

April 2016

Message from the Bronx Family Justice Center



(From Left: CUMC's Dr. Elizabeth Fitelson, OCDV Commissioner Cecile Noel, Bronx FJC Executive Director Margarita Guzman, Canadian Health Minister Jane Philpott, Canadian Minister on the Status of Women Patricia Hajdu at the Bronx Family Justice Center, April 20th, 2016.)

On Wednesday, April 20th, the Bronx Family Justice Center was honored to host Canada's Health Minister, Jane Philpott, and Patricia Hajdu, the Minister on the Status of Women. Impressed with ThriveNYC, the New York City First Lady Chirlane McCray's comprehensive plan for overhauling mental health care for New Yorkers, the Canadian delegation asked to visit the Bronx FJC to learn more about our innovative work bringing psychiatric care to survivors of intimate partner violence. The Ministers met with Commissioner Cecile Noel and Bronx FJC staff as well as leadership from Columbia University Medical Center, Dr. Elizabeth Fitelson and the clinical coordinator, Marina Weiss, to ask questions about the history of the FJCs, the genesis of the mental health pilot and its impact on educating staff about mental health assessments and suicidality. We were excited to share our model on an international platform and support similar work in other countries.

In 2014, The Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence in collaboration with the Department of Psychiatry at Columbia University Medical Center and sponsored by the Chapman Perelman Foundation launched an innovative on-site clinical psychiatric program at the NYC Family Justice Center in the Bronx to provide psychiatric support to victims of domestic violence through psychiatric evaluations, psychopharmacologic treatment and psychotherapy, regardless of their health insurance status. Dr. Anna Chapman being a psychiatrist and alumna of CUMC, understood the complex interaction between mental illness and trauma and wanted to find a way to better serve those

struggling at that intersection. Through this pilot program, the Bronx became the first FJC in the world to offer onsite psychiatric services.

Mental health services at the NYC Family Justice Centers address a compelling need and a critical piece of trauma-informed care. 1 in 5 survivors experiences a new-onset mental health illness after experiencing intimate partner violence. Despite this, obtaining mental health care is a need that easily goes unmet, while life-threatening risks are addressed and other basic needs such as seeking shelter and establishing take priority. The co-located model at the FJCs is an ideal setting for accessing mental health care because survivors do not have to choose between those needs. Moreover, treatment is delivered in a supportive environment where the patient's service providers act as a team to help them meet a diversity of goals that are more likely to help the client achieve long-term stability after the abuse.

Expanding mental health care to all the FJCs in New York City is one of the 54 initiatives in the First Lady's ThriveNYC program. Soon, every client receiving services at a Family Justice Center will be able to access mental health care at the same location where they are receiving legal assistance, case management/safety planning, economic empowerment services and services for their children. This expansion is a victory for all survivors of intimate partner violence and is a huge step towards promoting the health and healing for families impacted by abuse.

- The Bronx FJC Team



Host a workshop on teen dating violence and healthy relationships with OCDV's NYC Healthy Relationship Training Academy. Submit your request through our online [workshop request form](#) or call the Academy at 212-788-2516.

Upcoming OCDV Events & Trainings

***Please note that Family Justice Center trainings are geared toward service providers and professionals.**

QUEENS:

Introduction to Sex Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation

Facilitated by Sanctuary for Families Immigration Intervention Program & Mt. Sinai Sexual Assault and Violence Intervention Program (SAVI)

Monday, May 9th, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

NYC Family Justice Center, Queens

126-02 82nd Avenue

To register, please [click here](#)

Top News Stories from April

City of New York Joins Survivors and Advocates in Commemorating Denim Day NYC to Raise Awareness around Sexual Assault



First Lady Chirlane McCray and Office to Combat Domestic Violence Commissioner Cecile Noel stood with Denim Day NYC organizers Council Member Laurie A. Cumbo and Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer at the steps of City Hall alongside other senior Administration leadership, local elected officials, advocates and survivors to raise awareness about sexual assault and the City's resources for victims and survivors in honor of the fifth annual Denim Day NYC. "Denim Day is an important opportunity to raise awareness about sexual assault and to show solidarity with survivors," said Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence Commissioner Cecile Noel. "Consent is a simple concept, but as the Office to Combat Domestic Violence knows too well, our society still struggles to value, model and create relationships that are based in trust, respect and equality. Education, prevention and awareness are our most powerful tools to build a culture where every person feels safe and respected in their relationships. The New York City Family Justice Centers, our NYC Healthy Relationship Training Academy and the Office to Combat Domestic Violence Training Institute are invaluable resources to achieve this end."

[Read more](#)

Domestic Violence at Root of

Victims of Domestic Violence and

Staten Island Homicides

OCDV Commissioner Cecile Noel appeared on NY1's This Week in Staten Island to discuss the City's response to intimate partner violence in the borough.

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Spousal Abandonment in NY to Get Access to Obamacare

Victims of domestic violence and spousal abandonment will soon have year-round access to New York's Obamacare health insurance exchange. The new policy gives victims of domestic violence and spousal abandonment the ability to obtain insurance coverage beyond the normal enrollment period, which runs from Nov. 1 through Jan. 31. Insurers will not be allowed to set any time limitations on when the incidents of domestic violence or abandonment occurred.

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Dallas Woman Wins \$40 Million in Domestic Violence Case

A woman who was brutally assaulted by her boyfriend has received a \$40 million civil settlement from her assailant, the largest financial reward for domestic violence in U.S. history. The survivor has already spent \$1 million on medical bills and still requires more reconstructive surgery for her face as well as ongoing treatment for PTSD, vision disturbances, pain management and regular respiratory infections.

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The Brain of Male Batterers Functions Differently than That of Other Offenders

A study led by a research group at the University of Granada (Spain) compares, for the first time in the world, the brain functioning of aggressors against their partners or ex-partners to that of other criminals when they are exposed to images related to different types of violence. The study revealed that batterers-in comparison to other criminals-show a greater activation in the anterior cingulate cortex and in the medial prefrontal cortex, and a smaller reaction in the superior prefrontal cortex in response to images of intimate partner violence as compared to neutral images.

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Supreme Court Raises Questions about Tribal Convictions

NYC Launches Ad Campaign to Raise Awareness about Elder

The U.S. Supreme Court heard arguments on whether federal felony charges can be filed against defendants who were previously convicted of multiple domestic violence counts in tribal courts that didn't provide attorneys. In domestic violence cases, a decade-old law has sought to combat high assault rates on reservations by transferring cases involving offenders with multiple convictions to the federal courts for possible stiffer punishments. That statute is now being challenged on the argument that defendants must be guaranteed counsel in tribal courts if their cases are ultimately grounds for stiffer penalties in U.S. courts.

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Abuse

The city's Department for the Aging (DFTA) is launching a new ad campaign aimed at ending elder abuse. It features subway and bus ads showing images of elderly people who have been robbed, beaten, threatened or neglected by a family member. The ads encourage anyone who suspects an elderly person is being abused to call 311.

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A New Plan to Treat Brain Injuries for Women Escaping Abuse

Unlike players in the NFL, women who struggle with lifelong effects of concussions from abuse are rarely diagnosed. In Phoenix, scientists and advocates are working to change that.

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After Combat Stress, Violence Can Show Up at Home

The debate about the relationship between domestic violence and post-traumatic stress disorder waxed and waned since the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan, but never quite went away. Veterans' advocates are concerned about the stereotype of combat vets as ticking time bombs, which is contradicted by the vast majority of former troops who live with post-traumatic stress and never hurt anyone. There is a link, however, between combat vets who experience PTSD and violence. Vets with PTSD are three times more likely to be violent.

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Why Childhood Domestic Violence Is Often Mistaken for Physical Child Abuse

How to Talk with Students about Electronic Dating Violence

Childhood Domestic Violence (CDV) is often confused with child abuse because it is not widely acknowledged, although it impacts 15 million children and 40 million adults in the U.S. CDV is when a person grows up living in a home with domestic violence. There is a definitive understanding that child abuse can often lead to problems in adulthood with relationships, emotions, behaviors, and health. But what is little known is that CDV has a strikingly similar impact. UNICEF calls CDV “the single best predictor of becoming a victim or perpetrator of domestic violence” later in life. And this is key in addressing child abuse, because in homes where there is domestic violence, children are physically abused and neglected at a rate 15 times higher than the national average.

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In a report by Zweig, et al, more than one in four youth in a current or recent relationship reported experiencing some sort of electronic dating violence (EDV) within the past year. These youth were seven times more likely to have also experienced sexual coercion. One in 10 youth admitted being perpetrators of EDV, and these individuals were 17 times more likely to have sexually coerced a partner.

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Elders Use Culture to Heal Indigenous Inmates with a History of Sexual Violence

Indigenous women make up a disproportionate number of federal inmates in Canada. Many are survivors of a history of sexual violence before they arrive in prison. Elder Amy Victor of the Stó:lō Nation is not a prisoner or a guard. Her unique position, spiritual advisor, allows her to help Indigenous women heal the damage wrought by sexual abuse using a simple, potent formula: traditional teachings, Indigenous medicines, indomitable spirit.

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Blumenthal, Whitehouse, Franken, Casey Introduce Elder Protection and Abuse Act

Senators Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.), Al Franken (D-Minn.), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), and Bob Casey (D-Pa.) introduced the Elder Protection and Abuse Prevention Act to help protect seniors from abuse by implementing comprehensive network of elder abuse prevention and response measures.

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Rethinking “Women’s Issues” in Public Policy

New York City Council Members Laurie Cumbo and Helen Rosenthal aim to use their roles as newly-elected co-chairs of the Council’s Women’s Caucus to “invite, include, and encourage men to be a part of the conversation,” as Cumbo said, and to make sure that women’s issues are not seen as separate, but rather, as the “economic issues” and “community issues” that they are, Rosenthal said. Both agreed that the responsibility of recognizing and responding to “women’s issues” should fall on the entire City Council, not just the Council’s Committee on Women’s Issues.

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Programs Help Liberate “Chained” Orthodox Jewish Women

Many Orthodox Jewish women seeking to escape abusive or defunct marriages face a system that is stacked against them, sometimes trapping them as “chained women” for years on end. Advocates, social services agencies and lawyers have teamed up in an effort to provide Orthodox women with the resources and representation that they need.

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