

Advocate services “led to **greater cooperation** between victims and prosecutors.”<sup>1</sup>

“Rape survivors who worked with advocates reported receiving **more services** from the legal and medical systems.”

Survivors who work with rape victim advocates file more police reports (59% vs. 41%); those reports are less likely to be no actioned (29% vs. 57%); receive fewer victim blaming questions from LE around dress (41% vs. 46%) and sexual history (12% vs. 46%); are less likely to be asked by LE to take a lie detector test (6% vs. 18%); and have a **decrease in secondary victimization emotions** in the aftermath of the assault including less guilt (59% vs. 86%), less depression (53% vs. 88%), and less reluctance to seek further help (61% vs. 89%). (Statistics cited are all advocate vs. no advocate.)<sup>2</sup>

“This exploratory study highlights the role that advocates may play in **reducing victim barriers to participation** in the CJ process...” including reducing feelings of guilt and self-blame (1992), dispelling myths that contribute to self-blame (1992), reducing fear of retaliation if victim participates in the criminal justice process by discussing an option of a protective order (1992), reducing fears of poor treatment by law enforcement (1993), and **increasing victim’s confidence** about participating in the criminal justice process (1993).<sup>3</sup>

“...subsequent to the introduction of the victim-witness program, the success rate at trial for cases of child sexual abuse almost doubled ... **defendants were more likely either to plead guilty to or to be convicted of the more serious charge** ... and the penalties assessed offenders increased significantly.”<sup>4</sup>

“...the odds of [**victim**] **cooperation** [with prosecution] are more than **three times higher if the victim met with representatives of the victim/witness assistance program.**” Victims feel more supported (617), access resources (617), understand the system better (617), and feel safer (618).<sup>5</sup>

“Initial communication between the prosecutor and the victim is an important factor for victim cooperation in the prosecution process. Being informed of case decisions increased victim cooperation and also **helped to obtain a conviction.**”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Henning, K. and Feder, L. (2005). Criminal Prosecution of Domestic Violence Offenses: An Investigation of Factors Predictive of Court Outcomes. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 32(6), 612-642.

<sup>2</sup> Campbell, R. (2006). Rape Survivors’ Experiences with the Legal and Medical Systems: Do Rape Victim Advocates Make a Difference? *Violence Against Women*, 12(1), 30-45.

<sup>3</sup> Patterson, D. and Tringali, B. (2015). Understanding How Advocates can Affect Sexual Assault Victim Engagement in the Criminal Justice Process. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 30(12), 1987-1997.

<sup>4</sup> Dible, D.A. and Teske, R.H.C., Jr. (1993). An Analysis of the Prosecutory Effects of a Child Sexual Abuse Victim-Witness Program. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 21(1), 79-85.

<sup>5</sup> Dawson, M. and Dinovitzer, R. (2001). Victim Cooperation and the Prosecution of Domestic Violence in a Specialized Court. *Justice Quarterly*, 18(3), 593-622.

<sup>6</sup> Camacho, C. and Alarid, L. (2008). The Significance of the Victim Advocate for Domestic Violence Victims in Municipal Court. *Violence and Victims*, 23(3), 288-300.

“Advocates **improve victim participation** by providing tangible support, reducing ‘secondary victimization,’ improving victims’ knowledge of and autonomy within the legal system, and linking victims to available services.”<sup>7</sup>

“...victims supported by IDVAs [Independent Domestic Violence Advisors] may be **more likely to continue with the criminal justice system.**” More victims show for trial (93% vs. 88%), fewer recanted their statement (11% vs. 14%), and more defendants were convicted at trial due to the victim appearing (33% vs. 10%). (Statistics cited are all advocate vs. no advocate.)<sup>8</sup>

“...survivors who had worked with advocates over a 10-week period had significantly **higher levels of social support and quality of life**, were more able to access community resources, and were less likely to experience abuse.”

“Specifically, women who worked with advocates reported **less violence, greater quality of life, and improved mental health outcomes** over time (e.g., less depression, fewer symptoms of PTSD).”<sup>9</sup>

“Further, focus groups revealed a great deal about the **enormous impact** that knowledgeable and well-trained victim advocates can have on victims’ lives ...”<sup>10</sup>

Participation in community-based advocacy services were found to result in **higher quality of life, greater social support, and less difficulty obtaining community resources** compared to victims who did not have such services (101, 763, 766).

Victim resources in communities including access to hotlines, shelters, and legal advocacy programs are associated with **lower rates of IPV homicides** (90, 214). These “exposure-reducing” options and corresponding public policy decrease the likelihood of recurring abuse and violence (214).

Victims who receive outreach from system-based or community-based advocates (compared to those who received just referrals) report **greater decreases in distress one year later, including PTSD symptoms, depression, and fear** (213).

Victims who have early, victim-focused contact with system-based advocates **were more likely to have contact with community-based agencies providing IPV services** than victims who declined to talk with or were never reached by system-based advocates (198).<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Gaines, D.C., and Wells, W. (2017). Investigators’ and Prosecutors’ Perceptions of Collaborating with Victim Advocates on Sexual Assault Casework. *Criminal Justice Policy Review*, 28(6), 555-569.

<sup>8</sup> Taylor-Dunn, H. (2015). The Impact of Victim Advocacy on the Prosecution of Domestic Violence Offenses: Lessons from a Realistic Evaluation. *Criminology & Criminal Justice*, 16(1), 21-39.

<sup>9</sup> Allen, N., Larsen, S., Trotter, J., and Sullivan, C. (2013). Exploring the Core Service Delivery Processes of an Evidence-Based Community Advocacy Program for Women with Abusive Partners. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 41(1), 1-18.

<sup>10</sup> DePrince, A., Srinivas, T., and Seulki Lee, M (2014). Partnering to Access Legal Services (PALS): A Needs Assessment for the Denver Wrap Around Legal Services for Victims of Crime Project. University of Denver Traumatic Stress Studies Group report. <https://www.du.edu/tssgroup/media/documents/pals2014.pdf>.

<sup>11</sup> Hart, B. (J.D.), and Klein, A. (Ph.D.), (2013). Practical Implications of Current Intimate Partner Violence Research for Victim Advocates and Service Providers. *U.S. Department of Justice NCJRS Grant Report*, Award Number 2010M\_10065, <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/244348.pdf>.