Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault: Protection Order Findings

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Protection orders and their perceived effectiveness – A domestic violence and sexual assault crisis center program final report
SASA Crisis Center – Legal Advocacy Program
Hastings, Nebraska

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with Jeanette Harder, Ph.D.

The University of Nebraska at Omaha
Grace Abbott School of Social Work
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This report will begin with demographic information derived from protection order affidavits provided to the researcher from Jo Springer, SASA’s Executive Director. The report will then move into quantitative analyses where several variables were analyzed against protection order outcomes. Then, qualitative data from two Skype interviews and one phone interview was be analyzed. Lastly, a summary and recommendations for SASA’s legal advocacy program is presented.

For reference, the term “petitioner” refers to the individual who sought help from SASA and filed the protection order and the term “respondent” refers to the individual who the petitioner is filing the protection order against.
Quantitative Analysis
The majority (85%, n=53) of petitioners identified as female. 15% (n=9) of petitioners identified as male. The majority of petitioners spoke English as a primary language.

Study Population: This study includes all individuals who were seeking SASA's support and submitted an affidavit for protection order from 1/31/2017 to 3/20/2018.

Nearly 3/4 of petitioners were between the ages of 18 and 38 years old.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Petitioner Age Groups</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Cumulative %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-28 years</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29-38 years</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39-48 years</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49-58 years</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58+ years</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>46</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The average age of petitioners was 34 years old, the middle-most (median) age was 32 years old, and the most common (mode) age was 55 years old. The oldest petitioner was 65 years old and the youngest was 18 years old. The standard deviation was 12.44, meaning that many individuals were about 12.5 years younger or older than the average age. Age data was missing for 28% of petitioners.

The majority of respondents were identified as male.

The majority of respondents were White.

Over half of respondents were between the ages of 18 and 38 years old. The average age of respondents was 37 years old, the middle-most (median) age was 35 years old, and the most common (mode) age was 34 years old. Age data was missing for 3% of petitioners.
Out of the 64 affidavits analyzed, 51 petitioners had protection orders awarded to them, whereas 13 petitioners did not.

Petitioners were more likely to have their protection order affidavit awarded than denied.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Awarded</th>
<th>Denied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>80%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each of the research questions outlined in this report asks whether there is a relationship between several different variables and whether the petitioners’ protection order affidavits were awarded or denied. The dependent variable for each research question is the protection order status. The independent variables include:

- **Age of petitioner**
- **Age of respondent**
- **Number of children involved**
- **Race of respondent**
- **Type of abuse experienced by the petitioner**
- **Language of petitioner**

**Methodology**

The **research design** utilized in this analysis was a post-test only research design. The variables being analyzed from the protection orders were primarily to determine why the protection was awarded or denied. No analysis or contact with the researcher was made prior to the submission of the protection order affidavit by SASA and the petitioner.

The **sampling design** utilized in this analysis is a nonprobability sampling because there was no randomization and not every member within the population represented had a chance to be involved in the analysis. It is also a convenience sample as protection order affidavits that SASA has access to within the **sampling frame** of 01/31/2017 to 03/20/2018 are the ones available for analysis.

There was no **measurement tool** utilized in this quantitative analysis and **data was collected** through analysis of protection order affidavits of SASA’s legal advocacy program’s clients.
Is there a relationship between the age of petitioners and protection orders being awarded?

Independent variable: age of petitioner

The majority of petitioners were between the ages of 18 and 38 years old (n=34).

There were a total of 34 petitioners who fell between the ages of 18 and 38 years old, with the mean (average) age of petitioners being 34 years old. The remaining 12 petitioners were 39 years or older. This means individuals seeking protection orders in SASA’s serving population represented a younger population. The sample size for this variable included the entire sample size of 64 petitioners.

While the relationship between these variables was not statistically significant (p=0.55), almost 90% of petitioners who were 18-28 years old were awarded protection orders, which is something to be of note. This is higher than the overall approval rate of 80%, while the other age ranges of 29-38 years old and 39+ years old were about parallel to the overall approval rate. The higher approval rate for 18-28 year old petitioners falls in line with the larger amount of petitioners who fall into the younger age categories.

Petitioners were somewhat more likely to have their protection order affidavits awarded if they were younger (18-28 years old).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Approval Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-28 years old</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29-38 years old</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39+ years old</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

41% 33% 26%
18-28 years old 29-38 years old 39 + years old
# Quantitative Data

**Is there a relationship between the age of respondents and protection orders being awarded?**

*Independent variable: age of respondent*

A majority of respondents were between the ages of 29 and 38 years old.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>49+ years old</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39-48 years old</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29-38 years old</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-28 years old</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

30 of the 62 respondents were between the ages of 29 and 38 years old. The mean (average) age of respondents was 37 years old, which was slightly higher than the mean age of petitioners at 34 years old.

Depending on the petitioners’ age, their protection order approval rate fluctuated between 70% and 90% (n=62).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Approval Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>49+ years old</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39-48 years old</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29-38 years old</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-28 years old</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Protection order approval rates ranged from 70% to 90% depending on the respondent’s age. This difference of 20% is notable, with older individuals (40+ years old) falling below the overall approval rate of 80% and younger individuals (18-28 years old) having approval rates above the overall approval rate. When comparing these findings with the petitioner’s age, it is interesting to see a protection order affidavit with a respondent of younger age has a higher approval rate just as a petitioner of younger age does. While the relationship between these variables was not statistically significant (p=0.69), this does not mean these findings are not important.
Is there a relationship between number of children involved and whether a protection order was awarded?

Independnet variable: number of children

Many petitioners did not have any children.

Of the 58 petitioners who indicated the number of children involved with their protection order affidavit, 30 stated they did not have any children. 12 petitioners stated they had one child and 12 stated having two children. Four petitioners indicated having three or more children.

Petitioners were somewhat less likely to have their protection order affidavits awarded if they had one child.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Children</th>
<th>Approval Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zero Children (n=30)</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Child (n=12)</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Children (n=12)</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three or More Children (n=4)</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Petitioners who indicated having zero or three or more children had approval rates that fell in line with the overall approval rate of 80%. However, petitioners who indicated having one child had an approval rate of 67%, which is much lower than the overall approval rate. On the other hand, petitioners who indicated having two children had a notable approval rate of 92%, which is much higher than the overall approval rate. Despite this, the relationship between these variables was not statistically significant (p=0.50).
Is there a relationship between the race of respondents and protection orders being awarded?

*Independent variable: race of respondent*

Protection order affidavits were somewhat less likely to be approved when the respondents’ race was White or African American (n=61).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Approval Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other (n=3)</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic (n=10)</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American (n=5)</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White (n=43)</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The approval rates for petitioners whose respondent’s race were indicated as Hispanic or Other were higher than the overall approval rate of 80%. While on-par with the overall approval rate, petitioners who identified their respondents as African American or White had lower approval rates than those who identified their respondents as Hispanic or Other, with the majority of respondents being identified as White. The relationship between these variables was not statistically significant (p=0.85), however this does not mean that these findings are not important.

*Please see demographics page for univariate analysis of “race of respondent.”

Is there a relationship between the language of petitioners and protection orders being awarded?

*Independent variable: language of petitioner*

Of the four petitioners who indicated they spoke Spanish, three (75%) were awarded protection orders. This 75% approval rate is about on-par with the 80% overall approval rate. English speakers were more likely to have their protection orders awarded at an 88% approval rate. However, with the number of Spanish-speaking petitioners being so small, this comparison cannot be made reliably.
A majority of petitioners experienced psychological abuse.

Petitioners who indicated experiencing sexual and/or physical abuse were more likely to have a protection order affidavit approved, with approval rates higher than the overall approval rate of 80%. Petitioners who indicated experiencing psychological and/or emotional abuse were less likely to have their protection order affidavit approved, with approval rates lower than the overall approval rate. Also, while many petitioners indicated experiencing psychological and emotional abuse, this was not reflected in the types of abuse that warranted higher approval rates. While the relationship between these variables was not statistically significant (p=0.45, 0.28, 0.19, 0.24, respectively with the graph to right) these findings are still important to consider.

The graph depicted to the left shows a composite of the four types of abuse indicated by petitioners in their affidavits. 50 out of the 64 petitioners indicated in some way on their affidavit that they had experienced psychological abuse. 30 petitioners indicated experiencing emotional abuse, 23 indicated experiencing physical abuse, and seven indicated experiencing sexual abuse. Many of these petitioners (76%, n=46) reported experiencing two or more of these types of abuse.

Petitioners who experienced sexual and/or physical abuse were somewhat more likely to have their protection order affidavit awarded.

- Sexual Abuse (n=7) 100%
- Physical Abuse (n=23) 87%
- Psychological Abuse (n=50) 74%
- Emotional Abuse (n=30) 73%

Is there a relationship between type of abuse experienced by the petitioners and whether their protection order affidavit was awarded?

*Independent variable: type of abuse experienced by the petitioner*
Summary

In general, petitioners were more likely to have their protection order affidavits awarded than denied, regardless of many other precipitating factors. Some variable categories, such as sexual/physical abuse experienced, petitioners’ age of 18-28 years old, and petitioners having two children seemed to elevate the approval rate above the overall approval rate of 80%. On the other side, some variable categories, such as having one child, brought the approval rate below the overall approval rate. No variables jumped out as having a particularly impactful effect on whether protection orders were awarded.

Limitations

One of the major limitations of this analysis is that the sample size was small (n=64), with some individual variables having less than the overall sample size. Along with this, many of the categories used to prove statistical significance within individual variables were too small for the test to be valid, as Chi Square Tests were run for each variable besides language of petitioner. This means that many of the relationships presented have no statistical backing as to whether there is a reason behind the relationship found between two variables. However, as noted previously, these findings are still important to consider moving forward. Other limitations include the nonprobability convenience sample. The findings here cannot be generalized to a greater population of individuals seeking protection orders in the state of Nebraska or the United States due to the type of sample obtained as well as the small sample size.
Qualitative Analysis
Grounded Theory
This qualitative study was carried out using ground theory. Grounded theory is both a process and a product, meaning it guided how I went about the data collection and methodology as well as how the data is explained. The main goal of grounded theory for this project and evaluation is to help SASA develop a new understanding grounded in data gathered from their own field. Essentially, we started with a guiding question, however the data will guide us to a new understanding of a certain subject, in this case it being how the approval/denial of a protection order affidavit impacts an individual’s perceived safety and protection.1, 2

Data Collection
Data was collected using a convenience sample of individuals who were selected by Jo Springer, Executive Director of SASA, and were agreeable to participate. These individuals were all females who had obtained protection orders with the help of SASA. After three participants were agreeable, one-on-one interviews occurred via Skype/telephone. Two of these interviews were conducted via Skype on January 31, 2019 with the participant, Jo, myself, and one other SASA staff member present. Jo was present on these interviews to provide an extra layer of support and comfort for participants. The last interview occurred over telephone between myself and the participant on February 7, 2019. Interviews were conducted as opposed to a focus group due to time limitations and the inability to gather several SASA clients together at the same time. These individuals were invited to speak about their experiences using the questions found in the interview script in Appendix A as an outline for conversation structure. Participants filled out an informed consent form where they demonstrated that they fully understood the purpose and risks of this study (Appendix B). These interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. The voice recording was immediately saved in a password-protected drive. After being transcribed, the voice recordings were destroyed.

Data Analysis
Data was analyzed by utilizing the transcribed data from each individual interview and putting it into a Microsoft Excel file. From there, the process of open coding began, which is essentially going line by line and assigning a word or short phrase to each line that describes it. This type of coding is purely descriptive and is open to all possibilities. From there, categories were derived and subsequently four overarching themes emerged. These themes are described in the following pages.

Memos
Memos, which are notes kept by the researcher to reflect on thoughts, biases, and learnings, were created throughout the data analysis process. As analysis moved forward, memos accumulated as written ideas or records about concepts and their relationships to each other and to the data. Researcher bias was confronted frequently as I was not aware or frustrated with many of the things participants spoke about.
Below is a word cloud of all the codes derived from the qualitative data collected. The bigger the word is, the more times it came up in the data analysis. From this, it can be said that “children,” “law enforcement,” “violation,” and “protection” were all common words associated with what participants said in their interviews.
Below is a concept map that depicts relationships between SASA, their clients, law enforcement, the respondent, and myself as the research student.
Experiences with Law Enforcement

This theme emerged immediately and relentlessly throughout the data. All three participants spoke to their experience with law enforcement particularly pertaining to their protection orders, whether good or bad. However, participants’ experiences were split on this theme.

Participant 1

Participant 1 spoke about having a great experience with local law enforcement regarding her protection order. She has had her protection order for several years and has always felt supported and protected by area law enforcement. She stated that whenever she needs them, she calls and they are readily available. She also stated that she has seen the appropriate consequences be given to the respondent.

“So, if I take a screenshot, or if I take a picture of the caller ID, he goes to jail and that has happened.”

“And so it's not really just a piece of paper. It actually has, there's substance there.”

Participant 2

Participant 2 detailed how law enforcement has essentially failed her in her experience with having a protection order. She said that she does not understand why law enforcement does not take into consideration red flags and previous evidence when dealing with protection orders. She also stated that despite law enforcement encouraging her to call whenever her respondent violates the protection order, there has been little effort on law enforcement’s side to take action. She stated that her respondent has found loopholes in the protection order and continues to follow and stalk her without consequences.

“I had called the cops, I don't know how many times on violation, him stalking me, and following me, and being abusive.”

“He would show up at my house, night and day. He'd drive around it, he would pop in, want to see the kids at any time…. He's gonna be just popping up, coming over, doing what he wants”

Participant 3

Participant 3 spoke about how she has not had much of a reason to have extensive experience with local law enforcement. She stated that her respondent is too afraid to be put in jail again to violate it.

“But I knew once that he was served with it that he would leave me alone because he doesn't want to go back to prison again.”
Seeking Safety and Healing From Trauma
Participants all spoke about a similar progression of events in terms of seeking safety for themselves and working to heal from the trauma that their relationship with their respondent has caused. Participants talked about getting to a certain point and realizing they had to get out of the relationship, whether that was because they were fed up or they were genuinely scared for their own safety. Steps taken to continue to feel safe and protected were also a common subject and included things such as getting a protection order, making sure they are never alone, avoiding areas where they know the respondent frequents, or even moving to a different town.

“We would avoid going out pretty much where we knew they would be.”
- Participant 3

“But if he was still here, I will always have someone around me.”
- Participant 3

“Where this town has failed to keep me safe, I will move… I feel like if he couldn't be cordial while I was here, I tried that route… I tried.”
- Participant 2

“Things were escalating to the point that it was just really scary.”
- Participant 2

Child Safety
This theme was very evident throughout the data, as all participants had children with their respondents. Participants spoke about the desire to keep their children safe and protected as much as possible, given the circumstances. Participant 3 was granted a protection order specifically for the protection of her child. Participants also spoke about the potential for their children to witness abuse, struggles with custody, and issues relating to co-parenting with their respondent.

“The times when I feel unsafe is when I'm out driving around. Like, when I'm exposed... I'm at work, when I can be looked in on, checked in on. I'm in public, so that's where I feel unsafe.”
- Participant 2

“Maybe if a mother is getting a protection order, I feel like it is... Imperative... That the judge... The judicial system, whatever, that they really take a good, hard look at the children... And kids need to have a voice, more so than what they are having.” - Participant 1

“And then, (he) use(s) the kids as a time to come at me… And I said, ‘Okay, that's abusive in front of our kids… That’s abusive, that is showing them abuse.’”
- Participant 2
Negative Emotions

Throughout the data, there were many negative emotions associated with what participants were speaking about. When coding, the emotions that emerged were reluctance, disappointment, vulnerability, fear, numbness, frustration, overwhelmed, and feeling misunderstood and alone. Another feeling that went along with the overall theme is the feeling that their protection order was useless. Participant 1 had a great experience with her protection order, however participant 2 did not and participant 3 was indifferent.

“I'm still scared to ever be alone”
- Participant 3

“I mean, when it came to take care of the baby, I just feel so overwhelmed now, all the time.”
- Participant 2

“And at that point, I guess I was just numb to it”
- Participant 2

“Misunderstood”

“Fear”

“Numbness”

“Reluctance”

“Overwhelmed”

“Frustration”

“Vulnerability”

“Disappointment”

“Alone”

“And that's all it is, a piece of paper in my billfold. Because when you call the police, they give you another piece of paper to put in your billfold… My protection order is pretty much just confetti.”
- Participant 2

“So, I mean, that's where I've been on the fence about dropping it because it has not been very useful for me.”
- Participant 2
Reliability is the consistency of measure, which means that the same results would be found on any given day. Reliability was attempted to be increased in this evaluation through detailed notes during interviews and attempts at accurate transcription of interviews. Other ways that reliability could have been increased would have been through blind coding and the use of multiple coders.

Validity is collecting the data that is expected to be collected. Validity in qualitative research can be increased in several ways. One way is by having prolonged engagement in field, which I have worked on through immersing myself in literature and speaking with several individuals for this evaluation. Another way to increase validity is to have triangulation of data, which means that there is data coming from several sources. This was done in this evaluation by gathering data from three separate participants as well as from the protection order affidavits. Addressing researcher bias openly is also important, which has been done through the memoing and in preparing this report.
Summary & Recommendations
Overall, protection order affidavits were awarded at a rate of 80%. Petitioners were most represented in both the quantitative and qualitative sections as English-speaking females between the ages of 18-38 years old. Some categories brought the approval rate up, such as petitioners’ age, whereas others brought it down, such as petitioners having one child or having experienced psychological or emotional abuse.

Participants experienced emotional and psychological abuse more frequently than physical or sexual abuse. Statements that were made in the interviews also made it clear that individuals experience more emotional and psychological abuse and trauma as opposed to physical or sexual abuse. These statements included things such as playing games, name-calling, lying, and stalking, among others. However, protection orders were awarded more often to individuals who experienced physical and sexual abuse.

Participants were in somewhat disagreement on whether they felt that law enforcement involvement was helpful. Where participants did find agreement was the importance of safety for themselves and their children. Creating a new environment with less fear and risk of abuse were important aspects for all participants. All participants also expressed primarily negative emotions when describing their respondent as well as their experience in trying to obtain a protection order.

Overall, participants felt a strong connection to SASA, its employees, and the services and support they have provided them through these difficult times. Participants in the interviews were repeatedly grateful for SASA.
Program Strengths

SASA’s legal advocacy program has many strengths, as evidenced by this evaluation. The legal advocacy program assists individuals who are experiencing domestic violence and/or abuse and guides them through the process of filing a protection order affidavit. SASA’s legal advocacy program in general is a strength in itself as this is a program that appears to be rather unparalleled in the literature and surrounding communities. Participants in this evaluation noted that SASA and its employees, notably Jo Springer, do an incredible job in supporting clients in whatever way they need. This can be from help with protection orders, providing a safe shelter, or simply being there for an individual who is in distress or even simply frustrated. Overall, SASA also does a great job of focusing and serving their younger population of 18-38 year olds. This group made up the majority of the data sample and were shown to have higher protection order approval rates. SASA is also doing a good job of assisting individuals in obtaining protection orders, as the overall approval rate for individuals seeking protection orders was 80%.

Professional Literature Further Informs Results

- The literature focused on the several dimensions of domestic violence and abuse (psychological, emotional, physical, and sexual). These were all evident in responses from SASA participants and presented in many different ways.
- One of the themes derived from the professional literature that seemed to be pertinent in this evaluation was how protection orders are more likely to be issued when the violence experienced by the victim is more severe. It was found that affidavits evidencing physical or sexual abuse were more likely to be awarded. To many, physical and sexual abuse are seen as more violent and severe than psychological and emotional abuse, which would explain why physical and sexual abuse are more likely to warrant a protection order.
- The literature also focused on what precipitating factors petitioners bring with them when filing a protection order affidavit. This was revealed to be important to SASA participants as well, as they made it clear in the interviews that many things played a part in their decision to seek a protection order and that all of these things should be taken into consideration when the judge is determining whether it will be awarded.\cite{3,4,5}
Recommendations

Program Recommendations

1. **A focus on older individuals (38+ years old) is important moving forward.** This population was slightly below the 80% approval rate (75%).

2. **Focusing on petitioners with respondents who are of African American or White ethnicities is important.** Petitioners whose respondents were of African American or White ethnicities were on-par with the 80% approval rate, while Hispanic and Other ethnicities were around 90% approval rates.

3. **Because Spanish-speaking individuals have low representation in this program, based on this data sample, outreach to this population is recommended to ensure they are receiving SASA’s services when necessary.** While there were only four Spanish-speaking individuals in this data sample, they had an approval rate of 75%.

4. **Proactive approaches, such as assessments and trauma-informed trainings, should be adopted to pinpoint and focus on individuals contemplating getting a protection order and supporting them in the best possible ways.** All participants in interviews expressed letting the abuse get to a scary point where they were fearing for their lives. These proactive approaches will move to ensuring this is not occurring in future cases.

5. **Trainings for staff on understanding and interpreting client experiences, therefore creating affidavits with clients that are as explicit as possible is important when considering types of abuse.** While sexual and physical abuse have clear evidence, this is often not the case with psychological and emotional abuse. Many petitioners experienced psychological and emotional abuse (78% & 47%), however these approval rates were lower than the overall approval rate of 80% (74% & 73%) and lower than the approval rates of sexual and physical abuse (100% & 87%).

6. The last recommendation is simply to **continue with great support in the form of meetings, trainings, and supportive relationships with clients, colleagues, local law enforcement, and the local judicial system.** SASA has made an impact on individuals in their serving area and clients appreciate that. All participants in the interview portion noted feeling very supported from SASA and that the employees truly care and see their pain.
**Policy Recommendations**

*SASA taking a stance and working alongside local law enforcement and judicial system in the form of meetings, trainings focused on trauma-informed practice, and strong rapport will make a great impact.* Advocating for clients on the county and state level along with working cooperatively with law enforcement are both imperative steps for SASA to take. In the interviews, individuals often spoke of feeling alone and helpless and not knowing what to do. They also spoke of feeling generally let down by the judges and law enforcement in the area.

**Research Recommendations**

SASA provided the researcher with adequate data in order to perform this evaluation, which was appreciated. However, several data points were missing that would have been beneficial to the researcher and to SASA to create a more well-rounded evaluation of their legal advocacy program.

*These data points included items that were not made available on the protection order affidavits provided, to include:*
- Race of petitioner
- Zip code of petitioner
- Employment status of petitioner
- Employment status of respondent
- Whether the petitioner was granted a hearing
- Severity of abuse
- Other SASA services the petitioner may have utilized

In order to accurately provide this information, SASA may need to keep more detailed data records on the clients utilizing the legal advocacy program in a way that still maintains confidentiality. Also, providing the researcher with more of a scope as to what information is being sought from the affidavits would be helpful as well.
SASA Interview Outline

Welcome and greet.
Shelby will introduce self and purpose of focus group. I simply would like them to speak about their experiences and how they feel those experiences have affected them.

Build rapport.
Go over informed consent. Have Jo disseminate & participants fill out.
Talk about confidentiality, go over audio recording guidelines (recorded, transcribed, destroyed)
Have Jo say anything she feels is necessary (trigger warnings, additional support, etc.)

- What makes you feel safe and protected?
- How did you feel when you received the outcome of your protection order affidavit?
  What was your reaction?
- What aspects of your safety and protection were affected by the outcome of your protection order affidavit?
- How do you feel that your life would be different if your protection order affidavit outcome had been different?
- What steps are you taking to continue to feel safe and protected in your life?
- For those who were awarded protection orders:
  - Was your protection order ever violated?
  - Was law enforcement contacted, if so what was their response?
  - In what ways do you feel that this response was helpful/unhelpful?

Debrief.
Have Jo say a few things - regarding emotions, as-needed follow-up, resources they have for them.
Thank them for participating, will provide them with final product if they wish.
Appendix B

Informed Consent
SASA Legal Advocacy Focus Group

SASA LEGAL ADVOCACY FOCUS GROUP

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR
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sconnett@unomaha.edu

ADDITIONAL CONTACT
Jo Springer
Spouse Abuse Sexual Assault
(SASA) Crisis Center
220 S. Burlington Ave. Suite 4
Hastings, Nebraska 68901
402-463-5810
executivedirector@hastingssasa.com

INTRODUCTION
Shelby is a Master of Social Work student at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. She is conducting this study to help SASA better meet the needs of the people they are serving.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

You are being asked to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate in this study, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully. Please ask the researcher if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information.

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences that you have with protection orders. This study seeks to answer the question of how the approval/denial of a protection order affects an individual’s perceived safety and protection.

STUDY PROCEDURES

You are being asked to participate in this study because we feel that your experiences will benefit the work that SASA does. You are being invited to participate in a group discussion. You will be in a group with 4-5 others who have similar experiences to you in terms of protection orders and will be guided with questions from the researcher. The group discussion will start with the researcher making sure that you are comfortable. We can also answer questions about the research that you might have. Then we will ask you questions about your experiences with protection orders and give you time to share your knowledge. The questions will be about your experience with protection orders as well as your own thoughts about safety and protection.

The group will meet in the SASA building and Jo Springer, SASA’s executive director, will be present. No one else besides these people will be present. Since the researcher is in Omaha, the group will occur over video conferencing. The video will not be recorded, but the group will be audiotaped for data collection only. Once the audio is transcribed and stored in a password-protected drive, the audiotape will be destroyed. It is estimated that this focus group will take about an hour to complete and Jo will reimburse you for your time. The study itself will run until May of 2019, but you will only need to participate once. If you would like to receive a copy of the final product, please reach out to me or Jo.

Participant’s Initials: ________

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Appendix B

Informed Consent
SASA Legal Advocacy Focus Group

RISKS

We are asking you to share with us some very personal and confidential information, and you may feel uncomfortable talking about some of the topics. You do not have to answer any question or take part in the discussions if you don't wish to do so. You do not have to give us any reason for not responding to any question, or for refusing to take part in the interview.

You may decline to answer any or all questions and you may terminate your involvement at any time if you choose.

BENEFITS

There will be no direct benefit to you for your participation in this study other than the benefit of shared experiences. However, we hope that the information obtained from this study may help to inform SASA’s practice to better serve individuals in their program and to inform the greater community about what experiences are like for individuals experiencing domestic violence and sexual assault.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Your responses in this focus group will be anonymous. Please do your best to not use identifying information when speaking. We will ask you and others in the group not to talk to people outside the group about what was said in the group. We will, in other words, ask each of you to keep what was said in the group confidential. You should know, however, that we cannot stop or prevent participants who were in the group from sharing things that should be confidential.

Every effort will be made by the researcher to preserve your confidentiality including the following:

- Code names/numbers for each person participating in this focus group will be used on all research notes and documents.
- Notes, interview transcriptions, and any other identifying participant information will be kept in a locked file cabinet in the personal possession of the researcher.

Participant data will be kept confidential except in cases where the researcher is legally obligated to report specific incidents. These incidents include, but may not be limited to, incidents of harm to yourself or others in the form of abuse and suicide risk.

SHARING THE RESULTS

Nothing that you tell us today will be shared with anybody outside the research team, and nothing will be attributed to you by name. The knowledge that we get from this research will be shared in a summary with you and SASA staff.

Participant’s Initials: ________
Informed Consent
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COMPENSATION
This focus group involves no form of compensation.

CONTACT INFORMATION
If you have questions at any time about this study, or you experience adverse effects as the result of participating in this study, you may contact the researcher whose contact information is provided on the first page or Jo Springer at SASA. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, or if problems arise which you do not feel you can discuss with the Primary Investigator, please contact the Institutional Review Board at (865) 354-3000, ext. 4822.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION
Your participation in this study is voluntary. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part in this study. If you decide to take part in this study, you will be asked to sign a consent form. After you sign the consent form, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. Withdrawing from this study will not affect the relationship you have, if any, with the researcher. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed, your data will be returned to you or destroyed.

CONSENT
I have read and I understand the provided information and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and without cost. I understand that I will be given a copy of this consent form. I voluntarily agree to take part in this study.

Participant's signature __________________________ Date __________

Investigator's signature __________________________ Date __________

Participant's Initials: ________