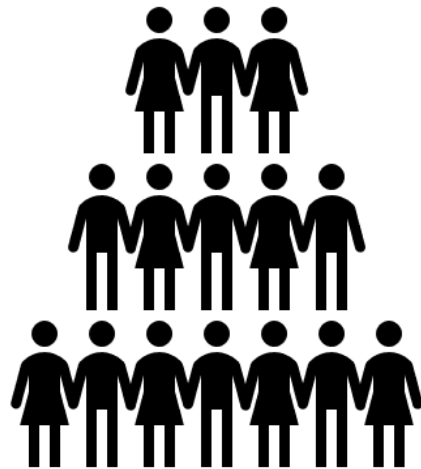




THE SITUATION ON VIOLENCE IN A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP AND THE SERVICES OFFERED TO REDUCE IT: THE CASE OF LIEPAJA

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14.11.19.

Institutional support system offered in Latvia



- Institutional support for victims in Liepaja municipalities should be provided by the state police, municipal police, court, custody court, municipal social services, health care institutions, NGO Marta, crisis center and school.
- There were offered tool of temporary separation, rehabilitation services, programme of state probation service.



TOOL OF TEMPORARY SEPERATION

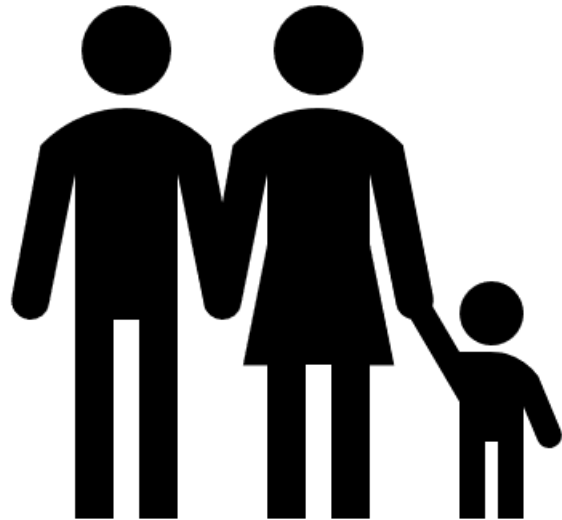
- The decision of immediate temporary separation made by the police. It provides that the person who has created the threat has to keep a certain distance (according to the decision) away from the victim's residence.



SOCIAL REHABILITATION SERVICES

- Any person that has suffered from either physical, sexual, economical or emotional violence or received threats of physical or sexual violence is entitled to receive services that should primarily provide psychosocial support and help to evaluate the threats.
- There are two ways of receiving rehabilitation services: (1) a 30-day course in a social rehabilitation institution or (2) a support in a form of individual consultations.
- According to the statistics of Liepaja social service, in 2016 there were 55 people that received the service; in 2017 - 79 (of them 72 women, 7 men) and in 2018 the service was used by 117 women and 6 men.

PROGRAMMES OF STATE PROBATION SERVICE



- The State Probation service offers various probation programmes for their clients - a bundle of activities with the goal to foster the social integration of the client.
- Usually these programmes are undergone during the time while conditional sentence is in power, as the client is obliged to join the probation programmes such as "The fostering of respectful relationship" that is created for people that have been violent to their partner.

Some findings 1



- The **support system works more effectively and faster if there are children** involved. There are also some enforcement mechanisms that impose the usage of social rehabilitation services for the violent person.

Some findings 2



- The study identifies two main recommendations for rehabilitation services offered to the victims of violence:
- (1) the **amount of legal and psychological counselling should be increased** (within the rehabilitation for adults who are victims of violence),
- (2) **the amount of psychological counselling** (that is a part of the rehabilitation service **for children**) **should be increased** from 10 consultations at least up to 23)

Some findings 3



- Although the experience with **police** is not always positive - the victims **sees it as a source of protection in critical situations.**
- **Not all information characterizes police in a good light.** There are stories that include information about unprofessional attitude to the victims, ignorance of report and phone calls, recommendations not to submit application to the police about domestic violence and not providing information about support that can be received by the victim even in cases of sexual violence. **But there are also a good stories.**

Some findings 4



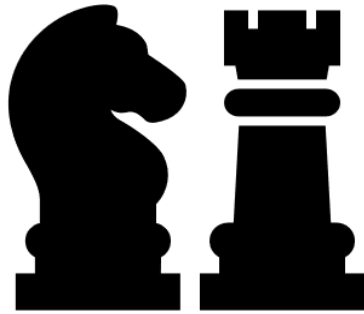
- In comparison with other institutions, cooperation with the Custody court was only experienced by some informants, but at the same time, this institution was overall assessed most critically.
- **A large proportion of women are afraid of this institution even if they haven't cooperated with it.** The reason of this attitude is that a lot of **perpetrators are using this institution to frighten victim by promising to take away their children.**

Some findings 5



- **Cooperation with Liepaja local social services representatives** in the interviews is perceived differently. There are people who **describe it as a positive experience** that allows to resolve the violent relationship and is a good possibility to get support.
- **Some victims** refuse to use local governance offered social services because they **worry about confidentiality.**

Some findings 6



- Although some of the informants have sued the violent partner and used the court services, **women had little comment on court work.** They believe that do not have the expertise to evaluate it.
- The one of the most important problems related to the court is victim **need for legal advice**, but in a lot of situations, victim, cannot afford.
- A positive indicator was that one woman used the possibility to attend court through a conference call.

Some findings 7

The legal advice and psychological support provided by the NGO “Marta” is important to the victims in Liepaja, especially for persons with high status - that do not use the services offered by the municipality.



Some findings 7



- **Cooperation with the medical staff** in context of violence prevention is **described most fragmentary**.
- Several women say **they hide violence** in the family **from their family doctors**, because the family doctor knows all the family members and friends. One victim admitted that she did not visit any doctors even after her husband raped and beat her up.
- **Most women are not informed about the possibility to visit the family doctor to register injuries**. This information will be sent to the forensic expert and can be used in court.





Some findings 8

Not only the family, but also the society in general is not supportive: people do not recognize violence, and if they do, pretend that they did not, or in the worst situations, blame the victim. Therefore, informing the public is essential in order to change the attitudes towards victims.



Thank you!