



turn
AROUND

the first place to turn

No Matter What:

Evolving to Meet
Survivors' Needs During
the Covid 19 Pandemic



For more than 40 years,
TurnAround has provided
services to survivors of
sexual and domestic
violence in the metropolitan
Baltimore area. Our
programs include a
24/7/365 hotline, mental
health counseling,
legal referrals, court
accompaniment, crisis
shelter assistance,
case management,
and more.



A "second, silent pandemic"¹ of sexual violence and abuse emerged during COVID-19 quarantines, lock-downs, and stay-at-home orders.

We had to move quickly to meet the increased needs in our communities as a result of the pandemic. We were also deeply committed to meeting critical public health requirements. As the pandemic changed the world, we changed, too. We changed to meet survivors' needs, as we have done for the last 40 years.

We did more with less. We immediately pivoted to new service delivery models, re-imagined our community engagement program, leveraged technology to be more accessible to survivors, and expanded our capacity to provide mental health counseling.



**We needed to be there for survivors.
No matter what.**

¹ "A Second, Silent Pandemic: Sexual Violence in the time of COVID-19"; <http://info.primarycare.hms.harvard.edu/review/sexual-violence-and-covid>; Harvard Medical School Primary Care Review



Re-imagining Community Engagement and Service Delivery

We have long known that while some survivors will come to us for services, many may not even know we exist.

To become more visible, and more trusted, within the communities we serve, we sought new avenues to deliver both educational programming and direct services on-site in strategically relevant locations.

One component of our new, hybrid community engagement and direct services model is our programming with the Boys and Girls Clubs of Baltimore.

With the Boys and Girls Clubs, we hold educational sessions about sexual abuse awareness and prevention led by one of our Community Educators, and provide on-site case management support staff to assist kids and their caregivers.

Deploying case managers to both lead the programming and meet with children at the Clubs enables us to:

- educate children in the community
- provide children with the opportunity to disclose if they need an adult to safely talk to.

Our next steps for the Boys and Girls Club programs include refining and expanding our case management and community education resources to help continue to hone and scale our programming for the greatest possible reach and visibility.

Ensuring a Continuum of Care

Over many decades of experience working with survivors and providing educational programming, we've learned that there is no way to anticipate when a survivor may disclose their trauma. Our role is to be ready when they are.

One way we've ensured our readiness to provide care is by restructuring our Community Engagement role. Today, our community engagement takes the shape of outreach led by our Outreach Advocates who are trained to educate and do a client intake on the spot should a client disclose.



This more streamlined and immediate process has resulted in the elimination of one barrier to intake – the gap between disclosure and intake – when we “lose” our clients due to fear, shame, or external pressures to not return for counseling or care.

This hybrid Advocate and Engagement role is working.

We received a grant through the Maryland Department of Health to conduct outreach to LGBTQIA+ college students specifically because of our uniquely responsive approach and ability to provide on-the-spot services.

“A more streamlined and immediate process to reduce the time between disclosure and intake means more of our clients don't have to wait to start to receive care.”

Leveraging Technology in New Ways

**Our crisis hotline operates 24/7,
365 days per year.**

The ubiquity of mobile phones means that survivors have increased ability to connect with us. But what happens when privacy disappears due to pandemic lock-down protocols forcing people into close quarters?

To provide a channel for communication to individuals under stay-at-home orders with their abusers, we developed a text message-based version of our hotline. It requires no verbal communication to initiate, engage in a dialogue, and request intake or crisis services.

Our hotline call volume doubled during the pandemic. Pre-pandemic, our average annual call volume was approximately 1,500 calls. In 2021, it was over 3,000, with more coming in through our non-crisis phone lines.

Crisis counseling and shelter calls soared during the pandemic, with over 1,200 shelter calls

in 2021 alone. Most clients seeking shelter were parents to young children, and stays were averaging two weeks, especially at the height of lockdown when shelters were closing, and family and friends were not always able to safely provide a place to stay.



Our text platform, designed to reach people who may not have received care if they could not text to get in touch with us, continues to grow in reach.

Evolving Service Models to Meet Demands

One immediate result of the pandemic was a spike in calls to our 24-hour crisis hotline.

The hotline is one of our major channels for intake and engagement with survivors. Ensuring the hotline was staffed appropriately and that our hotline representatives can serve survivors at their best required increased training, staffing, and management.

With the increase in calls came an increase in clients. The need for our clinicians has never been greater. As a non-profit that also provides direct clinical services, we must closely monitor our clinicians' caseloads to prevent burnout.



The best practice is for clinicians to have no more than 24 cases in their caseload. TurnAround's clinical team of five to six therapists handles an average of 500 cases a year.

The pandemic spike necessitated finding additional, flexible, "on-demand" clinical support to service our growing number of clients. For the first time, we engaged with a contracted on-call crisis counselor to help field the overflow of calls for crisis sessions over the phone, as well as shelter assessments for emergency shelter placement as needed.

By relieving the caseload burden on our clinicians, we were also able to expand our level of capability to serve the growing need for services in our communities.

Over 40 years ago, we promised survivors in our communities that we would be there for them, no matter what.

None of us ever imagined that “no matter what” could mean an over-two-year global pandemic marked by political upheaval, violent and public acts of racism, and **a significant increase in reported instances of rape, sexual assault, domestic partner and intimate partner violence.**

Evolving to ensure responsiveness to the communities’ changing needs is in our DNA.

Innovations in our capabilities and service delivery models based on best practices, our experience with local communities, and our expertise in caring for survivors were the result of the tremendous need caused by the pandemic.

We’ll carry these innovative practices forward into the future, and continue to place innovation at the heart of our approach to providing services, in years to come. Pandemic or not.

No matter what.



TurnAround, Inc., is a non-profit organization that relies on our network of ambassadors to spread the word in their communities about our services, grants and donations to operate.

Supporting us is as easy as visiting our website at www.turnaroundinc.org and signing up to learn more about our programs.

We believe all survivors and base our services on the core values of our mission:

Community

We have been part of the Baltimore community for over 40 years. We are the dedicated rape crisis center for Baltimore City and Baltimore County.

Empathy

We serve all ages, genders, and work with survivors at any point in their journey after trauma.

Empowerment

We are dedicated to the individual's wellbeing and community wellbeing. Changing the system for survivors means shifting community awareness, changing community response, and impacting public policy.

