

## SOCIAL SERVICES PROVIDED TO WOMEN WHO ARE VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN AZERBAIJAN

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### Abstract

“In order to ensure the protection of women who have suffered from violence, including domestic violence, and to provide them with a safe environment, almost all countries in the world currently offer comprehensive care and services. Additionally, in the Republic of Azerbaijan, shelters are established to ensure the safety and reintegration into society of women who have suffered harm as a result of domestic violence. Women placed in these shelters not only find temporary refuge but also receive expert support for the restoration of their mental and physical well-being, as well as assistance in carrying out processes such as reintegrating into life and meeting their needs”.

### Keywords

*Violence, domestic violence, shelter, rehabilitation, trauma.*

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### 1. Introduction

Domestic violence against women is understood as a situation supported and reinforced by gender norms and values that place women in a subordinate position in relation to men. Domestic violence is one of the most common crimes against women which is inextricably linked to the perpetuation of patriarchy.

Who is the main type of gender-based violence, domestic violence is unfortunately also widespread in Azerbaijan. One of the main points of regret is that women are the main group of victims of domestic violence in the country.

The social services provided to victims of domestic violence can be categorized into three main headings:

1. Preventive Services - These are measures taken in advance through policy decisions to ensure that women do not fall victim to violence. Studying the identities of victims of domestic violence, as well as the perpetrators, increases the possibilities of investigating the causes of the problem and applying preventive measures. From this point of view, the socio-demographic situation of the victims of violence, the interaction between the victim of violence and the perpetrator of violence (kinship, neighborhood, friendship, etc.) is necessary to study.
2. Intervention Services - These services are aimed at identifying individuals who have experienced violence, ensuring their safety and physical well-being, providing shelter and ultimately preventing them from experiencing violence again.

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3. Rehabilitation Services - These are measures aimed at eliminating the negative effects of violence on individuals and restoring their well-being.

Violence against women, which usually occurs as a result of the power imbalance in the relationship between men and women, is a social problem that is difficult to reveal because it occurs in private life. Violence, which disrupts the social functionality and quality of life of family members, has permanent effects on the individual as a result. Domestic violence is defined as any kind of physical, psychological, social, economic, sexual pressure and coercion applied by a family member who does not have sufficient communication equipment, cannot control his anger and acts impulsively, to other weaker family members. Although it is known that mostly women and children are exposed to violence within the family, it is also determined that the elderly or disabled people who live with the family due to their inadequacies are also subjected to violence. All forms of violence cause pain and injury to the victim.

Various social services and support mechanisms have been implemented for women victims of domestic violence in Azerbaijan. These services are critical to meeting the immediate and long-term needs of survivors. The following are some types of social services provided to women who are victims of domestic violence in Azerbaijan.

Shelters and Safe Houses:

Safe and secure accommodations where women and their children can seek refuge from abusive situations.

Counseling and Psychological Support:

Professional counseling services to help survivors cope with the emotional and psychological impact of domestic violence.

Legal Assistance:

Support in navigating the legal system, including assistance in obtaining restraining orders or other legal measures to protect victims.

Hotlines and Helplines:

Telephone helplines providing immediate assistance, information, and emotional support for victims of domestic violence.

Medical Services:

Access to medical care and treatment for injuries resulting from domestic violence, as well as support for addressing long-term health consequences.

Financial Assistance:

Support in accessing financial resources to help victims regain independence and stability, such as assistance with housing, employment or education.

Community Outreach and Education:

Initiatives aimed at raising awareness about domestic violence, its impact and available resources. These programs may involve community workshops, awareness campaigns and educational efforts.

Collaboration with NGOs:

Partnerships with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) specializing in women's rights and domestic violence issues to enhance the reach and effectiveness of services.

Training for Professionals:

Training programs for law enforcement, healthcare providers, social workers and other professionals to improve their ability to identify and respond to domestic violence cases.

Legal Aid Centers:

Centers that provide legal assistance to survivors, helping them understand their rights and navigate legal processes.

Employment and Vocational Training:

Initial Contact and Assessment:

The process often begins with the survivor reaching out to a helpline, law enforcement, social services, or a domestic violence support organization. During this initial contact, a preliminary assessment of the situation and the survivor's needs is conducted.

Emergency Assistance:

In urgent cases, immediate assistance may be provided, including guidance on safety planning, legal measures such as restraining orders and temporary shelter arrangements.

Referral to a Shelter:

Based on the assessment, the survivor may be referred to a suitable shelter facility. Referrals can be made by law enforcement, social workers, counselors or other professionals involved in the case.

Coordination with Shelters:

Shelters play a crucial role in providing safe and confidential accommodations for survivors. Coordination between the referring agency and the shelter is essential to ensure a smooth transition.

Intake Process at the Shelter:

Upon arrival at the shelter, the survivor undergoes an intake process. This involves completing necessary paperwork, discussing safety plans and providing information about available services.

Confidentiality and Security:

Shelters prioritize confidentiality and security. Survivors are often provided with a safe and undisclosed location to protect them from potential harm.

Counseling and Support Services:

Shelters typically offer counseling and support services to help survivors cope with the emotional and psychological impact of domestic violence.

Legal Assistance:

Shelters may collaborate with legal aid organizations to provide survivors with assistance in navigating the legal system, obtaining protection orders and addressing legal concerns.

Children's Services:

If the survivor has children, shelters may offer support services for them as well, including counseling, educational assistance and recreational activities.

Transitional Support:

Shelters often provide transitional support, helping survivors plan for their next steps, whether it involves returning to their homes with

Programs aimed at helping survivors gain financial independence through employment and vocational training opportunities.

Upon a woman's arrival at a shelter, the first action is to conduct a medical assessment. This evaluates her present state and discerns the type of violence she has undergone. Medical staff should offer holistic care, establishing a sense of support. Besides physical health, psychological and social aid from psychologists and social workers is crucial for their emotional well-being. Professionals working with survivors must acknowledge their profound trauma and consider this aspect. Those who have

endured violence often withdraw due to fear and anxiety, struggling to communicate their feelings due to the trauma they've experienced.

When interacting with victims, it's crucial to engage them in conversation without blame. This encourages them to confide in social workers about their challenges, especially since they fear their words might reach the perpetrator. Victims receive not only medical and psychological care but also legal awareness to safeguard their rights. Safety in shelters is comprehensive.

Customized plans aid individuals' reintegration, focusing not just on victim recovery, but addressing perpetrator actions. To fully resolve the issue, both victim rehabilitation and perpetrator reform are necessary.

According to Azerbaijan's Domestic Violence Prevention Law, victims receive legal aid, court process explanations, shelter, essential needs, medical and psychological support and clothing.

The law's Articles 13 and 14 detail measures and legal assistance. Article 15 covers social services like shelter, legal and medical aid, skill development, economic self-sufficiency, document assistance and more.

Institutions provide safety, education, services tailored to needs, family restoration, prevention, etc., for domestic violence victims.

Temporary shelters for victims emerged in the 1970s, starting in the UK. They expanded globally, including Germany, France, Sweden, Norway and Switzerland.

Initially, these centers received funding from women's societies or donations. The first shelter in Azerbaijan, established in 2002 by the "Clean World" Women's Support Victims Union, set the precedent.

While shelter names differ, they share a core purpose. Temporary shelters primarily ensure victims' mental and physical well-being. This aids the spiritual growth of women recovering from domestic violence and prevents self-exploitation. The shelter protects victims and deters aggressors.

Shelter models vary globally, managed by state bodies, law enforcement, NGOs, individuals or religious groups. The aim is to provide a safe environment, prevent trauma recurrence, support empowerment and independence.

Shelters help victims regain spiritual strength, voice, and decision-making ability. Services within shelters are cost-free, covered by the state or relevant institutions. Privacy is maintained, personalized support plans are created, including medical and psychological assistance. Education continues via the Ministry of Education and vocational, social and employment support via the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection.

Shelter duration is 2 months. Implementation is with victim consent or authorized bodies.

Different forms of violence aim to control, induce fear and cause vulnerability. Those who experience and perpetrate violence are categorized as follows:

1. In various countries, 40-75% of rapes are committed by intimate partners. Addressing youth relationships is crucial.
2. Around 40% of severe violence occurs within families, mostly affecting women.
3. Some women adapt to living with violence.
4. Despite an increase in affected individuals, fewer women seek crisis center help, indicating hidden violence.
5. Expanding social, police, education and health services reduces violence.

6. Women's sensitivity contributes to increased violence.

7. Lack of belief in help hinders prevention efforts.

Efforts to tackle violence require more than lectures; preventive measures, alternative solutions and effective action are essential.

State services restore functions, provide medical care, psychological support and rehabilitation for victims' reintegration. Azerbaijani institutions offer assistance for domestic violence victims, operated by nature, generally known as crisis centers.

Crisis Centers like the "Clean World" Women's Support Public Union and the Hopeful Future Youth Organization protect women affected by crime. Hopeful Future, established in 2011, aids young victims of violence and crime. The Baku Social Rehabilitation Center, run by the Hopeful Future, supports women affected by crime and domestic violence.

## 2. Conclusion

In conclusion, generalizing all these ideas, we can come to the conclusion that the main duty of every center is to provide timely care and appropriate services to victims of violence, highlighting the essential value of these centers in the support provided by the state for victims of violence. Thus, these centers can be considered a special step in the process of supporting victims of violence, allowing them to easily leave the violent environment and reintegrate into society as strong individuals.

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