

THE JUSTICE INSTITUTE ON GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE



BELFAST, NORTHERN IRELAND

From February 26 - March 1, 2018, Vital Voices conducted the eighteenth Justice Institute on Gender-Based Violence in Belfast, Northern Ireland. By convening diverse practitioners across the criminal justice system, the Institute strengthened their ability to investigate, prosecute and provide services for victims of gender-based violence (GBV) crimes, and in doing so fortified participants' capacity to better collaborate in promoting victim safety and offender accountability.

Approx. 1 in 5 women in Northern Ireland have experienced some form of domestic violence in their lifetime

£180 million per year is the estimated cost of domestic violence to the economy in Northern Ireland

2/26 FACULTY TRAINING DAY

Faculty facilitators included representatives of diverse sectors of society working to address violence against women through the criminal justice process in Northern Ireland. During the Faculty Training Day held at the Merchant Hotel in Belfast, Vital Voices introduced the structure and content of the Justice Institute model, highlighted tools for effective facilitation, and sought feedback on key issues of legal and cultural sensitivity.

2/27 INSTITUTE DAY 1

Media Event: The first day of the Institute commenced with registration and introductions followed by a media event and panel discussion moderated by Vital Voices. The panel featured leading figures working across sectors to protect and serve GBV victims in Northern Ireland.

Throughout the discussion, panelists focused on the challenges of addressing GBV in Northern Ireland and expectations for the next three days of the Institute. Panelists emphasized the importance of engaging multi-sector practitioners and promoting institutional innovation in order to more effectively prevent GBV crimes and protect survivors.



Dr. Geraldine O'Hare discussed her work with GBV offenders in her role as the Head of Psychology Services and Interventions at the Probation Board of Northern Ireland.

Module 1 Practical Exercises

The first module introduced participants to the regionally-tailored hypothetical case scenarios on which the Institute is centered.

- ◆ Practical Exercise A: Collateral Consequences of Violence
- ◆ Practical Exercise B: Coercive Control and Charging Decisions
- ◆ Practical Exercise C: Workplace Sexual Assault

This module identified systemic and widespread challenges to addressing GBV in Northern Ireland, while also allowing faculty to observe which participants might be leaders on the issues, or, to the contrary, hold attitudes that endanger or blame victims.

Module 2 Evaluating and Investigating the Case

In this module, participants discussed common goals and challenges faced by professionals handling GBV cases, including disagreements over and misunderstandings of the law, barriers to implementation, and the unique dynamics of GBV cases that make them difficult to investigate and prosecute. Participants also explored how multidisciplinary teams can coordinate and collaborate to more effectively respond to these cases.

Participant Highlights

What was your favorite part of the Justice Institute?

- ♦ "I enjoyed the interactive exercises - taking on different roles. I threw myself in these, moved out of my comfort zone and learned so much by doing so."
- ♦ "Once we left our "hats" at the door there was a great deal of learning from each other. Gaps were discovered once guards were dropped."

2/28 INSTITUTE DAY 2

Participants continued working on Module 2, which included a variety of interactive sessions on assessing dangerousness, responding to intimidation, investigating and analyzing a case, and assessing domestic violence incidents where children are present. Highlights of the day included a presentation led by Northern Ireland Attorney General John Larkin on the indicators of lethality in violent intimate partner relationships and an evidence-gathering activity where participants assumed the role of members of a multidisciplinary team in order to investigate a case and assist the victim navigate the criminal justice process.

3/1 INSTITUTE DAY 3

Module 3 Prosecuting the Case

Facilitators kicked off the final day of training with Module 3, which generated productive discussions about conducting thorough investigations that lead to more informed charging decisions to help ensure stronger prosecutions and increase both victim safety and offender accountability.

Module 4 Holding Offenders Accountable

The final module included dialogue on sentencing co-facilitated by District Judge Barney McElholm in which participants considered new methods for implementing coordinated community responses and tools to empower victims after the case concludes. Finally, participants developed individualized Action Plans through which they identified steps they would take - both individually and collectively - to improve the quality of justice as it relates to GBV crimes following the conclusion of the Institute.

District Judge Barney McElholm spoke to Justice Institute participants about the need to develop a holistic approach to domestic violence crimes in Northern Ireland.



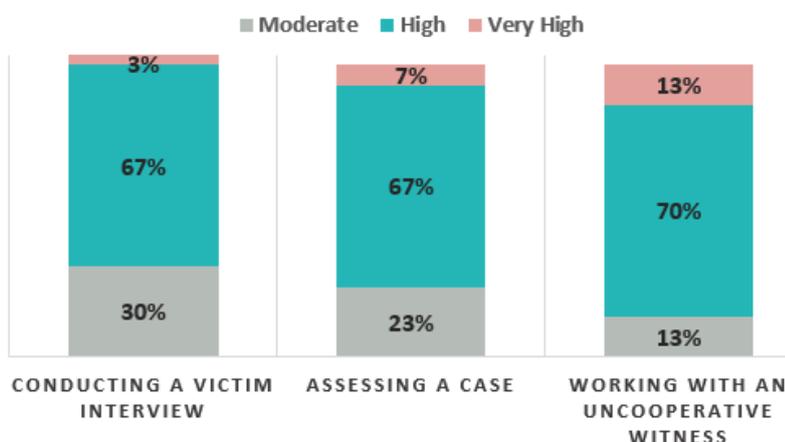
INSTITUTE IMPACT

Over 41 multidisciplinary faculty facilitators and participants including judges, prosecutors, solicitors, police officers, service providers, and government officials



KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS

REPORTED INCREASE IN KNOWLEDGE



NETWORK BUILDING



100%

Agreed or strongly agreed the Institute established a network where participants can share information with others

88%

Rated their level of increase in their ability to partner with others to identify victims of domestic violence as high or very high

Closing thoughts

Ultimately, in convening these diverse practitioners across the criminal justice system, the Institute addressed some of the most pressing institutional and attitudinal challenges to combating GBV in Northern Ireland by encouraging participants across sectors to identify challenges and outline strategies to collaboratively address them.

