



Women's Crisis Shelter

Annual Activity Report – 2025

The Women's Crisis Shelter Association, which operates, in cooperation with and under the supervision of the Ministry of Welfare, a shelter for women survivors of domestic violence and their children, continued its work in 2025 on behalf of women and children who have experienced domestic violence.

During the year, 32 women and 55 of their children resided at the shelter.

Who Stayed at the Shelter in 2025?

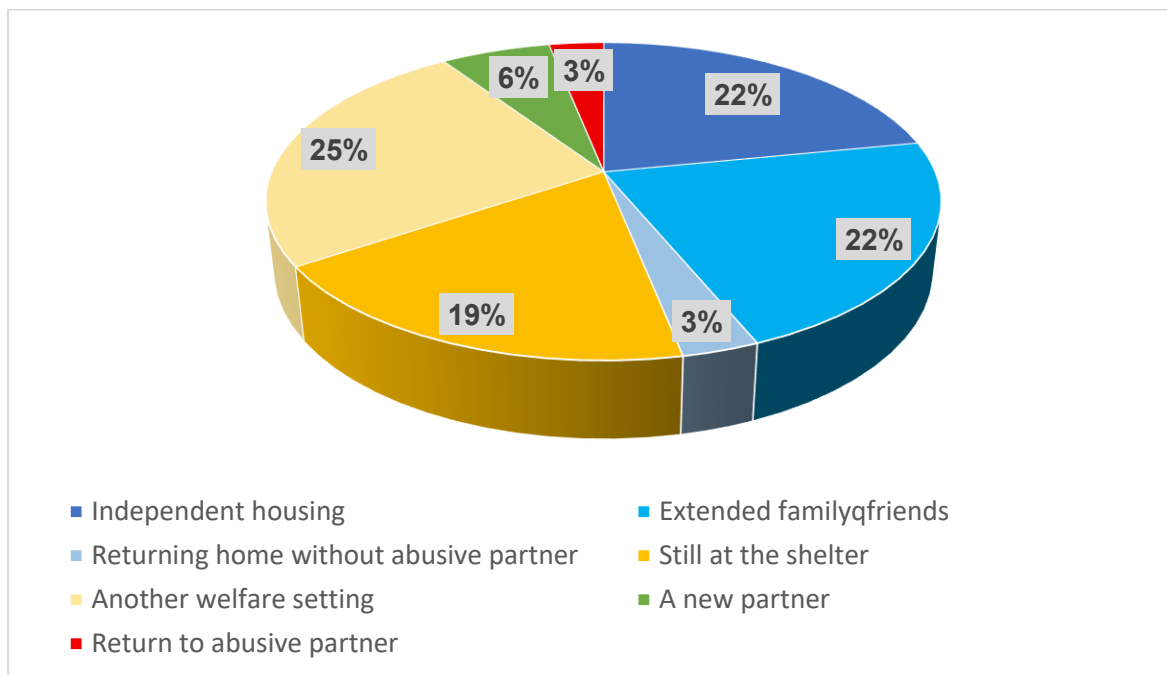
- The women who arrived at the shelter ranged in age from 18 to 59. Approximately 16% were aged 18–25, approximately 62% were aged 26–40, and approximately 22% were aged 41–60.
- Among the women who stayed at the shelter were 14 Israeli Arab women (44%), as well as one Druze woman and one Bedouin woman; 10 Jewish women (approximately 31%), half of whom were not born in Israel; 5 women without legal residency status in Israel (approximately 15.7%); and 2 women who did not fall into any of the above categories.
- Four women reported having an academic education, and nine reported completing high school (some with a matriculation certificate). The remaining women did not provide information regarding their educational background.
- Some women stayed at the shelter without their children. A total of 39 children did not arrive at the shelter with their mothers; 31 of these children were in the custody of their fathers or their fathers' families, and 8 were placed in out-of-home care. In all cases, a significant part of the therapeutic process focused on the relationship, and/or lack of relationship, between the mother and her children.
- Thirteen of the women (approximately 41%) fled to the shelter from abusive relationships with partners who had significant criminal backgrounds and involvement (beyond intimate-partner violence). This characteristic had a significant impact on our work in several respects: ensuring the safety of the women and their children; the nature of the psychosocial treatment, including behavioral aspects related to daily life at the shelter; and developing an exit plan while reducing and managing risk.
- Six women (approximately 19% of all women who stayed at the shelter) stayed for less than one month, and another four women stayed for less than three months. Twenty-two women stayed at the shelter for more than three months (69%); some had already been staying at the shelter at the beginning of 2026. The proportion of women who stayed at the shelter for longer and more substantial periods increased compared with previous years.

A meaningful length of stay at the shelter, together with the treatment provided to the woman and her children during this period, significantly support women choose violence-free alternatives when they leave the shelter.

An analysis of the destinations to which women moved upon leaving the shelter shows that the solutions they chose were highly diverse. Nevertheless, 47% left for violence-free lives in the community, while another 44% continued treatment and/or stayed in other supportive settings.

We are proud that 91% of the women who stayed at the shelter in 2025 ended the year in a safe and protected situation.

Women's Exit Destinations – 2025



As noted above, 55 children also stayed at the shelter during the year. These children received a broad range of services and activities, as detailed below. In addition, the shelter team worked on maintaining and facilitating contact and communication between mothers staying at the shelter and children who were not staying with them.

Ages of Children Who Stayed at the Shelter in 2025

During the year, 18 of the children (33%) who stayed at the shelter with their mothers were infants and toddlers. Most attended the toddler program operated at the shelter during the daytime. Sixteen children (29%) were aged 3–6 and attended the kindergarten we operate at the shelter, while 21 children (38%) were school-aged. Some attended schools in the community.

In recent years, we have seen an increase in the number of school-aged children arriving at the shelter, reflected in the age distribution of the children staying there. We recognize this change and adapt our activities for children accordingly.



Shelter's Key Areas of Activities – 2025

During their stay, the Women's Crisis Shelter provides women and children with accommodation, food and clothing, psychosocial treatment, and a wide range of services and activities designed to support women and children and help women choose a life free from violence for themselves and their children.

Women's Empowerment and Preparation for Violence-Free Living

This includes a broad range of activities and services designed to provide women with emotional support, rebuild their self-image and self-confidence, provide them with tools for identifying unhealthy relationships, and equip them with tools for assessing and managing the risks they face, alongside practical skills for independent living.

Our activities included intensive individual emotional therapy, group therapy, assistance in exercising rights vis-à-vis various institutions, including support in addressing debt, individual and group parenting guidance, individual guidance on household budgeting, and more. In addition, enrichment and empowerment workshops were held, including yoga, laughter yoga, self-compassion, a series of nutrition workshops, a workshop on child development and health, a series of arts and crafts workshops including a museum visit, holiday celebrations and farewell events for women embarking on a new path, festive meals in honor of International Women's Day and the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and Hebrew lessons for women who needed them, with an emphasis on strengthening their ability to cope with everyday challenges in the community.

Women and their children also participated, accompanied by staff members, in recreational outings to swimming pools, a children's museum, a large petting zoo, and more. Beyond the enjoyment these activities provided—and the fact that most of the women and children were experiencing such activities for the first time—they were highly important in strengthening positive mother-child relationships, as well as parental authority and responsibility arising from spending time together outside the shelter.

All these activities, and many others, form part of a complex rehabilitation process aimed at developing everyday life skills that enable women to choose independent lives.

Employment as Part of Women's Empowerment

The shelter team encourages women who are ready to do so to enter the workforce, subject to each woman's level of risk. Employment is highly important in building women's independence and reducing dependence on a partner or family. Going to work is significant for the women: it enables us to develop and strengthen essential employment skills; emotionally, it means that the woman is engaged in work rather than focusing solely on her personal difficulties. She practices a routine similar to that of working mothers and sees that it is possible—that she has the strength and abilities to manage it. This provides a realistic model of the circumstances she will face in the future. The women themselves view work not only as a source of income, but also as an anchor in the broader rehabilitation process of leaving the cycle of violence and making a “fresh start” in their lives.



During most of the year, some of the women staying at the shelter worked outside the shelter and received payment for their work. Their areas of employment included elder care, kindergarten caregiving, supermarket floor work, and office and home cleaning. During 2025, seven women staying at the shelter entered employment.

Working women received emotional and practical support from the shelter team to strengthen their employment capabilities—from childcare during working hours to assistance in finding jobs and guidance on interacting with employers.

Education, Support, Treatment and Enrichment – Children

We provide a wide range of services to children staying at the shelter with their mothers who have been exposed to violence in their homes. Some were affected by exposure to violence against their mothers alone, while others experienced abuse themselves, including sexual violence.

It is important to note that during the year we dealt with a relatively high number of children who were not enrolled in educational frameworks in the community for relatively extended periods. The reasons varied: a high level of risk, fathers' refusal to register children at school, difficulties in finding appropriate educational settings to meet their needs, and, of course, partial and irregular operation of the local education system during part of the war.

Our children's team provided these children with an enriching and experiential program within the shelter, including during morning hours.

Our work with and for the children was diverse and included operating a kindergarten and day care center for toddler on the shelter premises; parenting guidance and individual psychosocial support by a social worker; operating a learning center that provided individual academic support to each child by the project team; supporting school-aged children in integrating into appropriate educational settings; and providing four children with weekly private lessons from a teacher to help close educational gaps. In addition, daily afternoon leisure activities were held, including arts and crafts, sports activities, and a wide range of enrichment activities such as holiday and birthday celebrations and a full enrichment program during the summer and holiday breaks. These included special activities such as a magic show, drumming and music workshops, a juggling workshop and a full-moon party, as well as visits to a children's museum, a swimming pool, and more.

During the year, we invested many hours in guiding and supporting women staying at the shelter whose children were placed in other out-of-home settings, in order to strengthen and maintain their relationships with their children and help them cope with their children's difficulties and complex needs.

We believe that children need a positive and supportive relationship with their parents. Accordingly, we also worked to maintain children's relationships with their fathers, in accordance with the relevant risk characteristics. During the year, we supported and accompanied the process required for meetings between ten children staying at the shelter and their fathers at supervised contact centers. In addition, a social worker from our organization accompanied and supervised telephone conversations between children and their fathers.



It is worth noting that during the year we supported the assessment of two children on the autism spectrum and assisted in exercising their rights, and obtained approval for a psycho-diagnostic assessment for another child; the assessment was completed after the mother and child had moved to another therapeutic setting.

Legal Counseling and Representation

Legal services give expression to the woman's voice and wishes and are significant not only legally, but therapeutically as well. Women whose voices were silenced as a result of violence, and who developed patterns of appeasement, submission and freezing, learn to make their voices heard and assert their rights. Close coordination between the therapeutic and legal teams is essential, as is positioning the attorney's professional role in a way that is adapted to the woman's needs, both emotionally and in light of the risk characteristics she faces.

The project's primary area of activity is personal status and family law, including divorce, custody, visitation arrangements, child support, protection orders, guardianship, housing rights, and related matters. In most cases, following complex legal proceedings, women succeed in exercising the rights arising from marriage and divorce, including custody and receipt of child support.

During the year, 21 women staying at the shelter received legal counseling and representation. Of these, 15 were represented in family-law proceedings by an attorney from the Association; two additional women were assisted in obtaining representation from another attorney through Legal Aid in family-law matters. The remaining four women were represented by other attorneys, generally through Legal Aid, who had been appointed by Legal Aid and/or retained before their admission to the shelter.

In addition, our attorney continued during the year, as part of her work with the Association, to represent 11 women who had previously stayed at the shelter and whose legal matters had not been concluded when they left.

We also facilitated the appointment of a Legal Aid attorney specializing in debt matters for three women staying at the shelter who were facing substantial debts. Without addressing these debts, it would have been difficult to see how they could achieve independent, violence-free lives while meeting the financial burden of maintaining a home and supporting their families.

Support for Women Leaving the Shelter

The Association assists and continues to assist women leaving the shelter for independent living in a variety of ways—from accompanying them in finding and renting housing and obtaining furniture and household equipment, to registering children in educational settings in the receiving community; connecting women with welfare services in their new communities, including projects that support women affected by violence; helping them exercise their rights, such as applying for rent assistance from the Ministry of Housing and Construction, applying for grants for women leaving shelters; and providing food packages, food gift cards, and basic small electrical appliances for the kitchen, among other forms of assistance.



Education to Prevent Intimate-Partner Violence among Teens

This year, we expanded our collaboration with the Matzmichim Academy Association and deepened the development of an innovative program addressing the prevention of intimate-partner violence among adolescents (middle- and high-school age). During the year, we trained facilitators, held 25 one-day workshops in grades 6–8, and conducted an accompanying evaluation study.

The evaluation found very high satisfaction among both students and educators. The findings also indicate that, among younger students (grades 6–7), adolescents focused on understanding healthy close and intimate friendships, while among the older students with whom we worked (grades 7–8), adolescents focused on identifying harmful dynamics in close and intimate friendships and early romantic relationships. In grade 8, there was also a focus on willingness to take action and make personal decisions regarding specific relationships.

Community Engagement and Partnerships

The Women's Crisis Shelter Association works to raise awareness of violence against women and improve the services and responses available to women affected by violence and their children.

- Participation in the Forum of NGO's Operating Shelters, which works to advance issues related to the protection and treatment of women affected by violence and their children.
- Participation in national discussions on violence against women at the Knesset Committee on the Advancement of the Status of Women and Gender Equality; membership in the steering committee and subcommittees initiated by Kavim Adumim and others.
- Participation in the Haifa municipal forum of organizations working to combat violence against women, including delivering a lecture on intimate-partner violence to Haifa Municipality employees.
- Hosting medical and social work students and introducing them to the phenomenon of violence against women and the response provided by the shelter to women and children.
- Lectures and workshops on intimate-partner violence.
- Hosting social workers from the communities who refer women to the shelter, in order to strengthen familiarity with the characteristics of shelter operations and strengthen collaboration between shelters and the communities that refer women to them.

Thank You to All Our Partners in This Work

- **The dedicated and professional shelter team**
- **The Association Board of Directors**
- **The Association Audit Committee**
- **Volunteers and national-service volunteers**
- **The Ministry of Welfare, which supports our work professionally and financially**
- **Social organizations that share our goals and work**
- **Wonderful donors – foundations, companies, and individuals**

