



**TRANSFORMING
FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER
SERVICES :
Creating New Pathways
of HOPE, and Healing for
POLYVICTIMS
A FINAL REPORT**

Introduction: **Butterfly's Story**



I like the new me
because I feel peace
and tranquility.

'BUTTERFLY', CLIENT
CHATTANOOGA - HAMILTON COUNTY FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER

[Click here to view an interview with Butterfly.](#)

"Butterfly", like many clients coming into a Family Justice Center, carried the cumulative weight of her life experiences of trauma with her when she walked through the door. Traumatic experiences that left her feeling ashamed, afraid of her abusers, and struggling to achieve well-being and happiness. This began to change when she walked into the Chattanooga - Hamilton County Family Justice Center (CHCFJC), a participant in Creating New Pathways of HOPE and Healing for Polyvictims, a special national initiative funded by the US Department of Justice Office for Victims of Crime (OVC). Butterfly met with a navigator who, guided by the use of the Polyvictimization Assessment Tool (Assessment Tool), engaged Butterfly

in an in-depth, supportive conversation about her past experiences of trauma, both as a child and as an adult. Together with Butterfly, the CHCFJC Navigator used this information to identify a range of services to help her move forward in her life. For Butterfly, this was the first time she had spoken with anyone about many of these traumatic experiences. With the Assessment Tool and the support of her navigator, Butterfly felt confident in doing so. When later asked about what she had learned from this process, Butterfly explained that others around her, including her own daughters, have noticed a positive change in her, that her gaze is no longer sad, but happy, and that she has a new-found sense of peace and tranquility.

Introduction

It can be cathartic and healing for survivors of polyvictimization to tell their whole story. It can be transformative for survivors to understand the connections that exist between their past and present experiences with trauma and victimization,

and the seemingly unrelated physical, emotional, and/or behavioral symptoms that are present and holding them back. Helping survivors to address their underlying trauma and related symptoms in a client-driven, hope-centered, kindhearted way is life changing.



In order to be ‘trauma-informed’ we must give survivors space to tell their whole life story of trauma. Helping them contextualize their past – both childhood and adulthood – is the first step toward what Maslow called ‘self-actualization’ so long ago. Once you can contextualize your past and understand what happened to you and why you might have certain trauma symptoms, then you can begin to set goals and find pathways to who you want to be and what you want to do with your life. This is the essence of hope and, ultimately, wellbeing after trauma.

Casey Gwinn, President
Alliance for HOPE International



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PARTICIPANTS OF THE DEMONSTRATION INITIATIVE

At the heart of the Initiative was the development of a validated Polyvictimization Assessment Tool (Assessment Tool) designed to assess lifetime victimization and trauma in clients. The Assessment Tool was collaboratively developed over a three-year period, with more than 24 iterations drafted by the Alliance, OU, the six demonstration sites and their local research partners. The process for developing the Assessment

Tool involved extensive review, pilot testing, and multiple revisions before it was validated and approved for use. The Assessment Tool was intended to be client-led, strength-based, completed conversationally and retrospectively, and used to acknowledge and validate a client's experiences of trauma and victimization.



TRANSFORMING FAMILY JUSTICE CENTERS: CREATING PATHWAYS TO HOPE, AND HEALING FOR POLYVICTIMS

OVC's National Polyvictimization Demonstration Initiative challenged the lens through which Family Justice Centers and staff viewed service delivery and assumptions held about client needs and resulted in the transformation of service delivery through the implementation of a more holistic polyvictimization framework.

Through the Initiative and the implementation of the Assessment Tool, participating Family Justice Center staff

gained a deeper understanding of the trauma with which clients have had to cope, leading to an opportunity to deliver broader services to meet their clients' long-term needs, and ultimately, helping to mitigate risk factors for future victimizations. The National Polyvictimization Demonstration Initiative ended in 2018, the results of which are found in the [**Polyvictimization Initiative Applied Book of Lessons Learned.**](#)

NATIONAL POLYVICTIMIZATION DEMONSTRATION INITIATIVE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TEAM

Casey Gwinn, Esq, President,
Alliance for HOPE International

Gael Strack, Esq, CEO,
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Chan Hellman, PhD, Researcher,
Hope Research Center,
University of Oklahoma, Tulsa

Natalia Aguirre, MA, Director

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THE NATIONAL POLYVICTIMIZATION INITIATIVE'S GUIDING PRINCIPLES



There was an understanding among all participants that adaptations and changes would be made to the Assessment Tool during the three year Demonstration Initiative based on survivor, site, and national expert feedback, as well as lessons learned during pilot testing and final implementation.

The Guiding Principles of the Initiative were established to ensure that certain elements of the Assessment Tool's use would remain constant and would be adhered to by both participants in the Initiative and future users of the Assessment Tool. The graphic above presents the Guiding Principles of the National Polyvictimization Initiative.



I remember when we first dreamed about this initiative and what it would mean to survivors, their children, and the professionals who served them. As the former and first Director of the San Diego Family Justice Center, I saw polyvictimization each and every day. At that time, we just didn't have a word for it and certainly didn't know how to help. This initiative answered those questions and has become a dream come true. The fact that more victims want to come back for services is success. The fact that Centers have invited more partners and provide more services is success. The fact that this initiative will help other Centers improve and increase services for years to come is tremendous success. Thank you OVC for believing in the Alliance, our program staff, the Centers and the researchers who were involved. It has impacted all of us.

Gael Strack, CEO, Alliance for HOPE International



Transforming Family Justice Center Services: **Creating New Pathways of HOPE, and Healing for Polyvictims** (2019-2023)

In 2019, OVC created a new program to build on the lessons learned from the fiscal year 2016 National Polyvictimization Demonstration Initiative's Framework and Assessment Tool. Five Family Justice Centers, including three from the original Polyvictimization Demonstration Initiative and two other Family Justice Centers, were competitively selected to take part in the program. Alliance for HOPE International was selected again to be the national technical assistance provider.

Goals for the new program included:

1. Implementing a trauma-informed and hope-centered Polyvictimization Framework in Centers adopting the Assessment Tool;
2. Expanding the Polyvictimization Framework in participating Family Justice Centers by broadening their scope of services and partners, and increasing capacity for long-term case management;
3. Developing networks and connections between Family Justice Centers to exchange lessons learned and innovative ideas; and

4. Further developing organizations that support hope and survivor-centered approaches to healing and community. Ultimately, the Polyvictimization Initiative is about nurturing hope in the lives of survivors to overcome adversity and begin to set their own goals and pathways in their healing journey.

This final report features national data and valuable information about the Transforming Family Justice Center Services: Creating New Pathways of HOPE, and Healing for Polyvictims program. Included throughout are anecdotes and quotes from survivors, frontline staff, Family Justice Center and Alliance leadership. It was prepared by the Family Justice Center Alliance, a program of Alliance for HOPE International in collaboration with the five participating Family Justice Centers. For guidance and support in the implementation of a polyvictimization framework within a Family Justice Center, or in the use of the Assessment Tool, contact the Alliance at FJCA@allianceforhope.com.



Above 2022 Polyvictimization Initiative Pre-Conference Learning Exchange Team Meeting

PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TEAM FOR TRANSFORMING FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER SERVICES: CREATING NEW PATHWAYS TO HOPE, AND HEALING, FOR POLYVICTIMS

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Natalia Aguirre, MA, Director

Brynne Spain, BA, Program Manager

Holly Regan, MA, Program Assistant

Sarah Pike, MA, Program Assistant

Kayla Halsey, MA, Program Assistant

What We Found

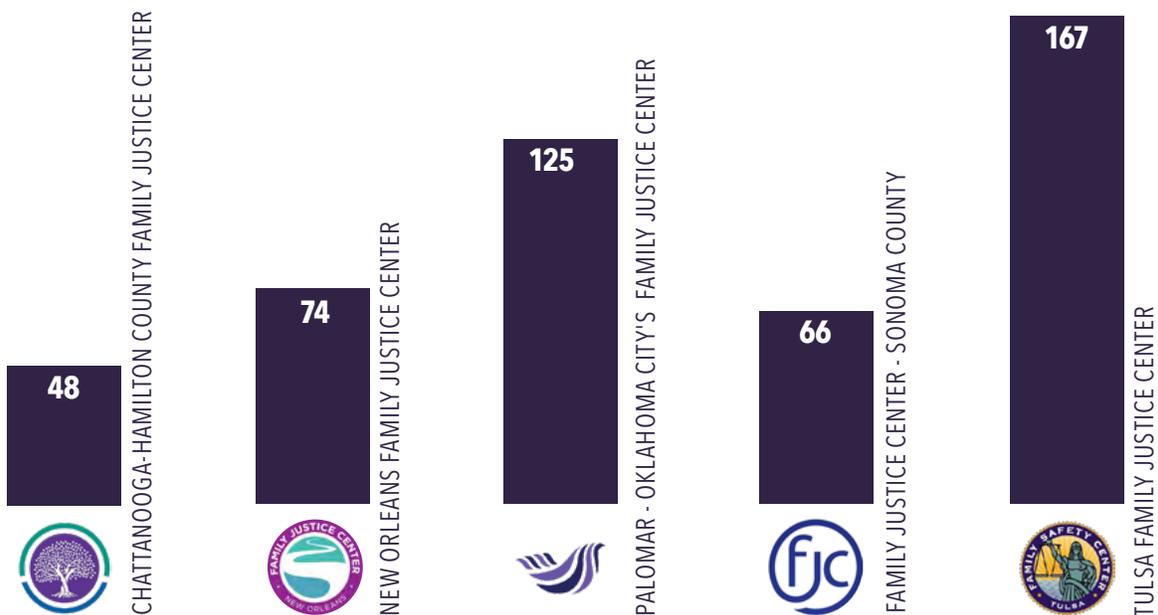
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ASSESSMENT TOOL

NUMBER OF POLYVICTIMIZATION ASSESSMENT TOOLS AT EACH SITE

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS (N=480)

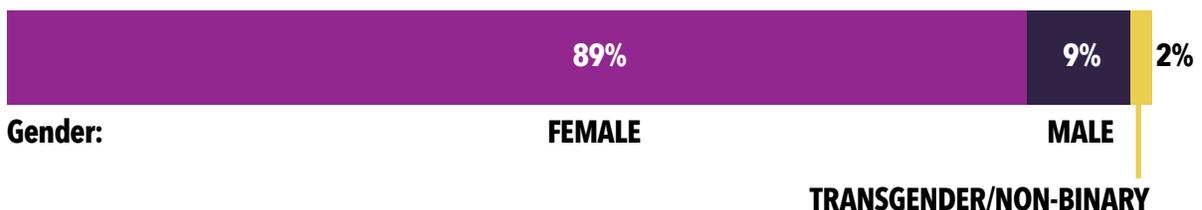
From 2019 -to 2023, a total of 480 Polyvictimization Assessment Tools were administered across the five participating Family Justice Centers.

The number of assessments varied for several reasons, including but not limited staff turnover and the impact of COVID on service delivery during the height of the pandemic.



PARTICIPANT GENDER BREAKDOWN GENDER OF PARTICIPANTS (N=478)

Most participants were female (89%), followed by small percentages who were male (9%), and transgender and non-binary (2%).





The purpose of data collection from 2019 to 2023 was to build on what was learned during The National Polyvictimization Demonstration Initiative from 2016 to 2018 with two main datacollection activities: the continued analysis of the Polyvictimization Assessment Tool data to examine prevalence of events and symptoms at Family Justice Centers; and a case study approach carried out to examine the process of implementation of the Polyvictimization Assessment Tool. Implementation of the Hope Scale was also collected and analyzed.

Dr. Carrie Petrucci, National Research Partner
Alliance for HOPE International

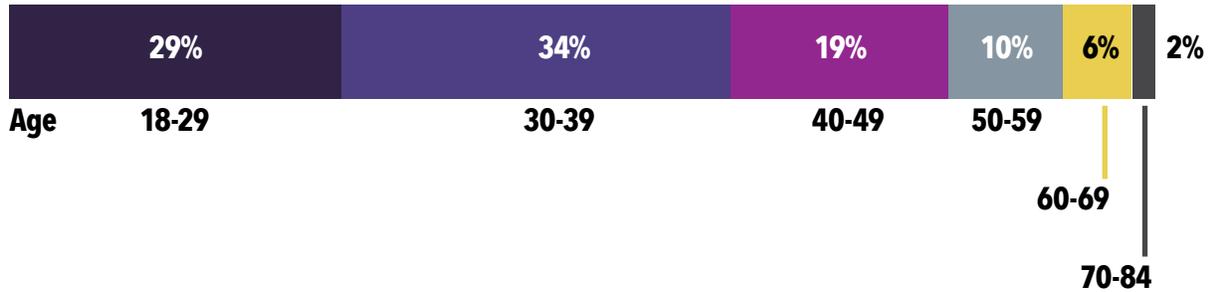


What We Found

PERCENTAGE OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH AGE GROUP

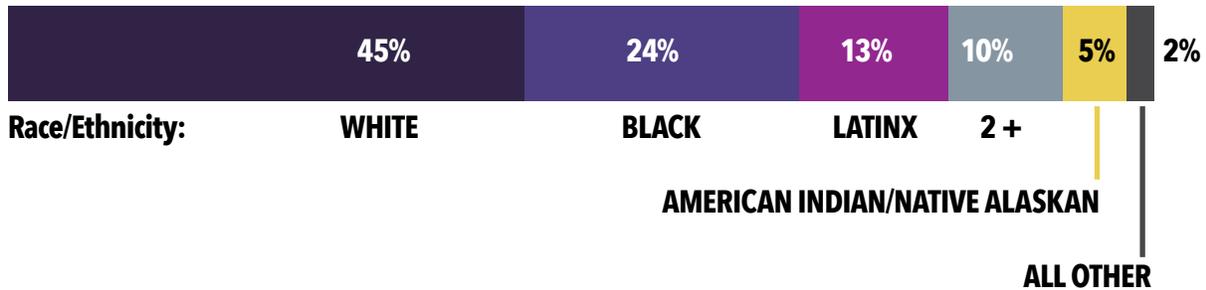
AGE GROUPS OF PARTICIPANTS (N=450)

Client age range varied from 18 to 84 years old with an average age of 38 years old (SD-13).
The largest group of participants was 30-39 years old (34%) followed by 18-29 years old (29%)



PARTICIPANT RACIAL/ETHNIC CLASSIFICATION BREAKDOWN

RACE/ETHNICITY OF PARTICIPANTS (N=480)

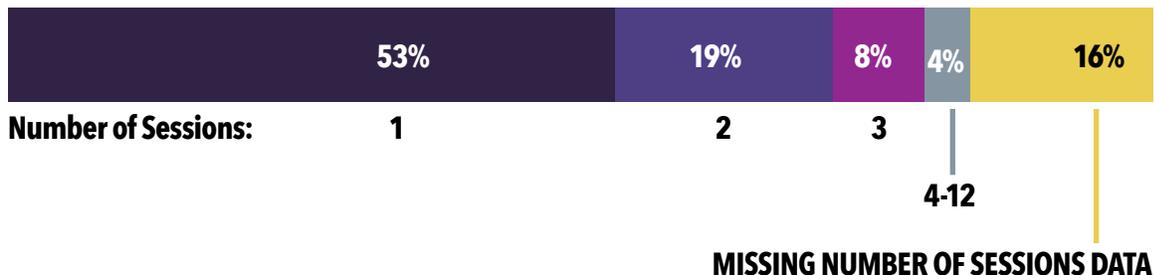


NUMBER OF SESSIONS TO COMPLETE THE ASSESSMENT TOOL

NUMBER OF SESSIONS HELD TO COMPLETE THE POLYVICTIMIZATION ASSESSMENT TOOL (N=480)

The Assessment Tool is intended to be used to guide a conversation with a client to more fully explore their lifetime experiences of trauma, related symptoms, and holistic service needs. It may be completed in one or more sessions as needed.

During Polyvictimization Program Implementation, more than half of clients completed the Assessment Tool in 1 session (53%), one quarter completed it in 2-3 sessions, and 4% completed it in 4 to 12 sessions.



What We Found

CHARTING OF EVENTS

Half of participants reported 8 or more events in the last year, 12 or more events as an adult, and 7 or more events as a child showing evidence of the occurrence of polyvictimization among participating Family Justice Center clients.



**8+ events
in the last year**



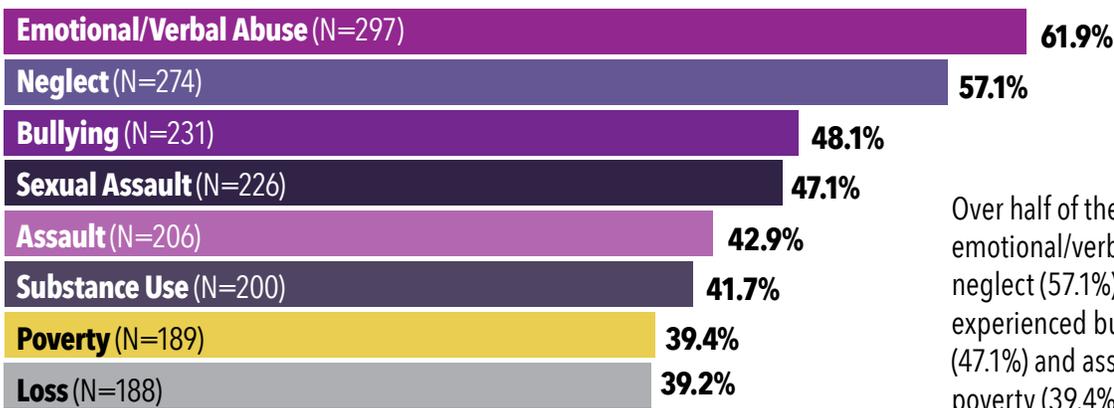
**12+ events
as an adult**



**7+ events
as a child**

MOST COMMON EVENTS AS A CHILD

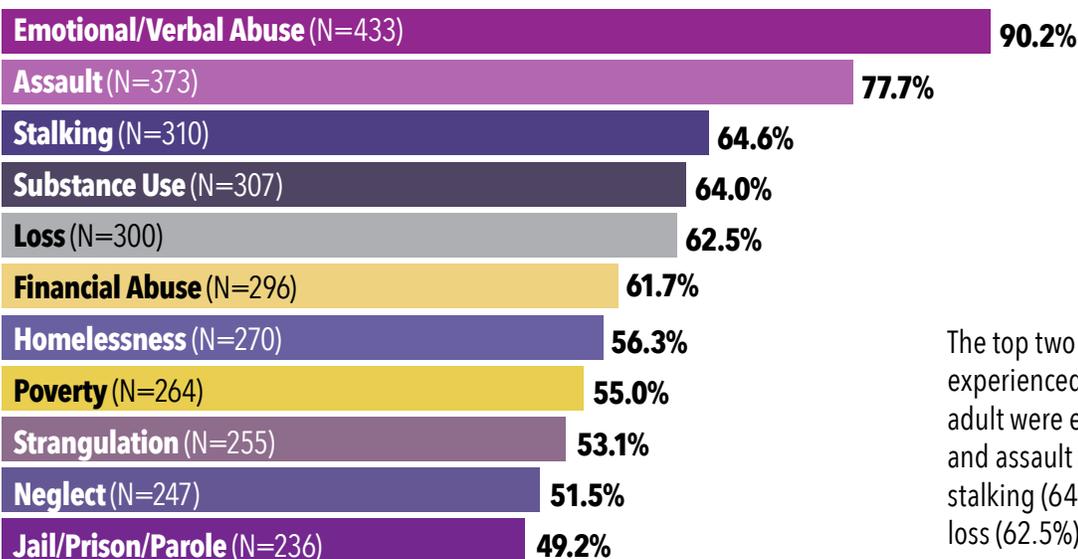
PERCENTAGE OF PARTICIPANTS WHO EXPERIENCED MOST COMMON EVENTS AS A CHILD (N=480)



Over half of the participants experienced emotional/verbal abuse (61.9%) and neglect (57.1%) as a child. Just under half experienced bullying (48.1%), sexual assault (47.1%) and assault (41.7%), followed by poverty (39.4%) and loss (39.2%).

MOST COMMON EVENTS AS AN ADULT

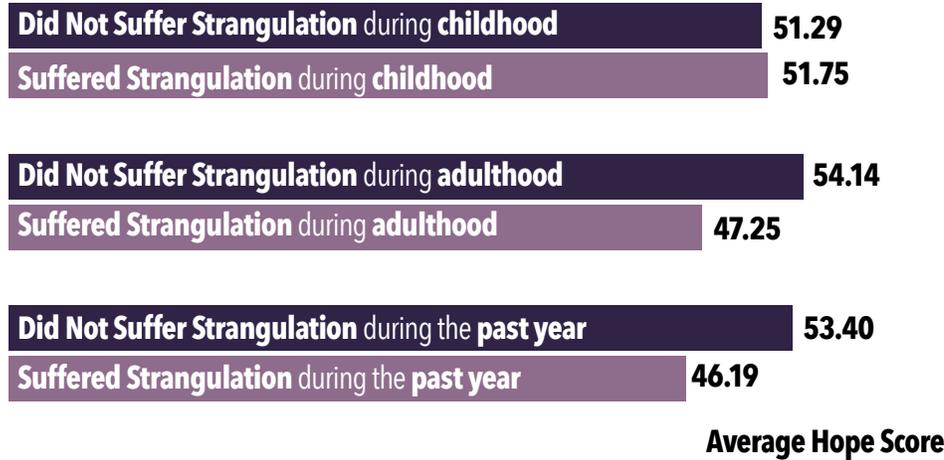
PERCENTAGE OF PARTICIPANTS WHO EXPERIENCED MOST COMMON EVENTS AS AN ADULT (N=480)



The top two most common events experienced by participating clients as an adult were emotional/verbal abuse (90.2%) and assault (77.7%). This was followed by stalking (64.6%), substance use (64%), loss (62.5%), and financial abuse (61.7%).

What We Found

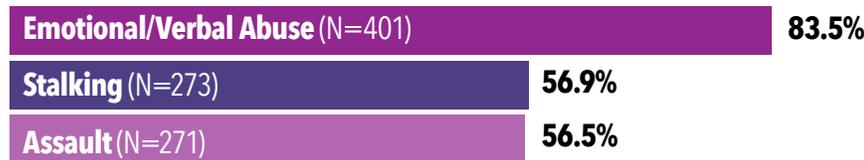
STRANGULATION AND HOPE BY TIME OF OCCURRENCE



While survivors who report childhood strangulation scored lower on hope compared to those who did not experience strangulation, the differences are not statistically significant. Clients who experienced strangulation as an adult scored lower on hope than those who had not experienced strangulation.

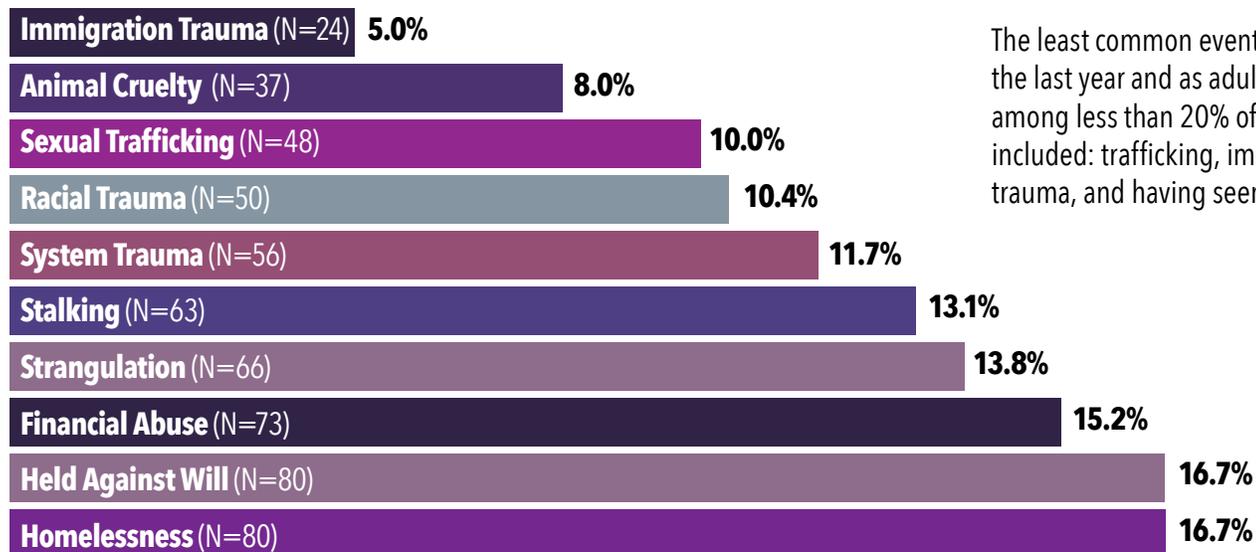
MOST COMMON EVENTS IN THE LAST YEAR PERCENTAGE OF PARTICIPANTS (N=480)

Other more common events experienced by clients in adulthood included: forced or unwanted sex (42.5%), held against will (44.6%), sexual assault (46.7%), natural disasters (46.9%), physical injury or illness (47.5%), and bullying (47.9%).



More than three quarters of clients experienced emotional/verbal abuse in the last year, and more than half experienced stalking (56.9%) and Assault (56.5%). Other common events experienced by clients included poverty (42.5%), homelessness (42.9%), substance use (45.8%), and financial abuse (47.1%).

LEAST COMMON EVENTS AS A CHILD/TEEN PERCENTAGE OF PARTICIPANTS (N=480)

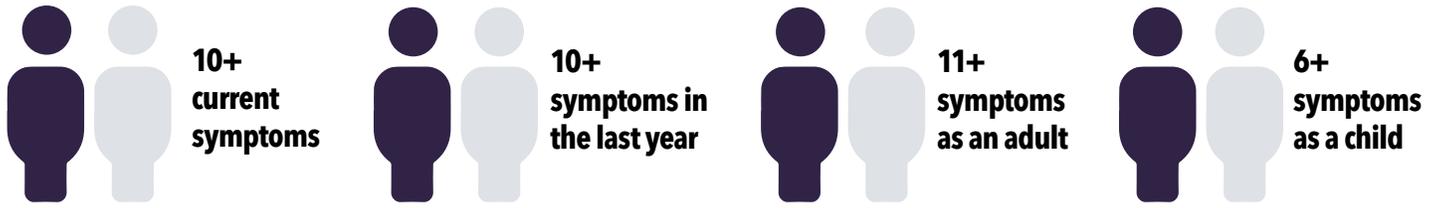


The least common events for clients in the last year and as adults, occurring among less than 20% of participants, included: trafficking, immigration, racial trauma, and having seen a person dying.

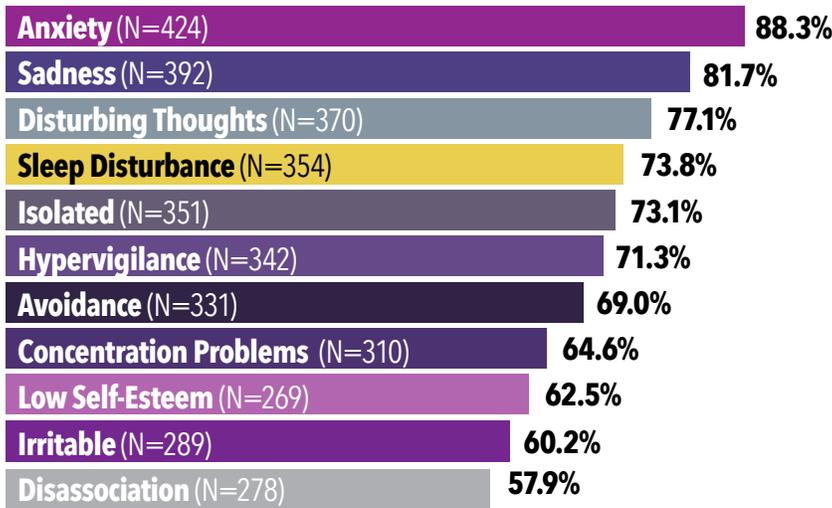
What We Found

CHARTING OF SYMPTOMS

Half of participants reported 10 or more current symptoms, 10 or more symptoms in the last year, 11 or more symptoms as an adult, and 6 or more symptoms as a child.

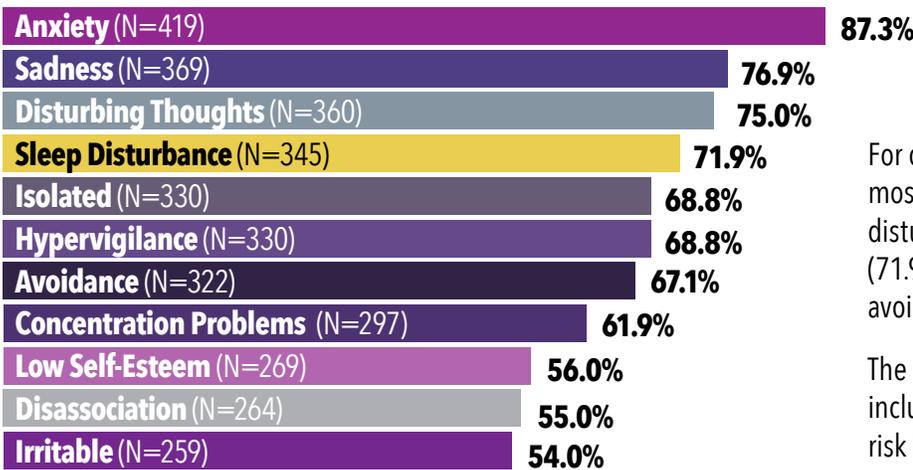


MOST COMMON SYMPTOMS IN THE LAST YEAR PERCENTAGE OF PARTICIPANTS (N=480)



Among clients who have experienced symptoms in the last year, three quarters or more experienced anxiety (88.3%), sadness (81.7%), and disturbing thoughts (77.1%). More than three quarters of clients experienced emotional/verbal abuse in the last year, and more than half experienced stalking (56.9%) and assault (56.5%). Other common events experienced by clients included poverty (42.5%), homelessness (42.9%), substance use (45.8%), and financial abuse (47.1%).

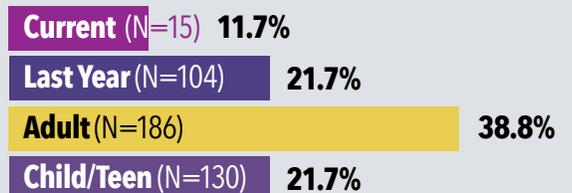
MOST COMMON CURRENT SYMPTOMS AS AN ADULT PERCENTAGE OF PARTICIPANTS (N=480)



For clients currently experiencing symptoms, the most common are anxiety (87.3%), sadness (76.9%), disturbing thoughts (75%), sleep disturbance (71.9%), isolated (68.8%), hypervigilance (68.8%), avoidance (67.1%), concentration problems (61.9%).

The least common current symptoms among clients include suicide (11.7%), self-harm (14.0%), health risk behavior (15.4%), and aggression (17.5%).

It is important to note the high history of suicide (suicide attempt, suicide discussion, or thoughts of suicide) at each point in time. At every charted stage, it is considerably higher than CDC data stating that 4.3% of adults had suicidal thoughts and 0.6% of adults reported suicide attempts in the past year (Ivey-Stephenson et al., 2022). This is concerning and suggests the importance of clinical interventions for this population.



TRACKING OF SERVICES



Overall, data was collected to identify services requested by clients and then to document whether clients were referred to or received services. Data analysis also focused on whether a client received or

was referred to more services than they originally came for to the Family Justice Center. The top three services requested were information requests (73.8%), housing (65.1%), and counseling (53.3%).

TOP SIX SERVICES REQUESTED WITH SERVICES REFERRED/RECEIVED

PERCENTAGE OF PARTICIPANTS WHO REQUESTED SERVICES (N=195) ^{VS} WERE REFERRED TO/RECEIVED SERVICES (N=202)

Information Request or Other



Housing



Counseling



Holistic Healing



Civil/Legal



Advocacy



For the top six services requested, more clients were referred to or received information requests (83.2%), counseling (59.4%), advocacy (51.5%), and civil/legal (42.1%), than had requested them (73.8%, 53.3%, 42.1%, and 40.5% respectively). For housing and holistic healing, fewer were referred to or received these services than requested them (61.4% vs. 65.1% for housing, and 46.5% vs. 46.7% for holistic healing), but the gap was small.

In some instances, the services requested may simply not have been available at the time of request. There may have been other unknown factors meriting further study/analysis.

Ultimately, this information offers an important feedback loop for Family Justice Centers as they continue to expand services and create new partnerships.

What We Found

LEAST REQUESTED SERVICES WITH SERVICES REFERRED/RECEIVED

PERCENTAGE OF PARTICIPANTS WHO REQUESTED SERVICES (N=195) ^{VS} WERE REFERRED TO /RECEIVED SERVICES (N=202)

Employment



Support Groups



Forensic/Medical



Criminal Justice



For the services shown to the left, more clients received employment (37.1%) and criminal justice services (22.3%) than requested (28.2% and 13.4% respectively).

Slightly fewer received support groups (25.7%) and forensic/medical (11.4%) than requested these (26.7% and 14.9% respectively).

Between 74% and 96.5% of participants were referred to or received one of nine services they requested (info request, employment, housing assistance, advocacy, counseling, civil/legal, holistic healing, support groups, and criminal justice). This speaks to a strong commitment to follow-through on service provision. The only exception to this was forensic/medical in which less than half of 29 participants were referred to or received this service. Reasons for this should be explored and barriers identified and remedied.

Also encouraging was that an additional 2% to 18.2% of 192 participants who had service data received a service that they did not initially request. This suggests that the need for additional services was found most likely during the polyvictimization assessment process. This allowed Family Justice Center staff to better tailor services to meet the holistic needs of the client.

REFERENCE Ivey-Stephenson AZ, Crosby AE, Hoenig JM, Gyawali S, Park-Lee E, Hedden SL. Suicidal Thoughts and Behaviors Among Adults Aged ≥ 18 Years – United States, 2015–2019. *MMWR Surveillance Summary* 2022, 71(No. SS-1):1–19. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.ss7101a1>

TRANSFORMING FAMILY JUSTICE CENTERS: CREATING PATHWAYS TO HOPE, AND HEALING FOR POLYVICTIMS



Transforming Pathways to Healing: What We Learned from Survivors

We had the honor of bearing witness to survivors' experiences with the Assessment Tool and the implementation of a polyvictimization framework through focus groups, Assessment Tool implementation observation, Learning Exchange Team discussions, and case studies with frontline staff.

Survivors who completed the Assessment Tool often described their experiences largely through the benefits of psychoeducation; the importance of a strong client/advocate relationship; value of increased services and community building; and the resurgence of hope in their lives, which they were able to see in real-time while using the Hope Scale.



Above The Chattanooga – Hamilton County Family Justice Center



What I have learned from my client survivors is that they are the most gentle, considerate, and kind people that I am honored to know. I truly believe in the miracle of the human spirit for victims to come from such brutal experiences, and still walk through life with such kindness. My clients are incredibly brave to come to therapy and want to heal the most unlovable parts of themselves. I am so grateful to have had the assistance of this grant to provide quality care for survivors who live with such severe symptoms that make having financial stability very difficult.

Hannah Ligon-Schuetze, Board Certified Art Therapist, MS, ATR-BC,
Owner, Access Art Therapy
at the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Family Justice Center

THE ROLE OF TRAUMA EDUCATION IN A CLIENT'S HEALING PROCESS

Trauma education (psychoeducation) helps survivors understand the interconnected nature of their traumas and helps normalize the physical, emotional, and behavioral changes they may be experiencing. It can also help survivors to build connections between their core beliefs about themselves, their lives, and their past experiences.

One of the most valuable outcomes for the use of the Assessment Tool, as reported by survivors, was that it provided them an opportunity to explore their past victimizations in a safe and supportive environment and helped them to connect past experiences of trauma with their current mental, emotional, and physical wellbeing.

Administration of the Assessment Tool provided a safe and supportive pathway to offer trauma recovery education for Family Justice Center clients. By exploring symptomology with clients, frontline staff were able to provide education on the effect of trauma on the body and brain, to incorporate trauma education into conversations around their symptoms, and to help clients to identify, better understand, and work through triggers and other distress responses when they occurred.

Navigators and Case Managers reported that their clients often expressed "epiphanies" of sorts, when they realized that certain symptoms affecting their quality of life, even unexplained physical pain, were related to their trauma history.



Oh, wow, I had not realized all this.
Looking at it no wonder I am so stressed.

Survivor



Going through this process opened up that door
and that gateway to myself.
You get mad at yourself because it's hard for you to work,
and hard for you to use your mind clearly
when you don't understand why you feel like this.
The inner peace is everything. It's a transformation of healing.

Survivor



When she asked the question 'tell me what happened', she helped me re-identify myself. I've never had a sit-down where I talk about everything that's gone on because you don't even know where to start. I felt there might be hope by the time I went home.

Survivor



Above Palomar, Family Justice Center of Oklahoma City

THE IMPORTANCE OF NURTURING A STRONG CLIENT/ADVOCATE RELATIONSHIP

Establishing rapport and trust with a survivor is essential in the healing journey; it is only through relationship building that most people openly share their life experiences. A critical tenet of the polyvictimization framework includes building deeper relationships and rapport with clients before, during, and after use of the Assessment Tool. Throughout the Initiative, new Polyvictimization navigators and case managers received extensive training and were encouraged

to foster an environment of empathy, understanding, and trust with their clients. In doing so, it established a safe environment for clients to disclose their trauma histories without fear of judgment or stigma, and created a safe environment for clients to experience, move through, and learn from triggers if they arise.

Moreover, clients who developed deeper connections with their advocates through this Assessment Tool were more likely to return for future supportive services.

NEW VS RETURNING PARTICIPANTS PERCENTAGE OF NEW ^{VS} RETURNING PARTICIPANTS (N=478)



I had to learn when to mention some of the worst bombshells about my life – like feeling suicidal – as a way of testing the provider. Because sometimes they would back away or not want to help anymore. The FJC was the only one that passed that test.

Survivor



Clients often come into the Sonoma Family Justice Center for a primary victimization such as domestic violence.

They are often seeking immediate help for a particular service/services. In talking with clients, staff help clients to understand their story as a whole and how victimizations across one's lifetime have an impact on their current victimizations but also represent their resilience and strength to overcome them.

"The client recognized that she had been a polyvictim all of her life. The Assessment Tool helped her to recognize all of the trauma that she had already gone through. There were moments that she got emotional when she saw her life story laid out in this way. Through all of the validation we gave her while doing the Assessment Tool, she started to realize she was an extremely resilient woman who had overcome so much already and was overcoming her current trauma, too." This, however, was only made possible by developing a strong relationship with the client before and during implementing the Assessment Tool. The staff went on to describe, "Because we had a positive, trusting, safe relationship built over several months, the client as very open and receptive to having the conversation and felt that she could be honest, and we would hold the space for her."

Frontline Staff Member,
Family Justice Center of Sonoma County

THE NEED FOR EXPANDED SERVICES AND COMMUNITY BUILDING

From crisis response to long-term case management, information gathered from survivors through use of the Assessment Tool revealed areas where participating Family Justice Centers needed to create new partnerships and expanded services to support the ongoing healing process of clients.

In focus groups with clients who had completed the Polyvictimization Assessment Tool, they reported that the community and peer support they were able to find through these groups had been invaluable, leading to new support networks and even long-lasting friendships.



Just knowing that a talking circle existed was such a safe space for me, I learned so much about these other women who know what safety is and how we have to define it for ourselves and for the world.

Survivor





The emphasis that this Initiative has had on collaboration has been eye-opening and inspiring for myself. As a growing macro-level social worker, I appreciate the importance and value that collaboration and partnership brings. Having organizational partners on the Learning Exchange Team provides well-rounded guidance for services and programs by lending their unique perspectives and expertise. Being able to offer partners unique therapies to meet the needs of staff and clients alike was greatly appreciated. This experience has shown me that polyvictims need and deserve the level of service that a fully collaborative network of professionals provides.

Timothy Machado, FJC Prevention Coordinator,
Chattanooga-Hamilton County Family Justice Center



HOPE MATTERS

For survivors, the Assessment Tool proved most powerful when completed alongside the Hope Scale, while the Assessment Tool looks back, HOPE looks forward. The Hope Scale used with the Assessment Tool allowed clients and staff to work together to name and focus on tangible goals and pathways to achieving them.

During one Assessment Tool observation, the Alliance team had the honor of seeing a survivor take the Hope Scale. Afterwards, her Navigator presented her with the Hope Scale she had completed 30 days (about 4 and a half weeks) prior. This survivor looked at both and laughed in surprise, relief, and joy when she saw how much her score had increased.



Coming here gave me hope and positive thoughts about my life. I feel there's a community here and I'm still coming to the FJC, I wouldn't trade this place for the world.

Survivor

I can't believe that was me just a month ago.

Survivor
(regarding her previous score)





Transforming Pathways to Healing: What We Learned from Frontline Staff

Throughout the Initiative, FJC navigators, advocates, case managers, team directors, and program directors have made up the essential frontline staff members working directly with polyvictim clients, administering the Assessment Tool, and supporting on-going client case management.

As we learned through Frontline Staff Meetings, Polyvictimization Initiative site check-ins, during site visits, and through our Polyvictimization Initiative case study, these are the primary themes that have resonated most with frontline staff:



I found that working with survivors, as a Navigator, The Polyvictimization Assessment Tool was often best suited for therapeutic settings. I believe that it is a helpful assessment overall for what it can provide for the victims and professionals. I observed that it's crucial that survivors are informed on the purpose behind the Assessment Tool, how it can help them get connected with services, and the intent behind certain questions. Being prepared for tough questions in advance can help smooth the process of performing the Assessment Tool. In my experience, clients were best helped getting them connected with services they presently needed as quickly as possible. On that note, with our community and population, it seemed that they most appreciated when they were able to get quickly connected with our partners that could serve them best. I believe Navigation is best equipped to assist survivors with getting their immediate needs met and allowing them to process and work through the Assessment Tool with a therapist later.

-Kelsi Bush, Navigator
Chattanooga-Hamilton County Family Justice Center

CLIENTS ARE EAGER TO TELL THEIR STORY

Early in the Initiative many frontline staff members expressed concerns that exploring such personal, in-depth questions may be triggering for clients. As we have learned from frontline workers in our case study, many found clients were often happy to tell their story. Here are their words:



Above Palomar, Family Justice Center of Oklahoma City



My client shared more than once that she was so grateful that someone would listen to her and her whole story. She shared that she felt relieved after getting it all *“off her chest”* and felt validated that it’s normal for anyone who has gone through all of the trauma that she has, to be experiencing the symptoms she has. She resonated with the term polyvictim and felt that it helped her to make sense of her life experiences.

Frontline Staff Member



My client was very calm and expressed her gratitude more than one time at being able to have the chance to tell her story in a meaningful way and in a way that would make a difference to others.

Frontline Staff Member



The client recognized that she had been a polyvictim all of her life. The Assessment Tool helped her to recognize all of the trauma that she had already gone through. There were moments that she got emotional when she saw her life story laid out in this way. Through all of the validation we gave her while doing the Assessment Tool, she started to realize she was an extremely resilient woman who had overcome so much already and was overcoming her current trauma, too. Because we had a positive, trusting, safe relationship built over several months, the client was very open and receptive to having the conversation and felt that she could be honest, and we would hold the space for her."

Frontline Staff Member



The client often responded very candidly. Interactions were always positive; there was no problem with disclosure, often stating they were glad to speak to someone about their experiences, without the feeling of judgment, unsolicited advice or direction.

Frontline Staff Member

THE POLYVICTIMIZATION ASSESSMENT TOOL IS EFFECTIVE

This is what we heard from on the front lines of administering the Assessment Tool:



The Polyvictimization Assessment Tool is effective. With the guidance from a trained person, it enables the survivor to "connect the dots" between their subconscious and conscious mind. It helps the survivor connect the trauma with the symptoms they have experienced over their lifespan which in turn provides the survivor with an avenue for healing.

Wendy Jenkins, LCSW, Assistant Director of Clinical and Coordinated Entry Services,
Chattanooga-Hamilton County Family Justice Center



Above Chattanooga-Hamilton County Family Justice Center



In the initial stage of implementing the Assessment Tool, I was concerned about how it could unintentionally re-traumatize the survivor. Which, in some cases, it did. However, to my surprise, there were some valuable lessons to learn through the it. In one case, a survivor shared how she felt frozen in fear. She described experiencing isolation, sadness, and grief; ***"The same feeling I had when my mother died."*** Her experience was related to a strangulation incident that occurred eight months before the implementation of the Assessment Tool. Two months after her Assessment Tool, the survivor called and reported that after she was administered with the Tool, she started to have nightmares. She said: ***"I have had enough; ever since the Assessment Tool, I continue to have nightmares of him. I want to get an order of protection."*** She asked me how to do it—something that she would not even want to consider or think about doing before, due to fear. She stepped out of the dark tunnel of despair and stepped into the Hamilton County Circuit Court to file for an Order of Protection (OP) while he continued his threats from jail. After the case was heard, the OP was granted to her! Her decisive response was remarkable; she attributed her reaction to the Assessment Tool. She said those nightmares motivated her and helped her see how her fear kept her in ***"emotional captivity"*** and asserted: ***"It was the Assessment Tool that helped me see that."*** Months later, when asked what were the most important results for her? She spontaneously responded with: ***"Freedom, liberty, peace, like nothing had ever happened!"*** In conclusion, this remarkable response to her accomplishment was very evident and significant. Even though the Assessment Tool could be arduous to implement at times (for staff and for the survivor), some beautiful results could still be achieved!

Lydia S. - Navigator, Chattanooga-Hamilton County Family Justice Center



Above Karen Warrior, Navigator / Client Services Director

I like the connectivity of the process. To be able to sit down with the survivors, to provide a safe space for them to speak freely about their traumatic experiences was a rapport building opportunity that validated what happened to them. Many of the survivors had never experienced being asked those questions or being able to fully share their story about their victimizations and the emotions that impacted their mental well-being.

This allowed us to provide them with tools to cope, and support to address their self-identified needs and work towards stopping their incidence of polyvictimization.

Karen Warrior, Navigator / Client Services Director, Tulsa Family Safety Center



The Assessment Tool has actually helped a lot because I get to learn more about their story, not specifically just one case or one incident and so it makes me, it actually pushes me to provide them with better services or the most services needed.

Frontline Staff Member
Family Justice Center of Sonoma County



Above Family Justice Center of Sonoma County

BUILDING A STRONG RAPPORT WITH CLIENTS IS ESSENTIAL



Clients often come into a Family Justice Center for a primary victimization such as domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking, etc.. They are often seeking immediate help for a particular service or services. Through a polyvictimization framework, staff help clients to understand their story as a whole and how victimizations across one's lifetime have an impact on their current victimizations. A client's story can also serve as a source of resilience, strength, and hope. For frontline staff, building a strong rapport with a client is essential to create a safe environment for a polyvictim client to begin to share their story.

This however was only made possible by developing a strong relationship with the client before and during implementing the Assessment Tool.



Because we had a positive, trusting, safe relationship built over several months, the client was very open and receptive to having the conversation and felt that she could be honest and we would hold the space for her.

Frontline Staff Member,
Family Justice Center of Sonoma County



The client recognized that she had been a polyvictim all of her life. The Assessment Tool helped her to recognize all of the trauma that she had already gone through. There were moments that she got emotional when she saw her life story laid out in this way. Through all of the validation we gave her while doing the Assessment Tool, she started to realize she was an extremely resilient woman who had overcome so much already and was overcoming her current trauma, too.

Frontline Staff Member, Family Justice Center of Sonoma County

VICARIOUS TRAUMA AND STAFF BURNOUT MUST BE ADDRESSED

Throughout the Initiative, frontline staff reported an increased level of vicarious trauma, compassion fatigue and burnout while holding a space for their clients to disclose such severe and enduring trauma.



Vicarious trauma and resilience are words I learned to grow through the time spent facilitating The Polyvictimization Assessment Tool.

Listening to the stories provided insight to the strength survivors of domestic violence convey. It also required me to be aware of the strengths within myself. The survivors that were introduced to the Assessment Tool were informed that it could be done at their own pace, and this became true for the facilitators as well. I had the opportunity to hold vulnerable stories that led to my own healing journey alongside those the Family Justice Center worked with. This tool goes through events and symptoms that may spark something within facilitators, which could include a triggering moment to occur. In these moments, I would provide space for a grounding exercise, which led to the holistic healing aspect many survivors desired. Boundaries and understanding personal self-care rituals were my biggest personal takeaways when navigating vicarious trauma and facilitating The Polyvictimization Assessment Tool.

Jaden Murrin, Case Manager, Palomar, the Family Justice Center of Oklahoma City



You should be mentally prepared for the heavily emotional experience that usually comes with working with someone possibly diving into their complex traumas for the first time. Assisting survivors in that vulnerable space can be challenging, so be sure to give yourself space and time to adjust to connecting with survivors in such tragic circumstances. I found it traumatizing for myself many times, often left with the mental pictures and stories of what had been shared, which often left me unsure of what to do. I was able to rely on my support circles, especially my husband, which helped me recover from these tough times.

Elisa Raymundo, Navigator, Chattanooga-Hamilton County Family Justice Center

TRAINING IS CRITICAL

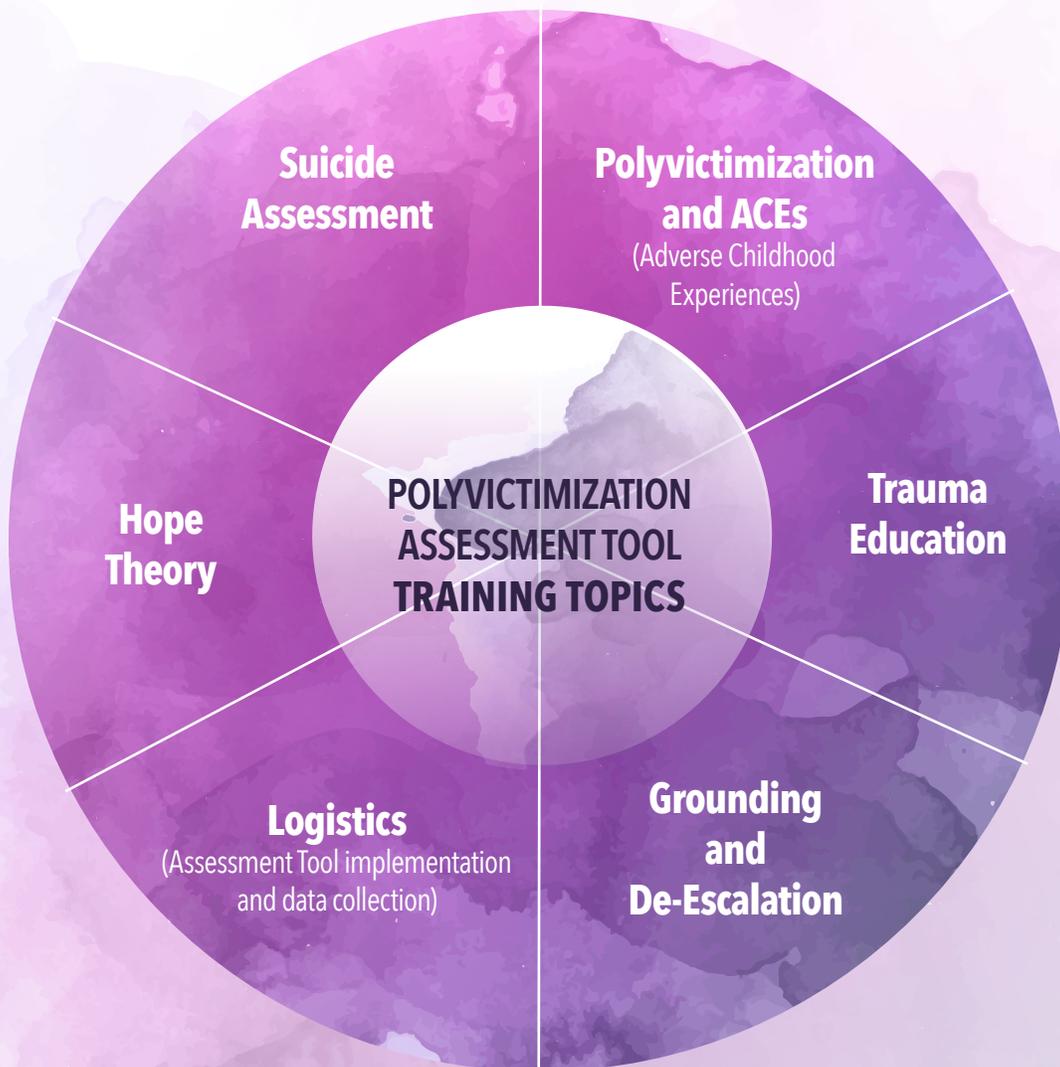
The Assessment Tool should ONLY be administered by those who are professionally trained to use it. During the Initiative, all frontline staff completed extensive training on how to use the assessment Tool in a safe, hope-centered, trauma-informed manner before they were cleared to use it with clients.

The multi-week training provided by the Alliance included training modules on polyvictimization and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), grounding, and de-escalation, crisis intervention, trauma education, suicide assessment, Hope Theory, and the logistics of Assessment Tool implementation and data collection.

Alliance training included the completion of a mock Assessment Tool to experience implementation of the Assessment Tool in real-time. Frontline staff reported that the mock tool process increased their confidence in broaching a wide variety of topics with clients and made the prospect feel less daunting.



Right Palomar, Family Justice Center of Oklahoma City



Transforming Family Justice Centers: **The Shift**



The New Orleans Family Justice Center was privileged to take part in this demonstration grant for 7 years. Despite a number of challenges through the years (COVID-19, turnover of staff, Hurricane IDA to name a few) we believe that this was a transformational process for survivors and the staff who participated. Most significantly was the learning we received from implementing the alternative healing therapies. While we knew it would be helpful to the survivors, we were amazed at the responses that survivors shared with us. Many survivors commented on how for the first time in their lives they felt *“safe”* in their own bodies and that *“they could feel again”*.

Mary Claire Landry, Founding Director, New Orleans Family Justice Center

Throughout the Initiative, FJC navigators, advocates, case managers, team directors, and program directors have made up the essential frontline staff members working directly with polyvictim clients, administering the Assessment Tool, and supporting on-going client case management.

As we learned through Frontline Staff Meetings, Polyvictimization Initiative site check-ins, during site visits, and through our Polyvictimization Initiative case study, these are the primary themes that have resonated most with frontline staff:



Through the implementation of the Polyvictimization initiative, the participating Family Justice Centers have each uniquely transformed their approach to client services from one of crisis response and intervention, to the provision of trauma-informed, hope-centered, long-term holistic services that address the multiple forms of trauma survivors face. Working through the lens of a polyvictimization framework has led to: increased collaboration, enhanced partnerships, expanded traditional and non-traditional holistic healing services, and for many, a restructuring of the client mapping process.

Participation in the Polyvictimization program has allowed us to support victims on a deeper level and provide resources and services that not only meet their needs but enrich their lives and healing journeys. Through non-traditional therapies, like music and art, that allows for a unique connection with survivors and provides them choice and autonomy where they need it most.

Regina McDevitt, Executive Director of the Chattanooga - Hamilton County Family Justice Center



Above Suzann Stewart, ED TSFC, and Chief Wendell Franklin, Tulsa PD



Participation in the Polyvictimization program provided needed data to not only help our clients understand what had happened to them and the effects through the years, and refer them to the services most appropriate, but also the basis for designing a facility to host the services they indicate they want to help them to happier, healthier lives.

Suzann Stewart, the Executive Director of the Tulsa Family Safety Center



By focusing on the polyvictimization component we have been able to address the long-term needs of clients, create deeper community, and truly give them tools that will empower them to thrive.

Hillary Burkholder, Director, Palomar, the Family Justice Center of Oklahoma City



TRANSFORMING FAMILY JUSTICE CENTERS: CREATING PATHWAYS TO HOPE, AND HEALING FOR POLYVICTIMS



Participation in the Assessment Tool provided a platform for clients to share staggering stories and experiences of trauma that we would have never otherwise touched the surface of in our normal course of service delivery.

Kelsey Price, Director of Client Services, Family Justice Center of Sonoma County



Transforming Family Justice Center Services: **Spotlights**



The polyvictimization framework offers an exciting new approach to working with survivors. It provides a safe and supportive foundation for working with clients to explore their full history of trauma, and to help clients understand the unique impact of trauma in their lives. It offers a platform for the expansion of on-site and off-site partners and the delivery of a broader range of services to meet the long-term needs of clients more effectively.

It nurtures hope and healing for clients as well as staff who bear witness to the depths of trauma experienced by their clients. And it is flexible.

We are pleased to shine a spotlight on our participating Family Justice Centers. Each has embraced the polyvictimization framework and use of the Assessment Tool in ways that are unique to their community. They are lighting the way for others to follow.





Family Justice Center
Chattanooga • Hamilton County
Pathways to Hope and Safety



I appreciate the opportunity to connect with other Family Justice Centers in a unique way that supports victims and survivors beyond the initial assessment and referral that domestic violence providers typically get to do. This Assessment Tool and Initiative have allowed us to support victims on a deeper level and provide resources and services that not only meet their needs, but enrich their lives and healing journeys. Through non-traditional therapies, like music and art, that allows for a unique connection with survivors and provides them choice and autonomy where they need it most. Lastly, utilizing and implementing the Polyvictimization Assessment Tool will be unique to each Family Justice Center, just as each FJC is unique to their community.

Regina McDevitt, Executive Director,
Chattanooga - Hamilton County Family Justice Center

48

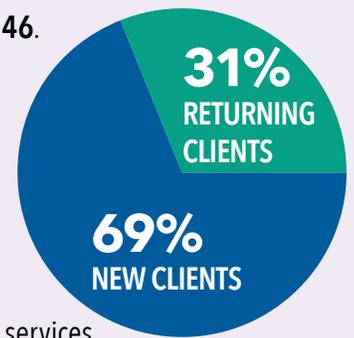
Number of Assessment Tools Administered



The Chattanooga – Hamilton County Family Justice Center opened in 2015 and joined Transforming Family Justice Center Services: Creating New Pathways of HOPE, and Healing for Polyvictims program in 2019. Through its participation in the Polyvictimization Initiative, the Chattanooga – Hamilton County Family Justice Center has continued to enhance operations, establish new partnerships, and expand programming in order to offer a more holistic service approach to working with survivors.

NEW VS RETURNING CLIENTS

The average age of new clients in the Chattanooga – Hamilton County Family Justice Center is **46**. The average age of returning clients is **41.8**. Clients classified as "Returning" were defined as those who had begun receiving services at the FJC prior to completing The Polyvictimization Assessment Tool. In contrast, "New" clients were those who completed The Polyvictimization Assessment Tool around their initial intake process and did not receive services prior to that point. To put it succinctly, **a client being considered "New" or "Returning" is based on their status as a client**, not the degree to which they received/ followed-up with services. With this in mind, Black-African Americans made up **41.4%** of our "New" clients. Additionally, **70%** of Hispanics and **31%** of White clients were considered "Returning", as they had received services prior to completing The Polyvictimization Assessment Tool.



SERVICES



MOST REQUESTED SERVICES BY NEW CLIENTS

Holistic Healing	86.2%
Information	82.8%
Counseling	72.4%
Support Groups	72.2%

MOST REQUESTED SERVICES BY RETURNING CLIENTS

Information	100.0%
Counseling	100.0%
Support Groups	100.0%
Advocacy	93.0%
Holistic Healing	76.9%

Partnership: Transforming Family Justice Center Services: Creating New Pathways of HOPE, and Healing for Polyvictims

Build it and they will come...For new clients to the Chattanooga – Hamilton County Family Justice Center, holistic healing services are the top requested service, and among the highest requested services for returning clients. Yet less than 30% of new and 31% of continuing clients were actually able to receive those services. This highlights the importance of continual enhancement and expansion of both traditional and non-traditional holistic healing services.

The Chattanooga – Hamilton County Family Justice Center embraces the implementation of the Polyvictimization Assessment Tool and a polyvictimization framework for service delivery.



I believe you need to have solid planning and preparation prior to implementing a polyvictimization framework. This will take your organization to new challenges and opportunities, so it is essential that you have your partners on board and on the same page.

Timothy Machado, FJC Prevention Coordinator
Chattanooga – Hamilton County Family Justice Center



Being a recipient of a non-traditional therapy and completing The Polyvictimization Assessment Tool, I learned a lot about my past experiences and their present-day impacts. I received Access Bar therapy, which helped me process grief and, at the time, the loss of my father. I felt like I could genuinely be myself and feel what I needed to feel, whether it was the loss or other grieving emotions. I realized that I could de-compartmentalize my emotions and be authentic in a space that allowed me to be.

Patti Childers, Assistant Director of Outreach, Training, and Volunteers, Chattanooga – Hamilton County Family Justice Center

THE FJC MEANS TO ME...

In the heart of the Chattanooga – Hamilton Family Justice Center is a board, known as “The FJC Means To Me...” board that includes anonymous quotes shared by clients of their experience at the Center. Here are some of their words:

*I have felt very supported,
and I know I am not alone.
They have taught me that justice does exist.
They are a good support team.*

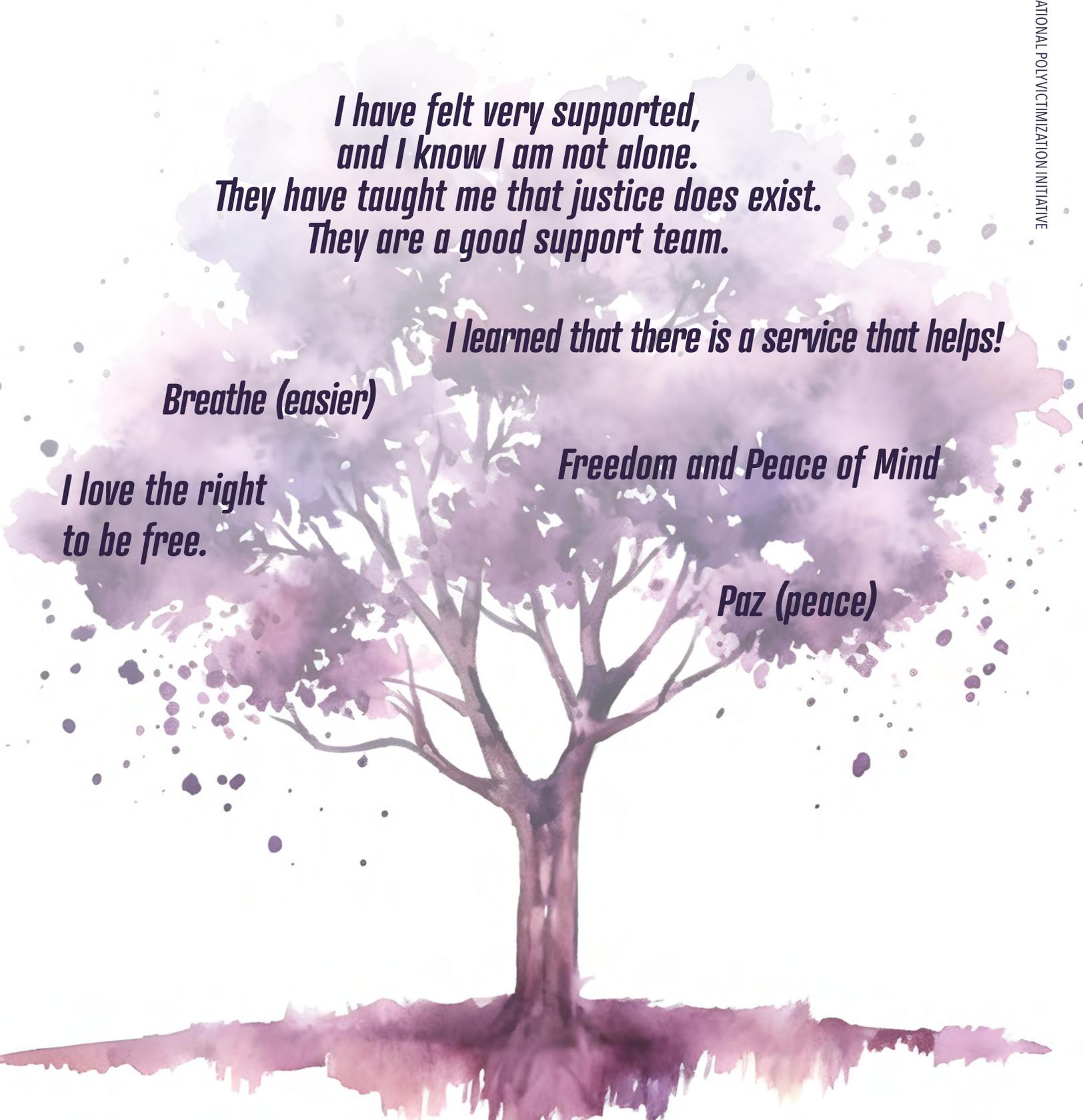
I learned that there is a service that helps!

Breathe (easier)

Freedom and Peace of Mind

*I love the right
to be free.*

Paz (peace)





I was able to use The Polyvictimization Assessment Tool in two areas: during intake and during therapy sessions. Both situations provided opportunities to learn about the client, their struggles, successes, and complex journey of trauma. Where I found the most value in the healing process for clients was when I performed The Assessment Tool with them during therapy sessions. This is because in that environment, the client would be in a space where they were more emotionally and mentally ready to dive deeper into their history and explore the nature of their trauma. Often during intake sessions, clients would come seeking a specific service or trying to meet a specific need, which meant that the Assessment Tool would feel like an obstacle, or require more emotional/mental investment than they could spare at that time. After experiencing both, I can assuredly say that the Assessment Tool is a helpful tool when provided in a therapeutic setting and provides many benefits for both myself as a practitioner and to the survivor.

Kimberly Colen, Client Services Supervisor,
Chattanooga – Hamilton County Family Justice Center



Transforming Family Justice Center Services: Creating New Pathways of HOPE, and Healing for Polyvictims has broadened our understanding of the full picture of trauma that clients are walking in with, and being intentional about how we walk alongside them to address and heal from all victimizations that have occurred over their lifetime.

I believe that by focusing on the polyvictimization component we have been able to address the long-term needs of clients, create deeper community, and truly give them tools that will empower them to thrive. This perspective we have gained from this program will continue to inform how we do this work of providing protection, hope and healing on a daily basis.



Hillary Burkholder, Director
Palomar: Oklahoma City's Family Justice Center





The Polyvictimization Assessment Tool was very beneficial in regards to discussing additional services the client was not previously connected with. By discussing past events and experiences with clients, it helped identify these additional resources that improved the client's healing journey and long-term goals. The Assessment Tool also helped clients connect their symptoms to certain events, which in turn also improved their healing journey. Multiple clients mentioned feeling like a weight had been lifted off of them due to being able to share their story in a way that made them feel supported and not judged for past events or symptoms. As the person administering the Assessment Tool, vicarious trauma and compassion fatigue did occur in the beginning. Administrators of the Assessment Tool need to carefully monitor and execute their self-care plans and assist clients in creating one as well. The Assessment Tool is a good tool to utilize when working with survivors of violence and trauma to help provide a better understanding of the person.

AJ France, Case Manager, Palomar: Oklahoma City's Family Justice Center



125

**Number of Assessment Tools
Administered**

Palomar opened in 2017 and joined Transforming Family Justice Center Services: Creating New Pathways of HOPE, and Healing for Polyvictims in 2019. Through its participation, Palomar was able to enhance services for clients, significantly expand holistic programming, and establish new partnerships.

The Initiative allowed Palomar to broaden their work from crisis intervention that was focused on addressing the needs arising from someone's most recent victimization to a holistic, long-term approach for those that have a lifetime of victimizations and trauma that need to be healed. Key was the creation of the Polyvictimization Case Management team to provide hands-on support to survivors working towards long-term, self-identified goals towards sustainability, such as housing, employment, education, mental health services, etc.

Partnership: Transforming Family Justice Center Services: Creating New Pathways of HOPE, and Healing for Polyvictims

Case managers assist clients navigating the systems through collaboration with on-site partners such as with law enforcement, advocacy, legal, child welfare, and other agencies.

Additionally, the case managers implemented the Polyvictimization Tool and further explored clients' needs based on discussions during implementation.



During my time at Palomar Family Justice Center, I implemented The Polyvictimization Assessment Tool from April of 2022 to June of 2023. Overall, my experience implementing the Assessment Tool was a great learning experience and provided me essential skills to help domestic violence survivors. The Assessment Tool helped me establish trust to provide continued services. On some occasions, a client may have never told anyone about the events that have significantly impacted their lives. Some had never had a safe space to acknowledge that some events were traumatic. Some of the most difficult conversations brought closure, support, and opportunity to seek peer support within our organization. On the contrary, it is important to address secondary trauma and the role it played. I personally found it difficult to get through a handful of Assessment Tools. Since some individuals have never explored or considered some victimizations, it added pressure and more opportunity for escalation. The secondary trauma increased the need for self-care. One thing that helped was not scheduling more than two Assessment Tools a day. Although it was sometimes a challenge, overall it was an impactful tool we used with our survivors and hope to have as a blueprint in the domestic violence setting.

Lauren Bright, Case Manager, Palomar: Oklahoma City's Family Justice Center

Partnership: Transforming Family Justice Center Services: Creating New Pathways of HOPE, and Healing for Polyvictims

The addition of case management also resulted in a shift in the housing referral process at Palomar. Previously, clients were directly referred to the Homeless Alliance, Palomar's community housing partner. During that time, one housing navigator was caring for and managing any clients who had housing needs. Now the Palomar case management team prepares clients to begin the housing process and works

closely with the Homeless Alliance housing navigators to collaboratively meet the clients long-term housing goals. This approach allows both agencies to support the client in their areas of expertise, providing the most comprehensive support possible. The Homeless Alliance currently has three housing navigators on site at Palomar, who are solely focused on the clients' housing needs.

THE EXPANSION OF HOLISTIC PROGRAMMING AT PALOMAR INCLUDED:



THE EXPANSION OF LOCAL FORMAL MOU PARTNERSHIPS:



These formal partnerships allowed to limit barriers and streamline services for Palomar clients. In addition to these formal partnerships, Palomar partnered with thirteen local holistic programming providers to offer on-site holistic services for clients.

Palomar is continually seeking out traditional and non-traditional programming to expand opportunities for holistic healing for clients and has secured a corporate grant to continue this programming beyond the life of the demonstration project.

RETURNING CLIENTS



During the program, Palomar partnered with a local researcher to examine three key questions on the use of The Polyvictimization Assessment Tool:

QUESTION 1

Are higher scores on The Polyvictimization Assessment Tool linked to the reception of more services by clients?

This research question was based on the theory that if The Polyvictimization Assessment Tool is helpful to clinicians in helping guide clients to sufficient services, then higher scores on the Assessment Tool should lead to more referrals for clients.

THE METHOD: To test this theory, we employed multiple regression modeling using clients' Assessment Tool scores on

- 1.) adverse events in childhood;
- 2.) adverse events in adulthood; and
- 3.) current symptoms as predictors of the number of referrals received by clients (**N = 79**).

THE RESULTS: The results indicated that higher scores on the Assessment Tool indeed predicted a higher number of referrals (**R2 = .561; P < .001**).

Interestingly, adverse events in childhood were more predictive (**B = .56, P < .001**) of the reception of services than either adverse events in adulthood (**B = .075, NS**) or symptoms in adulthood (**B = .089, NS**).

The results were consistent with the theory that the Assessment Tool helps to identify greater client needs, which in turn leads to greater client referrals.



QUESTION 2

Are higher scores on The Polyvictimization Assessment Tool linked to lower hope among Palomar clients?

This research question was based on the theory that adverse experiences as captured by The Polyvictimization Assessment Tool are associated with lower psychological well-being.

THE METHOD: Psychological well-being was measured using the Dispositional Hope Scale. Using multiple regression modeling, scores on The Polyvictimization Assessment Tool were used as independent variables to predict the dependent variable of client hope scores (**N = 79**).

THE RESULTS: The results indicated that scores on The Polyvictimization Assessment Tool were not significantly correlated with clients' hope levels.



QUESTION 3

Are clients' hope scores higher at discharge compared to clients' hope scores at program entry?

This research question was formulated to gauge the potential impact of Palomar's services on the psychological well-being of clients. Client well-being was again measured using the Disposition Hope Scale.

THE METHOD: A paired samples t test (**N = 59**) was used to evaluate the statistical significance of differences in average hope scores of clients at program entry compared to average hope scores at program discharge. Cronbach's alpha scores were calculated on both pre and posttest hope scores to determine their adequacy for comparison. Both pre and posttest hope scores had **ALPHA'S > .70**, indicating sufficient internal consistency for analysis.

THE RESULTS: The results indicated that client hope scores were significantly higher post program exposure than at program entry (**PRE HOPE M = 46.6; POST HOPE M = 49.4; P < .000**).

While more research is needed, the statistically significant increase in hope scores from pre to post among Palomar clients is consistent with the theory that exposure to services at Palomar increased the hope levels of Palomar clients.





FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER of Sonoma County



My time spent participating in the Polyvictimization Initiative has been an eye-opening experience, rich in learning opportunities for myself and staff at the FJCSC. I participated both as a frontline staff who administered the Assessment Tool, and then as the administrative point of contact/grant coordinator. This Initiative provided a platform for clients to share staggering stories and experiences of trauma that we would have never otherwise touched the surface of in our normal course of service delivery. While I knew that polyvictimization was prevalent amongst most of the clients that we serve, I had no idea the breadth and depth of the victimizations our clients are experiencing beyond the primary victimization that caused them to seek services. The implementation of the Polyvictimization Assessment Tool and accompanying whole-person framework allowed for staff to take a holistic view of our clients, which led to a greater sense of relationship building, empathy, and more meaningful referrals. Overall, I believe taking the time to listen to a survivor's whole story was a humanizing experience for both staff and the survivor. My hope is that the data gathered in this Initiative will cause the field to go further in identifying meaningful and effective interventions in the lives of polyvictims. It has been a great privilege to hold the space of stories of so much pain and yet incredible strength and resilience.

Kelsey Price, Director of Client Services, Family Justice Center of Sonoma County



We're here to walk the path with you and to help you in whatever you need to be successful, whatever that looks like. So, doesn't the Assessment Tool give us that ability to look at what they need and help them be successful? The Assessment Tool has allowed us to look at people's needs and help them be successful based on their life experience... That's actually how I do think about it.

Frontline Staff Member, Family Justice Center of Sonoma County

The Family Justice Center of Sonoma County served as one of the national Polyvictimization Initiative demonstration sites (2016 - 2018), and a continuation site during the Polyvictimization Initiative Implementation Program (2019 - 2023).



69
Number of Assessment Tools Administered **2016 - 2018**

66
Number of Assessment Tools Administered **2019 - 2023**

NEW PARTERSHIPS ADDED

2016-2018



2019-2023



Throughout the Polyvictimization Initiative, the Family Justice Center of Sonoma County has made multiple structural changes in order to better serve clients and connect them with appropriate services. This includes developing 16 new partnerships, both on-site and off-site, with local community organizations.



Partnership: Transforming Family Justice Center Services: Creating New Pathways of HOPE, and Healing for Polyvictims

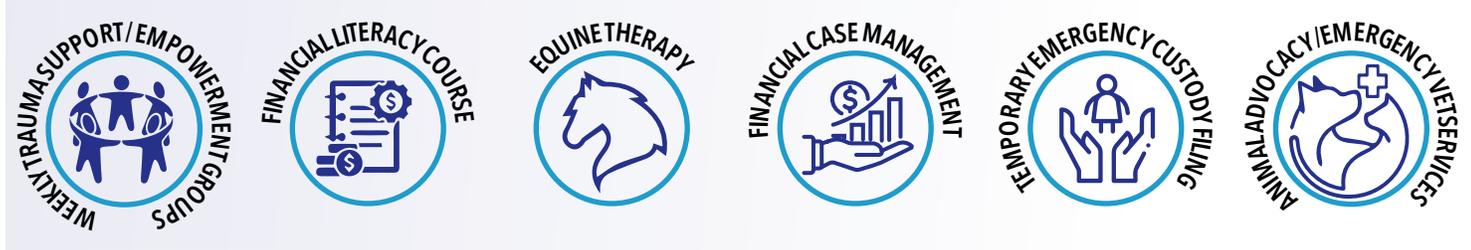
NEW SERVICES ADDED

In addition, 17 new services were created for clients to be connected to.

2016-2018

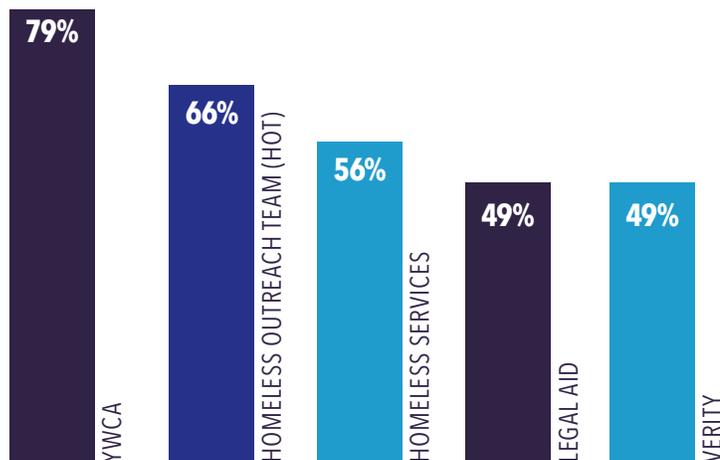


2019-2023



TOP FIVE SERVICES REFERRED

Among the top services referred were to the YWCA of Sonoma County, the Homeless Outreach Team (HOT), Emergency Homeless Services, Legal Aid, and Verity, a local provider of sexual assault services.



35% INCREASE in RETURNING CLIENTS



I felt like the FJC understood what was happening without having to explain everything over again. Previously, I felt like my substance use recovery overshadowed support - except at the FJC. They present possibilities.

Survivor, Family Justice Center of Sonoma County

Partnership: Transforming Family Justice Center Services: Creating New Pathways of HOPE, and Healing for Polyvictims

COVID mitigation protocols expanded access for clients as well, as staff were able to offer phone/virtual intakes and appointments, allowing staff to meet clients where they were. The Center also implemented a longer intake process that is focused on a whole-person framework view of clients



There was one client in particular who was really intrigued by the [Assessment's] questions that we were talking about; and who after having gone through them, put the dots together and realized that she needed to go back to therapy because she had stopped going. But after doing the Assessment Tool, she actually said that she wanted to go back to therapy, and really does need it.

Survivor, Family Justice Center of Sonoma County

and their experiences by having broader conversations with clients through use of the Polyvictimization Assessment Tool.

Next are more statements from clients and frontline staff on the experience of the Assessment Tool implementation:



Above Survivor Day of Empowerment at Family Justice Center of Sonoma County



My experience at the FJC was nice because everybody I talked to didn't question the severity of my situation. With my family, I have kind of felt like I had to make it seem worse than it was in a way; which it was already as bad as it could get. Some people doubted me in a way just because I was staying, I kept going back with my boyfriend. Everybody here that I talked to...it's like no questions asked. We believe you. It felt really good and I actually noticed that across the board.

Survivor, Family Justice Center of Sonoma County



Above Survivor Day of Empowerment at Family Justice Center of Sonoma County



I was in darkness,
but throughout everything
I had been through,
the pain, I overcame all of it.
It taught me to stay strong,
and keep breathing,
and keep going.
I now see the light,
finally, after so many years.
There are still obstacles
and I will overcome them all.
So, thank you to you,
Family Justice Center.
You helped me
find myself again.

Survivor, Family Justice Center of Sonoma County





It was an honor to be given the resources to really explore the journey of survivor's life time trauma. We truly believe that every person walking through our doors are polyvictims because of the significant exposure to ongoing trauma that is present in our community. It was revealing to us as well the extensive number of events that survivors are dealing with in the current year. Just because we interface with them in a given incident or event does not even begin to capture the range of events and chronic exposure to trauma that they are experiencing. This was a significant learning and one that enabled management to truly grasp and understand the level of secondary trauma that our staff are exposed to every single day.

**Mary Claire Landry, Founder and Executive Director,
New Orleans Family Justice Center**



Partnership: Transforming Family Justice Center Services: Creating New Pathways of HOPE, and Healing for Polyvictims

The New Orleans Family Justice Center, which opened in 2007, served as one of the National Polyvictimization Demonstration Initiative sites from 2016 – 2018, and a continuation site during the Polyvictimization Initiative program implementation from 2019 – 2023. Through its Trauma Recovery division, the New Orleans Family Justice Center prioritizes clients' emotional and mental health, and, as a result of the Polyvictimization Initiative, has expanded alternative therapies and healing practices available to clients. In addition to the larger research goals

of the National Polyvictimization Initiative, the New Orleans Family Justice Center aimed to observe whether operationalizing the implementation of the Polyvictimization Assessment Tool (Assessment Tool) and the Hope Scale made for understanding the range of traumatic events and associated symptomatology polyvictim clients experience throughout their lifetime as well as if the provision of holistic healing therapies, counseling, and other wrap-around services positively impacted clients' emotional and mental health and well-being.



70 Number of Assessment Tools Administered
2020 - 2023

In partnership with the Institute on Women & Ethnic Studies (IWES), the New Orleans Family Justice Center aimed to observe if polyvictim clients experience improved emotional and mental health and well-being by examining the longitudinal Hope Scale data as well as the "currently experiencing symptoms" portion of the Assessment Tool. Two of the research questions asked:



- 1. What is the relationship between the type, frequency, and duration of services received by the New Orleans Family Justice Center among polyvictim clients and hope as measured by the Hope Scale across visits?**
We anticipated a positive correlation between the frequency/duration of services and Hope Scale Scores.
- 2. What is the relationship between the type, frequency, and duration of services received by the New Orleans polyvictimization cohort and the reported number and types of current symptoms reported across visits?**
We anticipated a negative correlation between the frequency/duration of services and the number of symptoms reported. As the frequency/duration of services increases, we anticipated the number of symptoms reported to decrease.

FINDINGS

Of the **75** clients in the study:

- **30** clients had comparable Hope Scales from intake and follow-up, of which an increase in Total Hope Score was observed in **20 (67%)** clients;
- a decrease in Total Hope Score was observed in **8 (27%)**; and **2 (7%)** clients had no change in Total Hope Score.

Of the **10** clients with comparable symptoms data:

- **1 (10%)** client reported a decrease in the number of symptoms currently experienced,
- **8 (80%)** clients reported an increase in the number of symptoms currently experienced, and **1 (10%)** client reported no change in the number of symptoms currently experienced.

The time elapsed between baseline and follow-up symptoms and Hope Scale completion for each client varied between 17 days to 1 year, 8 months. Although there was not a reduction observed in the number of symptoms clients reported that they were “currently experiencing” at follow-up, most clients with comparable Hope Scale scores did show an increase in hope. In reviewing these findings, a New Orleans Family Justice Center counselor remarked,



what’s most important is how symptoms are being managed as opposed to being reduced.

Counselor, New Orleans Family Justice Center

To address some of these limitations, we developed a brief qualitative questionnaire completed at follow-up visits with polyvictim clients. Navigators asked returning clients to speak more about:

- their emotional and mental health now compared to when they first spoke to a case manager or counselor, and
- if at all, how their engagement with the New Orleans Family Justice Center impacted their emotional and mental well-being or influenced how they might perceive their health now.

Clients were also asked to think back and compare their current emotional and mental health to when they first spoke with a navigator, 4 out of 6 clients described improvements to their mental well-being as navigator documentation noted:



In a much better space now. Felt empowered in court hearings. Felt stronger/spoke about the staff at the New Orleans Family Justice Center. *“I’m a lot stronger, less angry. Able to deal with seeing him now.”*

In the last month, her mood has improved. Has a new job in the insurance field.



Much better. Counselor helped so much. Still have moments, but not as often.



Took a lot of time to process anxiety before anything else. Now, can process feelings and thoughts so much better. 100% difference.

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FINDINGS CONTINUED

Additionally, clients described how New Orleans Family Justice Center engagement directly impacted their emotional and mental health. In conversation with clients at follow-up, survivors noted,



Made me believe in myself...instilled hope...it helped a lot.

Survivor, New Orleans Family Justice Center



So many people helped. Always felt supported and told she was normal. Never made to feel that she was the cause. Feels much more peaceful. A place of grounding.

Survivor, New Orleans Family Justice Center

When asked what New Orleans Family Justice Center services impacted them the most, clients spoke about counseling, named New Orleans Family Justice Center counselors or case managers, and specific services, including legal, case management, housing, and immigration services.

RETURNING CLIENT DATA

Of the **75** clients in the study:

- Seventy-one (**71**) clients had returning visit data documented, of which the number of visits to the New Orleans Family Justice Center ranged from **1** visit to **56** visits, with **12** visits as the average.
- Only **5 (7%)** of clients visited New Orleans Family Justice Center once, and **66 (93%)** of clients visited the New Orleans Family Justice Center twice or more, demonstrating that **most clients who completed an Assessment Tool with a navigator returned to the New Orleans Family Justice Center for repeated or multiple services.**

66 Returning Clients (12 visits on average)

5 One-Time Clients (1 visit)

4 Missing Data (on the number of visits)



ADDRESSING RACIAL TRAUMA

In 2021 the Initiative decided to include an event in the Assessment Tool that would prompt the New Orleans Family Justice Center navigators to speak with clients about their experiences with racial trauma. IWES assisted in conducting a survivor focus group and a navigator survey that asked their opinions about including racial trauma as an event to the Assessment Tool, their comfortability and

proficiency in discussing this topic, and their perspective regarding its relevance to clients' lived experiences. Navigators shared that they felt confident conversing with clients regarding racial trauma but could benefit from further guidance and training to discuss this experience with clients. Trauma Recovery Counselors shared,



Racial trauma comes up through conversations, but to have it explicit on the Assessment Tool would be great.

Trauma Recovery Counselor,
New Orleans Family Justice Center



I think this is very important - to distinguish racial trauma from discrimination and system-induced trauma. I also think something needs to be specific about anti-Black racism: as it is a specific type of racism with a specific history and accompanying impacts on lived reality, health, encounters with law enforcement, etc.

Trauma Recovery Counselor, New Orleans Family Justice Center

New Orleans Family Justice Center leadership identified the importance of continued training to ensure navigators are confident in discussing all the adverse event-related topics presented on the Assessment Tool and growing their self-awareness of how their identities may shape client responses.





When I first read the Vision 21 report issued by DOJ Office for Victims of Crime in 2013, the lights came on!

The “Ahhha! moment” we all sometimes need make sense of the work we do. The National Polyvictimization Demonstration Initiative was the logical outcome. We applied thinking that this would be the perfect opportunity to learn more about the traumas faced by our survivors through the years, as well as how we could provide the additional services they need based on the information gathered to inform our growth for the future.

We had started our strategic planning for expansion of space and program in 2015, and when we got this demonstration project to help develop the Assessment Tool, it was perfect timing.

Subsequent implementation gave us the data we needed to not only help our clients understand what had happened to them and the effects through the years, and refer them to the services most appropriate, but also the basis for designing a facility to host the services they indicate they want to help them to happier, healthier lives. To create the sense of community they need to grow, learn, and share experiences in a safe, comfortable, hopeful environment.

The data collected is invaluable in ensuring we provide each individual the psychoeducation and follow up programming necessary for hope and healing...providing pathways and exciting agency to set and achieve their goals.

Suzann Stewart, Executive Director, Tulsa Family Safe Center



Above Tulsa Family Safety Center Staff and partners

The Tulsa Family Safety Center, which opened in 2006, served as one of the National Polyvictimization Initiative Demonstration Sites from 2016 – 2018, and a continuation Site during the National Polyvictimization Initiative implementation program from 2019 – 2023.



The moment I began my position at the Family Safety Center I was focused on incorporating the polyvictimization framework to help create an environment that was soothing, supportive, and impactful for the few moments in time that we had the survivors with us. Our staff desperately needed that calming environment as well to mitigate their vicarious trauma.

Janine Collier, Director of Programs, Tulsa Family Safety Center

**ONE PLACE. ONE HOPE.
WHERE FAMILY SAFETY COMES FIRST.
A PLACE WHERE FAMILIES COME FIRST
AND PROFESSIONALS COME TOGETHER.**

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151

Number of Assessment Tools Administered 2016 - 2018

167

Number of Assessment Tools Administered 2019 - 2023

74

Returning Clients



Throughout the Polyvictimization Initiative, the Tulsa Family Safety Center has continued to build a stronger trauma-informed framework for clients, staff, and partners, and has transformed its service delivery model from one of a crisis-centered, protective order focused Family Justice Center to a community to which clients return for on-going assistance.



The polyvictimization framework facilitates the holistic well-being of survivors and staff. In a collocated setting it helps promote connective and positive relationships through the centralized theme of helping survivors by raising their awareness about their polyvictimizations.

Staff Member, Tulsa Family Safety Center



It is amazing how my past with my parents, domestic violence, and divorce affect now. I have had long lasting issues resulting to my current relationship even though I thought I had taken care of things, let go, and moved on. My ex-boyfriend is a lot like my dad was when he abused my mother. I have stuff to work on.

Survivor, Tulsa Family Safety Center

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The Tulsa Family Safety Center has also embraced the Client Mapping Process, using it as an opportunity to review the client flow process on a regular basis and to make modifications to enhance services as necessary. For the Center, the Client Mapping Process was the main factor in streamlining the intake process and referral process to onsite partners. The Center revisited this process many times with the onset of covid and when they had a glitch with ensuring connection to onsite and offsite partners.



These are just a few of the many quotes made by clients reflecting on their experience in using the Assessment Tool:



Oh, wow, I had not realized all this.
Looking at it no wonder
I am so stressed.

Survivor, Tulsa Family Safety Center



It showed how messed up I was.
I understand now why I am so tired
and sad and how my childhood has
shaped my thoughts and actions.

Survivor, Tulsa Family Safety Center



I noticed how the past
has come back through the abuse
and I worry for my daughter.

Survivor, Tulsa Family Safety Center

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These are among the many valuable lessons learned we would like to share:

- We learned that not asking questions can be as damaging as asking questions. Many of our clinical staff and partners were apprehensive about asking survivors these questions as they believed the content of the questions would escalate trauma. What happened was survivors were relieved to be asked the questions and told us it was empowering to be able to talk with someone in a safe space and share their stories.
- We learned that survivors were having intense issues with mental health and substance abuse. We also learned many did not know they were victims of familial sex and labor human trafficking, child sexual abuse, and financial abuse until they participated in the Polyvictimization Assessment.
- We learned that having an organized process for the intake and referrals to onsite partners helped expel the chaotic process and mitigate vicarious trauma.
- We learned that training staff properly on the use of the Assessment Tool was an essential part of staff retention and self-efficacy.



This is helpful. It validates my experiences, feelings, and the choices I have made and am making.

Survivor, Tulsa Family Safety Center

It is scary to see this. Why? Why did I let this happen? I want to be better for me and my kids and have a better life. I can see myself being a phlebotomist and I like working with the elderly. I can control more now and make goals. If I did not do this now and leave now, I would be dead soon. It's scary.

Survivor, Tulsa Family Safety Center

The Tulsa Family Safety Center is in the midst of a capital campaign for a \$30 million, 65,000 sf facility adjacent to the local child advocacy center. Plans are to break ground in November 2023 with completion in 2025.

The new facility will revolutionize how Tulsa County serves the most vulnerable members of our community.

Suzann Stewart, Executive Director Tulsa Family Safety Center

Embracing the Polyvictimization Framework: Join the Mission!



Just as participating site clients described experiencing epiphanies, the lessons learned through the Polyvictimization program should represent an epiphany for all of us serving survivors in Family Justice Centers and other advocacy organizations. The Assessment Tool has transformed the work of participating sites, and I believe it will be transformational for the entire Family Justice Center movement. Our team at the Family Justice Center Alliance is gearing up to make use of The Polyvictimization Assessment Tool and Hope Scale a fundamental part of our technical assistance program."

Ken Shetter, National Director, Family Justice Center Alliance, Alliance for HOPE International

The work of the Polyvictimization Initiative is historic. This Initiative is pointing us in the direction of what Family Justice Centers will be doing in the future; understanding the complexity of victimization, trauma and trauma symptomology in survivors as we go forward with our Centers across the country and around the world.

While we encourage other Family Justice Centers to embrace a polyvictimization framework, we strongly recommend that this Assessment Tool not be implemented without specialized training. If you have interest in receiving training around working within a Poly victimization framework and using the Assessment Tool, please contact FJCA@AllianceforHOPE.com.

Polyvictimization Final Report **Resources**



1. [**Polyvictimization: The Legacy of the Initiative and the Future of a Ground Breaking Framework**](#) *Webinar*
2. [**Polyvictimization Assessment Tool Resource Guidebook**](#)
3. [**The Polyvictimization Assessment Tool - English**](#)
4. [**Herramienta de Evaluación de la Polivictimización**](#)
(The Polyvictimization Assessment Tool - Spanish)
5. [**A Pathway to Justice, Healing and Hope: Addressing Polyvictimization in a Family Justice Center Setting - An Applied Book of Lessons Learned**](#)
6. [**Lightning Talk: The Science of HOPE, Casey Gwinn, Esq.**](#)
7. [**Family Justice Center Alliance Online Resource Library**](#)
Search [**Polyvictimization**](#) for additional resources.
8. [**Email FJCA@allianceforhope.com**](mailto:FJCA@allianceforhope.com) for guidance and support in the implementation of a polyvictimization framework within a Family Justice Center, or in the use of the Assessment Tool.

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