



How the National Domestic Violence Hotline Can Support Family and Friends of Victims/Survivors:

Theoretical Framework Research Brief

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1. Introduction

This brief describes efforts to develop a theoretical framework specific to services provided by the National Domestic Violence Hotline ([The Hotline](#)) to family and friends of those affected by relationship abuse (family/friends).¹ This work is part of the National Domestic Violence Hotline Services Assessment Framework based on Theory (SAF-T) project. In this section, we describe the SAF-T project, provide an overview of The Hotline, and outline the organization of the brief.

1.1 The SAF-T Project – Background and Purpose

The SAF-T project is a collaboration between the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) and the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) Program within the Family and Youth Services Bureau at the Administration for Children and Families (ACF). ACF contracted with Westat to conduct this multi-phase project. In the earlier two phases of the project, the project team created a survivor-centered theoretical framework, developed performance measures based on the framework, and conducted an assessment of services provided by The Hotline. The purpose of the third phase of the project was to build upon this previous work and create a framework for family/friends of victims/survivors, the second most commonly identified group to contact The Hotline after victims/survivors.² Research indicates that family/friends are significant members of informal networks and social support systems of victims/survivors. Given the benefits of informal social networks in the lives of victims/survivors, some researchers assert that domestic violence services should include a network-oriented approach involving direct work with informal network members, like family members and friends, to enhance their understanding and awareness of relationship abuse and related resources to facilitate their supportive relationship with victims/survivors.³ This brief focuses on the work conducted by Westat and its subcontractor, EMT Associates, to develop the family/friends framework during the third phase of the project.⁴

1.2 The Hotline

The Hotline provides 24-hour, national, toll-free, and confidential advocacy services by phone, online chat, and text messaging. Its mission is to “answer the call to support and shift power back to those affected by relationship abuse.”⁵ Funded with a \$1 million grant appropriated

¹ Relationship abuse refers to coercive behaviors used by one partner to maintain power over another partner in an intimate relationship (e.g., physical harm, attempt to control, physical or sexual violence, threats, intimidation, tactics to instill fear, emotional abuse, economic abuse). This term is often used interchangeably with *intimate partner violence*.

² McDonnell, K. A., Nagaraj, N. C., Mead, K. H., Bingenheimer, J. B., Stevens, H., Gianattasio, K. Z., & Wood, S. R. (2018). An Evaluation of the National Domestic Violence Hotline and loveisrespect. A report from the Accomplishments of the Domestic Violence Hotline, Online Connections, and Text Project. Retrieved from <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/report/evaluation-national-domestic-violence-hotline-and-loveisrespect>

³ For example, see (1) Goodman, L. A. & Smyth, K. F. (2011). A Call for a Social Network-Oriented Approach to Services for Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence. *Psychology of Violence*, 1(2), 79-92.; (2) Goodman, L. A., Banyard, V., Woulfe, J., Ash, S., & Mattern, G. (2016). Bringing a Network-Oriented Approach to Domestic Violence Services: A Focus Group Exploration of Promising Practices. *Violence Against Women*, 22(1), 64-89.

⁴ For more details on the first two phases of the SAF-T project, see the project webpage: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/national-domestic-violence-hotline-ndvh-services-assessment-framework-based-theory-saf>

⁵ National Domestic Violence Hotline. (2021). *About the Hotline*. Retrieved from <https://www.thehotline.org/about/>

under the Violence Against Women Act of 1994, The Hotline answered its first call on February 21, 1996.⁶ Through continued funding from the FVPSA Program, The Hotline offers brief crisis intervention, safety planning, emotional support, resources, and referrals to community programs. It informs and assists adult and youth survivors of relationship abuse, their family and household members, and others affected by violence to build healthy, safe, and supportive communities and families. Through its *love is respect* project, The Hotline provides youth and young adults with services focused on promoting healthy relationships and preventing patterns of abuse. The framework presented later in this brief pertains to The Hotline, including its *love is respect* project.

1.3 Organization of Brief

This brief begins with an overview of the methodology, including the project research questions and the multi-method approach used to address them. Next, we present the findings from the literature review and analysis of chat transcripts and Advocate⁷ interviews. Then, we discuss group concept mapping (GCM) activities and present the results of those data collection efforts. Afterward, we explain our process for developing the theoretical framework and share our conclusions as well as limitations and strengths of the study. Finally, we offer recommendations for next steps.

2. Overview of Methodology

In this section, we list the research questions identified for the third phase of the SAF-T study. We then provide an overview of the multi-method approach used to address these research questions and to develop the family/friends theoretical framework.

2.1 Research Questions

With input from ACF, The Hotline, and the SAF-T Project expert panel,⁸ we identified six research questions to guide the third phase of the project. They are as follows:

1. How well do existing behavior change theories apply to family/friends who contact The Hotline and *love is respect*?
2. What is an appropriate theoretical framework that describes the role of family/friends, assesses their needs, and gives them relevant information?
3. How does this framework align with or differ from that of the victim/survivor?
4. How does this framework reflect the differential use of digital services⁹ and the unique aspects of providing services by text or chat?
5. What are the key components of an effective intervention for supporting the family/friends of someone affected by relationship abuse?
6. What are the desired outcomes of services provided to family/friends?

⁶ National Domestic Violence Hotline. (2021). *History: Looking back to inform the future*. Retrieved from <https://www.thehotline.org/about/history/>

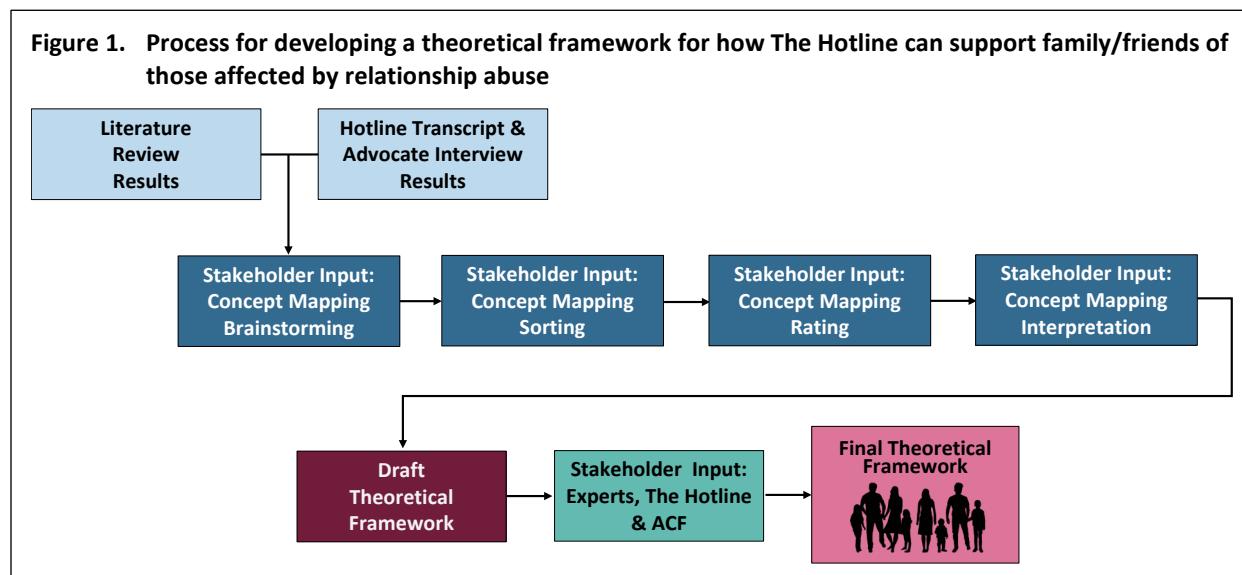
⁷ "Advocate" is the job title for The Hotline staff who provide crisis intervention and other services to individuals who contact The Hotline via telephone, online chat, or text.

⁸ The panel included seven practitioners and academics with varying perspectives on behavior change theories; experience in applying behavior change theories to domestic violence within well-being and health promotion frameworks; and expertise with underserved populations, domestic violence, dating violence, youth-based hotlines, and the subgroup of family/friends of victims/survivors.

⁹ "Digital services" are advocacy services provided by The Hotline via on-line chat and text messaging.

2.2 Multi-method Approach

Similar to the approach implemented in phase one, we used multiple methods in our process for developing the family/friends theoretical framework for phase three. We began by conducting a literature review guided in part by our first research question. We then analyzed de-identified chat transcripts from The Hotline and conducted interviews of Advocates from The Hotline.¹⁰ As illustrated in Figure 1, results from the literature review and analyses of chat transcripts and Advocate interviews contributed to the first of four steps of the GCM process. Results from the GCM activities informed the development of a draft theoretical framework. Then, with input from our panel of experts, The Hotline, and ACF, we finalized the family/friends framework. We implemented this stakeholder-informed process, which included GCM and engagement of our expert panel, to address the remaining five research questions.



3. Literature Review

As part of the literature review, we considered the applicability of behavior change theories and other theoretical frameworks to the work of The Hotline as it applied to family/friends. We identified conceptual factors that might inform the creation of a new framework that applies to family/friends.

Our search strategy employed multiple databases (i.e., PubMed, PsycINFO, Sociological Abstracts, Applied Social Science Index and Abstracts, ERIC, and Education Collection). We did not apply any date limitations to the database searches. We used Reference Manager to compile, organize, and prioritize abstracts. To identify the most relevant published research, we reviewed 206 abstracts from searches on relationship abuse-related help-giving, help-seeking, informal networks, social support, dating violence, and secondary trauma. We initially focused on help-giving and related experiences of family/friends in the context of intimate partner or dating violence, but there were few studies. We then expanded the review to consider literature on how victims/survivors of intimate partner violence and dating violence

¹⁰ Although The Hotline does not collect or store personally identifiable information, The Hotline staff reviewed all transcripts before sharing them with the research team to ensure contactors had not provided any information that could potentially identify them.

characterize the involvement of family/friends. We excluded abstracts on newspaper articles, commentaries, and unrelated or peripheral topics (e.g., non-partner sexual assault, help-giving via formal networks, child abuse, bystander training evaluations).

Through our review of abstracts we identified 87 articles, which we retrieved for full-text review. Next, we excluded references that focused mainly on victims/survivors' disclosure of abuse to family/friends without examining family/friends' involvement after disclosure. This process resulted in 52 peer-reviewed journal articles for final inclusion. We shared our process and list of identified literature with our expert panel and reviewed three additional articles recommended by our expert panel.

Of the 55 articles, only 13 represented the perspective of family/friends. The remaining 42 articles focused on research from the perspective of victims/survivors regarding their interactions with family/friends during relationship abuse experiences. Fourteen were theory-focused articles that centered on victims/survivors and their experiences with family/friends in the context of help-seeking, informal networks and social support. The Transtheoretical Model (Stages of Change Model), Social Ecological Model; Main Effects, Moderator, and Mediational Models of Social Support; and Social Capital Framework were among the 15 theories we identified. Overall, we found that elements of each theory captured the significance of family/friends as members of the informal network and social support system of victims/survivors. However, these theories did not seem to fully explain how The Hotline can effectively serve family/friends and facilitate their appropriate support of victims/survivors.

Our full review of the 55 articles also revealed that family/friends often provide emotional and instrumental support as they journey alongside victims/survivors. Yet, in some cases, they intentionally or unintentionally render unhelpful responses as they become aware of and involved in relationship abuse scenarios. Also, family/friends may experience victimization, secondary trauma, and other adverse effects as a result of their involvement. In sum, three overarching themes emerged. These include: (1) helpful involvement of family/friends with victims/survivors (e.g., validation of feelings, emotional support, encouragement to seek formal support);¹¹ (2) unhelpful involvement of family/friends with victims/survivors (e.g., judgmental language or attitude, normalizing abusive behavior, offering inappropriate advice);¹² and (3) consequences of involvement for family/friends (e.g., experiencing guilt, fear, anxiety, actual or threatened harm; or feeling sad, depressed, helpless).¹³

¹¹ For example, see (1) Latta, R. & Goodman, L. A. (2011). Intervening in partner violence against women: A grounded theory exploration of informal network members' experiences. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 39(7), 973-1023; and (2) Stylianou, A. M., Counselman-Carpenter, E., & Redcay, A. (2018). "My sister is the one that made me stay above water": How social supports are maintained and strained when survivors of intimate partner violence reside in emergency shelter programs. *Journal of interpersonal violence*, 0886260518816320.

¹² For example, see (1) Morrison, K. E., Luchok, K. J., Richter, D. L., & Parra-Medina, D. (2006). Factors influencing help-seeking from informal networks among African American victims of intimate partner violence. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 21(11), 1493-1511; and (2) Trotter, J. L., & Allen, N. E. (2009). The good, the bad, and the ugly: Domestic violence survivors' experiences with their informal social networks. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 43, 221-231.

¹³ For example, see (1) Gregory, A. C. (2017). 'The edge to him was really, really nasty': abusive tactics used against informal supporters of domestic violence survivors. *Journal of Gender-Based Violence*, 1(1), 61-77; (2) Gregory, A. C., Feder, G., Taket, A., & Williamson, E. (2017). Qualitative study to explore the health and well-being impacts on adults providing informal support to female domestic violence survivors. *BMJ Open*. doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2016-014511; and (3) Gregory, A. C., Taylor, A., Pitt, K., Feder, G., & Williamson, E. (2019) "...the forgotten heroes": A qualitative study exploring how friends and family members of DV survivors use domestic violence helplines. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 1-27.

4. Chat Transcripts

In phase one, when developing the theoretical framework for victims/survivors, we received de-identified chat transcripts from The Hotline that included chats from both The Hotline as well as *love is respect*. These chats covered six non-consecutive days spanning from January to May of 2015. We used NVivo qualitative software to analyze the 528 chat transcripts we received. Initial queries yielded 359 chats with references to family and/or friends. Our initial review of these chats yielded 23 chats initiated by a family member of victims/survivors and 25 chats initiated by friends; the remaining 311 were initiated by victims/survivors and therefore excluded from the analysis.

Seven themes emerged from our analysis. We have listed them below in order of frequency in which each occurred across chat transcripts:

- Family/friend indicates that victim/survivor is reluctant to seek help/leave (e.g., victim/survivor is secretive about abuse, seems to be under control of partner or normalizes abuse, afraid of losing custody of children),
- Family/friend initiates request for specific help for victim/survivor (e.g., immediate safety advice/plan or shelter/housing),
- Family/friend indicates relationship abuse also involves addiction and/or mental health issues of perpetrator or victim/survivor,
- Family/friend needs help/self-care (e.g., family or friend is receiving help/self-care or should receive help/self-care),
- Victim/survivor is already receiving some form of assistance for housing, counseling or a restraining order,
- Family/friend indicates relationship abuse also involves perpetrator's abuse of victim/survivor's child(ren), and
- Family/friend has experienced abuse by the same perpetrator.

5. Interviews with Hotline Advocates

Data gathered from the literature review and analysis of chat transcripts led to the development of a semi-structured interview protocol. Following approval from Westat's institutional review board (IRB), we selected respondents from a list of Advocates provided by The Hotline and actively recruited to ensure representation across a variety of characteristics (i.e., phone or chat/text, shift, bilingualism, gender, and years of service). Two team members conducted nine interviews with Hotline Advocates (five phone and four digital Advocates) in April and May 2020 and audio-recorded interviews with permission from respondents. After transcribing interviews, we imported the transcripts into NVivo to facilitate analysis.

Thematic content analysis identified a variety of reasons why family/friends contacted The Hotline or *love is respect*, including to learn more about abuse and to identify resources and ways to help their loved ones. According to respondents, The Hotline can meet the needs of family/friends by listening and letting them know they are not alone, validating their experiences, educating them about relationship abuse, providing information and resources, and empowering them as helpers. Respondents also indicated that family/friends can best

support victims/survivors by remaining supportive, compassionate, and nonjudgmental and by sharing information without forcing them to make decisions.

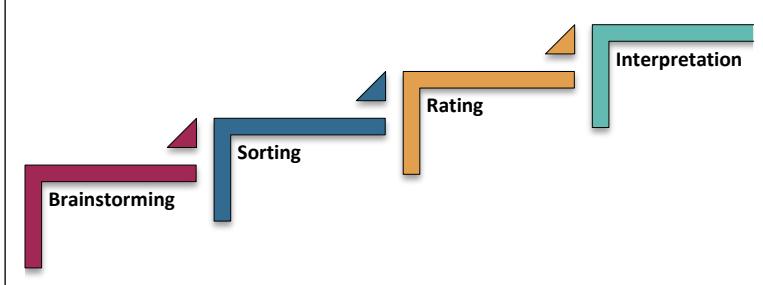
6. Group Concept Mapping (GCM)

GCM is a participatory research method that helps users develop a conceptual framework summarizing participants' views on a specific topic or aspects of a topic.¹⁴ GCM uses a structured data collection approach, which allows for collection of a wide range of participant-generated ideas and applications of quantitative analytic tools (e.g., multidimensional scaling and hierarchical cluster analysis). The results of GCM are several visuals that present an organized combination of themes. Steps in the process include planning, data collection, and utilization.¹⁵

As illustrated in Figure 2, there are four steps in the GCM process that build upon one another. We chose GCM as a methodology for developing the family/friends theoretical framework for several reasons. GCM is used to solicit input from key stakeholders, allows participants to share ideas in their own words,

identifies collective thinking about a topic and provides structure for organizing topics into themes, and identifies what participants believe to be the most important and useful. Overall, data collected via GCM is stakeholder driven, rather than researcher driven.

Figure 2. Four steps of group concept mapping



Methodologically, there are several benefits to using GCM. First, GCM uses a rigorous research approach, but provides flexible design options.¹⁶ In addition, it blends qualitative and quantitative methods and facilitates incorporation of multiple participants' perspectives. Finally, it allows for the creation of a theoretical framework that is multi-purpose, and moves from planning to implementation, through interpretation, and utilization. For this study, we conducted GCM in a virtual online environment using Concept Systems' *groupwisdom™* software.

6.1 GCM Target Population

The target population for this study included stakeholders representing a range of constituent groups relevant to The Hotline's work with family/friends of victims/survivors. We included five categories of stakeholders: (1) victims/survivors, (2) family members of victims/survivors, (3) friends of victims/survivors, (4) The Hotline staff, specifically with experience with

¹⁴ Trochim, W. (1989). An introduction to concept mapping for planning and evaluation. *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 12(1), 1-16.

¹⁵ Kane, M., & Rosas, S. (2018). Conversations about group concept mapping: Applications, examples, and enhancements. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

¹⁶ For example, data can be collected on a tablet, smart phone, laptop computer, or on paper forms.

family/friends, and (5) domestic violence (DV) practitioners who work with families/friends and victims/survivors.¹⁷

6.2 GCM Sampling

We employed a purposive sampling approach, leading to a snowball or chain sampling approach to recruit respondents.¹⁸ In light of the diversity among stakeholder groups as well as the difficulty in accessing some of these populations (e.g., family/friends of victims/survivors), we designed recruitment strategies tailored to accommodate these differences and to increase our chances of recruiting the desired number of respondents. In addition, our recruitment strategy provided for a “confidential route” and an “anonymous route.” These two routes are summarized in the sections that follow.

Confidential Route. We recruited stakeholders within targeted organizations with DV practitioners and implemented snowball sampling to recruit stakeholders within their respective personal and professional networks. We sent an introductory email to invite stakeholders to participate in online GCM activities and asked them to forward the email to other people in their networks who met the criteria for stakeholder participation (e.g., other DV practitioners, family and friends of victims/survivors who are not in crisis). In addition, The Hotline management staff provided us with a list of names and email addresses for all Advocates currently employed by The Hotline. We sent each Advocate an introductory email inviting them to participate in brainstorming activities as well as invitation emails to participate in subsequent sorting and rating GCM activities.

Anonymous Route. We designed the anonymous route to recruit respondents from the remaining three stakeholder groups (i.e., victims/survivors, family of victims/survivors, and friends of victims/survivors) who are users or “contactors” of The Hotline. Contactors who represented any of these three groups and who were not in crisis at the time of contact were asked toward the end of their text/chat/phone session if they would like to participate anonymously in a GCM activity. Advocates used their judgement to determine whether a contactor was in crisis and if it was appropriate to invite a contactor to participate in the project. Contactors who were not in crisis and agreed to participate were provided a link to connect to the GCM project website. These participants remained anonymous and therefore did not receive email reminders regarding future participation. However, at the end of each GCM activity, anonymous participants received a thank you message, which included an invitation and instructions to participate in subsequent GCM activities.

6.3 GCM Data Collection

Data collection activities began in September 2020 and continued through the end of December 2020. We describe the details of each activity below.

Brainstorming (September 2020). Fifty-two stakeholders logged onto the online GCM system that invited participants to complete the following focus prompt as many times as they liked: “I

¹⁷ Broadly, DV practitioners could include staff of shelters, local or state hotlines, victim services, individual therapy/family counseling services, Family Justice Centers, or domestic violence service organizations providing direct services to victims/survivors and family/friends of victims/survivors.

¹⁸ Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications.

think one way The Hotline can support family or friends who contact The Hotline is..." Participants added to a pre-populated list of 40 unique statements derived from the literature review, interviews with Advocates, and chat transcripts. This brainstorming activity generated 67 additional statements. After combining these with the initial 40, splitting apart statements expressing compound ideas, and removing duplicates, we ended up with 62 unique statements.

Sorting (October–November 2020). Participants sorted the 62 statements into categories or "piles" that made sense to them and then named each pile representing the common theme of the statements included in the pile. This resulted in 38 sorts.

Rating (October–November 2020). Participants rated the 62 statements on the importance and usefulness of each using a 5-point Likert scale.¹⁹ Results yielded 52 importance ratings and 47 usefulness ratings.

Sorting/rating participation by stakeholder group. We analyzed stakeholder group based on two questions.²⁰ Of the 66 individuals who participated in sorting/rating activities, 95 percent identified their stakeholder group. Due to small numbers and overlap between the groups, we went through a step-by-step process to identify the largest possible group of family/friends who did not also have Hotline staff or victim/survivor experience. The overlap between the two questions resulted in 24 combinations of responses describing the experiences of participants from among five groups (i.e., family, friend, victim/survivor, Hotline, and practitioner). First, we identified the largest group in which participants selected only one choice, which was the practitioner-only group with 14 participants. Next, we selected the 15 participants who indicated they worked at The Hotline.²¹ Then, we selected 22 participants with victim/survivor experience.²² Finally, we were left with 12 participants who identified as a family and/or friend, but had no Hotline staff or victim/survivor experience.²³ Three respondents did not identify a stakeholder group. Figure 3 shows the percent of GCM sorting/rating participants by stakeholder group.

¹⁹ The importance rating asked participants to rate each statement on how important they felt it was in supporting family/friends who contact The Hotline using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1=not important to 5=extremely important. The usefulness rating asked participants to rate each statement on how useful they felt it was in supporting family/friends who contact The Hotline using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1=not useful to 5=extremely useful.

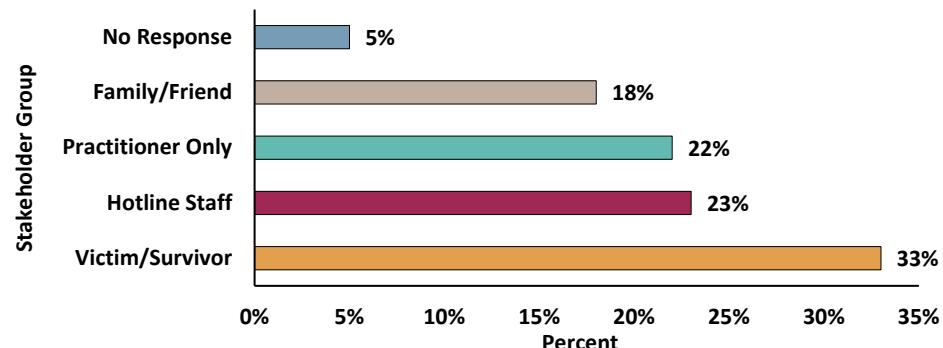
²⁰ The first question was, "I identify as a member of the following group(s) [check all that apply]." The second question was, "I was recruited to participate in this study primarily because I am a member of the following group [please select just one]."

²¹ Participants in The Hotline group may have also identified as a victim/survivor, practitioner, family or friend.

²² Participants in the victim/survivor group may have also identified as a practitioner, family, or friend, but not as a staff member of The Hotline.

²³ Some participants in the family/friend group also identified as a practitioner.

Figure 3. Percent of GCM Sorting/Rating Participants by Stakeholder Group (n=66)



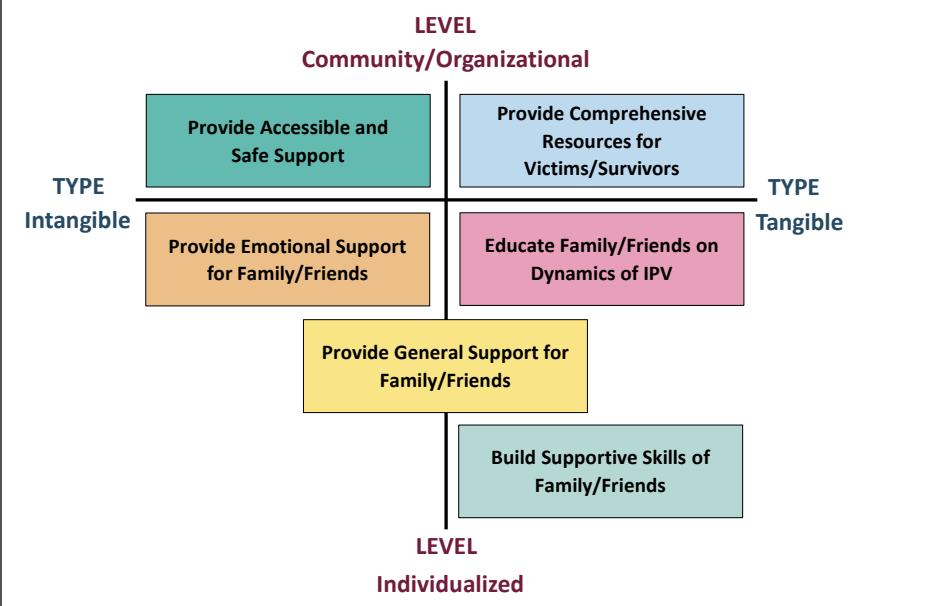
Interpretation. We conducted four interpretation sessions with GCM participants in January and February 2021. In these interpretation sessions we presented preliminary results of the GCM data analysis, which included concept maps (i.e., visual depiction of how ideas were organized into six themes), proposed theme names, and how importance and usefulness ratings related to the themes. Participation was voluntary and completely anonymous to promote open and honest informal discussions. We invited participants to share feedback throughout each presentation as much, or as little, as they liked. A total of 12 individuals participated across all sessions.

6.4 GCM Analysis and Findings

The project's two GCM experts analyzed the data using multidimensional scaling and cluster analysis via the *groupwisdom™* Concept Mapping software. GCM findings have four levels: (1) statements generated directly from participants through brainstorming, (2) clusters representing larger themes derived from statement piles or "clusters," (3) four anchors representing the next level of themes, and (4) a two-dimensional structure representing the largest or overarching themes from the data. First, the analytic process grouped the 62 statements from brainstorming into six themes.

Figure 4 illustrates each level of the GCM results. The two dimensions represented here encompass how support can be understood as having both "type" and "level." Figure 4 further shows how the intersection of Level of Support and Type of Support forms the four anchors, representing the endpoints of each dimension's spectrum. Level of Support ranged from the individualized to the community/ organizational level of support. Type of support ranged from intangible to tangible support. The two-dimensional structure and four anchors help us better understand how cluster themes relate to one another and identify how different areas of the map illustrate different themes. Collectively, the two dimensions, four anchors, and six themes reveal the multifaceted ways that The Hotline can support family and friends of victims/survivors of relationship abuse.

Figure 4. Level and Type of Support The Hotline Can Provide to Family/Friends



The six themes formed the foundation of the theoretical framework. See Figure 5 for a listing of the six key themes and the number of statements with examples that make up each theme.

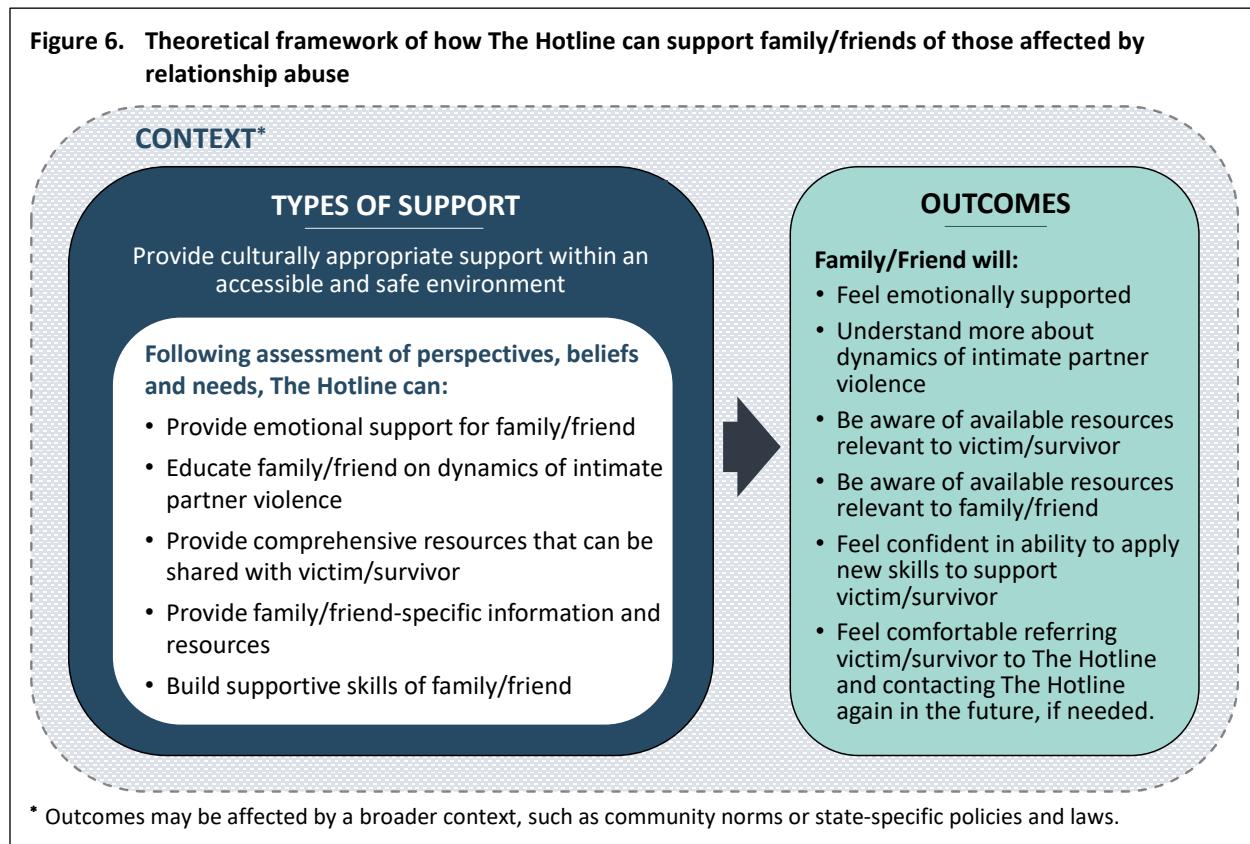
Figure 5. Six themes stakeholders identified as important and useful ways The Hotline can support family/friends of those affected by relationship abuse*

Provide comprehensive resources for victims/survivors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examples include up-to-date connections and information about local resources, and where to get legal advice (<i>10 statements</i>)
Provide accessible and safe support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examples include The Hotline being available 24 hours a day and having staff available who speak multiple languages (<i>6 statements</i>)
Provide general support for family/friends
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examples include providing help with resources that family/friends may need for themselves and connecting family and friends to counseling services for themselves (<i>4 statements</i>)
Provide emotional support for family/friends
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examples include helping family/friends put the situation in perspective, letting family/friends know they are not alone, and empowering family/friends as helpers (<i>16 statements</i>)
Educate family/friends on dynamics of intimate partner violence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examples include encouraging family/friends to emphasize safety of the victim/survivor, explaining consequences of involvement, and helping family and friends avoid victim blaming (<i>16 statements</i>)
Build supportive skills of family/friends
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examples include helping family/friends learn to listen to the survivor, and encouraging family/friends to continue supporting victims/survivors in whatever they decide (<i>10 statements</i>)

* Theme labels and examples reflect wording provided by GCM participants.

7. Theoretical Framework Development

Drawing from the results of the GCM activities, we created a draft theoretical framework and presented it during an expert panel meeting in March 2021. We refined the family/friend theoretical framework following discussions at the expert panel meeting and follow-up correspondence with the expert panel, The Hotline staff, and ACF. The final family/friends theoretical framework depicted in Figure 6 reflects the different **Types of Support** that The Hotline can provide to family/friends of those affected by relationship abuse. It acknowledges not only that family/friends may be seeking information and resources to support the victim/survivor, but also that they may be in need of support, skill-building, and education themselves.



Providing **culturally appropriate support in an accessible and safe environment** is a key overarching theme in the framework. This theme includes delivering 24/7 support in the primary language of the family/friend, adapting advice to each person's specific circumstances, providing a safe place for those affected by intimate partner violence to reach out, and maintaining trust and communication. Nested within this overarching theme are additional **Types of Support** The Hotline can provide to family/friends. The Hotline's assessment of perspectives, beliefs and needs is an essential foundation needed to tailor the support provided to family/friends. Key elements of support include:

- **Providing emotional support for family/friend** highlights the need for addressing emotional needs of the family/friend throughout the interaction (e.g., helping family/friend put the situation in perspective, letting family/friend know they are not alone in helping victim/survivor),

- ***Educating family/friend on dynamics of intimate partner violence*** focuses on helping the family/friend understand intimate partner violence to provide appropriate support to the victim/survivor (e.g., encouraging family/friend to emphasize safety of the victim/survivor, helping family/friend avoid victim blaming),
- ***Providing comprehensive resources that can be shared with victim/survivor*** includes offering information on tangible resources family/friends can offer to support victims/survivors (e.g., providing up-to-date connections and information about local resources and where to get legal advice, providing help with practical needs of victims/survivors, such as housing, transportation, childcare, financial help, food or clothing),
- ***Providing family/friend-specific information and resources*** emphasizes the importance of assistance that directly addresses the needs of family/friends (e.g., providing help with resources that family/friends may need for themselves, connecting family/friends to counseling services for themselves), and
- ***Building supportive skills of family/friend*** involves helping family/friends learn how to provide appropriate support to the victim/survivor (e.g., encouraging family/friend to continue supporting victim/survivor in whatever they decide, encouraging family/friend to be nonjudgmental toward the victim/survivor).

An arrow leading from Types of Support points to desired **Outcomes** of a family/friend interaction with The Hotline. As desired outcomes, the family/friend will feel emotionally supported, understand more about dynamics of intimate partner violence, be aware of available resources relevant to the victim/survivor, be aware of available resources relevant to the family/friend, feel confident in their ability to apply new skills to support the victim/survivor, and feel comfortable referring the victim/survivor to The Hotline and/or contacting The Hotline again in the future, if needed. Lastly, outcomes of a family/friend interaction with The Hotline may be affected by a broader **Context**, such as community norms or state-specific policies and laws. The figure displays a shaded background that encompasses all the framework components to illustrate the role of context in achieving desired outcomes.

8. Conclusion

The findings from our literature review, results of GCM activities, and input from our expert panel and other stakeholders indicate that family/friends' needs are unique and thus justify a separate framework. Five types of support were identified within a safe and accessible environment: emotional support for family/friends, educating family/friend on dynamics of intimate partner violence, building supportive skills of family/friends, providing family/friend-specific information and resources, and providing comprehensive resources for victims/survivors. Unlike the survivor-centered theoretical framework, the family/friends framework reflects two types of potential outcomes: those specific to the survivor and outcomes specific to the family/friend.

8.1 Limitations

There are limitations to our theoretical and stakeholder-informed approach for framework development. For example, family/friends were difficult to recruit, in part, because they contact The Hotline less often than victims/survivors, and relationship abuse is a sensitive topic

that few may be willing to openly discuss. Also, the COVID-19 pandemic likely impacted recruitment, resulting in smaller than planned sample sizes across stakeholder groups. In addition, because of the overlap across stakeholder groups, we were unable tease out perspectives unique to each group. Other limitations related to the sample included an over-representation of the provider stakeholder group and an insufficient sample size to assess digital/phone differences. Furthermore, brainstorming may not have elicited all possible relevant ideas in response to the focus prompt although inclusion of results from the literature review and analysis of Hotline transcripts and interviews reduced the likelihood of such gaps. Finally, as with any online rating survey, participants may not have fully read each statement prior to rating it.

8.2 Strengths

There are also strengths to our theoretical and stakeholder-informed approach for framework development. To begin, we employed multiple methods in an iterative process with ongoing stakeholder engagement. Together, results from the literature review and analysis of chat transcripts and Advocate interviews provided rich content for GCM activities. In addition, a diverse group of stakeholders (i.e., family, friends, victims/survivors, The Hotline, and other DV practitioners) participated in the brainstorming, sorting, rating, and interpretation steps of concept mapping, which yielded key themes that became the foundation for the initial family/friend theoretical framework. To further strengthen our approach, we collaborated with and requested feedback from The Hotline, ACF, and expert panel members to refine the family/friend theoretical framework.

8.3 Recommendations

After careful consideration of study findings and input from the expert panel, The Hotline, and ACF, we offer the following recommendations to decision makers regarding next steps:

- Conduct focus groups with family/friends from various cultural backgrounds to elicit additional perspectives on the framework and ensure it is culturally appropriate.
- Develop performance measures based on the family/friends framework, and map existing data collected by The Hotline to performance measures (or collect new data if no data exist).
 - Design a strategy to observe or measure each type of support and each outcome for The Hotline staff to complete based on interactions with contactors and for contactors to complete anonymously.
 - Pilot test the strategy to determine how well the performance measures assess services provided by The Hotline.
 - Establish a standardized quarterly or bi-annual process for monitoring performance once a performance measurement strategy has been pilot-tested and revised based on feedback.
- Review the family/friends framework to assess and revise as needed based on continuous feedback of the performance measurement strategy.

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