Bloom Out of the Darkness

2019 Impact Report

EMPOWERING SURVIVORS AND MOBILIZING COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND ACTION TO END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
Pivoting Towards A New World

Dear cherished supporters,

From where we sit in 2020, 2019 feels like a lifetime ago. As you read this, we hope that you and your families are healthy, and that you are finding meaningful ways to engage in this extraordinary moment of change.

With your superb partnership, there is so much you made possible in 2019 to advance survivors’ well-being and resources to cope with the unsettling now:

- **In 2019,** hundreds of survivors boosted their confidence, created safety strategies, strengthened support systems and found their voices. They are building on this strong foundation to cope with today’s risks and uncertainties while New Beginnings continues to offer robust support to survivors now, remotely and when needed, in person.

- **Our shift away from communal shelter and toward individual apartments in our Home Safe Bridge Housing has meant that survivors who stay with us have fewer risks of catching or transmitting COVID-19. In 2019,** our Housing Advocates broadened their community housing contacts and enhanced their advocacy toolbox to ensure that more survivors can sustain their new homes once they move out of *Bridge* and when, typically one year later, our rental assistance ends.

- **Black, Indigenous and other survivors of color bear the extra burden of racism, compounding their domestic violence trauma and creating vulnerabilities that can be leveraged for abusive purposes. These survivors often face much higher barriers to sustaining safety and autonomy too. In 2019,** we wrote and adopted a statement to solidify our organization’s commitment to racial equity, and are currently working on action items to challenge the larger systems that create and reinforce oppression. As in previous years, all of us at New Beginnings also received training about the needs and experiences of the most marginalized survivors and focused on continual improvement of our efforts to challenge racism and promote equity. Additionally, we increased financial assistance to survivors to break down as many of those barriers as possible.

- **Helplines can be lifelines for survivors, but many in our community still don’t know they exist. When survivors do find information about local helplines, the long list of numbers can be overwhelming. And these days, the most convenient and safest way to communicate with a helpline for some survivors is through chat. Over the past several years, New Beginnings has actively participated in plans to create a centralized domestic violence phone and chat helpline for King County. In 2019,** we stepped up to establish and host this critical lifeline for survivors and those who want to support them. Keep your antenna up for news about the helpline launch in 2021!

The world is changing before our eyes, full of pain and possibility. Building on the success of 2019 we stand tall—together—to meet the challenge. Thank you for being an integral part of our team!
In March of 2019, New Beginnings’ participants graduated from the “Hope & Power for your Personal Finances” ten-week course. Organized in collaboration with The Economic Resilience Initiative at the YWCA Seattle King Snohomish branch, this class in financial literacy was designed to address the unique needs of survivors and their families.

Financial abuse can look different across intimate relationships and usually happens alongside other forms of domestic violence. It can include preventing a partner from working, harassing them at work to make their job more difficult, blocking a partner from accessing their own money or shared accounts, and manipulating someone’s credit or forcing someone into debt.

Even after a survivor is no longer with an abusive partner, financial abuse can have ongoing effects on their options and safety. Because of their abuser’s destructive behavior, a survivor may have ultimately lost their job. Or, once a survivor leaves an abusive partner, they may have also had to leave resources or money behind. And after being shut out of financial decision making, survivors may also feel ill-equipped to negotiate their own finances again.

That’s why a class like this one is so important for a survivor’s economic empowerment. Each week focused on a different element of financial literacy, including how to get and read your credit report, tools for improving your credit, and how to save on a limited income. Survivors were able to practice habits like budgeting and setting financial goals, even exploring options like financial aid for school or starting their own small business.

By gaining knowledge of financial systems and resources, a sense of community, and confidence in their own tools and decision-making ability, survivors graduating this course have more of the tools they need to successfully live an independent life with a community of survivors by their side. You made this possible.

“‘This class has helped me to continue moving forward with my family.’”
– Hope & Power Graduate

Building Hope and Power Free From Financial Abuse

Survivors New Beginnings Helped Navigate Financial Abuse in 2019

293
In many ways, technology has improved modern life, with innovations in GPS and communication. However, it has also amplified the ability for intimate partner abusers to control survivors. Technology Enabled Coercive Control is an increasingly prevalent trend, allowing abusers unprecedented access to a survivor’s personal communications, plans, or location.

This might look like receiving hundreds of text messages in a matter of hours, incessant phone calls, forced access to personal electronic devices, emails, calendars, and social media accounts, or even installing a tracking app without the survivor’s knowledge to know their location at all times. While this may seem different from other types of abuse, technology is only the tool, and the dynamics of power and control are consistent with other types of domestic violence.

It can make a person feel unsafe, alone, or even like they can’t trust their own experience. It can be particularly dangerous because it limits a survivor’s ability to seek safe options. Technology that survivors may ordinarily use to reach out to loved ones or for resources are now seen as a source of pain. Not only that, but the tools abusers can use are constantly evolving, not particularly difficult to use, and are accessible to anyone with a smart phone.

New Beginnings is able to continuously innovate to address this evolving form of abuse. Through collaboration with community partners, academics, and the City of Seattle, New Beginnings launched a bi-weekly clinic in which volunteers with particular technological expertise assisted individual survivors to reduce the risks of technology-assisted harassment, abuse, and stalking. It started as a pilot in the Fall of 2018, with the goal of making adjustments as we learned from survivors about what was most helpful.
Introduced as the TECC (Technology Enabled Coercive Control) Clinic in 2019, volunteers and staff supported survivors over the course of 34 appointments and has adapted to a fully remote model in 2020 in the face of COVID – 19. Over the course of these appointments, 12 dedicated and knowledgeable volunteers addressed issues like spyware on devices, compromised accounts and passwords, and location tracking. To pinpoint areas that technology-enabled abuse, our volunteers and staff members ask survivors some of the following questions:

- Is your abuser harassing you or putting you down through texts or social media?
- What does your abuser know about your movements and communications? Where could they have gotten that information?
- Do they know what websites you’ve visited?
- Do they only know when you leave your home?
- Have people mentioned receiving texts or emails from you that you never sent?

Survivors and volunteers worked in conjunction to develop an individual plan that would allow for the survivor to feel safer, supported, and more knowledgeable about the technology. Importantly, without you this work would not be possible. Though the medium abusers use to exert control may change, donor support allows us to adapt to these new technologies.

Helpline: Always Here, 24/7

Top 5 Reasons for A Helpline Call

- Requesting Shelter
- Requesting services, like support groups, legal assistance, and counseling
- Requesting information about available resources
- To talk through a safety plan with an Advocate
- To get emotional support and validation

What is the New Beginnings Helpline?

For domestic violence survivors, their loved ones, and anyone looking for community resources, information, and emotional support, the New Beginnings Helpline is available 24/7. Our trained advocates can provide housing options, connect survivors to New Beginnings services like legal aid or support groups, provide emotional support, and help with planning for safety. They also can provide information, clarity and coaching to friends and family to help them support a survivor they are concerned about. Our Helpline ensures that people in our community have 24/7 access to someone with knowledge, experience and understanding, affirming that survivors and their loved ones are not alone.

5,283 People Called New Beginnings’ Helpline For Resources, Support, And Access To Services in 2019
2019 Financials

Thanks to our generous community of donors, volunteers, and partners, we continue to meet the complex needs of survivors and their families through our Home Safe program, Community Advocacy Program, 24-Hour Helpline, direct financial assistance, and community outreach efforts. Thank you for supporting New Beginnings.

Mission: New Beginnings empowers survivors and mobilizes community awareness and action to end domestic violence | www.newbegin.org

Due to the sensitive nature of this material, all names and identifying details have been changed to protect the confidentiality of survivors; these blended stories represent the challenges and successes of many survivors who have used our programs. In addition, stock photography is used in most cases to further protect the ongoing safety of our current and past participants.