

## **New Jersey Coalition for Battered Women Policy Statements**

### Advocacy

Consistent with all of its Guiding Principles, it is the role and intention of the NJCBW to advance the cause of battered women through proactive public advocacy. The NJCBW is committed to advocating for effective legislation, responsive governmental intervention and service and assistance funding levels that promote the elimination of violence against women. The NJCBW will also join others who advocate for the equality, empowerment and self-determination for all women.

### Awareness

Consistent with its mission statement, the NJCBW is committed to increasing public awareness and understanding of the issue of domestic violence, including but not limited to its root causes, its risks and complexities, the magnitude and seriousness of the problem and available resources.

### Capital Punishment

Consistent with all of its guiding principles, NJCBW believes that the taking of life is the ultimate manifestation of the violence we seek to eliminate, and that the death penalty does not contribute to the reduction of violence in our society, or in the lives of women. NJCBW is committed to ensuring that domestic violence policies do not encourage or support the use of the death penalty.

### Children

Consistent with its principle regarding Children and Quality Services, and with the goal of breaking the intergenerational cycle of violence, the NJCBW is committed to ensuring that the appropriate quality services are available to child victims of domestic violence in our programs. A holistic approach to meeting the safety, therapeutic, educational, social, recreational, and spiritual needs of children shall be encouraged and supported. As the principle also notes, the needs of children are intertwined with the needs of their mother, therefore, the NJCBW is committed to helping battered mothers increase their knowledge, skills and access to resources in order to better meet the needs of their children.

### HIV/AIDS and other Communicable Diseases

Consistent with its principles on Equality and Special Needs, the NJCBW recognizes that HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases are matters of concern to the battered women's shelter and service provider community. The NJCBW is committed to ensuring the health and safety of all clients and staff through the promotion of health education, access to medical care, and healthful practices in all programs. The NJCBW encourages providers to meet the challenge of all communicable diseases without losing sight of the

fact that they are among many medical needs which concern battered women and their families. The NJCBW endorses the use of universal health precautions and standards that safeguard health and privacy in domestic violence programs throughout the state.

### Mental Health Issues

Consistent with its principles regarding Quality Services, Special Needs and Equality, the NJCBW is committed to ensuring that victims with the dual problems of domestic violence and mental health issues receive trauma sensitive, supportive and specialized intervention. NJCBW recognizes that mental health issues are matters of concern to the battered women's shelter and service provider community since domestic violence victims with mental health issues face many additional barriers to safety making them particularly vulnerable to entrapment.

### Non-Member Domestic Violence Service Programs

Consistent with its principle regarding the need for a Coordinated Community Response to the problem of domestic violence, NJCBW is committed to establishing partnerships and fostering cooperative and collaborative working relationships with the many other agencies and organizations working with battered women and their families. NJCBW recognizes that our goal of expanding and improving battered women's access to quality services cannot be accomplished in isolation. NJCBW must allow, support and encourage the participation with other organizations in this effort.

### Poverty

Consistent with its guiding principles on Empowerment, Equality, Special Needs and Coordinated Community Response, the NJCBW is committed to ending poverty as a barrier to women and children's ability to live safely. The NJCBW will join with other groups to increase battered women's access to financial, housing, employment, legal and medical resources, in order to enhance their ability to become self-sufficient.

### Substance Abuse Issues

Consistent with its principles regarding Quality Services, Special Needs and Equality, the NJCBW is committed to ensuring that the dual problems of domestic violence and substance abuse are addressed with through supportive, trauma-sensitive and specialized interventions for domestic violence victims. While both domestic violence and substance abuse issues may be present, intervention plans should not be based on an assumption that the substance abuse caused the domestic violence and must incorporate the strong possibility that a victim's substance abuse may be a coping mechanism in response to the battering. NJCBW recognizes that substance abuse issues are matters of concern to battered women's shelters and community providers because victims with substance abuse issues face many additional barriers to safety, making them particularly vulnerable.

### Underserved Battered Women

Consistent with its Guiding Principles concerning Empowerment, Equality, Quality Services and Special Needs it is the role and responsibility of the NJCBW to provide the highest quality services to all battered women regardless of race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, age, religion, sexual orientation and ability. The NJCBW is aware that domestic violence issues are inextricably linked to other forms of oppression faced by battered women, e.g., sexism, racism, classism, homophobia, ageism, and able-bodyism. The NJCBW is committed to eliminating barriers to access and full participation in services for all battered women in New Jersey. This commitment shall be reflected in agency policies and hiring practices. Our goal is that all programs reflect the diversity of the population of their communities.

### Women Charged with/Convicted of Crime

Consistent with its principle on Women's Use of Force, the NJCBW is committed to assisting those women who use force against the batterer in self-defense or in reaction to abuse, and who are subsequently charged with and/or convicted of a crime. NJCBW is also committed to assisting women who commit illegal acts under duress from the batterer.

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