

# < HER WAY / >

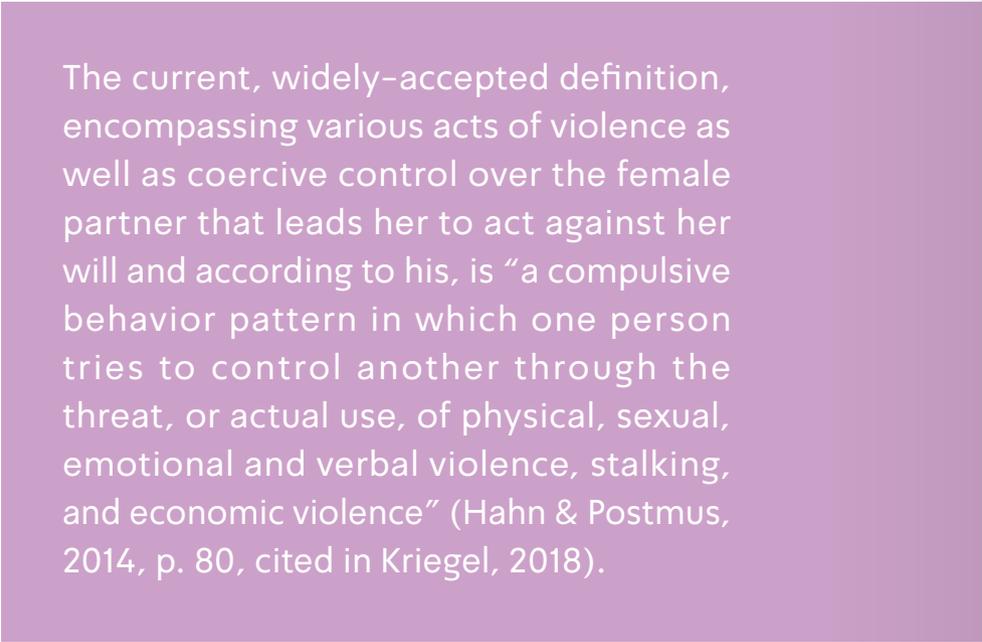
< Program Guide / >

# Introduction



Domestic violence in general and violence against female partners in particular is a worrying, dangerous and widespread phenomenon in Israel and the world. According to the 2021 Report of the Knesset Research and Information Center, in the years 2016-2020, 122 women were murdered in Israel, approximately 40 percent of them (48 women) by their spouses or ex-spouses. In 2020, the Israel Police opened 20,326 cases concerning violence between spouses (physical violence and threats); in the vast majority of cases (87 percent), the victim was a woman. In 2020, 10,338 families were treated in domestic violence treatment centers. In 2020, 723 women resided in shelters, compared to 653 in 2019 – an increase of 11 percent.

According to Kriegel (2018), an analysis of the data collected about the phenomenon of domestic violence in general and inter-spousal violence in particular shows that its dimensions are broader still – reports about it are partial and it is a phenomenon that is difficult to quantify and measure. Indeed, according to data from the United Nations and World Health Organization, less than 40 percent of women who experience violence seek help of any kind. In most countries where data is available on this issue, among women who do seek help, most turn to family members and friends rather than to official institutions such as health services and the police (the data shows that less than ten percent of those seeking help went to the police). In the State of Israel, too, it appears that the data presented above are severely deficient; according to estimates by the welfare authorities, in Israel today there are 200,000 women experiencing violence, and 600,000 children witnessing violence.



The current, widely-accepted definition, encompassing various acts of violence as well as coercive control over the female partner that leads her to act against her will and according to his, is “a compulsive behavior pattern in which one person tries to control another through the threat, or actual use, of physical, sexual, emotional and verbal violence, stalking, and economic violence” (Hahn & Postmus, 2014, p. 80, cited in Kriegel, 2018).



Many studies report that a large number of women who have integrated into the labor market earn relatively little and are forced to work part-time, which exacerbates their economic hardship (Brush, Meisel, et al., 2003; Moe & Bell, 2004; Staggs & Riger, 2005; Tolman & 2005; Wang, cited in Kriegel, 2018). Violent spouses act aggressively and deliberately to prevent their partners from pursuing personal and occupational development and to increase their economic dependence on them. They do this in several ways, including deliberate sabotage, economic control, and family, social and community isolation (Kriegel and Peled, 2016).

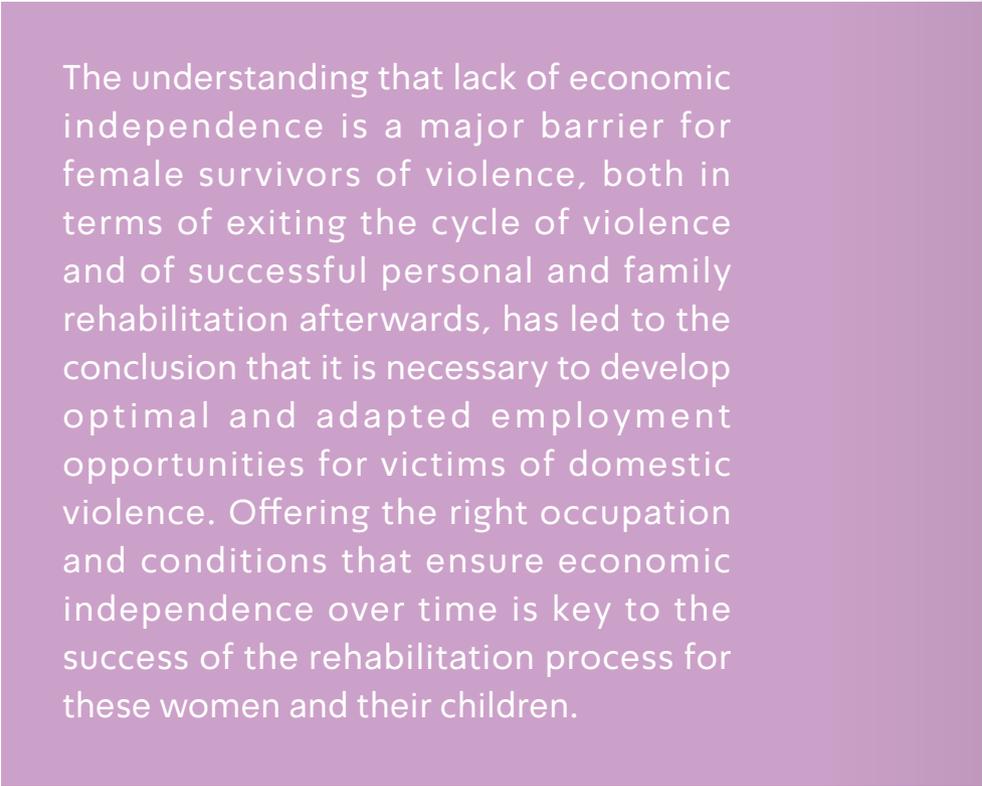
There is much evidence that economic dependence on a male breadwinner or on welfare payments is common among women suffering from domestic violence (Bornstein, 2006; Scott et al., 2002, quoted in Kriegel and Feld, 2016). At the same time, recent studies show that a woman’s belief in her own ability to obtain resources and financial security, combined with financial education, can lead to the economic empowerment of victims of domestic violence, which may in turn lead to their economic independence (Postmus et al., 2013; Hahn & Postmus, 2014, quoted in Kriegel and Feld, 2016). Yet, due to the violent relationships to which they are subjected, such women are forced to contend with unique and complex barriers on their path to achieving economic independence.

It is impossible to separate the processes for promoting economic independence from the emotional aspects associated with dealing with violence and its consequences, and it is necessary to ensure that the emotional needs of the victims of violence are continuously being met (Feld and Kriegel, 2016). Aspects of job quality such as independence, flexibility, salary and benefits may contribute positively to female survivors of violence's sense of self (Bermann-Graham & Lynch, 2004, cited in Kriegel, 2018). Researchers have emphasized work as a positive source of a woman's sense of identity in the context of domestic violence (Kriegel, 2018).

Most researchers view the acquisition of professional education and employment, which is often limited and disrupted by the violent spouse, as the most effective way of transitioning women from economic dependence to economic independence (Hall & Thomas, 2008, quoted in Peled and Krigel, 2016).

Since 2016, Israel's Ministry of Social Affairs has led a broad inter-ministerial committee comprising 12 government ministries, which has made recommendations to improve the treatment of domestic violence. One of the committee's recommendations referred to a woman's economic dependence as an obstacle that prevents her from starting a new, safe and stable life for herself and her children, given that in the absence of economic independence she will often return to the cycle of violence or avoid leaving it in the first place.

Women who survive violence often face difficulties in integrating into the workforce. These may be due to damage to their sense of competence and self-image, which are essential for those wishing to grow into new fields of employment; limitations that apply to some of them in terms of their freedom of movement and/or employment, which have led to a hiatus of several years in their working life; or the obligation to obtain their partner's approval for making career-related moves, which is often not given. At the same time, these women often face significant financial burdens due to the nature of their abusive relationships (debts registered in their name, relinquishment of joint assets in exchange for their partner's consent to separate, etc.), and, in some cases, live as a de facto single mother.



The understanding that lack of economic independence is a major barrier for female survivors of violence, both in terms of exiting the cycle of violence and of successful personal and family rehabilitation afterwards, has led to the conclusion that it is necessary to develop optimal and adapted employment opportunities for victims of domestic violence. Offering the right occupation and conditions that ensure economic independence over time is key to the success of the rehabilitation process for these women and their children.



Israel's high-tech sector is a thriving, ever-expanding industry that offers avenues for personal and professional growth and development. The government has defined goals for the expansion and diversification of the high-tech workforce in order to facilitate its growth and ensure that jobs are being created for Israeli workers rather than outsourced to foreign workers. To this end, the government is investing diverse resources, as are many employers.

While women make up about 50 percent of the population, less than a third of those employed in high-tech are female, and only about a fifth of them are employed in technological roles. However, in recent years there has been an upward trend in the recruitment of women into the high-tech industry due to the companies' understanding that gender diversity among employees is key to their organizational and financial success. The industry's working conditions may also suit the unique needs of single mothers; though demanding, high-tech jobs are often flexible and encourage creativity.

As in the rest of the world, Israel's workforce is undergoing significant changes. Research shows that in order to take a

significant part in the new labor market, specific skills, not just professional knowledge, are required. The twenty-first century skillset is characterized by the concept of lifelong learning, diverse avenues of employment, and self- and group-learning processes that instill capabilities in teamwork, entrepreneurship, creativity, and mobility throughout one's career.

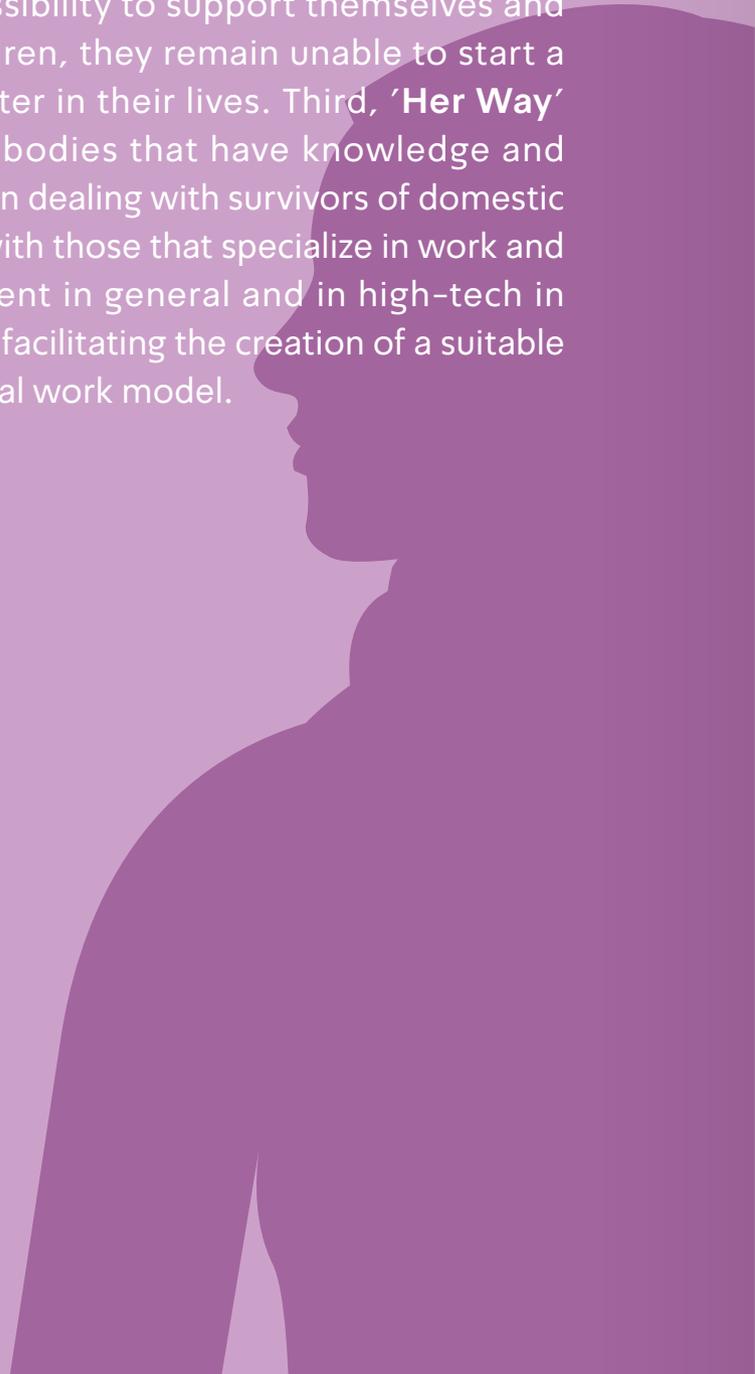


**'Bedarca'** (Hebrew for "Her Way") is a unique and groundbreaking program that aims to advance female survivors of violence towards optimal employment in the Israeli high-tech sector.

< **The program  
is unique  
in several  
aspects** />



First, it recognizes the high-tech industry as a potential employment arena for these women, a connection that is not self-evident. Second, it identifies and emphasizes practical and functional facets alongside therapeutic aspects, with a focus on livelihood, earning capacity, and the importance of a life of dignity. While these are factors that concern every person, they are even more pertinent for female survivors of violence, as without appropriate treatment and in the absence of the possibility to support themselves and their children, they remain unable to start a new chapter in their lives. Third, **'Her Way'** connects bodies that have knowledge and expertise in dealing with survivors of domestic violence with those that specialize in work and employment in general and in high-tech in particular, facilitating the creation of a suitable and optimal work model.



'Her Way' is designed for women receiving services from prevention and treatment centers, those nearing the end of their stay in a shelter, women in transitional apartments, and those in treatment or support programs for female survivors of violence. The program, which seeks to help them achieve financial independence in order to ensure their own safety and security and that of their children upon exiting the cycle of violence, provides women with unique professional training for lucrative technological professions, and then helps place them in jobs in the high-tech industry.

Entry into the high-tech world is sometimes seen as somewhat of a dream, with its competitive salaries and conditions, young and dynamic work environment, and image as an industry at the cutting edge of the Israeli workforce. A high-tech job may thus be perceived as distant, unattainable and inaccessible. Such impressions are intensified in the case of female survivors of domestic violence; their experience leaves them feeling oppressed, and their sense of competence and self-image damaged. For this reason, the program's model includes a system of emotional support and participation in a social community, alongside preparation for the workforce and professional training.

Integrating into high-tech will allow women who have survived domestic violence to live with dignity and overcome the considerable economic barriers they face. The program's whole is worth more than the sum of all its parts - the process that the women undergo allows them to experience themselves in a new way, restore the way in which they see themselves, discover the strengths inherent in themselves, and give and receive reinforcements that rebuild their sense of capability. Apart from the great personal benefits that the program offers, it is hugely valuable in building these women's capacity to integrate into the workforce and develop in a way that matches their abilities and aspirations.

The 'Her Way' program was conceived in light of the significant demand for workers in the high-tech industry, along with the belief that given appropriate training and guidance, it is possible to bring these women to an optimal starting point for employment in this field.

## < Overview />

This guide was written in order to turn the knowledge that has been accumulated into a regulated work model that may help other organizations in Israel and around the world run similar programs.

The guide outlines the main elements required to operate the 'Her Way' model. It covers the infrastructure necessary for set-up, organizational structure, guiding principles for working with the participants, measurable goals, and details of each of the steps involved in the process.

'Her Way' is an innovative pilot program for the state and civil society. As such, it is characterized by a process of "learning while doing," with the knowledge accumulated during its operation constantly updated. At the time of the writing of this guide, the program is still in its pilot phase. Therefore, it will be updated from time to time to include conclusions and insights gathered throughout the program's work with and for the women.

The first chapter details the infrastructure required to run the program. The second chapter presents its organizational structure. The third chapter deals with guiding principles for working with the women in the program, while the fourth chapter details the practical model and the various stages of the program. Finally, the fifth chapter provides appendices with various aids that may be used by those interested in adopting this model.



## Chapter 1: The program's infrastructure

### < Establishing an inter-sectorial partnership />

Three partners came together to establish the 'Her Way' program: The Israeli Ministry of Welfare and Social Affairs, via its professional service dealing with domestic violence and The National Program for the Prevention of Domestic Violence (founded by a government decision and with partners from various ministries led by the Ministry of Welfare); the Rashi Foundation, which is a philanthropic fund; and Google. The partnership is based on a shared budget and management, and professional cooperation, with each partner bringing knowledge of the area in which it specializes. The partnership is reflected both in the structure of the program and in its routine work processes.



The Ministry of Welfare and Social Affairs' role in the partnership includes its mandate to develop national policy for the treatment and prevention of domestic violence, and its direct connection to services in the community that operate within the range of social services offered by the local authorities. In addition, the Ministry brings professional expertise in the treatment of survivors of domestic violence and the services that enable therapeutic support in the community throughout women's participation in the program.



The Rashi Foundation brings experience in developing services in the social arena through learning processes and data- and results-based work, as well as organizational and budgetary flexibility that enables processes of change and modeling while learning. Likewise, the foundation brings with it significant working relationships with the social services departments of the local authorities and other entities and organizations that offer services for female survivors of violence.

Google.org

Google brings in-depth familiarity with the high-tech world, a connection to knowledge and insights from key players in the field, exposure to leading vocational training institutes, and a connection to large-scale investment processes for women who have survived violence in Israel in recent years. Moreover, it serves as a model for other corporations to step up and demonstrate a similar commitment to bettering the situation of women.

\* The training and placement components are operated by the 8200 Alumni Association, an Israeli NPO with extensive ties to the Israeli and global tech communities.

## The three partners have several shared interests that have led them to create a common agenda:

- › Improving the treatment and prevention of domestic violence.
- › Developing unique solutions for the financial rehabilitation of women who have survived violence, addressing both personal rehabilitation and the eradication of the phenomenon of violence
- › Formulating national policy on the issue, including designated budgets and efficient, sustainable services
- › Combining the areas of therapeutic treatment and employment to forge a connection between rehabilitation processes and the needs of the economy
- › Diversifying the high-tech workforce while providing professional training to population groups that are underrepresented in the industry
- › Using technological tools and skills to advance economic growth

Given the target population of the program and the support services provided beyond the professional training, it was natural that the government's participation in this partnership would be led by the Ministry of Welfare and Social Affairs. However, in the State of Israel there is a government ministry responsible for employment and professional training — the Ministry of Economy. Therefore, a link-up was formed by which the Ministry of Economy takes responsibility for financing the training component of the program, so that the budget given on behalf of the three partners can be used for the support, preparation and accompaniment elements of the training and placement phases. Various possibilities are currently being examined to expand the partnership in practice and to put in place the channel to fulfill this commitment.

## < Establishing a professional partnership />

### Referrals to the program

The program's model has defined who can refer applicants to the program:

- › Centers for the prevention and treatment of domestic violence
- › Shelters and transition apartments
- › Non-profit organizations that operate programs in partnership with the Ministry of Social Affairs

The decision to allow referrals only through these entities stems from the belief that this is the best way to reach women who will benefit most from this program, that is, for whom it is appropriate for their therapeutic/rehabilitation/personal stage. Because these are women whose experience of violence has in many cases severely damaged the way they perceive themselves and their abilities, it is important that referrals come through entities that will give them the right kind of encouragement; there will be women who hear about the program but believe that they are not suitable and so will not bother applying; there will be others who have applied but consider withdrawing during the selection process because they are worried about how to juggle between everyday life and the course assignments. In addition, as will be expanded upon later, it is very important for the women to be supported with a therapeutic framework throughout the entire process, and so collaboration with community-based therapeutic agencies is crucial.

## During the program

In order to provide top-level professional services that will yield significant results for the participants, it is necessary to build a structured connection between three spheres: **social-emotional**, **technological-professional**, and **employment**. This connection is established partly through the program itself, and partly through cooperation between the program and treatment processes in the community, and between program team-members and therapists in the various services.



The social-emotional aspect

It is essential to be deeply familiar with the consequences of domestic violence on survivors, and to build a process that takes into consideration of all its implications throughout the program. Such familiarity includes an understanding of and experience in providing a response to the needs of the participants, personal and group support, and removal of personal and social barriers in order to create as much accessibility as possible for this specific population. To build and maintain this component of the program, a program director has been recruited who is a social worker by training (her job description appears later in this document). In addition to her other duties, she is in charge of creating and maintaining the partnership broadly and vis-à-vis each individual partner in order to achieve the program's goals, and dealing with the relevant organizations in the community and in government — the social services departments, the National Insurance Institute, the Ministry of Economy's training division, and others.



The  
technological-  
professional  
aspect



The employment  
aspect:

It is important to accurately meet the needs of the industry by developing a syllabus that teaches the knowledge and abilities required for the high-tech sector, while understanding the needs of the labor market and identifying courses that are relevant to the needs of the industry at a given time (in-demand professions). Similarly, it is necessary to identify accredited bodies for vocational training and to obtain a certified qualification that is recognized by employers. To this end, another collaboration was forged, this one with the 8200 Alumni Association, which specializes in making high-tech professions accessible to marginalized populations in general, and to women in particular. The association has appointed a dedicated professional development coordinator for this program, and will allow graduates to join the association's alumni community.

In order to fulfill the goal of the program, namely employment for participants, efforts are being invested in developing relations with employers, harnessing various organizations such as the Employers' Directorate (a joint body of the Ministry of Economy and the Socio-Economic Forum of Israeli Industry) and creating partnerships with the business sector. These efforts aim to help locate jobs, identify opportunities and trends in the labor market, and adapt the curricula and future job placements accordingly.

To conclude this chapter, the two types of partnerships that have been forged complement each other and will help participants achieve the program's goal; through the inter-sectorial partnership, policy has been formulated and an infrastructure established that facilitates execution and implementation, while the professional partnership enables and supports the program's professional operations.





## Chapter 2: Organizational Structure

< Diagram and explanation of the program's organizational structure />





## < Explanation of each of the components />

As shown in the diagram, 'Her Way''s organizational structure has two components. The first comprises the internal structure of the program: its steering committee, executive committee, program director, and training and placement coordinator. The second component includes the set of external professionals who work directly with/alongside the program and who are considered part of the structure due to their great importance to the process.

- › **Steering committee:** The steering committee is comprised of representatives of each of the partnering bodies and is responsible for program design, the work model, policy development, relationships with relevant external parties, and budget allocation and development.
- › **Executive committee:** The executive committee is a small committee that supports the program's operations as needed; it helps in thinking through issues and solving problems that may arise. The committee is readily available to the program director for consultations and decision-making on the fly.
- › **Program director:** The program director is a social worker by training. She is responsible for all processes within the program, implementation of policy and the budget as determined by the steering committee, relationships and partnerships at all levels, data gathering, and the development and preservation of knowledge accrued throughout the program's operation. In addition, she is responsible for initiating and creating solutions and for removing barriers horizontally and individually among the participants of the program, in cooperation with the community-based social worker and services. The definition of the program director's role as one that requires a social work degree reflects the understanding that specialized, professional education and training is required in order to uncover the participants' personal potential under the many

layers of lack of opportunity, damage to self-image, and limited view of the future.

- › **Training and placement coordinator:** This coordinator is in charge of managing the preparatory course and vocational training phase, as well as the placement process upon the completion of training.

In order to bolster the training and placement components, 'Her Way' has joined up with the 8200 Alumni Association — a non-profit organization comprised of former soldiers of the elite 8200 Unit of the IDF's Intelligence Corps. The association is a platform for alumni to promote social initiatives, with the goal of using the knowledge and experience they acquired during their military service to benefit Israeli society. It is involved in many activities that promote technological entrepreneurship in general, and in particular social entrepreneurship, with a focus on minority populations, women in technology, and technological education in the periphery. The association has extensive experience in implementing intervention programs based on a combination of practical training, support and mentoring processes, and assisting under-represented communities.

This partnership is managed jointly; while 'Her Way's' program director maintains contact with the social workers assisting the women, who provide emotional support and remove practical, material and emotional barriers, the coordinator and staff of the 8200 Alumni Association are in contact with vocational training institutes and potential employers. Beyond this division of duties, the two bodies work together closely to introduce participants to the program's content, evaluate for whom it is suitable, choose courses, and generally build the overall process to reflect the program's two domains — the emotional-personal and the professional. In this way, the high-tech training and emotional support components occur in a space that is built as a community, a safe haven for participants.

Specifically, within the 8200 Alumni Association, the Woman2Woman program aims to advance women and deals on a daily basis with the career development of women from a variety of populations, geographical areas, and fields of activity. Over the years, Woman2Woman has

developed expertise in building and operating mentoring programs, starting from the stage of identifying needs, defining the target audience, adjusting the content to personal and professional needs, building relationships,, and finding employment opportunities, all while leveraging the connections and wide range of professional knowledge at hand.

- › **The diagnostic institute:** As part of the selection process, the suitability of women referred to the program must be ascertained with regards to their personality and emotional and professional states, both in general and specifically for the relevant course/profession.

To this end, a partnership was formed with a leading diagnostic institute in Israel, the Adam Milo Institute. The institute conducts tests and assists the program team in all aspects of screening, free or charge, out of a sense of mission to help these women and support the fight against domestic violence in Israel.

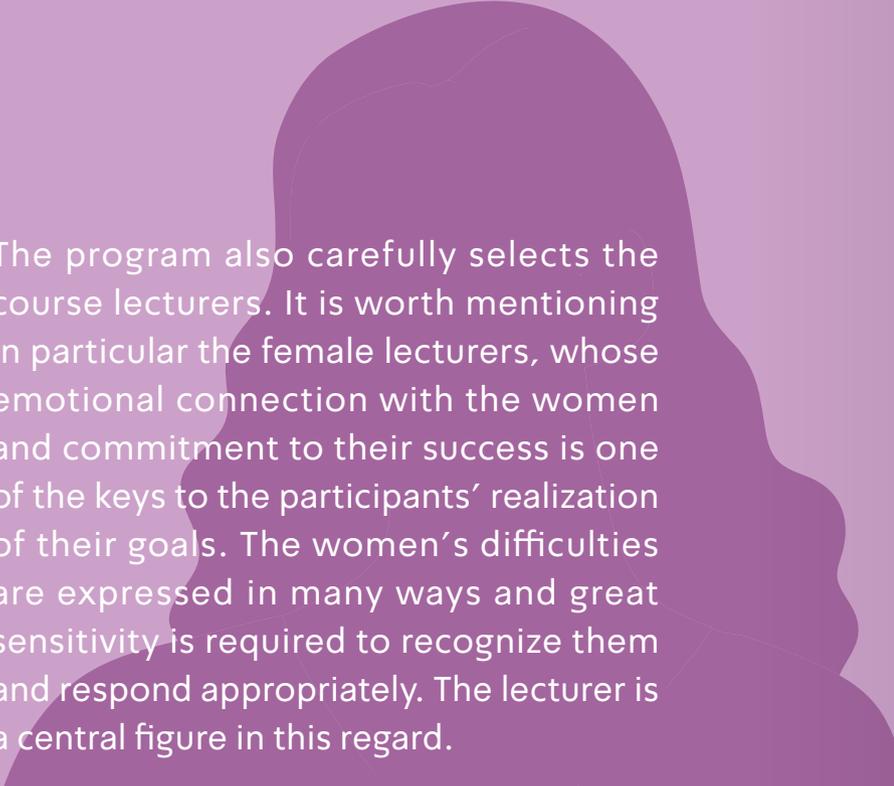
- › **Social workers in various community services:** Community professionals play a significant role in referral and support. This role begins with identifying women who may be suitable for the program and suggesting it to them, and continues with assisting them throughout the recruitment process, being there for them during their participation in the program and beyond, all the way to the stage of job placement. The program director is in contact with the social workers on a regular basis, and especially in cases where joint action and/or involvement of the social workers is required regarding a specific situation. The accompanying social worker is expected to provide therapeutic support through any emotional obstacles that may prevent the woman from being emotionally or practically ready for the job search phase.



The relationship between the program team and the accompanying social worker is particularly significant in moments of crisis and difficulty. The triadic relationship between the participant, the social worker and program director facilitates the flagging of issues and their resolution, thereby encompassing both the therapeutic and the employment process within the program's framework.

Moreover, both therapists and participants have reported that the triadic relationship helps not only advance the employment process, but also to speed up and enhance the therapeutic process.

- › **Vocational training institutes:** These are leading institutes that offer training courses in relevant professions for the general public and have extensive connections with the Israeli high-tech industry. The institutes were selected after a thorough assessment of their affiliation with the program's goals and understanding of the target audience. These criteria were set due to the importance of coordinating expectations. The uniqueness of the course and its participants require the institute to be adaptable and show flexibility regarding the format of the courses, necessary assistance, and more.



The program also carefully selects the course lecturers. It is worth mentioning in particular the female lecturers, whose emotional connection with the women and commitment to their success is one of the keys to the participants' realization of their goals. The women's difficulties are expressed in many ways and great sensitivity is required to recognize them and respond appropriately. The lecturer is a central figure in this regard.

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- › **Mentors:** Female mentors are assigned during the placement phase. These are women who have worked in the high-tech industry for at least four years and who have volunteered to accompany the participant one-on-one through the first stages of her job search. The mentorships help the participants in two crucial ways: First, by connecting them with contacts and potential jobs; and second, by offering them an opportunity to practice and implement aspects of the placement phase, such as job hunting, resume-writing, and preparing for interviews. Additional details about the mentorships are presented in Chapter 4.



## **Chapter 3:** Our guiding principles

This chapter presents the main principles guiding the program. These principles reflect the fact that the connection between the target audience and the practical aspects of employment in general, and of high-tech in particular (and the preparation to join this industry even more so), involves a great deal of deliberation and even a clash of needs or perceptions. On the one hand, the program strives to help the participant prepare professionally for work in an industry that does not compromise on work quality, while on the other hand there is a need to adapt, mediate, and respond to the unique needs of the target group.

As seen below, the principles combine aspects of perception and a frame of reference alongside the practical aspects of work. In addition, the principles do not “stand alone” but are closely related to and complement one another.

## < Providing opportunities />

The program is intended for any woman who considers herself suitable and who meets the threshold requirements for admission to the vocational training courses. The process for identifying candidates is derived from this basis; it is comprised of several stages, each of which offers more information about the program, helping the candidate understand whether this is the right step for her at this stage of her life. We believe that once she has all the relevant information, the woman, together with the program team and the community social worker, will be able to understand whether this is the right move for her and whether she should continue the process.

This principle guides us to be active in the selection process, as well as in the later training and support processes, during which we make every effort to help each woman remain in and succeed in the program, despite the challenges and difficulties.

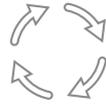
*For example: One of the women who qualified for an information technology (CCNA) course that lasted nine months lives in a shelter and was at an unusually high level of danger. We asked ourselves whether she would be able to persist in her studies, how we could help her take part in face-to-face meetings when the threat she lives under does not allow her to leave the shelter, and how emotionally available she would be for this process over time. In the end, together with the shelter's social worker, we decided to allow her to take part, and to make a great effort to help her in every aspect while maintaining close contact between the shelter's social worker and the program team. This decision is not self-evident; it requires flexibility and a willingness to go the "extra mile" in order to enable even women whose situation is extremely complex to not give up on themselves and their future in the face of such difficulty.*

## < A tailored and comprehensive approach />



In order for survivors of domestic violence to be able to leave a violent environment and start rebuilding their lives and those of their children, a long and in-depth process is required. A deep familiarity with this population and with developing solutions in the area of employment raises several crucial points:

- › Women who survive violence need a solution that increases their sense of competence as much as they need professional training.
- › They need an economic safety net.
- › They may need training and work that is convenient for a single mother.
- › They need therapeutic support.
- › Any solution must relate specifically to economic oppression and the development of financial independence.
- › The solution should be developed as part of an array of services recognized by the Ministry of Welfare and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Economy.



In order to ensure an effective personal and professional process, the program should undertake to do the following:

- › Identify sought-after professions in the market that offer a decent livelihood.
- › Design a training process adapted to the hours and requirements of a single mother.
- › Develop an individual and group support process throughout the duration of the program.
- › Offer concrete material assistance throughout the process.

The question arises as to why there is a need for a unique response when there are existing programs that facilitate the integration of women into the workforce through subsidized training courses. This principle reflects the insight that in order to give these women the best chance to succeed, they must be offered not only a framework within which they receive funding for studies, personal support, or a group/community component, but a single, comprehensive framework that encompasses all of these things.

## < Quality training />

The vocational training phase adheres to an uncompromising professional standard for optimal integration into the workforce. This principle expresses the commitment that no corners will be cut in ensuring the content and quality of the training, and that cooperation with vocational training institutes is of great importance to the success of the process.

The institutes are carefully selected and their graduates are in demand in the high-tech industry. Despite the uniqueness of the target audience, the courses are generally standard and there are no concessions made with regard to the content taught. The requirement to meet the high professional standard needed to train and work in the field and to pass the training tests is essential for job placement, but also brings with it added emotional value — it improves self-confidence and strengthens the women's recognition of their personal skills.

The lecturer is of prime significance and it is critical that she has sufficient understanding and sensitivity on top of her strong professional ability. The lecturers who have taught courses within the program have been meaningful figures for the participants no less than the program staff, inspiring in them motivation and a sense of capability. The lecturers are committed to the women's success and feel connected to the program's goals.

Female survivors of domestic violence often suffer damage to their self-image and belief in their abilities. The program team, together with the training institute staff, actively take steps to help the women slowly regain faith in their own abilities, even in the most mundane moments.

*For example, when a participant wants to ask a question and opens with an apology, saying, "I have a stupid question to ask," the lecturer replies, "There is no such thing as a stupid question." Or, when a participant has a technical difficulty and asks for assistance, we ask that she first address the request to the other members of the group. This way, she experiences asking for help in a safe space, and those who respond to her increase their sense of competence from being able to be of help.*

## < Community />



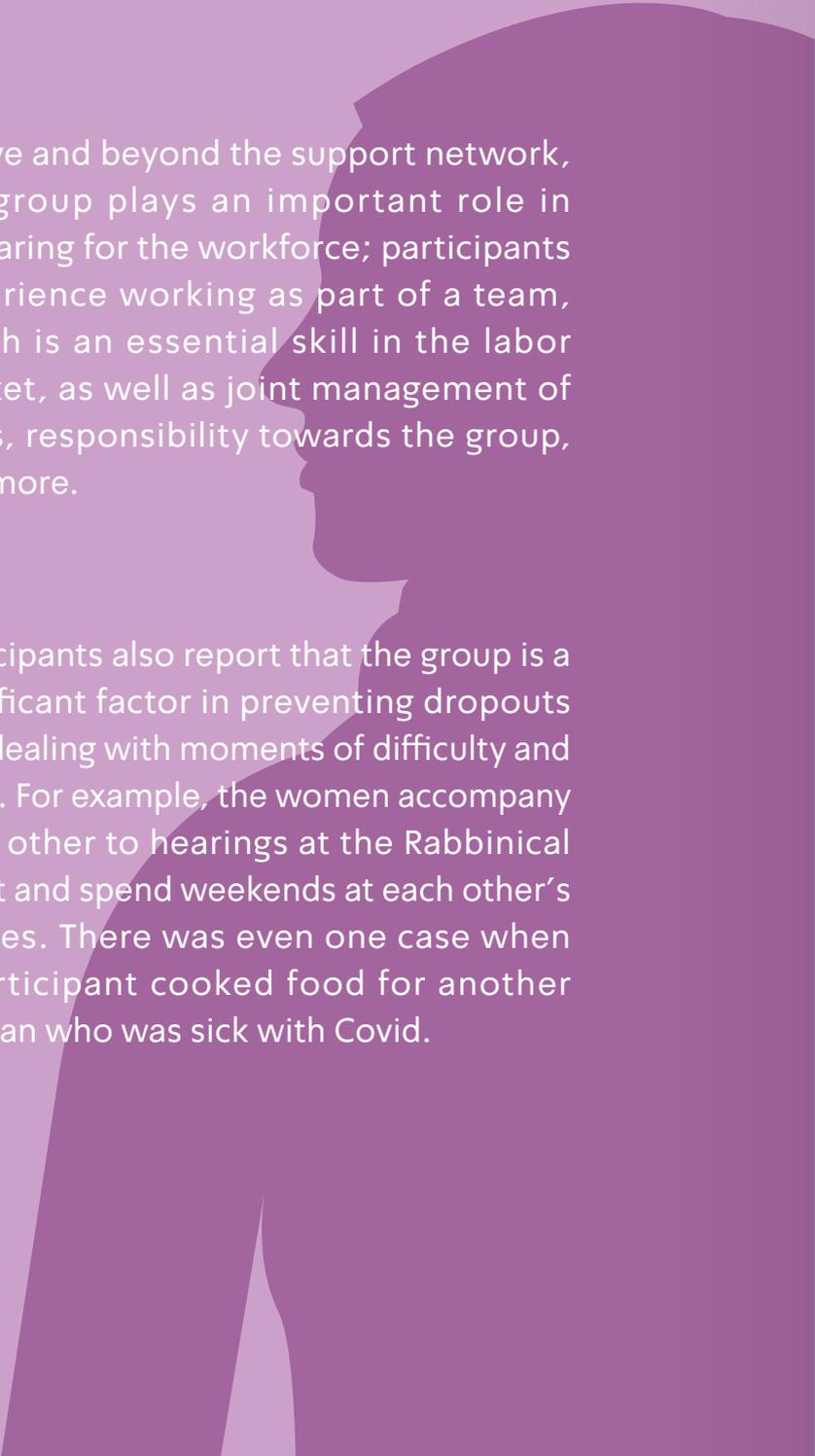
The program offers training as part of a community, which is a safe space to share the personal difficulties — whether they are similar or different to those of the fellow participants — that characterize this population. This principle is guided by four basic assumptions:

- › The participants come from a background that requires a unique approach, both emotionally and practically speaking.
- › A group process enables support, understanding and connection, which empower the participants and strengthen their personal abilities.
- › The group continues to provide meaningful support further down the road, and even once the program has ended.
- › After years of forced isolation and concealment of their life situation, women who survive violence are often lonely and lack a social support network.

The community component is formed at the start, during the preparatory phase, due to an understanding that it is a key tool for dealing with the intensity and commitment of the training process. The group provides an important support network during a period in which the women must invest great efforts to participate and make a significant change in their lives.



The group becomes a significant element for female survivors of domestic violence. Many participants have testified that throughout their married life or couplehood, they were isolated from society or from a supportive environment, and that being part of a community that understands them contributes significantly to their success.



Above and beyond the support network, the group plays an important role in preparing for the workforce; participants experience working as part of a team, which is an essential skill in the labor market, as well as joint management of tasks, responsibility towards the group, and more.

Participants also report that the group is a significant factor in preventing dropouts and dealing with moments of difficulty and crisis. For example, the women accompany each other to hearings at the Rabbinical Court and spend weekends at each other's houses. There was even one case when a participant cooked food for another woman who was sick with Covid.

## < A supportive framework />

Living in the cycle of violence has repercussions on all areas of a woman's life, including her emotional state, and these can sometimes continue for years.

Given the complex life and difficult relationships that these women have experienced, it is crucial to have a comprehensive support system that includes both a social worker within the program and another social worker in the community. At the same time, the entire program team needs guidance and support, including the course lecturers and mentors.

Such a support system facilitates the upholding of many of the other principles of the program — identifying and removing barriers, providing opportunities, forming a community of women, and more. The support system instills a sense of capability and empowerment in the women, which is crucial after the years of belittlement and humiliation that have decreased their ability to identify where their strengths lie.

Being a member of the program's female community also brings with it complexity, given the exposure to issues that may be raised by others, which can sometimes overwhelm and even trigger the women. Even in such cases, the program's support system and its relationship with providers of support in the community work together to overcome these challenges. Reports from both social workers and participants have demonstrated that the two processes promote one another simultaneously.

## < Identification and removal of barriers />

There are a number of barriers that may stand in the way of a woman achieving success in the program, and it is up to the program team to identify and remove these barriers. The population of female survivors of domestic violence is diverse, and barriers vary from woman to woman.

Particularly in the initial phase, when the program team has not yet been deeply acquainted with the women, the team relies on the community social worker and the candidate/participant to identify barriers that require attention. In the initial interview, the subject is raised and attempts are made to explore the issue and come up with solutions as early as possible in the process. However, it is clear that only an in-depth familiarity with the woman will be able to specify her needs and the necessary treatment, ensuring a unique response for each one. This process of identifying and removing barriers continues throughout the entire program.

*For example: A woman whose children who are in their father's custody travels out of town once a week to see them, and this visit falls on the same day as the online course. In order for her to be able to participate, she had to have a close and trusting relationship with the program staff so that she could feel comfortable raising this difficulty; moreover, the program's team had to see overcoming this challenge as part of their role, and then exercise the creativity necessary to find a solution. The program director contacted the local community center and arranged for the woman to use a suitable room there for her online course on a regular basis.*

To overcome various barriers, the program team pools resources and exercises civic rights. There is a dedicated component of the budget for this purpose, to be used to meet the woman's particular need, according to the team's discretion.

It is worth noting that there are barriers whose resolution does not lie in working with the woman herself, but rather through systemic work; this is also dealt with by the program team.

## Types of barriers and challenges:

### A. Claiming rights:

- › Receiving official acknowledgment of the program and the training course in order to receive the relevant social benefits and rights
- › Maximizing the use of services and mentors that will help during the training period, such as discounts for children's after-school programs, scholarships from the Ministry of Economy for single parents, income security, and more

### B. Personal needs:

- › Material needs for the woman and her children
- › Babysitters during the hours of the course
- › Finding a quiet space to study near where she lives

### C. Educational needs:

- › Tutoring and reinforcement lessons
- › Laptop with relevant software

## < Accessibility />

As mentioned, the high-tech industry is characterized by an underrepresentation of women, and even more so, female survivors of domestic violence. The industry is seen as a place that is irrelevant to them because it seems to them unattainable, and therefore most participants have not even allowed themselves to think about a future in high-tech, with its high professional threshold criteria, high costs of training, and other associated requirements (such as babysitters, a personal computer, etc.). On top of these objective barriers, there has often been long-standing harm to the women's perception of their personal and professional abilities. In light of this, a significant part of the candidates' recruitment phase is to help them realize that a career in high-tech is an option that is accessible to them.

It is made accessible by the community professionals in the welfare services (social workers and their supervisors), as well as by female professionals from non-profit organizations. Having a complete, in-depth understanding of the program and

its requirements, these professionals are in contact with the program team to make accurate referrals and align expectations with the candidates. The topic of accessibility comes up in each of the program's screening stages, during which the team try to understand, together with the candidate, what the emotional and objective challenges are and how to deal with them.

At the same time, efforts are made to disseminate information about the program as widely as possible, through meetings with regional supervisors of social welfare services, information sessions with professionals in the community, and written information about the program. We also hold introductory meetings for candidates on different days and at various times, to allow as many women as possible to attend and gain access to the information they need to decide whether to continue the process.

Another aspect of accessibility is the course's hybrid format, which makes it easier for women to take part in the training phase. There is also an aspect of accessibility in the removing of barriers, which, due to its centrality and importance, is discussed separately.

The process is flexible and, if necessary, adjustments are made to the schedule and work format.

*For example: During the summer vacation, the timetable was adapted to suit the needs of the participants, the vast majority of whom are mothers. In one of the courses (CCNA), a change was made in the middle of the process and the number of study days per week was reduced from three to two, with the third day dedicated to reinforcement for those who needed it. This flexibility helps us keep the process accessible and relevant for participants.*

## < Restoring control, information-sharing, and choice />

One of the guiding principles in working with trauma survivors focuses on the idea of regaining control. After a prolonged period during which they have experienced a lack of control, uncertainty, and oppression, many women find it difficult to regain a sense of control over their lives; at the same time, they fear that a loss of control will undermine the stability they have managed to achieve so far in the rehabilitation process. Therefore, an intervention based on regaining control, maximizing the availability of information, and encouraging independent decision-making is most appropriate for survivors of violence. This principle is particularly challenging since, as in any service, there are inherent power relations, and the degree of influence of each party (staff/participants) on decision-making and implementation cannot be equal. This principle guides the program team to be aware of these power relations at all times, and to actively work in partnership with the participants. This approach, inter alia, will allow them to make decisions for themselves and direct the course of their lives in a manner that suits them as much as possible.

*For example: In the introductory sessions, the women chose whether or not to turn on their cameras, give their names, ask questions, or share concerns and thoughts. They could answer the questions raised by the team during the meeting in a private chat. They were able to choose the date of their personal interview from a number of options. The women can choose whether to take the suitability test, and they are given the opportunity to choose together with the professional staff which of the offered courses is the most suitable for them.*

From the outset, the women receive full information about the program and its courses, are partners in decision-making throughout the process, and are even invited to state their opinion about how the program is proceeding and have some influence over it. This is reflected in both minor and more significant ways; the program is built in partnership with the participants, and at several points throughout the program they

are asked by the program team to share their opinions both in the group space and individually, and adjustments are made according to their requests and needs.

## < Transparency />

This principle stems from the concept that the participants are equal partners in the program's process and that they must be updated and informed with regards to each stage and challenge.

The team makes sure to describe the process fully, including the challenges involved, in a way that helps the women understand what lies ahead and the requirements of the process. Even in situations where there are doubts or constraints concerning the participant on an individual level, this is fully and clearly reflected to her.



*For example: When the demands of a vocational training course are very high, this is conveyed to the women in a manner that helps them deal with any frustration they may experience. They are invited to discuss the situation and may decide to wait for the next course offered. Often, throughout the process there are changes or delays, some of which may frustrate the participants. There may be difficulty finding a suitable mentor, or a long wait until being called for an interview. Beyond the fact that frustration is part-and-parcel of being in the labor market, and that helping participants deal with it is integral to the program, this is a subject that is always managed with complete transparency.*

There is a tendency to view the program's target audience as a vulnerable population. This principle of transparency, however, expresses not only the priority of partnership, but also the appreciation of these women's strength in being able to deal with difficult moments or disappointment and work through them together with the program team.

## < Privacy/ Confidentiality />

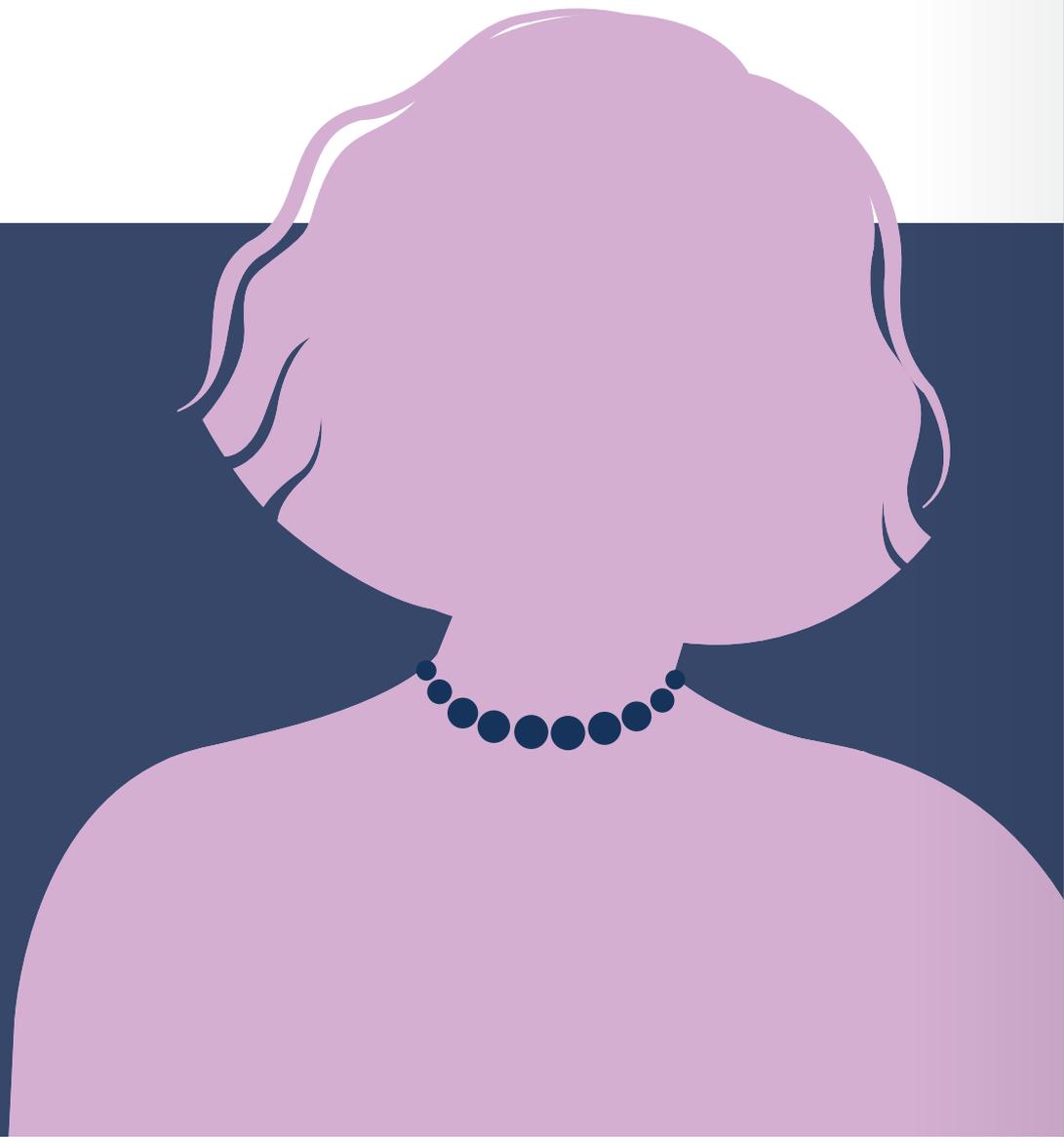
Maintaining privacy when working with this population is critical. For quite a few women, being labeled as a survivor of domestic violence causes fear and denial of the situation. Ensuring privacy is a guiding principle from the very first stages; for example, a registration form for an introductory meeting includes only general details — email address, name and phone number. In addition, there is an option to choose whether the referral will be made by an accompanying professional or by the candidate herself. Furthermore, in the electronic form in which they choose the time of their interview, the women enter only their first name and the last four digits of their mobile phone number. Another example is that communication via email is written in a very general way, without specific reference to the target population, for fear of who may be reading the message. There are women who are still in the violent relationship, or do not want their details to be revealed.

It should be noted that this principle brings with it challenges throughout the process, and much thought is constantly invested in how to properly manage it for the benefit of the participants.

*For example, a central issue that arises in the run-up to the placement phase is whether or not to indicate to the employers that this woman completed the 'Her Way' program, with all that that implies. Such disclosure has advantages and disadvantages; on the one hand, if the employer is unaware of the woman's difficult situation, she can make a fresh start, without being labelled and on an equal footing with other employees; on the other hand, if the HR department knows about her particular family and personal situation, it can enable sensitivity on the part of the employer, with flexibility of conditions, consideration of a suitable professional companion at the beginning of the job, and assistance in moments of crisis. These factors may help ensure that the placement be successful over time.*

*For quite a few female employees, being a survivor of domestic violence, with all that this “label” brings with it, is difficult and complex. In accordance with the principle of transparency, such an issue is discussed with the women both as a community and with each participant individually. The personal wish of each woman regarding disclosure to employers about her participation this unique program for survivors of violence is carefully considered.*





## **Chapter 4:** Implementation

This chapter describes the program's implementation model, setting out its detailed stages and expected results. It should be noted that as of the writing of this guide, the program is still in its pilot phase, and therefore this chapter will be updated over time.



## < Measuring the success and impact of the program />

To measure the program's success, two types of goals have been defined with regards to the program participants — personal goals and occupational goals. These two aspects are, of course, intertwined, and directly impact one another. Below is a breakdown of the **program's defined goals**:

- › Completion of the preparatory stage for 80-100% of participants
- › Completion of the vocational training process and attainment of a certification diploma for 80-100% of participants
- › Job placement in the professional field studied for at least 50-75% of participants
- › Removal of personal and family barriers to participating in the program for 80-100% of needs that arise
- › Report of improvement in soft skills required for the workforce among at least 70-85% of participants
- › Report of improvement in the sense of personal well-being among at least 70%-85% of participants
- › Expansion of the social circle and support network for at least 70% of participants
- › Report of improvement in the sense of self-efficacy, self-image and perception of personal abilities among at least 75% of participants
- › Report of improvement in the degree of financial independence in at least 50-75% of participants

## < Implementation model in stages />



### Stage 1: Identifying and recruiting participants

Each group has up to 25 female participants. Recruitment takes place in a number of stages:

- › **Presentation of the program to professionals:** The program is presented to supervisors in the various districts of the Ministry of Welfare and, through them, to social workers in the local authorities as well as to female professionals in relevant organizations. The partnership with the state and the authorities has a decisive role in assisting the program team in locating and recruiting the women. The structure of the program ensures that the women are referred by a social worker who knows them personally, can verify their suitability for the program, and determine the right timing for the referral; the Ministry's policy vis-à-vis the local authorities is consistent with this approach. In the first months of recruitment, the program staff handled many phone calls from both professionals and women interested in the program.
- › **Introductory meetings:** Two months after beginning the marketing and presentation of the program, all women who had expressed an interest were invited — via their social workers or directly — to an online introductory session. Each woman was asked to fill out a registration form; it is worth noting that given the target audience, the form requested only minimal details, for fear that this very request could constitute an obstacle or disincentive to submitting an application. For some women, this process had to be done discreetly (for example, in cases where the applicant did not want her husband to know that she applied for this program, or in the case of a woman who moved to another town and did not want her ex-husband to know where she lived, or another who now lives in a shelter). The women chose their preferred time to participate in the introductory meeting — morning or evening, and the date itself.

**The meeting comprises four areas of content:**

- › Introduction to the world of high-tech and addressing any concerns about working in the industry
- › Information about the program in its various stages and about the vocational training course being offered
- › Requirements and challenges of the program in general.
- › Q&A

› **Personal interview — an interview with the program team to explore several points together with the candidate:**

- › Alignment of expectations regarding the study and support components of the program
- › Compliance with the required threshold conditions, if any
- › Readiness and motivation
- › Emotional and physical availability
- › Understanding the requirements and opportunities
- › Identifying obstacles
- › Assurance of personal emotional support by the community social worker, including contact between her and the program team
- › General suitability for the high-tech industry in terms of the roles and nature of the work, and specific suitability for the profession taught in the course currently offered (sometimes the woman is suitable for another course to be offered at a later date)

- › **Suitability test:** A personal test has been developed especially for the program by a placement and diagnostics firm specializing in the field, the purpose of which is to examine the degree and nature of each candidate's suitability for learning and working in the high-tech world. The results of the test are individually mediated for each participant.

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- › **Final screening and decision-making:** After processing information about the candidates, including impressions from the interview and the results of the suitability test, decisions are made regarding each of them. Each woman is contacted by phone to inform her of the decision, and to explain it in light of the fact that the number of participants in the program is limited, and not everyone is found to be suitable. This conversation enables dialogue even in cases of disappointment, and the candidate is commended for her very participation in the process. In addition, the team can share impressions from the interview and suitability test, and in some cases the woman is directed to other places that can help her vis-à-vis employment. For example, a candidate who seems to be in need of extensive career guidance is referred to an appropriate address, or put in touch with an occupational psychologist from the Adam Milo Institute who reviews the test with her and allows her to gain insights from the process that will be of use to her in the future.
  - › **Formation of the group:** The next stage is the formation of the group for the designated course of vocational training. Before the course begins, two events take place: First, a preliminary online meeting is held to familiarize participants with the training institute, the syllabus, and detailed information about the course; this helps them understand what lies ahead and how they should prepare themselves on a personal and family level, and, in addition, what assistance may be needed from the staff before the training begins. Second, an in-person meeting is conducted to allow the participants to get to know each other and the program team. This meeting is important for making the participants feel comfortable before starting their online studies.; the community of women and their sense of belonging to it, a significant factor in each participant's personal success, begins to form.

## Stage 2: Preparatory course

The preparatory course lasts about six weeks and offers emotional and practical preparation for the vocational training, as well as a period in which to assess personal needs and improve digital literacy, technical English, and learning skills.

The purpose of this stage is threefold:

- › Preparing for the course in terms of organization and learning skills
- › Closing educational gaps to facilitate a smooth transition into the training phase
- › Creating a learning community that is a safe space for studying and mutual support

The preparatory process allows women to “get a taste” for the content and nature of the course and acquire the skills required for work in the high-tech world. At the same time, it consolidates them into a meaningful group, which offers mutual reinforcement throughout the women’s shared journey both during and after the program. The program director leads the group and guides the processes, with attention paid both to the individual and to the group dynamic.

Participants have reported that the preparatory course provides a “soft landing” for the vocational training stage, due to the fact that for most of them, this period takes place after many years of not having studied; studying is a skill that needs to be rekindled and strengthened.

### Stage 3: Vocational training

In each group, the vocational training phase focuses on teaching one professional course, which is chosen after a consideration of several factors: It must be a profession that is sought-after in the market; jobs in the profession must be appropriate for single mothers; and it should be suitable for 20 participants from among the applicants who were interviewed.

After choosing the course, a specialized training institute recognized by high-tech employers is selected and an appropriate supervisor appointed who can offer a thorough educational response along with sensitivity to the nature of the group. The training institute is responsible for all of the course content, including preparation for the certification exam and final project.

The training course is selected and operates according to the following principles:

- › It trains participants for a digital profession required in today's market.
- › The course takes place at convenient hours suitable for single mothers with small children.
- › There is a support system comprising extra lessons and reinforcements based on individual needs.
- › The course provides accreditation and certification for work in the studied profession.

The training phase is comprised of three components:

- › A vocational course with a recognized professional syllabus
- › Personal and group support, both emotional and educational
- › Remedial and reinforcement classes to help close educational gaps and strengthen each participant's areas of weakness

It should be emphasized that this stage of the vocational training focuses on the professional course, but to a large extent all the principles detailed in the previous chapter remain in force.



*For example: The training is delivered in a hybrid format with the understanding that online meetings dramatically increase the possibility of women taking part in the course, but at the same time, it is important to hold in-person meetings; from participants' reports, it appears that in-person meetings significantly contribute to group cohesion and a sense of belonging. Another example: Much emphasis is placed on soft skills such as teamwork; the suitability tests revealed that most of participants scored low on the ability to work in a team (this is not surprising given their life experience and the damage to assets related to teamwork, such as the ability to trust others). The ability to work in a team is important for integrating into the labor market in general, and the high-tech industry in particular. Through a methodology of working in groups during the course, the women experience the benefits of teamwork, and if a difficulty arises, the program staff is there to help and mediate.*

#### **Stage 4: Certification**

Upon completing the training course, participants must submit a final project and/or pass a certification exam that awards a diploma recognized in the labor market. The program finances the cost of the exam and the vocational training institute prepares the participants for it. This exam is significant, as many training courses do not provide a recognized diploma; the certification exam indicates the seriousness of the course and the high professional level of the graduates. The diploma increases the graduates' chances of gaining optimal employment at the end of the course.

## Stage 5: Accompanied placement

The participants may experience a regression during the transition between the end of training and the beginning of the accompanied work placement. Resources are therefore dedicated to ensuring the success of the process by helping participants maintain their hope and motivation during a period that requires much effort on their part.

Upon completion of the course and receipt of the diploma, the program works to find the participants a job in a workplace appropriate to the reality of the participant's life. Participants begin their preparation for the workforce during the training course and continue to prepare more intensively upon its completion. This stage is led by the training and placement coordinator, who deals with finding jobs, mentoring, and employer relations. Meanwhile, the program director (in her capacity as a social worker) continues to provide emotional and practical support in order to remove obstacles in the process.

At this stage, an online group meeting is held once a month with the aim of empowering the women in the job search process, preserving the community that has been created, and enriching them with content relevant to this stage.

A key element of support provided in the placement stage is the assignment of a one-on-one mentor to each of the participants for a period of six months and/or until they find a job. Once a week, the mentor and mentee (the program participant) meet and work together on different tasks, depending on where the participant is in the job search process. These tasks include writing a cover letter, building a LinkedIn profile, interview simulations, personal connections, assistance in expanding the mentee's network, and connections to potential employers.

Given the importance of the mentor at this stage, efforts are made to locate the most appropriate ones, to connect "pairs" who are well-suited to one another, and to support the mentors throughout their volunteering process.

- › Potential mentors are identified by the W2W association, who approach various companies in the industry as well as graduates of the association's mentoring program.
- › The program coordinator meets every candidate interested in this type of accompaniment and fills out an application form. During the screening interview, she gets an impression both of the mentor's experience as well as her personal capacity to support a woman affected by violence.
- › Ahead of the "pairing" phase, the program team (the coordinator, social worker, and lecturer) meet to consider each participant's needs and form a productive and supportive mentor-mentee pair.



The mentors are prepared for their role in two principal ways. Firstly, regarding the occupational aspect, the coordinator updates the mentor with regards to what the participant learned in the vocational training course so that she can better guide her in finding a suitable job. Secondly, the mentors are coached on how to support survivors of domestic violence. For example, they must understand that writing a CV is not a routine or simple task for these women, who often find it difficult to express in writing their life experience and their abilities. The women are required to take a close look at themselves and understand what they have not been able to achieve so far, perhaps because they lost certain abilities.

In addition to these two aspects of preparation, the mentors are accompanied throughout the volunteering period, through regular meetings (once every three weeks) with the program team, during which they share their experiences. In addition, they maintain an active online discussion group for general advice and concrete help in connecting with employers.

## Stage 6: Accompanied employment

As of the time of the writing of this guide, this phase has not yet occurred in practice; the participants are currently in transition from the training stage to the placement stage. This section will be updated later, and the following points will be addressed: At this stage, the graduates have set out on their own, and each of them is at a different stage in the placement process. The group continues to be a significant and supportive space, but with very few structured meetings. On an individual level, graduates can be accompanied “remotely” during the first months on the job. In addition, they join the W2W alumni community and meet many other women who are making their way in the high-tech industry; here, they can find out information, learn from their experiences, and be part of a meaningful network of women.



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