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Director of Outreach Services

I've worked in the client service industry for about 15 years, both for profit and nonprofit. There is no typical client. Clients come from all ethnic, socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. We see both men and women victims. What they have in common is their inability for various reasons to make a change in

based program. They do projects and it's been a very successful.

Another good thing that comes out of the children's group is that they feel that the support they are getting from their peers and the coordinator ... they are able to address their issues better with their parents. The program coordinator will go with the children to meet with the parent and the parent's advocate is there, as well. So they have everybody that's involved in this family talking about the issues. The children feel that they are being supported by their advocate and they can be open and honest and tell the mother that "I don't like the fact that you're staying with this man that abuses you," or "It really hurts me when this happens." And the parent feels like they're being supported by their advocate. So it works as a really good team treatment environment.

A lot of the clients we serve may be referred from other agencies. Maybe at that point, they're not prepared to leave their abusers or they aren't able to go into the shelter. Sometimes they believe that their situation is not as bad as it really is. They have low self-esteem, they may feel that this is what they deserve and they want to keep their family together. There are a number of reasons why they would stay. But they still are required to receive services. So they go to the outreach offices and receive their counseling services there and gain an incredible amount of education regarding the cycle of violence and how domestic violence affects the family and their children. It really opens their eyes.

The second advantage of the outreach office is that it serves clients who are not currently in domestic violence relationships. They may have already left the situation and filed the restraining order and things like that. They don't need to go to the shelter. They have a home, a job, their children. But they still need to deal with the issues of domestic violence and how it has affected them and why they make the decisions that they make and how it has affected the children. They still need support and group ... all those things that we provide.

What I enjoy doing the most is the community outreach. I love going out into the community and making presentations and educating people on domestic violence, that it's not just yelling and screaming and bruises. That there are many forms of domestic violence that people don't think about. That's the best part. That has really been wonderful.

I do a weekly presentation at the GAIN office in Banning and what affects me the most is that every presentation that I do there, there's a victim. They may not say they're a victim, but it's so obvious in their faces. They look down or start to cry. It's just every time. Sometimes there's two, three, sometimes you see a couple and you know that it's going on. To see it kind of in your face like that, it's challenging. If something that I say or one of the other staff member says gets them to make the call and start the process of making a change in their life, then it's a good thing.

their life by themselves. They need support, help, guidance, advice and advocacy, which is what our staff provides for them.

Typically, we see more women than men. Typically these women have been in and out of relationships that have violence and control as part of the relationship. Usually coming from a childhood where there was abuse in the family. We see them in this cycle of violence. They come with their children who have grown up in an abusive environment and

then these children come back to us.

We have one family who is third generation out of the same family. The original client - we'll call her grandmother - originally came to us with her daughter when she was very young - a teenager - who had an abusive relationship. She had grown up in an abusive home. She came to our shelter, went through the program, left the shelter, went back to the abuser and over the years has come for counseling and another stay in the shelter. When her daughter became a teenager, that daughter started a relationship with a boy who was violent. She became pregnant and she was receiving counseling services. Her daughter is now in our children's program. I would not be surprised if that daughter does not ultimately have problems with abusive relationships.

Our children's program coordinator has been really successful in reaching the kids. We are seeing a lot more teenagers come into our children's program. She is young herself and has been very successful reaching them. She sees them on an individual basis, but it's really the children's groups that make the biggest change.

When teens can talk to each other about what is going on in their house, they know that they're not alone, that it happens to other people. They have really been able to open up. She uses an art therapy-

