paid time off to access services to help them escape their situation, or in general to deal with their situation. Most importantly, the service providers noted that they think the PSSTO will permit their clients from having to choose between their jobs and accessing vital services, such as getting a protection order. Service providers do think that the ordinance has a lot of challenges that may hinder their clients from accessing the leave provided by the ordinance. The challenges they named include that the PSSTO might not adequately meet the needs of their clients, that survivors will not feel comfortable navigating the current complaints-based enforcement system, and that clients might face unintentional harm or consequences at their jobs by accessing the time off.

Conclusion

Findings suggest that the PSSTO will be beneficial for survivors of domestic violence, but that the full implications of the PSSTO on survivors of domestic violence cannot be completely known without further study after the policy has been in place for longer.

Executive Summary

Rationale

In September of 2011, the City of Seattle passed the Paid Sick and Safe Time Ordinance (PSSTO), making it the second US city to mandate that employers provide dedicated paid time off for reasons related to domestic violence. The City partnered with the University of Washington to conduct an evaluation of the policy. I completed a study with domestic violence service providers about the PSSTO as an addition to this evaluation.

Background

Domestic Violence (DV) is a major public health program problem in the United States and in Washington State. Studies indicate that experiencing DV has a significant negative effect on DV survivors' economic security and ability to access and maintain employment.

Service Provider Interviews

I conducted semi-structured interviews with eight domestic violence service providers who serve clients in the City of Seattle and analyzed them for thematic relevance. These service providers expressed that survivors have specific employment challenges because of their experiences with DV and as single mothers. They described that survivors often need time off from work to: meet with their advocates or access other social services; attend court for protection orders and family law cases; go to medical and therapy appointments; relocate and find new housing for safety purposes; arrange new childcare; and have respite to process their experiences and begin to heal. Additionally, service providers mentioned various ways in which abusers affect survivors' employment. The interviewees also discussed the detrimental effects that experiencing DV has had on their clients' employment history and their ability to access new employment opportunities.

The majority of the interviewees had heard about the PSSTO, but most of them did not feel as though they understand the Ordinance. They lack clarity around: uses of safe time, how many days an employee can take, and how the PSSTO is enforced. None of them had clients who had mentioned safe time and they assume their clients are unaware of the PSSTO.

The providers feel that safe time will allow survivors to take paid time off to address their needs. They also felt that the PSSTO will raise awareness among employers about DV. Service providers mentioned concerns related to: survivors feeling comfortable accessing safe time, the adequacy of the number of days provided, the complaint-based enforcement process, forced disclosure, and other unintended consequences.

Recommendations

The City of Seattle should use the PSSTO as a tool to educate and raise awareness among employers and within the community about domestic violence, its prevalence, and its impacts on survivors. Additionally, the City should create easy to understand educational materials that explain the Ordinance and safe time. Lastly, the City should be creative about how they disseminate information about the policy.

Acknowledgements:

I would like to express my sincere thanks to Jennie Romich for allowing me to work with her and the rest of our team on this evaluation and the encouragement she offered along the way. I would like to thank Peter House, who mentored me for over a year of capstone ups and downs and who pushed me to expand my curiosity and critical thinking. I would like to thank Traci Underwood for her help connecting me with service providers and for her advice on how best to tackle this huge project. I would like to thank Taryn Lindhorst for helping guide me through this research and for her advice along the way. I would like to thank Merril Cousin for helping me get in touch with the interviewees. I would like to thank Amy Hagopian, Ian Painter, my entire COPHP cohort, Mary Denzel, Karina Bull, Mike Chin, and Marilyn Watkins for exposing me to this topic and providing me a foundation of knowledge about this Ordinance.

Most importantly, I would like to thank all of the domestic violence service providers who allowed me to interview them and who took time out of their overwhelmingly busy schedules to share the experiences of their courageous survivors with me.

Lastly, I would like to thank my friends and my partner for their continued support and encouragement throughout this process.

I. Background

Domestic violence statistics

Domestic Violence (DV, also referred to as intimate partner violence) is a major problem in the United States, affecting 35.6 percent of women and 28.5 percent of men during their lifetimes (National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, 2011). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines DV to include, “physical violence, sexual violence, threats of physical or sexual violence, stalking and psychological aggression (including coercive tactics) by a current or former intimate partner” (National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, 2011). DV occurs across populations, regardless of race or socioeconomic status. Research indicates that survivors of DV, “make more visits to health providers over their lifetime, have more hospital stays, have longer duration of hospital stays, and are at risk of a wide range of physical, mental, reproductive, and other health consequences over their lifetime than non-victims” (National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, 2011).

The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) has also identified domestic violence as a prevalent problem in Washington State. According to DOH, “About one in five Washington women reports being injured by domestic violence sometime in her lifetime” and “An estimated 10%-20% of emergency department visits by women with intimate partners are the result of domestic violence” (Washington Department of Health, n.d.). According to the King County Coalition Against Domestic Violence, however, accurate data at the state and local levels is difficult to find and compile, meaning that these numbers could be an underestimate of the actual impact of DV in Washington State (King County Coalition Against Domestic Violence, n.d.).

Effect on economic security

Studies have shown that experiencing domestic violence significantly affects survivors' economic security and stability. Postmus et al. (2011), found that 94 percent of domestic violence survivors included in their study had experienced some form of economic abuse in their current abusive relationship or in the last year of their abusive relationship. Additionally, 79 percent of survivors experienced some form of economic control and 79 percent of survivors experienced economic exploitative behaviors (Postmus et al., 2011). If survivors are financially dependent on their abuser, they are less likely to leave the relationship (Matjasko, Niolon & Valle, 2012; Postmus et al., 2011; Sanders, 2013; Rollins et al., 2012). Frequently, abusers will intentionally try to make their partner financially dependent on for these reasons (Matjasko, Niolon & Valle, 2012; Sanders, 2013; Postmus et al., 2011). Abusers ensure that their partners are financially dependent on them by controlling financial resources and not permitting the survivor to be involved in financial decision-making (Sanders, 2013). Furthermore, research indicates that women with fewer economic resources are more likely to experience domestic violence because they cannot leave, and they have more severe DV in their relationships than women with more

economic resources (Buzawa & Buzawa, 2012; Matjasko, Niolon & Valle, 2012; Reeves & O'Leary-Kelly, 2007; Sanders, 2013; Swanberg et al., 2007).

Additionally, research has found that employment is positively associated with survivors being able to leave an abusive relationship (Rothman et al., 2007; Sanders, 2013). Rothman et al.'s (2007) study found that the income generated from employment provided survivors with the financial ability and confidence to support themselves and their children and provided them with a sense of control over their own lives. Additionally, working provides survivors with a designated time during which they are physically safe and can formulate ideas and plans to leave their abuser (Rothman et al., 2007). Perpetrators use a number of tactics to financially control their partners thereby making it harder for the victim to leave the abuser, including ruining the victim's credit, incurring debt (especially credit card debt) in the victim's name, ruining the victim's credit score, excessively gambling, or stealing the victim's money (Matjasko, Niolon & Valle, 2012; Sanders, 2013; Postmus et al., 2011).

Effect on employment

Experiencing domestic violence negatively affects many survivors employment. Research has found that experiencing domestic violence not only impacts current employment, but can have long lasting negative effects on a survivor's future employment (Kimerling et al., 2009; Matjasko, Niolon & Valle, 2012; Staggs et al., 2007). Kimerling et al. (2009) found that experiencing abuse was especially destructive for low-income women. Additionally, experiencing abuse predicted "employment instability, as indicated by decreased intensity and continuity of employment" (Kimerling, et al., 2009). Staggs et al. (2007), further report that experiencing DV is linked to underemployment, unemployment, and dependence on welfare for low-income mothers. Survivors repeatedly report a number of ways in which their abuse affected their ability to maintain consistent employment. Studies have also found that experiencing domestic abuse can also lead to negative health outcomes, which make working difficult for survivors (Arias & Corso, 2005; Matjasko, Niolon & Valle, 2012)

A number of studies have found that abusers will interfere with their partner's employment in various ways. Frequently, abusers will not permit their partners to work or look for work (Logan et al., 2007); Postmus et al. (2011) found that in general, between 16-59% of abusers would not permit their partner to work. The abuser may intentionally sabotage educational attainment by destroying textbooks or starting fights the night before an exam (Logan et al., 2007; Swanberg, Macke, & Logan, 2007; Sanders, 2013). Abusers also sabotage job interviews by escalating abuse before a job interview (Logan et al., 2007; Swanberg, Macke, & Logan, 2007; Sanders, 2013). If the survivor has a job, the abuser may show up to harass or threaten the survivor and/or her co-workers, or call the office repeatedly (Buzawa & Buzawa, 2012; Kimerling et al., 2009; Logan et al., 2007; Perrin et al., 2011; Postmus et al., 2011; Swanberg, Macke & Logan, 2007; Sanders). Additionally, abusers keep their partner from going to work by failing to fulfill childcare duties or provide transportation (Swanberg & Logan 2005); Postmus et al. (2011) found that this was the case for 67% of survivors.

The interference that survivors experience in their employment results in a loss of financial resources for both the survivor and the survivor's employer (Perrin et al., 2011). Reeves and O'Leary-Kelly (2007) found that DV survivors lost income for a number of reasons, including absenteeism, tardiness, and lost productivity. Research indicates that women in abusive relationships miss on average seven days of work for each assault they experience which results in average losses of \$816 (Postmus et al., 2011; Rothman, et al., 2007). Domestic violence on average costs \$728 million and has been shown to increase employers' administrative, insurance and medical costs (Swanberg, Ojha & Macke 2012). Women who are experiencing DV are more likely to miss work, be late, and take time off (Reeves & O'Leary-Kelly, 2007; Rothman, et al., 2007). Furthermore, when these survivors are at work, they are more likely to experience reduced productivity and work distraction (Arias & Corso, 2005; Logan et al., 2007; Perrin et al., 2011; Swanberg & Logan, 2005; Swanberg, Ojha & Macke, 2012). Lastly, survivors are more likely to be reprimanded for behaviors related to their abuse (Postmus et al., 2011) and 21-60% of survivors who have these experiences will be fired or lose their jobs (Kimerling et al., 2009; Logan et al., 2005; Postmus et al., 2011; Rothman et al., 2007; Swanberg & Logan, 2005; Swanberg, Ojha & Macke, 2012).

Disclosing experiences in the workplace

Literature is mixed about how comfortable DV survivors are disclosing their experiences to their employer and co-workers. Kwesiga et al. (2007) suggest that women who are experiencing domestic violence avoid disclosing their abuse to their employer. Other studies suggest that although some survivors prefer to disclose, those who choose not to disclose are unwilling because they fear it might affect their employment (losing their job, being judged, etc) or because they fear dangerous repercussions if their abuser discovers their disclosure (Swanberg, Macke & Logan, 2007). Other survivors cite feeling that their experiences are personal and being embarrassed as other reasons not to disclose. Women who have higher paying jobs may be less likely to disclose because they think experiencing DV may be seen as a sign of weakness (Kwesiga et al., 2007).

Other survivors, however, want to or have actually disclosed to their employers or co-workers. Many of these women found disclosing and the ensuing support they received helpful (Swanberg & Logan, 2005), but it is unclear if disclosing negatively impacted their employment (Swanberg, Macke & Logan, 2007). One study found that 74% of employed women had disclosed to someone at work, while 53% of unemployed women had not disclosed to their employer. This study indicated "that workplace disclosure was significantly associated with current employment after controlling for a number of relevant variables"(Swanberg, Macke & Logan, 2007). Swanberg, Macke and Logan (2007) also found that women who had disclosed and had received workplace supports (including flexible scheduling, screened phone calls, and employer-assisted workplace safety plans) were "significantly more likely to be employed as compared to women who did not receive workplace support."

Although this evidence suggests that women who have more stable work experiences, it does not explain why women make the choice that it is safe to disclose to their employer.

For instance, women who consider their experiences with domestic violence private may feel this way because they know that their employer will not be supportive or because their employer previously indicated that personal matters should not be discussed at work. Because of this, Swanberg, Macke and Logan (2007) suggest that “workplaces educate employees about partner violence, reduce the stigma surrounding partner violence, offer workplace support, and create a work environment that is responsive to victims who opt to tell someone at work about their situation.”

Workplace support desired by survivors

Research has explored the ways in which survivors of domestic violence prefer to be supported in the workplace. Survivors desire various levels of support from their workplace, which might also influence how willing or likely they are to disclose to their employer. Perrin et al. (2011), found that in general, the level and type of support that a survivor desires may also be influenced by her position of leaving her abuser. Perrin et al. (2011) categorized survivors into differing levels for how much support they would like to receive from their employers. They found that about a quarter of the women in their sample fell into a limited-support cluster, indicating that “they wanted to be treated as if nothing were wrong and wanted the [DV] to be kept confidential in the workplace” (Perrin et al., 2011). About one third of their participants fell into the confidential-, time off-, and support group. These women wanted access to take time off to deal with their DV issues, but wanted their experiences to be kept confidential in the workplace (Perrin et al., 2011). The last group, almost half of their respondents, was the support-in-every-way group who wanted as much support from their employer as possible. Perrin et al. (2011) posit that the level of support that a survivor wants might be related to the survivor’s status of leaving her abuser. For example, survivors who do not want to leave the relationship and are still dedicated to it might want to keep their abuse secret and will probably fall into the limited-support cluster. These survivors might be less likely to utilize or benefit from workplace supports that are intended to help them because they are less willing to disclose their experiences to their employers. If a survivor is in the process of planning to leave the abusive partner, she tends to be more public about her experience and more willing to disclose her experiences to co-workers and her employer (Perrin et al., 2011). These survivors often fall into one of the categories that desires more support, most likely the confidential-, time off-, and support group. Once the survivor has actually started the process of leaving the abusive partner, s/he wants more support than ever because s/he is concerned about personal safety and that of her children (Perrin et al., 2011). These are the survivors most likely to utilize workplace supports and openly disclose their experiences to their employers and co-workers. Perrin et al. (2011) suggest that supervisor support and workplace policies might mitigate the barriers that experiencing DV imposes on survivor employment.

Workplace policies and benefits

Although evidence indicates that experiencing DV has a negative impact on survivor employment and that employment is essential for individuals trying to escape unhealthy relationships, workplace protections for these survivors have been limited. Employees

who have access to workplace supports, particularly survivors in higher wage jobs, can often access one or more of the following:

- Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) – Provides job security for employees who are experiencing personal difficulties. Employees can take up to 12 weeks of *unpaid* leave if they meet the necessary qualifications for coverage. Kwesiga et al. (2007) report that FMLA can be vital to a survivor escaping a violent situation but that only “39% of people making \$20,000 or less and 66% of people making \$50,000 or more work for firms that fit FMLA criteria.” They also suggest that women in higher paying jobs may be hesitant to take advantage of this protection fearing it might negatively affect their opportunities for career advancement (Kwesiga et al., 2007).
- Paid vacation benefits – The amount and availability of paid leave varies drastically depending on the position and tenure that a survivor holds. Additionally, some industries are more likely to provide paid time off than others. Even survivors who have these benefits may underutilize them because they fear negative repercussions from doing so.
- Flexible work schedules/environments – Flexible work schedules allow survivors to adjust their work schedules to allow time to recover from the abuse as well as to avoid or reduce workplace harassment by their abusers (Kwesiga et al., 2007). Employers with multiple locations may be able to transfer a survivor to another branch location to protect his/her safety and minimize workplace abuse.

Because not all survivors have access to the aforementioned protections, some states have enacted different policies that attempt to protect survivors’ economic security. State policies that provide workplace protections generally fall into one of the following categories: “(a) policies that offer work leave for victims; (b) policies that aim to reduce employment discrimination of domestic violence victims; and (c) policies that aim to increase awareness and safety in the workplace” (Swanberg, Ojha & Macke, 2012). Washington State has a number of policies that protect survivors of domestic violence, including the Domestic Violence Leave Law, which is an example of a work leave policy. It was enacted in 2008 and allows “victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking to take reasonable leave from work—paid or unpaid—to take care of legal or law enforcement needs and obtain health care” (Family Leave Law: RCW 49.67, 2008). This law, in theory, protects survivors from employment penalties for taking leave from work to access legal or law-enforcement assistance, to seek medical treatment, or to attain counseling. Other employment related legal protections for survivors of domestic violence in Washington State include (Swanberg, Ojha & Macke, 2012):

- Waiving work requirements of the TANF program if working will further threaten the safety of the survivor or her children;
- Providing intersession services to employed survivors that provide them the right to receive legal assistance from trained legal, law, or judicial personnel; and
- Protecting survivor’s unemployment insurance rights if they left a job because of reasons directly related to the DV or if they were asked to leave their job because of poor performance related to their DV experiences.

Although anecdotally, these policies help survivors, it is unclear what barriers exist to accessing these policies' benefits or if these policies sufficiently meet the needs of survivors. For example, if disclosure precedes benefiting from the policies, women who are uncomfortable disclosing would be less likely to benefit from the policies. Additionally, if women—especially those in higher paid positions—feel that accessing these protections will jeopardize, or further jeopardize their employment or their employment success, they may be unable or unwilling to utilize them (Kwesiga et al, 2007). Lastly, survivors must be knowledgeable about the policies and their protections in order to access them.

Importance of paid leave

Kwesiga et al. (2007) suggest that workplace benefits are essential for survivors to escape the abuse and that “Benefits and workplace supports can give victims of [DV] physical, emotional, and logistical support.” The aforementioned protections offered by Washington State are therefore vital to protecting the safety and wellbeing of many survivors. However, these protections may be insufficient if they include only unpaid leave because survivors who work in low wage jobs may not benefit from them in that they may not be able to afford to take unpaid time off work. Traci Underwood, Program Coordinator at Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence, states that the Domestic Violence Leave Law is probably under utilized by survivors because it does not offer monetary compensation to survivors (personal communication, March 5, 2013).

Seattle’s Paid Sick and Safe Time Ordinance

In September of 2011, Seattle became the third US city to pass a paid sick leave ordinance, but only the second city to pass a paid “safe” time ordinance when it passed the Paid Sick and Safe Time Ordinance (PSSTO). According to Marilyn Watkins, Policy Director at Economic Opportunity Institute and member of the Washington Coalition for a Healthy Workforce, the PSSTO is based on Washington, D.C.’s 2008 law (personal communication, January, 24, 2012). The Washington, D.C. Accrued Sick and Safe Leave Act of 2008 requires employers to provide paid time off to employees for reasons related to sickness of the employee or his/her family member as well as “for an absence if the employee or the employee’s family member is the victim of stalking, domestic violence, or sexual abuse and the absence is directly related to medical, social, or legal services pertaining to the stalking, domestic violence, or sexual abuse...” (District of Columbia, 2008). The PSSTO went into affect in Seattle on September 1, 2012 and stipulates that employers with more than four Full Time Equivalents must provide their employees with paid sick and safe time based on accrual rates dictated by the PSSTO. The Ordinance specifies that the use of paid safe time shall include:

“For any of the following reasons related to domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking, as set out in RCW 49.76.030:

1. To enable the employee to seek legal or law enforcement assistance or remedies to ensure the health and safety of the employee or the employee’s family members, including but not limited to, preparing for, or participating in, any or criminal legal proceedings related to or derived from domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking;

2. To enable the employee to seek treatment by a health care provider for physical or mental injuries caused by domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking, or to attend to health care treatment for a victim who is the employee's family member;
3. To enable the employee to obtain, or assist a family member in obtaining, services from a domestic violence shelter, rape crisis center, or other social services program for relief from domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking;
4. To enable the employee to obtain, or assist a family member in obtaining, mental health counseling related to an incident of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking, in which the employee or the employee's family member was a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking; or
5. To enable the employee to participate in safety planning, temporarily or permanently relocate, or take other actions to increase the safety of the employee or employee's family members from future domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking" (Seattle Municipal Code, 2011).

II. Rationale

The PSSTO mandates that "Eighteen months after the effective date of this ordinance, the Seattle Office for Civil Rights (SOCR) and the Seattle Office of the City Auditor will provide [Seattle City] Council with a written evaluation of the impacts this ordinance has had on employees and employers"(Seattle Municipal Code, 2011). These offices contracted researchers from the University of Washington to assist in completing an evaluation of the policy, however, this evaluation could not provide a clear understanding of the impacts the ordinance has DV survivors. I designed the following evaluation as an addition to the larger policy evaluation. This safe time evaluation aims to:

1. Provide a general context of how domestic violence affects Seattle survivors' employment and employment stability;
2. Measure domestic violence service providers' knowledge of and about the PSSTO;
3. Discover if domestic violence services providers have discussed the PSSTO with their clients; and
4. Explore the ways in which domestic violence service providers anticipate the PSSTO will affect survivors.

Although the PSSTO was modeled after the Washington, D.C. Accrued Sick and Safe Leave Act of 2008, Washington, D.C. did not conduct an evaluation of their law. Currently, the only known evaluation looking at a City policy mandating paid leave for these reasons is the evaluation of the San Francisco Paid Sick Leave Ordinance. This San Francisco ordinance differs from the Washington, D.C. and Seattle laws in that it does not mandate paid time off for reasons related to safety. The current safe time evaluation will fill the gap of literature addressing the effects that implementing a city-wide policy providing paid safe time will have on survivors of domestic violence. This evaluation will provide the Seattle City Council with information about the need for, knowledge of, and utilization of the PSSTO. The information gathered by this evaluation can also be used to inform policy

decision making for cities who are considering implementing a paid time off policy that may include safe time.

III. Methods

Upon passage of the PSSTO, the City of Seattle presented questions that they wanted the evaluation to address about the effects of safe time on survivors of domestic violence. In order to frame the evaluation and develop my evaluation questions, I interviewed key informants from the Office of the City Auditor, the Seattle Office for Civil Rights, the Washington Coalition for a Healthy Workforce, and academic experts on the topics of domestic violence and employment policies. I used the information gained from these interviews and the questions presented by the City to develop a logic model of the intended consequences of the PSSTO on domestic violence survivors, which is included as Appendix A.

Participants

Because of the limited time frame and expected difficulty of recruiting survivors of domestic violence for interviews, I chose to interview domestic violence social service providers as a proxy for gathering information about survivors. I was able to gather information about multiple survivors in one interview by interviewing service providers, which was an effective way to gather a broad base of knowledge of survivor experiences. Furthermore, by interviewing service providers from various organizations that represent diverse populations, I was able to ensure that my results represent a range of experiences. By interviewing service providers, I hoped to get an understanding of how domestic violence affects survivors' employment experiences, how information about legal protections is disseminated, the role of the domestic violence service provider in the dissemination of this information and how the implementation of the PSSTO has affected survivors.

Procedures

Before beginning recruitment, I conducted a Google search of domestic violence serving agencies in the City of Seattle. I excluded social service agencies that only offer batterer's education classes since those programs focus on perpetrators of domestic violence rather than victims. I also excluded agencies that do not provide direct client services, whose programs are targeted toward children, and that do not serve primarily clients who work in Seattle. After excluding agencies with these characteristics, I compiled a list of 12 organizations that provide direct services to adult victims of domestic violence in Seattle. I consulted domestic violence experts and a representative from the Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence to ensure that I had not overlooked or excluded any pertinent agencies. Next, I contacted each of these 12 agencies. I contacted one agency twice and all of the other agencies at least four times. I primarily contacted upper level agency managers or directors and asked these individuals to recommend a front line worker who they felt would have the most experience dealing with the domestic violence and employment issues. In two situations, the primary contact felt that she would be the best person to complete the interview. In two other situations, the primary contact

recommended a mid-level manager for the interview. I was successful in completing interviews with eight out of the 12 agencies, resulting in a 67% response rate. One additional agency refused to participate and the remaining three did not respond to my multiple emails and phone calls soliciting their participation.

To design the interview template, I first conducted a literature review about employment and domestic violence. Next, I reviewed the aforementioned logic model. Lastly, I consulted representatives from the City of Seattle and the Washington Coalition for a Healthy Workforce, domestic violence scholars and a practitioner working at a domestic violence technical assistance organization. Each interview was semi-structured using the reviewed interview template. All of the interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Each interviewee completed a demographic questionnaire that provided information about her experience working in domestic violence and her primary roles within her current position. A sample of the demographic form is included as Appendix B.

Analysis

I completed qualitative analysis using Dedoose, an internet-based qualitative analysis tool. After reading the cleaned interview transcripts multiple times, I created a codebook based on themes that came up in the interviews and the logic model. The faculty working on this evaluation reviewed the draft codebook and I revised the codebook taking into account their feedback. I coded three of the interviews using these codebook themes and then revised the codebook again to create the finalized codebook. Using the finalized codebook, I coded each of the eight interviews again.

IV. Results

Service Providers

The service providers had diverse experiences and have different views of their roles working with survivors. Additionally, because many of the domestic violence social service agencies in Seattle serve specific populations, the clients that these providers serve are quite diverse.

Demographics

All of the service providers that I interviewed were women. Over half of the respondents represented organizations that serve primarily racial or ethnic minorities. As previously mentioned, four of the respondents were front line workers, two were middle managers, and two were upper level managers. Many of the service providers have extensive experience working with domestic violence survivors. While some of the providers did have formal educational training, many of them felt that completing trainings and certifications specific to DV work was vital to their understanding of DV. Additional demographic information about the respondents can be found in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic Data for Participants.

Participant	Years working in Domestic Violence	Years with Current Organization	Average clients served per week	Educational preparation for current job
1	15	15	20	MSW
2	10	2	50	BA, Training/certification
3	3	1	4	BSW, Training/certification
4	20	7	28	BA, Training/certification
5	17	13	9	Training/certification
6	17	8	30	Training/certification
7	25	10	3	Training/certification
8	24	24	100	Training/certification

Role

Overwhelmingly, service providers feel it is their job to discuss employment issues with clients including: searching for jobs, writing resumes, explaining gaps in their employment history, building the client’s self esteem, and accessing the Victims Compensation Program. In addition to this, providers inform clients of pertinent policies that affect them or their particular situation.

Interviewee #2: “...a lot of times...we can disperse [policy] information...through announcements at our support groups...to let people know if they are ever in need of that, that’s an option. And then...part of it is making sure that the advocates on our staff know a lot of these things or at least have access to how to find out more about it.”

Furthermore, service providers mentioned educating employers about policies or advocating to employers on the client’s behalf.

Interviewee #4: “A lot of times [clients] don’t know, so we inform them ...[and tell them] ‘we can write a letter of support [to your employer] if they would like.’”

Additionally, three quarters of the respondents mentioned the scope of policy knowledge that they must have or be able to find in order to be an effective advocate. They mentioned that they regularly talk with their clients about section 8 housing, hospital charity care programs, and tenants rights policies. One interviewee mentioned specifically how this complicates her work:

Interviewee #4: “There is so much information that we do get. Sometimes it's information overload.”

Clients

Six of the respondents reported that the majority of their clients are either unemployed or under-employed while the other two respondents indicated that their clients have varied employment experiences. Two of the respondents who reported that their clients are primarily under- or unemployed specifically mentioned that many of these clients receive public assistance or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds.

Six of the respondents noted that at intake or within the first couple of conversations with clients, they develop an understanding of their client's employment status. Four of the respondents noted that they are required to gather employment information because their intake protocol requires it or because a grant requires that they report client employment information. The respondents also noted that oftentimes, their view of their client's employment status is shaped by whether the client needs their assistance with employment issues.

Domestic Violence and Employment

Service providers indicated that experiencing domestic violence affects their clients' employment. To begin with, providers noted that experiencing domestic violence comes with specific challenges that affect a survivor's employment. Service providers also noted ways in which abusers or experiencing domestic violence in general interfere with survivors' employment, making it difficult for survivors to access and maintain employment.

Survivor Needs

Service providers mentioned a number of needs specific to domestic violence survivors. They noted that their clients typically need to: meet with their advocates or access other social services; attend court for protection orders and family law cases; go to medical and therapy appointments; relocate and find new housing for safety purposes; arrange new childcare; and have respite to process their experiences and begin to heal. One interviewee gave an example of how these needs often require the survivor to take a lot of time off work.

Interviewee #4: "... if they get a protection order today they got to go back to court in two weeks. And that protection order may not be granted in two weeks because he wasn't served so she'll have to go back to court in another two weeks. During that time, she needs to try to find a different daycare because he knows where the daycare is..."

Service providers mentioned multiple instances similar to the one described in the above quote to demonstrate how experiencing domestic violence can require taking significant periods of time off and interfere with employment. Interviewees noted that transportation frequently acts as a barrier to meeting client needs as well. They also indicated that not being paid for time off and employers who do not understand their needs prevent survivors from being able to deal with these issues. Respondents noted that to deal with

these barriers, their clients find ways to schedule their appointments around their work schedules. Moreover, the interviewees mentioned that their agencies make their services as accessible as possible, holding legal clinics after hours, having evening support groups, and taking calls from their clients throughout the day and evening to ease their clients' burdens.

Single Parents

The most common reason for difficulty in maintaining or accessing employment involved having children and being a single parent, if the survivor had left their abuser. Service providers mentioned the challenges of being the primary caregiver and having to take care of all of the children's needs as well as scheduling constraints and the challenges of having the children visit the abuser.

Interviewee #1: "...to find a job is very hard [for single mothers]. Because of the schedule with their children, you know, they need to pick up to school and drop to school, so, because of that reason it's a very hard, hard thing to find the real job that suits them, you know."

Interviewee #5: "...single-parenting stress, and...parenting a child who oftentimes is then going to spend unrestricted time with an abusive parent ... So she has to not just single-parent but single-parent a child that's being abused actively, ongoing."

Interviewee #8: "So when they've left DV...they need time off to do daycare search. They need time off to go to court. They need to be doing all the things they used to do with another adult and they've doubled up what they've got to do ... and people who are involved with CPS...cannot always maintain a job while they're doing ... kids' visits in the middle of the day...for two hours, it's an hour bus ride each way and yeah, employers are not hot on that."

Employment Interference

Seven of the service providers explained the ways in which the survivors' abusers interfered with their employment. Five of the service providers gave examples of situations in which the abusive partner harassed the survivor or the survivor's co-workers.

Interviewee #2: "[Abusers are] sabotaging [the survivor's] job. So making a lot of phone calls, showing up there, starting fights, yelling, you know, just having a big scene where the other person is, you know, at work..."

Interviewee #7: "And so some of the abusers would either show up on the job, call her all the times of day...the employer doesn't look too favorably on that happening ... [Other times] he was telling your boss lies about [her] or he was making [her] co-workers feel uncomfortable by questioning them and intimidating them."

Furthermore, the interviewees noted that many survivors just struggle in general finding or maintaining employment because of their experiences with DV. They describe the

difficulty for survivors to keep their lives together when everything is up in the air because of their experiences. Interviewees also discussed the challenges survivors have being fully present because they are overly tired from having difficulty sleeping or because their abuser kept them up fighting all night, emotional exhausted from continuing to survive an abusive situation, or struggling to fully focus on their work. Additionally, two of the service providers mentioned that abusers prevent the survivor from maintaining employment by keeping her home when she should be at work, or by completely preventing her from getting a job. Additionally, the interviewees discussed the ways in which experiencing abuse negatively impact a survivor's self-esteem or makes the survivor feel shamed.

Lastly, many of the service providers mentioned that the detrimental effects that DV has had on clients' employment history reduces their ability to access new employment opportunities. For example, one advocate said that a history of bad credit or protection orders may make employers think you are irresponsible or not a good candidate for a position. Moreover, survivors often struggle with the interview process, explaining gaps in their work history, having been previously fired because of their DV, or disclosing their DV experiences. Lastly, two service providers explicitly mentioned that sometimes survivors do not seek out employment or leave jobs that their abusers know about because they fear for their safety.

PSSTO in practice

During the interviews, providers discussed how they found out about the PSSTO and the ideal ways in which they would hear about policies like the PSSTO. They also described their understanding of safe time and expressed their opinions about the entire policy. Lastly, they mentioned their interactions (or lack there of) with survivors regarding the Ordinance.

Provider Awareness

Six of the eight interviewees had heard about the Ordinance prior to scheduling the interview to meet with me but two of the service providers had limited or no awareness of the ordinance.

Interviewee #4 stated: "I heard of the paid sick, I haven't heard of the paid sick and safe..."

Half of the six who were aware had heard about the PSSTO through another organization or agency (e.g. external funders, The City of Seattle, the King County Coalition Against Domestic Violence, the Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence, or Legal Voice). The remaining three respondents heard about it either from external publicity and news, or internally through their agency.

When asked, all of the eight respondents thought that both the King County Coalition Against Domestic Violence and the Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence would be good avenues through which to disseminate information about the PSSTO. One

interviewee, however, mentioned that frequently nobody from their team is able to attend these coalition meetings. Individuals mentioned it would be helpful to have presenters come to coalition meetings to explain the Ordinance and how it impacts their clients. Others mentioned that it would be helpful if these organizations had information on their websites about the policy or if they sent out information about it in their newsletters. Two interviewees mentioned that it would be helpful to have a webinar about the Ordinance, but another thought webinars would be too time intense. Results were also mixed about if advocates thought email was a good method of communication, with three advocates mentioning that emails are easily deleted and that the influx of emails about DV issues can be overwhelming. Two others thought that email was a great way to spread information because emails can be easily forwarded and are not time intense to read. Three of the interviewees specifically noted that it would be helpful to have a dedicated flyer or brochure about the specifics of the policy. One provider mentioned that the City should explore multiple avenues of information distribution to meet the needs of all DV agencies.

If the interviewees needed more information about the Ordinance, they would probably speak to other service providers at their own or other social service agencies, or contact the state or county coalitions. Two of the interviewees noted that they regularly search the web for important information about policies that pertain to their clients.

Lastly, service providers suggested that Legal Voice, crisis lines, and courthouses should all be knowledgeable about the policy to assist survivors as well. One advocate reasoned:

Interviewee #3: "I also think that courthouses are a great place to have this information...automatically given [to survivors]. For example, like when you go to a protection order and it's reissued, to make sure that the survivor knows that...you can get paid for this time off depending on your job and stuff like that. Because...a lot of people...give up getting a protection order because [they have to take time off work]."

In addition, some respondents thought it would be nice to have educational materials that just highlighted safe time while others wanted comprehensive materials that explain both sick and safe time. Those who thought that information about safe time should be separate from sick time mentioned that they think it would make the safe time part of the policy more apparent and more easily understood.

Provider Knowledge

Only one of the providers seemed to have a firm grasp on the ordinance. Six of the eight respondents still feel like they do not completely understand the Ordinance and four of the eight respondents noted that they would like more information about the policy so they can better understand it. Many of the service providers noted a lack of clarity around: what safe time can be used for, how many days an employee can take, and how the Ordinance is enforced. Furthermore, during at least two of the interviews, it became apparent that the interviewee had misinformation about the details of the policy.

Client Utilization

None of the service providers had clients who had asked about the PSSTO. However, five of the service providers specifically noted that they do not think their clients are aware of the law or its protections. One interviewee said:

Interviewee #1" I think it's great...and it's necessary, it's needed. It's just...has to be...known and people have to use it. But I support it hundred percent, of course."

Another respondent mentioned:

Interviewee #3: "...I think that it's a great idea and a great start and a great protection to have. I wish that it was more known, more widely spread and more easily used and accessible for all survivors."

Anticipated effects on survivors

Based on their understandings of the PSSTO, service providers identified ways in which they feel safe time will benefit their clients and ways in which the ordinance will benefit society overall. Moreover, they mentioned potential barriers that their clients might face in being able to access safe time.

Benefits of the Ordinance

All of the interviewees indicated safe time would be valuable in helping clients meet their aforementioned needs that are specific to surviving domestic violence.

Interviewee #8: "I also want somebody...if they need to go to court...not feeling they're choosing between their job and getting a protection order...I have seen people agonize over that. You know, like I'm not going to go in there because that means I have to take time off and then time off again in two weeks because, you know, you have to go twice to get a protection order."

Interviewee #3: "[Safe time means survivors] wouldn't feel so pressed for time with applying for things like protection orders or having to go to courthouses or even just taking the morning off and be like, 'I need to pack up my house because I'm moving cus' I don't feel safe anymore.'"

A few of the interviewees further noted that the time off would be valuable for their clients who are dealing with longer-term issues, like battling substance abuse.

Interviewee #8 stated that she thought that the Ordinance would protect the general public because her clients who work in food service can stop going to work when they are sick. Three other interviewees thought the Ordinance would benefit the general public because it provides an opportunity for educating and raising awareness about domestic violence as a problem that affects all of us.

Interviewee #5: "...it promotes this level of awareness and it promotes a climate within a workplace place for a person to be able to, um, get the support that they need while maintaining their employment."

Interviewee #6: "I see it as a...clear message... That domestic violence is not OK and...there's steps taken to prevent it...[the PSSTO is] a source of education for the employer that they need to support their, um, employees who are suffering domestic violence."

Interviewee #7: "We'll always try to talk to an employer [about pertinent policies] because I see that we're building bridges and relationships and we're educating. And making the employer more aware. Now, those are teachable moments. Those are great opportunities to be able to not only challenge them but to educate."

Challenges of the Ordinance

In general, the respondents overwhelmingly supported the Ordinance and thought it was good for their clients. However, they worried that their clients might be hesitant to access safe time.

Interviewee #1: "[A survivor's] job is the only thing that they have, so they try not take time off, even though the benefit is there... I never heard that [my clients] take time off because of, you know, domestic injury."

Interviewee #6: "... because it's so hard for them to find a job that with the ones that are employed, they're so afraid to ask the employer for-, for time off.."

Additionally, all of the respondents were able to identify potential barriers to accessing safe time, or ways that the Ordinance would fail to meet their clients' needs. Although the respondents were primarily thinking about barriers for their clients, some also mentioned the barriers that employers might have in providing sick and safe time.

Adequacy

Seven of the eight respondents reported that they did not think the Ordinance would sufficiently meet their clients' needs. Two of the interviewees complained that because the PSSTO is specific to Seattle employees, disseminating information to their clients would be difficult because they would have to determine if the client qualifies. These individuals said that while the benefits are helpful for Seattle employees, as advocates, it is confusing to know which of their clients are covered under the Ordinance.

One respondent posited that she did not think most of her clients would benefit from the Ordinance because the legal definition of domestic violence is very narrow. She shared that most of her clients' abuse does not meet the legal DV definition DV. Even though she believes that reasons her clients would need to access leave are related to DV, she does not believe that safe time would cover these reasons. Four of the eight respondents felt that their clients would need more time off than the Ordinance provides to deal with issues related to their DV. Three of these explained that their clients need time off related to

being single parents, taking care of their children, or their family law cases—which are a result of the ending of their relationship rather than a result of their DV.

Interviewee #8: “...the biggest [need for repeated time off concerns] childcare or kid issues...if the leave policy is four or five days...in a year, these are people who are probably taking 10, 12, and 14 days. So in a shorter period, you know, it's like I said, if it's visitation, those kinds of things, that's weekly...Even with this protection, they may still burn through that and be in bad grace with their employer.”

Another respondent stated:

Interviewee #3: “...the things that...clients complain about more are the long court cases, that aren't necessarily things like protection orders. Or criminal hearings, but are things that really do take, you know, up to a year or longer. Either towards the beginning or towards the end of, like, a family law case.”

Three respondents specifically noted barriers associated with who is eligible to receive benefits. These respondents indicated that some or most of their clients would be ineligible to access the PSSTO because they are undocumented, paid under the table, they do not work consistently enough to earn safe time, or their type of work is not covered by the Ordinance:

Interviewee #6: “...the majority of our clients are illegal or, uh, work in cleaning houses. Therefore I don't see them getting that benefit, really.”

Enforcement

In seven of the interviews, we discussed enforcement of the ordinance. None of the seven respondents had been aware of how the ordinance is enforced, but all of them thought that an employee complaint-based process presents barriers to their clients. Five of the interviewees thought that clients who had to file a complaint would not feel comfortable contacting the Seattle Office for Civil Rights. Of these respondents, a few noted that they did not think their clients would be willing to file a complaint either because they do not have the energy or personal agency.

Interviewee #3: “...that's just more mud that you're making a survivor have to drag themselves through in order to be protected. It's like, “Oh, well, we want to protect you and we care about you and want you to be safe, but you have to advocate for yourself more.”...I didn't know that, so that's kind of shocking to me that they require a survivor to first of all, be educated enough to know that that's within their right, and second of all, take this big, weird power leap that might make them lose their job... Yeah, that's a big barrier that I think would prevent a lot of people from even accessing it.”

Another interviewee was worried that her clients would not be willing to report because they would be concerned about the consequences to their employment:

Interviewee #5: "Well, I mean, obviously, they're not gonna be comfortable if their employers not doing it...that's probably not the best way to do enforcement...the onus is on the person who's not getting their needs met. And who's being threatened implicitly or explicitly with loss of employment."

Another one of the interviewees said:

Interviewee #8: "I think realistically, like for our clients, that's the step they're probably not [going to] take without a lot of prodding or support from us to do it...they've got so much on their plate just in general in their lives...so I don't see a lot of people stepping up and saying I'm picking up the phone and doing it. Some people might but I think a lot of women aren't there yet when they're here."

Three of the interviewees also expressed that they thought a clients would need her domestic violence advocate to mediate if the employer was not following the law. The interviewees noted that they would call the employer on behalf of the client to explain the law and advocate for the client. They also stated that if that tactic did not work, they would help the client contact SOCR or in one case that they would seek legal council to contact the employer and explain the ramifications of not following the law.

Disclosure

Four of the service providers worried that requesting safe time would force their clients to disclose to their employers that they were experiencing domestic violence, which according to the providers, the majority of survivors are uncomfortable doing.

Interviewee #8: "Anybody who's experiencing DV, they don't even want to talk to their, you know, their family about it or they have – so their employer is not high on their list of people to be sharing with."

The interviewees listed a number of reasons that make their clients feel uncomfortable disclosing including: the process is exhausting, embarrassment or shame, language or cultural differences, fear of being seen as "weak" or a "victim", fear of harassment or punishment at work, and working with the abuser making it unsafe. Three respondents noted that their clients struggle with talking about their experiences and maintaining boundaries when they do so.

Interviewee #2: "Yeah, I'd say that it's a big question that we've heard a lot from survivors of just, how do I actually talk about my experience ... how much should they share, how to share, and how to be respectful of their own story. And...to feel like they can say, "I don't want to answer that question or I'm not really wanting to divulge that."

Furthermore, sometimes employers are hesitant to work with clients when they are not aware of the legal protections that require them to allow their employees to take time off for reasons related to their domestic violence. Two of the respondents said that disclosing

had resulted in negative consequences for their clients in the past, including the employer harassing the survivor after her disclosure and the survivor's co-workers shaming her.

Some of interviewees did note situations in which their clients were comfortable disclosing. The interviewees mentioned that the more empowered a survivor is, the more s/he is willing to disclose. If the client knows that the work environment will be supportive or has been at the workplace for a long time, s/he is also more likely to disclose. Although some clients thought disclosing might be interpreted by their employer as a weakness, one service provider mentioned that sometimes clients feel that surviving their experiences proves their strength and makes them a stronger job candidate or employee. Four service providers also mentioned instances in which the employer was understanding and supportive.

Interviewee #8 "No, we've seen many women who the employer has been really supportive. [For example] a grocery store might transfer them to another store...we've seen employers...put the abuser's picture at the front desk and not let them into the building ...if a woman has been a little bit of proactive [explaining her DV situation] ...employers tend to be better with that."

One other service provider noted that a lot of employers are supportive when they first find out about the DV but that as time goes on and the employee continues needing time off, employer support lessens. Lastly, two service providers noted that clients tend to feel more comfortable disclosing if they know that their advocate is willing to support them through that process or if the advocate is actively engaged in the disclosure.

Unintended Consequences

Six of the respondents thought that the Ordinance would create unintended consequences for clients who accessed safe time. Four of the respondents worried that even with the legal protections offered by the Ordinance and other state laws, survivors would end up getting fired later.

Interviewee #1: "...if they have to take a lot of time [off], ...the employer might not like it, so...they might get fired -- or [harmed] in different ways. A court...appointment it takes...three, four days. So it might be too much."

Interviewee #2: "...is [being a survivor] going to be something that's used against them...[as] excuses made about their work performance. "Oh, well, they took time off last time because of abusive stuff maybe that's the same thing now, maybe that's why her performance is poor." ...granted there's laws to protect people from [firing]...but...that's a legal process that a lot of people don't have the time, money, energy to do."

A few respondents did suggest that with time, the barriers to accessing safe leave might be lessened. A few of the service providers mentioned that they think it will be hard for survivors to access the leave in the beginning, and that they might need a lot of support

from advocates early on but that eventually, they would become more comfortable talking to their employers on their own.

Employers

Although the interviewees were most concerned about the barriers or inadequacies that their clients would face in accessing the PSSTO, three participants also noted barriers that would arise for employers who had staff members that needed to take time off under the Ordinance. These interviewees noted that:

- Some employees might be apt to abuse the time off;
- The cost associated with providing time off to survivors would be financially burdensome to business owners; and
- Running an organization when one of your employees was taking significant periods of time off would be difficult.

V. Discussion

A high proportion of the clientele of domestic violence social service providers are under- or unemployed. Although employment is rarely the primary reason for which survivors are seeking assistance, service providers do provide assistance in this realm and have knowledge about their clients' employment status either because of intake or grants mandates. Providers note that their clients often have unstable employment histories and that many of them strive to ensure that their experiences with DV do not interfere with their work. The interviewees mentioned that survivors are savvy and try to schedule court appointments and other activities related to surviving or managing their DV around their work schedules.

Moreover, service providers identified disclosure to employers as a huge barrier for their clients. They noted that survivors frequently do not want to disclose their experiences for a number of reasons: they might be embarrassed, disclosing might put them at greater risk, or they might see their work as a sanctuary that they do not want tainted by their experiences with DV. Although providers mentioned that oftentimes survivors receive valuable support from their employers after disclosing, a number of their clients still fear disclosing because they fear job loss, employer punishment or retaliation, and shame.

Service providers act as policy navigators and informational gatekeepers for their clients, meaning that if they are not informing survivors of the ordinance, it is likely that survivors will be unaware of its protections. Unfortunately, the interviewees were only marginally aware of the ordinance because they have not had clients identify needing the protections of the ordinance since its passage. Many of the interviewees indicated that they are responsible for a knowing about myriad policies and that they will seek out additional information about a policy when they have a client who needs them to do so. It is unclear if clients have not asked about the PSSTO because they are unaware of it or if they have not asked because they do not need its protections currently. It is also unlikely that a survivor would assume there are paid leave protections if they have not heard about them given the lack of mandated paid leave policies nationally. Furthermore, because of the advocates'

limited knowledge about the policy, they might not actually know which of their clients qualify for the leave. Lastly, at least two of the advocates had misinformation about the policy indicating that they have the potential to misinform their clients about the PSSTO and its protections.

While the interviewees mentioned multiple possible good methods of information dissemination, they were in agreement that the domestic violence coalitions—both King County Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence—are good sources of information. Provider responses to the best educational or dissemination method were mixed including emails, webinars, stories in coalition newsletters, presentations, and flyers.

The interviewees were overwhelmingly supportive of the ordinance and identified a number of benefits that it provides for their clients. The biggest benefit that they noted was that a paid leave policy allows survivors time to deal with the issues they face because of their abuse, including attending court appointments, seeking advocacy services, taking care of their children, finding childcare, or recovering from the emotional and physical effects of their abuse. Furthermore, the service providers remarked about how the ordinance personally affects them and the benefits they will see, including the public health protections of providing sick time.

The respondents were also aware of and identified a number of barriers inherent in the PSSTO. Many of the providers noted that while the law is good in theory, it will not provide protections to their clients who are undocumented, unemployed, under-employed, employed in professions not covered by the law, or who frequently change jobs and never accrue enough time for it to be useful. Providers are worried that their clients might face unintended consequences by accessing the leave, including being forced to disclose their experiences, being labeled a “victim” or being punished or fired from their job. Providers saw the complaint driven system as a huge barrier for their already disenfranchised clients. To begin with, in order for clients to complain that their employer is not following the law, the employee must be knowledgeable about the law to know that s/he qualifies. A few of the providers further remarked that they could not believe the onus of enforcement is on the employee and that their clients would not be comfortable reporting their employers for lack of compliance. Additionally, providers think that they themselves will face added burdens in trying to determine if they should tell their clients about the ordinance based on their knowledge of their clients’ employment; specifically, they will need to be clear about the eligibility requirements since not all of their clients will be covered. Providers were also worried that they will have to strongly assist their clients in talking to non-compliant employers as well as navigate the complaints-driven system for their clients.

Lastly, although the interviewees recognized the economic challenges that employers might face in offering the minimum paid leave required by the law, providers were concerned that the number of days offered would not be sufficient to meet the needs of their clients. Providers expressed that especially when their clients are involved in family law cases, they must repeatedly be in court or taking their child to mandated visitation

appointments and that these events add up to them needing more time off than the ordinance provides or than the employer might be able to financially provide.

VI. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the evaluation, the City of Seattle should consider the following:

- 1. Use the PSSTO as an educational tool:** The implementation of the PSSTO provides the City of Seattle the opportunity to embark on an educational campaign to raise employer awareness of domestic violence. By talking about domestic violence as a problem that affects employers and educating them, employers may become more aware and more supportive of their employees. Increased employer support and knowledge could mean that survivors feel more comfortable disclosing to their employers and accessing the leave. This educational campaign could simply mean including statistics about the rates of domestic violence and how domestic violence impacts employers.
- 2. Create clear and easy to understand educational materials:** Service providers feel overwhelmed by all of the information they are responsible for knowing. Therefore, to communicate correctly about the ordinance with their clients, they need easy to understand informational resources and messages. These materials should include information about who is covered by the ordinance as well as information about the Seattle Office for Civil Rights if individuals need assistance or need to file complaints.
- 3. Leverage partnerships for education and information dissemination:** The City should leverage relationships with domestic violence technical assistance organizations—particularly the state and county coalitions—so they can devise effective educational materials and strategies to disseminate information about the ordinance. Additionally, the City needs to recognize that successful information dissemination in one agency will not be the same in all agencies. The City should work with service agencies to ensure that educational materials meet their needs. If the City has resources, they could fund a staff person to work with these coalitions and the service providing agencies to develop an education and outreach plan for information dissemination. If the City is unable to hire someone, they could connect with a graduate student to help with this work.
- 4. Clarify the definition of “domestic violence”:** At least one of the service providers did not feel that the experiences of her clients met the legal definition of domestic violence. The City should work to educate providers and survivors on the PSSTO’s definition of domestic violence as well as the reasons for leave covered by the policy.
- 5. Assess the effectiveness of or alternatives to complaint-based systems:** Unanimously, service providers mentioned that the complaints-based system will pose a barrier for their clients utilizing the ordinance. The City needs to address if employees feel comfortable filing complaints against their employers and if this comfort changes when an employee has experiences with domestic violence.

Providers noted that ordinances that have an impact on health and safety should have a standardized compliance monitoring system. One provider noted that we do not put the onus on customers to ensure that restaurants are following health codes so we should not put the onus on employees with the PSSTO.

VII. Strengths

This project has a number of strengths. To begin with, this is the first study to examine the possible effects of *paid* safe time for survivors of domestic violence. By completing this study, I have increased the strength of the overall evaluation of the PSSTO. Three-quarters of the agencies identified in my sample completed interviews, resulting in a 67% response rate. Over half of those interviews represented diverse racial and ethnic populations, making my sample pretty representative to domestic violence social service agencies in Seattle. Additionally, the interviewees had on average over 16 years of experience working in domestic violence service provision. By completing semi-structured interviews, I was able to capture a complex and rich understanding of how this ordinance has affected survivors and providers and how it might impact them in the future. Because I audio recorded interviews and had them transcribed verbatim, I was able to ensure that the participants' views are accurately represented and quoted.

Based on the information that I collected, I was able to provide the City of Seattle with solid recommendations of issues to consider when they are passing legislation that affects survivors of domestic violence or social service providers who work with survivors. Additionally, I was able to provide concrete recommendations to the Seattle Office for Civil Rights on possible ways in which they can increase not only provider but also survivor knowledge of the Ordinance and recommendations on how to more effectively target outreach and education around policies such as this in the future.

VIII. Limitations

The breadth of this evaluation was limited by a lack of time and resources. Because I only had six months to complete the entire project, I was unable to talk with any survivors so I had to make inferences about how the ordinance will affect them based on the thoughts and stories of providers. If I had more time, it would have been more accurate to talk directly with survivors. Additionally, if I had more time, I would have been able to repeatedly contact the agencies that did not respond to me until they declined participating. Furthermore, because many of the organizations that serve survivors in Seattle serve a very specific population, by not interviewing all of the organizations, there are expected gaps in the generalizability of my results.

None of the service providers had clients who had talked to them about the Ordinance, meaning that they were ultimately guessing how the ordinance would affect clients. Lastly, because so many of the clients served by these organizations are under- or unemployed, I am still unclear about how much of an impact the ordinance will have on survivors.

Furthermore, because I only spoke with providers, my study is unrepresentative of survivors that benefit from the PSSTO but do not seek support from service providers.

IX. Conclusion

The Seattle Paid Sick and Safe Time Ordinance unquestionably offers a number of protections to survivors of domestic violence and is an invaluable piece of legislation to assist these survivors through the difficulties of surviving and recovering from abusive relationships. However, the PSSTO's protections may be less accessible and impactful than the City Council originally thought when they passed it. The domestic violence social service providers I interviewed for this study identified a number of benefits and limitations to the Ordinance. Perhaps the most significant limitation they noted is the lack of community and survivor awareness and usage of the leave. Although I intended to provide an understanding of how this piece of legislation will affect DV survivors, the impacts are still unclear because of the newness of the policy and because of the interviewees' did not have experience with clients accessing safe time. When passing legislation that impacts survivors of domestic violence, the City of Seattle should purposefully engage survivors and service providers so that the legislation is sure to provide the City's desired outcomes.

References

- Accrued Sick and Safe Act of 2008, District of Columbia Official Code. (2008). Available at: <http://dcclims1.dccouncil.us/images/00001/20080311113451.pdf>
- Arias, I., & Corso, P. (2005). Average cost per person victimized by an intimate partner of the opposite gender: a comparison of men and women. *Violence and victims*, 20(4), 379–91. Retrieved from <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16250406>
- Buzawa, E.S. & Buzawa, C.G. (2012). What does research suggest are the primary risk and protective factors for intimate partner violence (IPV) and what is the role of economic factors? *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 32(1), 122-141.
- Domestic Violence Leave law, Revised Code of Washington Chapter 49.76. (2008). Available at: <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=49.76>
- Kimerling, R., Alvarez, J., Pavao, J., Mack, K. P., Smith, M. W., & Baumrind, N. (2009). Unemployment among women: Examining the relationship of physical and psychological intimate partner violence and posttraumatic stress disorder. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 24(3), 450–63. doi:10.1177/0886260508317191
- King County Coalition Against Domestic Violence. (n.d.) Statistics. Accessed on May 6, 2013. Available at: <http://www.kccadv.org/learn-more/statistics/>
- Kwesiga, E., Bell, M. P., Pattie, M., & Moe, A. M. (2007). Exploring the literature on relationships between gender roles, intimate partner violence, occupational status, and organizational benefits. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 22(3), 312–26. doi:10.1177/0886260506295381
- Logan, T. K., Shannon, L., Cole, J., & Swanberg, J. (2007). Partner stalking and implications for women's employment. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 22(3), 268–91. doi:10.1177/0886260506295380
- Matjasko, J.L., Niolon, P.H., & Valle, L.A. (2012). The role of economic factors and economic support in preventing and escaping from intimate partner violence. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 32(1), 122-141.
- National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Division of Violence Prevention of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2011). National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey: 2010 Summary Report. Accessed on March 5, 2013. Available at: http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/nisvs_report2010-a.pdf
- Perrin, N.A., Yragui, N. L., Hanson, G. C., & Glass, N. (2011). Patterns of workplace supervisor support desired by abused women. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 26(11), 2264–84. doi:10.1177/0886260510383025
- Postmus, J. L., Plummer, S.-B., McMahon, S., Murshid, N. S., & Kim, M. S. (2012). Understanding economic abuse in the lives of survivors. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 27(3), 411–30. doi:10.1177/0886260511421669
- Reeves, C., & O'Leary-Kelly, A. M. (2007). The effects and costs of intimate partner violence for work organizations. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 22(3), 327–44. doi:10.1177/0886260506295382
- Rollins, C., Glass, N. E., Perrin, N. a, Billhardt, K. a, Clough, A., Barnes, J., Hanson, G. C., et al. (2012). Housing instability is as strong a predictor of poor health outcomes as level of danger in an abusive relationship:

findings from the SHARE Study. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 27(4), 623–43.
doi:10.1177/0886260511423241

Rosenfield, J.D. & Waters, J.E. (2008, July 16). DC Paid Sick Leave Law Effective November 13, 2008. *Wilmer Hale Publications & News*. Accessed on March 5, 2013. Available at:
<http://www.wilmerhale.com/pages/publicationsandNewsDetail.aspx?NewsPubId=92886>

Rothman, E. F., Hathaway, J., Stidsen, A., & De Vries, H. F. (2007). How employment helps female victims of intimate partner violence: a qualitative study. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 12(2), 136–43.
doi:10.1037/1076-8998.12.2.136

Sanders, C.A. (2013). Financial Capability among Survivors of Domestic Violence. In J. Birkenmaier, M. Sherraden & J. Curley (Eds.), *Financial Capability and Asset Development: Research, Education, Policy, and Practice* (pp. 85-107). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Seattle Paid Sick and Safe Time Ordinance, Seattle Municipal Code 14.16 (2011). Available at:
<http://clerk.seattle.gov/~scripts/nph-brs.exe?s1=paid+sick&s3=&s4=&s2=&s5=&Sect4=AND&l=20&Sect2=THESON&Sect3=PLURON&Sect5=CBORY&Sect6=HITOFF&d=ORDF&p=1&u=%2F~public%2Fcbory.htm&r=1&f=G>

Staggs, S. L., Long, S. M., Mason, G. E., Krishnan, S., & Riger, S. (2007). Intimate partner violence, social support, and employment in the post-welfare reform era. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 22(3), 345–67.
doi:10.1177/0886260506295388

Swanberg, J., Logan, T. (2005). Domestic violence and employment: A qualitative study of rural and urban women. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 10(1), 3-17.

Swanberg, J., Macke, C., & Logan, T. K. (2007). Working women making it work: intimate partner violence, employment, and workplace support. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 22(3), 292–311.
doi:10.1177/0886260506295387

Swanberg, J. E., Ojha, M. U., & Macke, C. (2012). State employment protection statutes for victims of domestic violence: public policy's response to domestic violence as an employment matter. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* (Vol. 27, pp. 587–619). doi:10.1177/0886260511421668

Washington Department of Health. (n.d.) Violence Against Women: Data and Statistics. Accessed on March 7, 2013. Available at:
<http://www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/InjuryandViolencePrevention/ViolenceAgainstWomen/DataandStatistics.aspx>.