Community Readiness Assessment
Ketchikan, Alaska

Prepared by Women in Safe Homes and Strategic Prevention Solutions, Inc.

Community Readiness Assessment: Ketchikan, Alaska

In Spring 2018, Women in Safe Homes (WISH) in Ketchikan, Alaska conducted a Community Readiness Assessment to assess key factors influencing the community's preparedness to address Sexual Assault (SA), Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), and Teen Dating Violence (TDV). WISH staff interviewed 8 members of the community. These interviewees represented a range of professional, organizational, and social entities including: government, legal, education, mental health, law enforcement, business, and the faith community. Interview responses were scored by two independent scorers utilizing standardized scoring criteria.

Assessing Readiness

Dimensions of readiness are key factors that influence a community's preparedness to take action on the issues of SA, IPV, and TDV. The following dimensions formed the basis of inquiry for the assessment.

A. Community Efforts: To what extent are there efforts, programs, and policies that address SA, IPV, and/or TDV prevention?

B. Community Knowledge of the Efforts: To what extent do community members know about local efforts and their effectiveness, and are the efforts accessible to all segments of the community?

C. Community Climate: What is the community's prevailing attitude toward these issues and early detection and prevention?

D. Community Knowledge: To what extent do community members know about or have access to information and its existence or impact in the community?

E. Resources: To what extent are local resources - people, time, money, space, etc. - available to support prevention efforts?

F. Leadership: To what extent are appointed/elected leaders and influential community members (non-elected/appointed) supportive of SA, IPV, and TDV prevention?

The community's score with respect to each of the dimensions forms the baseline foundation of the overall level of community readiness.

Categorical Description of Overall Scores
Table 1: Stages of Readiness

Score	Readiness Stage	Description of Readiness Level
1	**No Awareness**	Issue is not generally recognized by the community or leaders as a problem (or it may not be an issue).
2	**Denial/Resistance**	At least some community members recognize that it is a concern, but there is little recognition that it might be occurring locally.
3	**Vague Awareness**	Most feel that there is a local concern, but there is no immediate motivation to do anything about it.
4	**Preplanning**	There is clear recognition that something must be done, and there may even be a group addressing it. However, efforts are not focused or detailed.
5	**Preparation**	Active leaders begin planning in earnest. Community offers modest support of efforts.
6	**Initiation**	Enough information is available to justify efforts. Activities are underway.
7	**Stabilization**	Activities are supported by administrators or community decision makers. Staff are trained and experienced.
8	**Confirmation/Expansion**	Efforts are in place. Community members feel comfortable using services, and they support expansions. Local data are regularly obtained.
9	**High Level of Ownership**	Detailed and sophisticated knowledge exists about prevalence, causes, and consequences. Effective evaluation guides new directions. Model is applied to other issues.

Results:

Overall Score: 4.0 (Preplanning Stage)
There is a clear recognition that something needs to be done to address SA, IPV, and TDV in Ketchikan, and there is a group addressing these issues. However, efforts are not yet focused or detailed.

Table 2: Scores by Dimension of Readiness:

Community Readiness Dimension	SA, IPV, TDV
Community Efforts	4.8
Community Knowledge of Efforts	3.5
Community Climate	3.6
Community Knowledge of the Issue	3.3
Resources	5.0
Leadership	3.7
Overall Community Readiness Score	**4.0**

Summary: Ketchikan scored highest in the area of resources, indicating there are resources in the community that can be used to address SA, IPV, and TDV, and there are leaders in Ketchikan who are actively working to secure further resources.

The overall community readiness score of 4.0 puts Ketchikan in the **Preplanning** level of readiness. Communities in the preplanning stage are characterized by several key traits, including having *some* community members who have at least heard about local efforts to address SA, IPV, and TDV; leaders and community members acknowledge these issues are a concern and that something must be done to address them; community members have limited knowledge about SA, IPV, and TDV; and there are resources, though sometimes limited, that can be used for further efforts.

A. Existing Community Efforts: 4.8

Respondents reported WISH as a primary organization responsible for ongoing efforts to prevent IPV in the community. Other efforts or organizations cited include native organizations, school programs, the faith community, and RYC, among others.

> *WISH has a prevention program and they have staff that is responsible to provide prevention trainings and education for the schools in our school district as well as provide trainings to the teachers and other agencies that are in, you know, significant positions of power in the community. I know that prevention staff has provided trainings to groups such as the rotary and the city council and the borough assembly, those types of things. I know that in the past and over the years that they've provided trainings for agencies that work with youth.*

Interviewees cited "siloed" efforts in the community as potentially contributing to issues of inaccessibility for certain services. One respondent explains:

> *…there has been traditionally, and this is, this is changing now, but there has been, traditionally, a sense of this is what I do. And we're all, all these groups are running off on their own direction. And there is no, not necessarily a sense of overall goal, guidance, observation, there is just this what we do. And there is not necessarily a sense of overall goal, guidance, observation, there is just this is what we do. And the groups don't traditionally talk to each other very much. We do our thing. And I think that was a problem for access, because [people] don't always know.*

WISH remains committed to building and expanding community partnerships in our shelter, prevention, and family service programs. WISH is working to increase the strength of existing efforts by inviting new partners to get involved in the response to and prevention of intimate partner violence, sexual violence,

and teen dating violence. Current endeavors include the Domestic Violence Task Force, Sexual Assault Response Team, and the Revilla Island Resilience Initiative.

B. Community Knowledge About Efforts: 3.5

Respondents reported that community members are generally aware of efforts in Ketchikan, but most do not have detailed knowledge of efforts, especially for people who might not have any direct experience with domestic or sexual violence. One interviewee stated:

> *I think people are generally aware of these things, but they are not, intimately aware of them and they certainly would probably have trouble describing what they all do and what's the difference between this group or that group. And you see that in nonprofits all the time.*

When asked about how much most other people in the community know about prevention efforts, respondents cited the increase in media coverage both at the local and national level as contributing to an increased awareness among community members:

> *On the issue of everything that prevention does, I think that, in the past couple of years, due to other things that have happened politically, nationally and locally, that the marches, the women's marches and the events that have been held, and some of that collaboratively with our agency, but it [awareness] is very driven by prevention… we do think that it's most important in that, if we ever want to experience any kind of a social change, that we need to be involved in actually any prevention effort.*

WISH recognizes that knowledge about violence, including its Impact on families and the community, remain a huge barrier to our ability to reach victims and survivors. We aim to put ourselves out of a job by remaining firmly committed to changing the community norms and conditions that allow the cycle of violence to continue. Through the next fiscal year, we will be working to improve this dimension by expanding outreach and directly targeting our underserved populations to inform of services. Additionally, we will be working to expand community awareness about how to recognize warning signs and how to utilize bystander intervention strategies.

C. Community Climate: 3.6

When asked to rate the attitude of most other people in Ketchikan in regard to preventing intimate partner violence, respondents reported that community members, while not indifferent, are probably not very aware of IPV, which might contribute to a lack of engagement on the issue. One respondent provided this response:

> *…if I'm trying to think of average people. I think that average people probably don't have a sense of how prolific it is. And I would imagine people saying things like, "Well, they should just be locked up." Which, of course, isn't a solution to anything. So probably kind of low, which, is despairing. I*

think that if I was going to do a prevention program in Ketchikan, I would want to start by getting Ketchikan on board with how much of a problem this is. I think people just kind of go about their business and think that these people, WISH, is taking care of that.

Some respondents cited that the brand of individualism found in Alaska has also shaped the attitudes of some members of the community:

And, once again, we are a "rugged frontier community." All these individuals out there clicking their permanent funds and whatever else. Not really being individuals, but thinking they are. And, there is that sense of, "I'm the king of my castle."… There's still a lot of that. I won't say a lot of that, but, you know, "I grew up in a family where my father was in charge. He grew up in a family where his father was in charge."

Community climate continues to be a factor that drastically impacts our work. Limited knowledge of the rates of violence in our communities fuel a perception that this is not a social problem that impacts a great number of people locally. WISH is preparing to undertake a local victimization survey in partnership with University of Alaska Southeast Ketchikan campus. Data will be used to enhance media campaigns that paint an accurate picture of the drastic impact the IPV, SV, and DV have on the lives of our community members.

D. Community Knowledge of the Issue: 3.3

When asked about how much knowledge the community as a whole has about intimate partner violence, respondents reported knowledge to be low, especially for those who have never experienced it before or who are not involved in the issue professionally. One respondent stated:

Yeah I think, again, unless they're involved in it, then they're seeing it through ads, social media and community events. So overall, I dunno, I would have to say it's still not super, I guess widely known. I think everybody knows it happens but to what degree. You know, unless they're involved it in themselves…I think a lot of folks don't know.

In regard to accessing local data about sexual violence, respondents cited WISH, university studies, law enforcement, and the internet as potential sources, among others. When asked where most people can access local data on IPV, multiple interviewees cited studies from UAA:

…a quick open source search of google will bring up, it's dated, I think maybe it was a UAA study, but, maybe UAS, but it specifically addressed statistics in Ketchikan of how likely females were to be victims of physical or sexual abuse. So I think those stats exist, I just don't know how current they are.

WISH is continuing to build community knowledge of the issues. Within our service area there are several unique communities, and each needs to have its own outreach strategy. Combating rape culture and toxic masculinity that equates male identity with violence and theories of domination continue to be one of the most challenging barriers to overcoming the stigma surrounding intimate partner violence, sexual violence, and teen dating violence.

E. Resources: 5.0

Respondents listed multiple resources available in the community, and some respondents mentioned WISH as a primary resource. Overall, resources available in Ketchikan to engage people to prevent and address IPV were rated relatively high. One respondent had this to say about resources available to youth and those involved with youth, especially in the school system:

> *It starts at youth. Youth awareness, growing up. Youth self-confidence. Like I said, my goal, here at the school district, in terms of emotional security, is that child graduates from our school district secure in the belief that they have an intrinsic value… that ongoing program that we're doing within our school, our positive behavior support group, our compliance, voluntarily, with Erin and Bree's law, those type of ongoing social structures within the school, I think, are really important.*

In regard to other resources such as time volunteered, physical spaces being offered, and financial contributions, respondents noted that there is the feeling that more could be done, and that just a few individuals are responsible for most of the volunteer work being done:

> *I think it could be better…I don't ask for volunteers in the community except on a very individual level here, but I know that when people know that there is a need that there are people that will step up to the plate. And sometimes it's the same people in community activities [sic]… these are people that are always involved in other avenues and not getting paid for their efforts, totally volunteering and so, and the homeless initiative, the people working in the warming shelter and all these people that are so civic minded.*

Southern Southeast Alaska is filled with knowledgeable and motivated individuals. Throughout the interviews, a resounding theme was that in our communities we hold one another up when times are tough. However, due to the vastness of our communities and the overwhelming number of social causes to get involved with, volunteers tend to get pulled in many different directions. We continue to prioritize building new and diverse partnerships and expanding resources through seeking additional funding.

F. Leadership: 3.7

Respondents cited WISH as a primary leader for addressing IPV in Ketchikan, along the school district, law enforcement, the faith community, tribal entities, and other health and social services groups. There was, however, some hesitation with the idea of letting politicians take leadership in the effort, even though respondents reported they can sometimes be effective by cutting through "silos". One respondent noted:

> *I think there is always a danger when politicians lead these charges. Because you are always then perceived as trying to make, to gain political capital [sic]… that said, you can't use that as an excuse not to take a stand as a government official. Obviously, from that standpoint, we have to lead by… sometimes, government, politicians are good at kind of cutting through the silos. Every so often, we'll say, okay, we need to get all these different nonprofits in a room.*

Respondents reported that for the community to take authentic ownership for challenging social norms that allow sexual violence to occur in Ketchikan, broadening efforts to align with a diverse array of community partners would yield the best results. One respondent said the following when asked who they would want to participate with in the effort to change social norms in the community:

> *I would want the Tribe. I would want school representatives, coaches. I'd probably want somebody with a background in drug and alcohol treatment. And I think I'd get the churches involved, to tell you the truth. They are often not looked at as community partners with other things that we all spin our wheels on and they should be. I think that's who I would look to.*

To create a community free of violence takes stakeholders from all sectors and in all positions of power. Through our outreach efforts, WISH continues to work to empower all community members to be leaders in violence prevention. We also aim to influence social norms and policies that make our community is safer and that victims of violence have legal protections. We recognize that no one leader or sector can end violence and aim to grow collaborative efforts.

Conclusions and Next Steps

The results from Ketchikan's Community Readiness Assessment will be critically examined to determine possible next steps for WISH. Our coalition will need to collectively interpret the findings and prioritize action steps.

The CRA Manual offers strategic suggestions for each level of readiness. Possible next steps for Ketchikan include:

- Continuing to support the dismantling of community silos though participation in strategic collaborative work.

- Conduct a consensus workshop and a strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities (SWOT) analysis with board members, employees, and community partners currently engaged in prevention work.

- Continue to advance the community knowledge level of the impact of violence through strategic communications. Develop a multi-year timeline of events and activities using input from different coalitions and workgroups.

- Use these findings to update our community violence prevention plan.

Appendices

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