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Loganne Ditter

University of Oklahoma-Omaha, 19lditter@gmail.com

Ziwei Qi

Fort Hays State University, z_qi5@fhsu.edu

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An Economic Advocacy Approach to Empower Rural Victims of Gender-based Violence: A Review of the Literature

Loganne Ditter, B.S.

University of Nebraska, Omaha

Ziwei Qi, Ph.D.

School of Criminal Justice, Leadership, & Sociology

Fort Hays State University

Abstract

Gender-based violence (GBV) has devastating effects on survivors' mental, emotional, psychological, physical, and financial well-being. In rural communities, cultural stigma, isolation, lack of services, economic deprivation, and poverty can create additional barriers for survivors to seek help and leave their abusive relationships. Economic advocacy is a survivor-centered approach that addresses poverty and economic insecurity in ending GBV and empowers individuals and communities with the necessary resources and skills. In this review article, the researchers aim to identify survivors' unique challenges in rural communities, especially in economic hardship and financially dire situations. While the empirical research examined in this review has provided valuable insights, it is worth noting that the original authors did not explicitly

present policy recommendations that directly address the nuanced intersection of rural contexts, economic deprivation, and solutions. This observation emphasizes the innovative nature of deriving policy suggestions by synthesizing existing research. By examining the literature, the researchers recommend addressing the issue by developing effective and comprehensive policies and interventions that address survivors' unique needs and circumstances related to economic independence and financial freedom.

Keywords: gender-based violence, rural, poverty, economic abuse, economic advocacy, survivor-centered workplace, empowerment

An Economic Advocacy Approach to Empower Rural Victims of Gender-based Violence:

A Review of the Literature

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a pattern of coercive and violent behaviors committed against others due to their gender or gender identity (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2022). It encompasses various abusive behaviors, including intimate relationship violence, sexual assault, stalking, human trafficking, and other forms of physical, sexual, economic, emotional, and psychological abuse. It impacts anyone regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, or socioeconomic status (CDC, 2019; Stark & Ager, 2011). Statistics show that 1 in 4 women and 1 in 7 men in the U.S. will experience relationship violence from an intimate partner in their lifetime (Truman & Morgan, 2014). The occurrence of GBV in marginalized communities, such as LGBTQIA+, Indigenous populations, and immigrants, is at higher rates but is often underreported (Mora et al., 2022).

Financial and economic abuse are often overlooked forms of GBV (Haifley, 2021). Economic abuse can take many forms, including a perpetrator exploiting their decision-making power in household finances and creating total financial dependence on the victim, such as controlling the victim's access to bank accounts (Fitzgerald et al., 2022), limiting their ability to work or pursue education, forcing them to account for every penny they spend (Anitha, 2019), controlling all finances within the home, or withholding child support (Adams & Beeble, 2019). Abusers might also inflict facial injuries, refuse transportation, destroy work clothing to prevent the victim from working, or harass and stalk the victim at work (Davies et al., 2015). Victims with little access to finances risk homelessness and losing child custody when they leave their partners (Stylianou, 2018).

The connection between economic deprivation and the experience of gender-based violence is reciprocal and multi-faceted, with economic factors contributing significantly to the dynamics of GBV. Economic deprivation, often synonymous with generational poverty, significantly influences one's quality of life and intersects with several factors to shape the overall trajectory and experiences of GBV survivors, impacting their victimhood. First, economic dependence on the abuser can leave survivors with limited options to escape the abusive situation. The lack of financial resources, job opportunities, and financial literacy can prevent survivors from leaving or seeking help (Johnson, 2018). Economic vulnerability can exacerbate survivors' susceptibility to manipulation, control, and coercion by the abuser (Clark et al., 2019). Second, economic deprivation can restrict survivors' access to critical resources such as legal assistance, counseling, medical care, and safe housing (Sauber, 2015). Limited finances mean limited survivors' ability to travel to seek help or access services, particularly in rural areas with inadequate transportation options.

The intersection of poverty and gender-based violence can disproportionately impact marginalized communities, including women of color, LGBTQIA+ individuals, and people with disabilities, compounding their vulnerability to such forms of violence (Bettinger-Lopez et al., 2022). In rural areas, there are often fewer available services for survivors of GBV, including shelters, transportation, legal services, healthcare, and counseling. Economic constraints can exacerbate the impact of these service gaps. The combination of economic deprivation and limited services can lead to survivors having fewer avenues for support and escape.

The leading causes of GBV in the United States are complex and include relational, community, cultural, and societal factors (Matjasko, 2013). In addition, economic factors, particularly poverty and limited financial decision-making capabilities, can significantly contribute to increasing vulnerabilities and exposure to violence (Austrian & Muthengi, 2014). GBV is often driven by power and control dynamics over a partner, family member, or other individuals (Conroy, 2014). Social norms and attitudes also play significant roles in perpetuating GBV. Attitudes that support violence and discrimination against women and girls, including sexism, misogyny, and hegemonic masculinity, can indirectly foster tolerance and a lack of response to violence (McKinley, 2021). Addressing GBV requires a comprehensive and holistic approach, including changing societal norms and attitudes and strengthening laws to create a safer and more supportive social, legal, and work environment for victims. In the current review, the authors will explore the intersection of economic empowerment and GBV within a rural context.

Definition of Rural

While most of the literature and policy practices are focused primarily on urban areas, the researchers examined ways to incorporate an economic advocacy approach that addresses financial stability in rural and remote communities. The term "rural" is not uniformly defined and can vary widely, including small villages, less densely populated areas, and unincorporated townships (Litcher et al., 2016). Diverse conceptualizations can arise from geographic, economic, and cultural variations. Rural communities frequently exhibit positive interactions among residents and a strong sense of community (Flint et al., 2010).

Research indicates that rural communities often operate differently from urban areas. They tend to hold distinct values and norms that can be rooted in tradition and local culture. These values might influence various aspects of life, such as social interactions, work ethics, and family dynamics (Lynch & Logan, 2023). Rural communities tend to have dense acquaintanceships, contributing to a close-knit atmosphere where people are more interconnected (Terry, 2020). While rural communities may have a strong sense of community and social cohesion, some factors might contribute to the silence around gender-based violence. In close-knit rural communities, people often know each other well, and personal matters can become public knowledge quickly. This can make victims of domestic violence hesitant to report abuse due to concerns about privacy and fear of stigma (McCleary-Sills et al., 2016).

Methodology

Search Terms

This study employed a systematic literature review approach to investigate the intersection of economic justice and gender-based violence within rural contexts. The aim was to comprehensively analyze existing research and identify the relationships between economic disparities and the prevalence and incidents of gender-based violence in rural communities. The literature search revolved around a set of predetermined keywords that included the primary themes of interest. These keywords included "economic justice," "deprivation," "rural," "sexual violence," "intimate partner violence" or "IPV," and "poverty." Key terms related to economic development and entrepreneurship include "economic empowerment," "social enterprise," "rural initiatives," "microfinance," "community economic development," "poverty reduction," and "employment generation."

Inclusion Criteria

Inclusion criteria include whether the research examines how economic disparities and conditions contribute to or intersect with instances of gender-based violence. Studies were included if they considered “rural” as its context, acknowledging the unique dynamics of gender-based violence and economic challenges in rural settings. Research conducted primarily in developing countries is also included when it discusses issues with economic development and violence against women.

The primary databases included Business Abstracts with Full-Text, Criminal Justice Abstracts with Full-Text, EBSCO Databases, Entrepreneurship Collection, ERIC (ProQuest), PubMed, ProQuest Databases, PsycINFO, Sociological Abstracts, and Google Scholar. Governmental and non-governmental organization research reports, and dissertations are included in the inclusion criteria. Then, the retrieved articles were screened in a two-step process following the initial search. In the first step, titles and abstracts were reviewed to assess their alignment with the inclusion criteria. In the second step, full texts of the selected articles were assessed for eligibility. Data extraction included key study details such as authors, publication year, research focus, methodology, findings, and relevance to the study's objectives. The selected studies were assessed using established criteria for evaluating research in social sciences, such as research design, methodology, data analysis, and overall scholarly contribution. Studies demonstrating a high methodological rigor and relevance were prioritized in the analysis. The findings of the selected studies were synthesized thematically to identify common patterns, divergent viewpoints, and emerging trends related to economic justice and gender-based violence in rural contexts. A total of 119 articles were chosen to contribute to synthesizing the literature review and discussion.

Findings and Results

GBV in Rural America

Gender-based violence in rural America is difficult to quantify as many incidents go unreported (Peek Asa et al., 2011). Research suggests that rural women and girls are at a higher risk of repeated victimization due to factors such as the fear of retaliation, the shame associated with victim-blaming, social stigma, limited access to healthcare, insufficient access to social services, inadequate legal support, and restricted mobility with limited transportation options. (DeKeseredy & Hall-Sanchez, 2017; Lynch & Logan, 2023; McCall-Hosenfeld et al., 2014). Victims often need to travel several hours to a domestic violence shelter or hospital (Sudderth, 2006). Many become reluctant to come forward due to fear of retaliation from the

abusers, shaming from families and friends, or a lack of trust in the criminal justice system (DuBois, 2022; Qi & Craig, 2022).

Rural communities can have unique sociocultural factors contributing to violence and abuse, including cultural norms and inefficient formal and informal social responses toward victimization (Eastman et al., 2007). Traditional cultural norms and gender roles can often contribute to GBV, discouraging survivors from discussing their abuse with friends, family members, and churches (Uger et al., 2009). Rural communities tend to hold culturally rooted beliefs that it is a private matter that should not be discussed outside the home. Stereotypical beliefs regarding gender and violence often stem from the unequal power dynamics associated with traditional gender roles in rural communities. In these settings, women might rely on their partners for financial support, creating an environment where GBV is more likely to be tolerated or justified (DeKeseredy & Dragiewicz, 2007). Because of the isolation and stigma associated with GBV in rural areas, victims may find it easier to keep to themselves rather than draw unwanted attention to their difficult situations, which can bring feelings of self-blame as they may face rejection from families and friends (Neill & Hammatt, 2015; Perrin et al., 2019).

Barriers to accessing services can further exacerbate survivors' difficulties and reduce available choices for escaping abusive relationships (Little, 2017). Addressing access to services, especially economic-related remedies, is imperative to assisting survivors' journey to healing and recovery (Johnson, 2021). Economic security and financial independence support survivors to break the cycle of violence. To effectively address violence and abuse in rural communities, policymakers must address the intersectionality of poverty, economic deprivation, and lack of (available and accessible) services. Research and policy recommendations indicate that a comprehensive approach to addressing GBV involves coordinated community response that centers on survivors' needs, creates job training programs, provides affordable housing access, and supports small businesses and other economic development initiatives (Weissman, 2012). It can also involve creating partnerships between service providers, community-based organizations, and other stakeholders to expand access to counseling, healthcare, and legal advocacy (Ragavan et al., 2020). A holistic strategy involving targeted policies, investments, and community engagement which is crucial to facing rural communities' economic challenges and deteriorating infrastructure. These measures encompass approaches such as investing in infrastructure, exemplified by the creation of Rural Infrastructure Development Funds, and promoting collaborations between the public and private sectors through Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) to capitalize on private resources for rural projects (Haven-Tang & Jones,

2013), and enhancing digital connectivity to unlock online economic prospects and educational accessibility (Cullen, 2001; Cui et al., 2018; Satish, 2007).

Moreover, fostering economic diversity and job generation through supporting local industries and microfinance endeavors can boost rural economies, as many developing countries have succeeded in such endeavors (Lee & Kim, 2013). Enhancing access to education and training can be achieved through vocational programs that align with local employment demands and offering distance learning alternatives, utilizing technology to facilitate skill enhancement for rural populations (Almeida et al., 2012; O’Kane, 2020; Oser et al., 2019). These policy proposals also align with the pressing need to strengthen healthcare and social services in rural areas, incorporating measures like mobile clinics and telemedicine services (Jaglal et al., 2013).

Rural Poverty and GBV

Poverty is a persistent and widespread issue affecting millions of people living in rural areas across the country (Thide et al., 2018). Rural poverty can result from a range of factors, including limited education and professional development (Swaminathan & Findeis, 2004), lack of economic development and job opportunities (Thiede et al., 2018), declining agricultural and manufacturing industries (Lichter & McLaughlin, 1995), and insufficient infrastructure and public services (Burton et al., 2013; Sherman, 2006). Rural poverty also often exacerbates issues, such as poor health outcomes and high substance abuse rates (Harnack et al., 2019).

Unemployment can be a significant problem in rural areas as fewer job opportunities are often available, leading to slower economic growth in these communities. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, prime-working-age (25-34) unemployment rates in nonmetro counties increased from 2007 to 2019, especially in communities of color. These economic challenges can significantly impact the financial health of the households and prohibit survivors from leaving their abusive situations. In rural areas, the lack of resources, services, and transportation can make survivors feel trapped, helpless, and unsure of where to turn for support (Peek-Asa et al., 2011).

Living in poverty can increase the risk of domestic and sexual violence, especially when financial stress contributes to relationship abuse and coercion (Postmus et al., 2016; Shannon et al., 2016). Additionally, if a family struggles to make ends meet, it can create a tense and stressful environment that can exacerbate existing tensions and lead to conflict and violence (Slabbert, 2017). In many abusive relationships, one partner may have more financial power than the other, leading to a disequilibrium. Suppose the abuser is the sole breadwinner, and the

other partner is financially dependent on them. In that case, the dependent partner may feel trapped in the relationship and unable to leave the abusive relationship (Wilcox et al., 2021). The relation between masculinity and the experience of poverty can lead to a sense of emasculation, ultimately raising the risks of violent behavior to assert power and dominance (Wiler et al., 2013). This connection underscores how societal perceptions of masculinity, often associated with traditional notions of strength, control, and provider roles, intersect with economic hardships to create a volatile mix of emotions and behaviors.

Living in poverty can also challenge individuals' ability to conform to conventional masculine ideals, as economic struggles may impede their capacity to fulfill expected roles as providers and decision-makers within their families and communities (Laureen, 2017). This perceived failure to meet societal expectations of masculinity can lead to feelings of inadequacy and emasculation, eroding self-esteem and self-worth (Terry, 2004). In response, some individuals may resort to violent behavior as a way to reclaim a sense of power and dominance, attempting to regain a semblance of control in their lives that aligns with traditional masculine norms (DeKeseredy et al., 2016). In rural communities, a lack of financial independence also poses additional challenges for victims to care for themselves and their dependents, including children, elderly parents, pets, or other family members who rely on the victim for support (Wuerch et al., 2020).

Poverty can limit access to resources that could help prevent or address domestic and sexual violence. For example, individuals living in poverty often lack access to quality healthcare, mental health services, safe and affordable housing, or legal services that could help in abusive relationships (Rural Health Information Hub, 2021). Most importantly, research has shown that the likelihood of domestic violence is further reduced when both partners have equal earnings (Youngson et al., 2021). It is essential to address financial independence and economic empowerment as part of a comprehensive approach to preventing and addressing GBV (Trevillion et al., 2012).

Economic Empowerment and GBV

Economic empowerment is a survivor-centered advocacy approach that aims to provide individuals and communities with equitable resources and skills to improve economic status, achieve financial independence, and break generational poverty and gender discrimination (U.N. Women, n.d.). Economic empowerment encompasses various aspects of an individual's economic wellness, including access to education, job training, healthcare, and financial services (DAC Network on Gender Equality, 2011). It also addresses systemic inequalities by

promoting equal pay, supporting women-owned businesses, creating a survivor-centered workplace, and increasing access to credit and capital for marginalized groups (U.N. Women, 2018).

Economic empowerment is crucial for survivors to break the cycle of violence and create a more equitable and safer environment for recovery. It encompasses a range of services, from providing basic everyday living needs like food, shelter, and healthcare to efforts related to reducing economic strains, including engaging in job training and education and promoting entrepreneurship and business ownership (Matjasko, 2013; Peled & Krigel, 2016). Financial independence and stability make survivors less likely to depend on abusive partners and have greater power to make informed decisions for their well-being (Cardenas et al., 2022; National Resource Center on Domestic Violence, 2010). Increasing financial stability through employment and income-generating activities, such as living wage employment, can reduce the risk of GBV, increase survivors' ability to escape abusive situations (Warren et al., 2019), increase self-esteem, attain a sense of achievement (Showalter, 2016), and give survivors more decision-making power in their relationships (Showalter et al., 2021).

Employability and Economic Empowerment

The workplace can be one of the few places where individuals feel safe to disclose and seek support in rural areas (Swanberg et al., 2007). Employers in rural areas can play an essential role in providing workplace support to employees experiencing GBV. There are many ways that employers can support their employees, including creating a safe and supportive environment, offering employee assistance programs (e.g., paid leave), and providing resources and referrals to local service providers who can assist with safety planning and other forms of support (Wibberley et al., 2018). In the following, the researchers will discuss several specific ways employers could provide a safe, supportive, and trauma-informed workplace to employees who experience GBV.

Survivor-centered Workplace

Employers should be aware that experiencing violence and abuse can significantly impact a victim's ability to work, leading to short- and long-term physical, psychological, and economic consequences (Sauber & O'Brien, 2020). Being victims of gender-based violence can also result in physical injuries that impact a victim's ability to perform their duties at work effectively. It is important to acknowledge that GBV victims might have to take time off work, reduce work hours, and sometimes lose the ability to work (Afifi et al., 2012). They might also

need to take time off work to attend court appearances, meet with legal representatives, or receive medical treatment, and as a result, their employment prospects and stability are negatively impacted (Peterson et al., 2018). GBV also causes significant financial loss for survivors. Research shows survivors lose an average of \$23,076 (approximately \$33,300 in 2023 dollars) of income each year due to missed workdays, job loss, and the need to leave or reduce hours to escape an abusive partner (Swanberg et al., 2007). Another important factor that deters victims from staying at their current employment is that they may face stigma and rejection from colleagues and employers, especially when their colleagues know their abusers well (Overstreet & Quinn, 2013). The fear of retaliation or harassment from their perpetrator can also prevent victims from seeking or maintaining employment (Malecha et al., 2000).

By creating inclusive and supportive work environments, employers and communities can help survivors overcome challenges and achieve financial stability and independence (Beecham, 2014; Wood et al., 2020). For example, flexible work arrangements have recently become more in demand in the workplace due to the COVID-19 pandemic and remote work requirements (Society for Human Resource Management [SHRM], 2022). Employers can provide flexible work arrangements for survivors, such as paid time off for court appearances or medical appointments, to help survivors manage their responsibilities and meet their needs (Goodman et al., 2016). Offering support and insurance benefits, such as counseling services and legal assistance, can help survivors recover from their experiences and build resilience (Cattaneo & Goodman, 2015; Ventura, 2021). Additionally, addressing the stigma and discrimination affecting survivors to disclose their victimization to colleagues and employers is essential in creating a supportive work environment (Kossek et al., 2011; Sinko et al., 2021). Human Resources (HR) should have the capacity to offer training and education to employers and employees on the effects of GBV and promote a culture of respect and inclusiveness (Laharnar et al., 2015; Kulkarni, 2019).

Rural communities present a distinctive landscape where small businesses often prevail, and these entities frequently lack formal HR departments that are more commonly found in larger organizations (Wallace, 2007). This absence of dedicated HR resources can pose challenges when implementing survivor-centered workplace policies. Without established HR departments, smaller businesses might struggle to navigate the complexities of addressing survivors' specific needs, which can hinder the provision of crucial support to survivors.

Despite the limited focus of studies on these scenarios, a particularly plausible situation arises in rural settings where a dominant employer is present within the community. In such cases, survivors and perpetrators might find themselves employed by the same organization,

adding a unique layer of complexity to the dynamics of addressing gender-based violence in these rural areas. This intricate dynamic adds layers of complexity to the implementation of survivor-centered policies. The close-knit nature of rural communities can mean that survivors and perpetrators share social circles and even work closely together, heightening the need for sensitivity and specialized support mechanisms. Moreover, workplace conflicts of interest and power dynamics might deter survivors from reporting abuse for fear of retaliation or repercussions, further underscoring the importance of creating safe and confidential reporting channels. As a result, workplace policies must be carefully designed to ensure the safety and well-being of survivors while considering the broader community dynamics (Sarpy et al., 2022).

Job Training and Financial Assistance

Many survivors in rural areas might also face significant barriers to employment due to limited work experience and fewer job opportunities. Providing job training and education opportunities can help survivors acquire new skills and knowledge, increase their employability, and achieve financial independence (Sanders, 2007). These opportunities can also give survivors a sense of purpose and a positive outlook for the future, which can be essential for their recovery and healing (Valle et al., 2008). To provide these necessary training and educational programs, utilizing local resources and advantages can be critical in rural communities (Baker et al., 2010).

In some rural communities, agriculture can be a strong and important industry. The activity of extractive industries and large-scale agribusiness, however, can impact the employment structure of rural communities and can contribute to gender discrimination (Castañeda Camey et al., 2020) as women have limited employment opportunities in these sectors. These industries are often male-dominated and require physical labor or technical skills traditionally associated with men (Van Hightower et al., 2000). As a result, women may be excluded from these industries and have limited formal employment options. In addition, women may be subject to sexual violence and harassment in these male-dominated workplaces, further limiting their ability to work and advance in their careers (Carrington et al., 2013).

Financial assistance programs can empower survivors economically and promote their long-term financial stability and independence (King et al., 2017). Financial assistance can take many forms, including emergency financial assistance, housing support, and childcare subsidies. These programs can help survivors pay for essential expenses, such as rent, utilities, food, and transportation, thus providing a safety net as they rebuild their lives (Sullivan et al., 2019). Emergency financial assistance can help survivors pay for immediate needs, such as

transportation or temporary housing, as they escape abusive situations (Postmus, 2010). Housing support can help survivors pay rent and utilities and provide a stable and safe living place (Menard, 2001). Childcare subsidies can help survivors pay for childcare expenses, allowing them to work or attend school without worrying about the cost of care for their children (Showalter et al., 2019).

In addition to these programs, survivors should have access to other forms of financial assistance, such as unemployment benefits, food stamps, and financial aid for education and job training (Sullivan & Goodman, 2019). For survivors who have lost their jobs due to physical and emotional trauma, unemployment benefits can provide survivors with temporary financial support as they seek work or attend job training programs. Moreover, financial aid for education and job training is very important to help survivors pay for tuition, books, and other education-related expenses, allowing them to obtain the skills and training they need to succeed in the workforce (Sanders, 2014). Survivors need to know about these programs and the eligibility requirements and to work with local organizations and government agencies to access these resources.

Financial Competency Training

Because many survivors experience financial abuse, they often have very limited financial resources, poor credit, and a lack of job opportunities, creating significant barriers to achieving economic stability and independence (Rabiner et al., 2006). Financial competency training provides essential skills to survivors to gain skills and knowledge on fiscal management (Hetling & Postmus, 2014) and achieve financial stability in the long term (Postmus et al., 2012; Postmus et al., 2013; Silva-Martínez et al., 2016). In rural communities, access to financial competency training may be limited, but remote training options can help overcome this barrier.

The Allstate Foundation's Financial Empowerment Curriculum or "Moving Ahead" curriculum is a great example that can be implemented in rural and urban communities. Their financial literacy training program is designed specifically for survivors of domestic violence to gain the skills and knowledge they need to achieve financial stability and independence and to address the financial challenges that often accompany experiences of domestic violence (Allstate Foundation, 2023). Research shows that survivors who received financial literacy training reported increased financial knowledge and skills, improved credit scores, and greater control over their financial lives (Postmus et al., 2013). In addition, small business support programs can be critical, as survivors may face additional barriers to accessing traditional employment and economic opportunities (Qi & Yang, 2020). Grassroots-based entrepreneurial

businesses tailored to the needs and resources of rural communities can be an innovative way to address economic challenges unique to rural and remote communities, which often lack resources, infrastructure, and opportunities compared to urban and metropolitan areas.

Several grassroots-based businesses focus on providing survivors with safe housing and employment opportunities (e.g., Thistle Farms and FreeFrom). These business models are often referred to as social entrepreneurial models, which are mission-driven businesses that prioritize social impact and positive change, and they can provide a supportive and inclusive work environment that promotes healing and recovery for survivors. The goal of social entrepreneurial practices is to promote social justice and address systemic inequalities within the market system (Zahra et al., 2009). Social enterprises can offer a range of employment and training opportunities with a stable source of income, job training, skills development, and career advancement opportunities (Kimmitt et al., 2022; Haugh & Talwar, 2016). These organizations differ from traditional victim shelters in providing survivors with a pathway to economic independence and stability rather than just temporary shelter and support services (Reynolds & White, 2021). These organizations also offer job training and employment opportunities to help survivors build the skills to succeed in the workforce and provide a supportive and inclusive work environment that promotes healing and recovery.

Conclusion

Rural communities present unique barriers to accessing justice and services, thereby inhibiting survivors' service-seeking behaviors. Addressing the root causes of abuse and encouraging and facilitating collaboration and partnership-building within communities is the first critical step to offering survivor-centered advocacy. Domestic violence shelters, community organizations, and other community-based organizations can help to provide survivors with access to resources and support services and to promote a comprehensive response to GBV.

Advocating for economic empowerment and independence for survivors of gender-based violence in rural communities can promote healing, recovery, and empowerment and help to increase understanding of the importance of supporting survivors in their pursuit of economic independence. Job and education programs, financial literacy training, entrepreneurship, and small business support, as well as technical training, can help survivors acquire new skills and knowledge and increase their employability. Promoting financial literacy and management through financial competency training can help survivors better understand and manage their finances more effectively, leading to greater financial stability and independence, turning victims into survivors.

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