



St. Jude House Survivor Engagement and Leadership Focus Group

Overview: ICADV created an (Anti) Loneliness Cohort in February of 2022. The inspiration came from a journal article published by Goodman and Epstein, “Loneliness and COVID-19 Pandemic: Implications for Intimate Partner Violence Survivors”. This article really caught our attention and challenged us to think about what we are doing to connect survivors in meaningful ways to help alleviate their feelings of loneliness. St. Jude House volunteered to facilitate a focus group with assistance and support from ICADV, and had 6 survivors participate in a listening session in June of 2022.

Successes: The focus group itself was a tremendous success as the survivors we spoke with described their eagerness to share their experiences and wisdom to create additional safe space for more survivors to come forward. Reflection from their own experiences of isolation and loneliness created much discussion and multiple ranges of support that could support survivors’ needs. We will have first ever Survivor Council at St. Jude House, as this was one of our talking points during the listening session. Lastly, the enthusiasm of the survivors and willingness to participate moving forward was overwhelming and the excitement was mutual.

Challenges: We have not experienced many challenges at this point as we are still in the development process. We anticipate allocating the proper amount of time and identifying the support strategies that will be most meaningful, will be our most significant challenges.

How we pay for it: We discussed the findings with our Board of Directors at our last meeting and there was much conversation discussed. We feel we will be able to write a grant or approach a funder for startup costs, once we have identified what are initial costs will be. It was nice to compensate the survivors who participated with gift cards for their time.

For more information: Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions or concerns regarding our experiences thus far. Contact Ryan Elinkowski by email or phone:
relinkowski@stjudehouse.org

219-662-7066 ext.312