

Where is the Support System? Project:

# POST-SEXUAL VIOLENCE SUPPORT SERVICES

2025 Monitoring and Evaluation Report





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## Foreword



As the Association for Struggle Against Sexual Violence (CSMD), we approach sexual and sexualized violence not as a problem that can be reduced to individual experiences, but as a systematic field of human rights violations embedded in structural inequalities. From this perspective, we define the struggle against sexual violence not merely as an area confined to post-violence intervention, but as a rights-based process that encompasses prevention, the empowerment of survivors of violence and their close circles, and the enabling of effective access to rights.

CSMD's accumulated experience with applications over the years has revealed a clear reality: a significant proportion of survivors of sexual violence are left alone within existing post-violence support mechanisms, are unable to access adequate information, may encounter victim-blaming attitudes, and are often forced to navigate the process on their own without knowing where or how to seek support. This condition of structural isolation and uncertainty can become as severe and re-traumatizing as the violence itself.

The Association's support work has been shaped directly by the lived experiences of survivors who applied to CSMD, as well as by a structurally observed need in the field. Within this framework, the "Where is the Support System?" (Destek Sistemi Nerede - DSN) Project was designed to support survivors, enable the establishment of safe relationships, help them feel that they are not alone, and facilitate access to information and support mechanisms in line with their own needs. The project was conceived not as a structure that tells survivors what they should do, but as a trauma-informed support space that centers survivors' autonomy, pace, and boundaries in decision-making processes.

Today, within the scope of the DSN Project, we work with survivors and their close circles who reach the Association via phone and email, grounded in the principles of trust, confidentiality, and non-maleficence. Throughout the support process, we do not direct survivors' narratives, do not pressure them, and deliberately avoid re-traumati-

zing practices. Our aim is to accompany survivors in making sense of the violence they have experienced in their own words and at their own pace, recognizing their rights, and making informed, autonomous, and self-determined decisions among available support options.

As CSMD, we have been providing post-sexual violence support services since 2015. However, it was only as of 2020 that these efforts could be systematized and developed into a traceable and institutionalized structure. From that point onward, we took significant steps toward systematically recording applications, establishing a data infrastructure, and ensuring that support processes are carried out by qualified professionals competent in trauma-informed approaches, thereby forming our Support Unit. Launched in 2019, the [csdestek.org](https://csdestek.org) platform has since become a key digital support tool, enabling survivors to access information safely and at their own pace.

From this period onward, our Support Unit evolved a mere increase in capacity into a structure in which trauma-informed standards were explicitly defined and a rights-based social service approach was institutionally deepened. The growing climate of insecurity following Türkiye's withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention rendered the Support Unit an even more critical point of contact for survivors. During this time, DSN took shape not merely as a referral line, but as a support space where survivors could rebuild a sense of control, recognize their rights, and feel that they were not alone.

In recent years, in response to the diversification of applicant profiles and the increasing complexity of applications, we have sought to strengthen our monitoring and evaluation tools. Our focus throughout this process has been to make the impact of the trauma-informed support we provide to survivors more visible, measurable, and open to further development. The counseling work carried out during this period demonstrated that survivors need not only access to available services, but also the establishment of a safe relationship and a support environment in which they can feel understood. Applications revealed that open, transparent, and collaborative access to information reduces feelings of uncertainty and isolation, while strengthening survivors' capacity to make their own decisions and manage the process. Throughout our work in 2025, we experienced that the way CSMD works together with survivors is itself a source of strength for us. At times, we received applications beyond our capacity; nevertheless, we continued to assess each case individually, address needs on a

case-by-case basis, and manage processes holistically. Despite the density, we prioritized maintaining service quality, and, rather than rigidly standardizing application processes, re-thinking them anew for each survivor. We made decisions together with survivors, set the pace of the process according to their needs, and sustained this approach consistently. This practice strengthened the trust relationship we built with survivors and reinforced CSMD's rights-based stance.

Throughout all these experiences, we maintained team solidarity, flexibility, and a shared ethical framework. Continuing to work in line with these principles despite limited resources and increasing application volumes has nourished not only the continuity of services but also CSMD's institutional resilience.

The “Post-Sexual Violence Support Services: 2025 Monitoring and Evaluation Report” you are holding examines one year of the Support Unit’s operations through application profiles, areas of need, and the impacts of the support process on survivors. For us, this report is not merely an evaluation, but also part of an institutional learning process that learns from survivors’ experiences, upholds accountability, and aims to build safer support systems.

As CSMD, we reiterate once more: trauma-informed, inclusive, safe, accessible, and rights-based support systems are indispensable in the struggle against sexual violence. Survivors are not alone; seeking support is always, under all circumstances, a right!

“Where is the Support System?” Project Team

# Notes on the Findings



This report presents the monitoring and evaluation findings of the support services provided via phone and email throughout 2025 under the “Where is the Support System?” (Destek Sistemi Nerede? - DSN) Project implemented by the Association for Struggle Against Sexual Violence (CSMD). The study examines how survivors of sexual violence and their close circles’ engagement with the support line has affected their access to information, their capacity to name and make sense of violence, their psychosocial empowerment, and their ability to sustain engagement with support processes. The report seeks to make visible how the support system functions not merely as a referral mechanism, but as a safe, rights-based space of contact.

## 1- Scope and Context of the Evaluation

Değerlendirme, 1 Mart – 5 Aralık 2025 tarihleri arasında DSN destek hattına yapılan başvurulara dayanmaktadır. Bu dönemde haftanın sınırlı günlerinde hizmet veren destek hattı aracılığıyla toplam 61 başvuru alınmıştır. Çalışma; başvuru verilerinin analizi, hayatı kalanlar ve yakınlarıyla yapılan derinlemesine görüşmeler ve çevrimiçi anket uygulamasıyla yürütülmüş; nitel ve nicel yöntemler birlikte kullanılmıştır. Tüm araştırma süreci gizlilik, güvenlik ve zarar vermemeye ilkeleri doğrultusunda tasarlanmıştır.

### Key impacts of the support process on survivors

- **Increased access to rights-based information and predictability:**

Contact with the support line enhanced survivors’ knowledge of which institutions they could apply to, under what conditions, and within which rights framework. This enabled the process to be perceived not as an insoluble crisis, but as a manageable and rights-based pathway.

- **Strengthened capacity to name and make sense of violence:**

The support process, conducted without establishing hierarchies among different forms of violence, enabled survivors to interpret their experiences not as individual failures but as structural human rights violations. This reframing alleviated feelings of guilt and shame and reduced internal barriers to seeking support.

- **Psychosocial empowerment and reduced feelings of isolation:**

Experiences of being understood, not judged, and taken seriously diminished survivors' sense of loneliness and isolation, strengthened feelings of safety and psychological resilience, and increased motivation to continue with support and healing processes.

- **Development of solidarity and collective responsibility:**

For some survivors, the support process extended beyond individual empowerment, fostering an inclination to build solidarity with other survivors and to situate their experiences within a broader collective struggle for rights.

## 2- Process Evaluation

- **Establishment of a Safe Space:** Nearly all participants reported feeling completely safe throughout the process. Confidentiality and ethical principles constitute the cornerstone of the project.

- **Trauma-Informed Approach:** A robust documentation and case-tracking system, which prevents survivors from having to repeatedly recount their experiences, emerged as one of the most critical protective mechanisms for minimizing re-traumatization.

- **Facilitating Role:** Rather than adopting a “directive” stance, experts assumed a “facilitative” role that supported survivors’ autonomy by helping them identify their own needs.

## 3- Structural Findings and Areas of Improvement

- **Access Limitations:** The support line being operated by a single expert and within limited working hours can lead to temporary access difficulties during peak periods. This is not treated as a shortcoming, but as an institutional capacity boundary designed to safeguard expert well-being and ensure the sustainability of support services.

- **Legal Counseling:** While the clarity of the legal information provided is highly valued, the service being limited to “legal counseling” may create perceptual tension for some survivors who expect legal representation or case follow-up. This highlights the need to communicate the scope and limits of the service more clearly, transparently, and accessibly from the outset. Hukuki bilginin netliği takdir edilmekle birlikte, sunulan hizmetin “danışmanlık” ile sınırlı olması, bazı hayatta kalanlarda “temsil/dava takibi” bekłentisi nedeniyle algısal bir kırılganlık yaratmaktadır.

In conclusion, the 2025 data demonstrate that the support line transforms survivors from passive recipients into active rights-holders who seek and exercise their rights, and that it constitutes an indispensable instrument of social transformation in the struggle against sexual violence.

# Introduction



Since its establishment, the Association for Struggle Against Sexual Violence has carried out multi-layered work aimed at drawing attention to the structural dimensions of gender inequality and sexual/sexualized violence, contributing to the prevention of these forms of violence, and strengthening survivors of sexual violence. The Association's work does not focus solely on increasing the visibility of sexual violence; it also prioritizes the construction of safe, accessible, and sustainable support mechanisms that enable survivors' effective access to rights. Within this framework, the support and referral systems developed by CSMD are grounded in a rights-based approach that goes beyond treating sexual violence as an individual experience or an isolated incident, instead recognizing it as a human rights violation embedded within social, institutional, and political contexts.

The database developed as a result of years of empowerment and support work, together with independent monitoring and evaluation tools, enables the regular and systematic observation of how the support system functions. This infrastructure renders visible application profiles, areas of need, and the impacts of the support process on survivors. In this respect, the support system functions not only as a line responding to individual applications, but also as a mechanism that generates knowledge on structural problems in the field of combating sexual violence and contributes to policy development. To meaningfully assess the impact of these efforts, it is essential to situate the year 2025 within the broader context of sexual/sexualized violence.

## **Waves of Disclosure, Political Context, and the Importance of Support Systems**

In recent years, the increased public visibility of sexual violence experiences through waves of disclosure has constituted a significant turning point in the field of combatting sexual violence. Disclosures have exposed the prevalence, continuity, and structural character of sexual violence, often intertwined with impunity, while simultaneously revealing the limitations of existing justice and support mechanisms. For survivors, disclosure frequently emerges as a means of seeking justice in the face of inadequate formal mechanisms, of making one's voice heard, and of feeling less alone.

However, when disclosure processes are not accompanied by strong and safe support mechanisms, they carry the potential to generate new risks and secondary harms for survivors. Legal uncertainty, institutional neglect, targeting, digital violence, and

re-traumatization are among the experiences frequently encountered in the aftermath of disclosure. This demonstrates that an approach focusing solely on disclosure itself is insufficient in the struggle against sexual violence. Rather, it underscores the vital importance of safe, rights-based support systems that can respond to disclosure processes and are shaped in line with survivors' needs.

CSMD's support system assumes a critical role precisely at this juncture. In periods when waves of disclosure intensify, the increase in applications to the support system indicates that survivors seek safe forms of support alongside public visibility. Indeed, the marked rise in applications to the support line observed in September 2025 should be assessed in conjunction with the disclosure waves that gained prominence during the same period. This increase suggests that disclosures do not constitute a "solution" in themselves; instead, they function as a threshold that directs survivors toward support systems.

## **The “Year of the Family”, Intensifying Climate of Pressure, and Intersectional Impacts**

The declaration of 2025 as the “Year of the Family” further complicated the political context shaping the field of combating sexual violence. In a period marked by the strengthening of family-centered social policy discourses, the risk of rendering sexual violence, particularly violence occurring within the family as a rights violation, invisible has increased. While the family is often idealized as a protective and safe structure, it can also become a space where sexual violence is concealed, survivors are pressured into silence, efforts to seek support are obstructed. In this context, it is critically important that support systems operate not through normative, family-centered approaches, but through a perspective that prioritizes survivors' autonomy, safety, and rights.

This political climate produces particularly severe consequences for LGBTI+ survivors. In recent years, increasing discriminatory rhetoric, institutional exclusion, and heteronormative policy preferences have both heightened LGBTI+ individuals' risk of exposure to sexual violence and significantly restricted their access to support mechanisms. LGBTI+ survivors are often compelled to confront not only sexual violence itself, but also systematic discrimination based on their identities. This reveals that sexual violence is reproduced not solely through individual perpetrators, but also through normative family frameworks, heteronormative policies, and institutional neglect.

Within this context, CSMD aims to facilitate survivors' and their close circles' access to legal, psychological, and social support through its empowerment-oriented work. Referral and information activities conducted via phone, email, and online platforms are carried out through a trauma-informed approach that centers survivors' needs and prioritizes confidentiality and safety. Thanks to data collection, monitoring, and evaluation mechanisms developed over the years, the functioning of the support system is regularly monitored, and both its strengths and areas for improvement are made visible.

## Scope of the Report

CSMD carries out its referral and support work for survivors of sexual violence and their close circles within the scope of the “Where is the Support System?” (Destek Sistemi Nerede? – DSN) Project. The Association's post-sexual violence support work is based on a referral and information system designed to facilitate survivors' and their close circles' access to legal, psychological, and social support they need through direct applications to the Association via phone and email.

Activities under the project are implemented by a team consisting of a project coordinator, a social worker, and a lawyer. The team providing direct support is reinforced through regular supervision in order to ensure that the assistance delivered to survivors is ethical, trauma-informed, and contextually appropriate. The supervision mechanism enables consultation with a second professional opinion when necessary and allows for the early identification and management of potential secondary trauma risks affecting the team.

In addition to the DSN Project, the Association produces and disseminates informative and empowering content on combating sexual violence through the [csdestek.org](http://csdestek.org) website. However, this report is limited to the evaluation of referral support provided via phone and email within the scope of the DSN Project. Content published on the [csdestek.org](http://csdestek.org) website and data related to its use are not included in the evaluation. Accordingly, the report focuses not on the Association's digital content production and information access activities, but on the functioning, accessibility, and impact of the referral processes carried out through the support line, which involves direct contact with survivors.

Within the scope of referral support, survivors and their close circles can reach the As-

sociation via phone, email, and online channels. Applications are received by professionals with expertise in this field and are referred to appropriate legal, psychological, and social support services based on identified needs. The referral process goes beyond the mere provision of information and is conducted through a trauma-informed approach that aims to enable survivors to evaluate their options, make decisions in line with their own needs, and feel strengthened throughout support processes.

Within this framework, the report examines the ways in which survivors and their close circles access the support line, the needs addressed through referral processes, and the empowering impact of referral support from a rights-based perspective. It aims to make visible both the strengths of this component of the DSN Project and the areas requiring further development.

## Research Methodology, Scope, and Limitations



This study was designed to examine the impact of the support system implemented by the Association for Struggle Against Sexual Violence (CSMD) in 2025 and adopts a mixed-method research approach. In order to enable comparability with methods used in previous impact assessments, qualitative and quantitative research techniques were employed in combination. Accordingly, in-depth interviews, an online survey, and desk-based research methods were utilized.

For the qualitative component of the study, in-depth interviews were conducted using the contact information on record for survivors of sexual violence and their close circles who had reached the Association through the support line. Prior to the commencement of the interview process, support line professionals contacted the relevant individuals to provide information about the purpose, scope, and confidentiality principles of the research and to obtain preliminary consent for participation. Following this stage, one-to-one in-depth interviews were carried out in line with the interviewee list determined by the research team. In total, in-depth interviews were conducted with **eight** participants.

For the quantitative component, the survey questionnaire prepared for survivors and their close circles who had contacted the support system via telephone and email

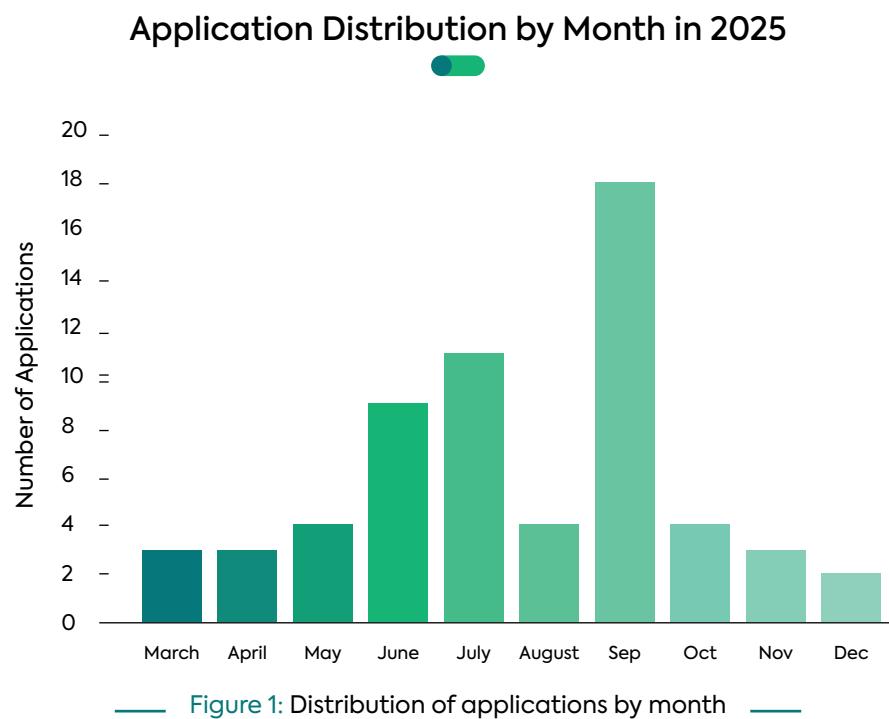
was transferred to an online format. **The survey was sent to a total of 25 individuals** whose contact information included an email address, **of whom 13 completed the questionnaire**. The survey enabled an assessment of the impact of the support system on survivors and their close circles within a broader analytical framework.

All data used in the research process were handled in accordance with principles of confidentiality and security. Personal information belonging to survivors and their close circles was anonymized by the Association's team, and demographic data and application-related information were shared with the independent researcher in this anonymized form for research purposes. This approach was intended both to safeguard the safety and privacy of survivors and to ensure that the research was conducted in compliance with ethical standards.

## Applicant Profile and Demographic Distribution

This evaluation is based on applications received by the Association for Struggle Against Sexual Violence (CSMD) between **1 March and 5 December 2025**. During this period, a total of 61 applications were received through the support line, which operated only three days per week (Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday). Application volumes throughout the year were directly influenced both by broader social agendas and by structural conditions affecting the accessibility of the support line.

An examination of the monthly distribution of applications indicates that the number of applications remained limited during the early months of the year. Three applications were received in March and April, and four in May. A notable increase was observed in June (9) and July (11). In August, the number of applications declined to four; this increase is assessed to be linked to the support line being closed for a two-week period. In September, applications rose sharply to 18, marking the highest monthly total of the year. This increase is considered to be directly related to waves of public disclosures that gained visibility during the same period. In October (4), November (3), and December (2), application numbers declined again. The support line being closed for three weeks in November and the availability of data only for the first week of December were the primary factors influencing this distribution.



As can also be observed in the chart in Figure 1, applications increased markedly in September, reaching the highest level recorded during the year. This trend is associated with the intensification of **#MeToo** and similar disclosure processes in the public sphere and was also confirmed by research participants. While disclosures contribute to raising societal awareness of the prevalence of sexual violence, they simultaneously make visible survivors' needs for support and referral. This increase demonstrates that disclosures is not merely a practice of visibility; rather, it functions as a threshold that prompts survivors to seek safe, rights-based, and accessible support mechanisms. At the same time, the chart also shows that application numbers decline during periods when the accessibility of the support line is limited.



I found the strength to demand more from my life through the wave of disclosures. The political atmosphere gave me the sense that I can ask questions, that I might be left alone, but that despite this I can still take action. The fact that these issues started to be openly discussed gave me a sense of resilience. **(Survivor)**



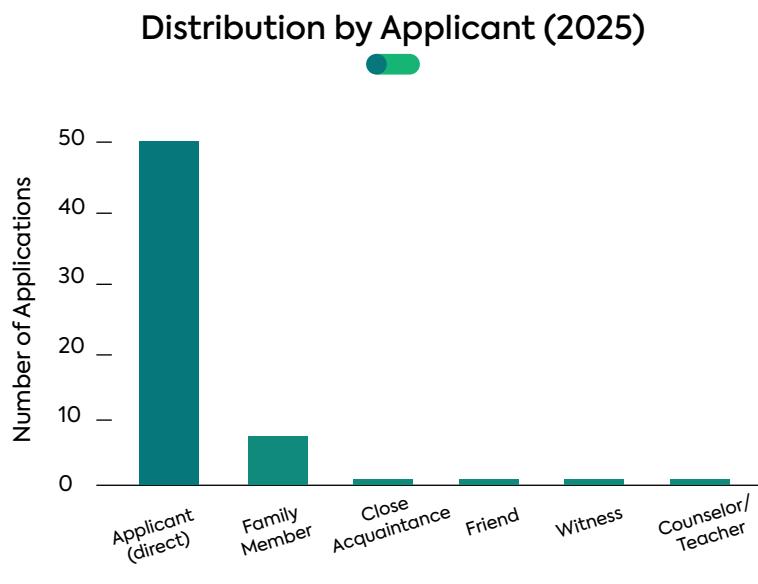
The biggest impact for me was being able to name it. I returned to writing, I returned to my work after years. There were things I had been holding onto for years, and I completed them. I remembered how I occupied space in

this life and went back to those parts of myself. These had been taken away from me, and now they are coming back. I was almost nonexistent; now I am taking up space in life again. Disclosures played a major role in this, I returned to expressing myself. **(Survivor)**

 I first talked to a friend. There were disclosures happening at the time, and my friend was actively working on these issues. Through their guidance, I found you. I had been looking for a way even before the disclosures, but the disclosures played a significant role in motivating me to reach out to my friend. **(Survivor)**

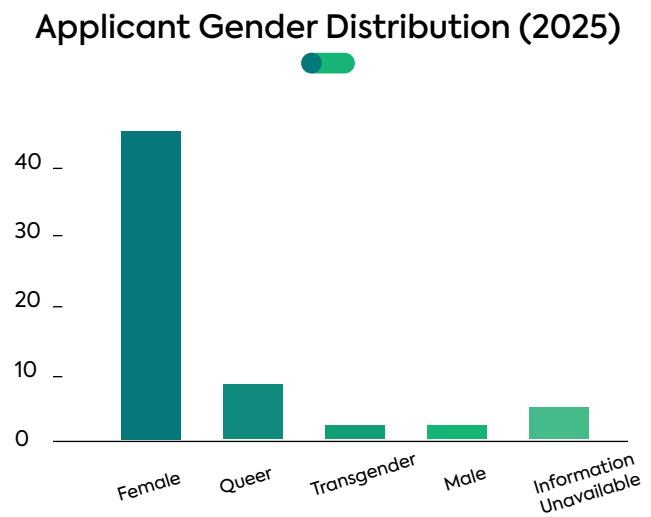
 So to speak, I had left it fallow; I had swept it under the rug, I tried to forget it for years, thinking there was nothing I could do. But after the disclosures, everything I tried to forget came back to me. I thought: this process has encouraged me; this person is still working, they may still be harming others. I may be silent, but perhaps there is something I can do. Maybe a report could be filed, maybe it could support someone else's complaint. Even if I can't do something for myself, maybe something could change for others. **(Survivor)**

An analysis of application channels based on database records shows that the majority of applications were made **by phone (38 individuals)**, while **23 applications were submitted via email**. Although data on how applicants became aware of CSMD are limited, it was identified that **6 applicants found the Association through social media** and **9 through acquaintances**. For 46 applicants, however, information regarding the channel through which they learned about the Association could not be obtained. In terms of who submitted the applications, **the vast majority (50 individuals) were made directly by survivors of sexual violence**. In addition **7 applications were submitted by family members**, while **one application each was submitted by a close acquaintance, a friend, a witness, and a counselor/teacher**. This distribution indicates that the support system is primarily used by survivors themselves, while also reflecting a limited but notable need for third-party applications.



— Figure 2: Applicant-1 —

Applicants were not asked directly about their gender when contacting the support line. Information on gender identity was recorded solely on the basis of personal statement. An analysis of the recorded data shows that **most applications were made by women (44)**. In addition, **8 queer, 2 transgender, and 2 male applicants** were recorded, while gender information could not be obtained for 5 applications. This distribution makes visible the gendered dimensions of sexual violence.



— Figure 3: Applicant-2 —

Regarding age distribution, a substantial majority of applicants fell within the **18-30 age range (48 individuals)**, while **13 applications were made by individuals aged 30-65**. This suggests that access to the support system is higher among younger age groups, whereas applications from older age groups remain comparatively limited.

An examination of geographic distribution shows that **İstanbul stands out with 20 applications**. **Applications for which city information could not be obtained constitute the second-largest group (14)**. Applications were also received from **Ankara (5)**, **İzmir (4)**, **Muğla (2)**, and **Antalya (2)**. Single applications were recorded from Balıkesir, Bursa, Erzincan, Kahramanmaraş, Kayseri, Malatya, Osmaniye, Sakarya, Sivas, and Yalova, as well as from abroad (Canada, Northern Cyprus, Egypt, and other cases where the country information could not be obtained). This distribution indicates that the support system is accessed primarily from large metropolitan areas, while also receiving applications from various other cities and from abroad. The presence of individual applications from different regions and countries suggests that, although geographically limited, the support system has a dispersed reach. At the same time, this pattern points to the greater accessibility of support mechanisms in major cities and underscores the need to strengthen access for survivors living in other regions.

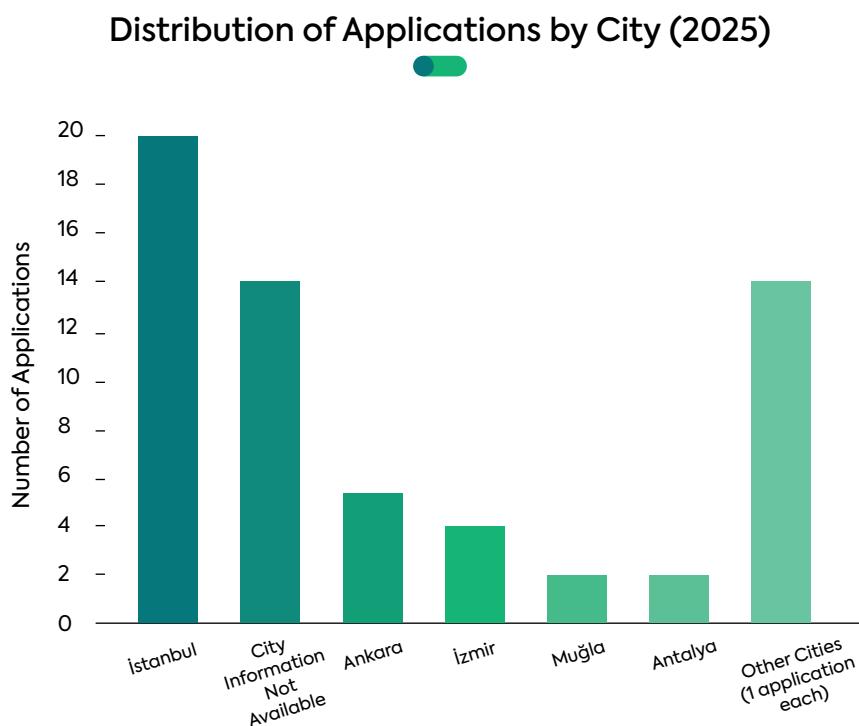


Figure 4: Applicant-3

When application reasons are examined, **sexual harassment (22)** and **sexual assault (12)** emerge as the most frequently reported forms of violence. These are followed by other categories (8), childhood sexual abuse (6), stalking and threats (4), digital/on-line sexual violence (3), sexual abuse (3), gender-based mobbing (2), dating violence (1). This distribution demonstrates that applications to the support system encompass a wide range of forms of violence and that survivors seek support on the basis of diverse experiences.

Distribution by Application Reasons (2025)

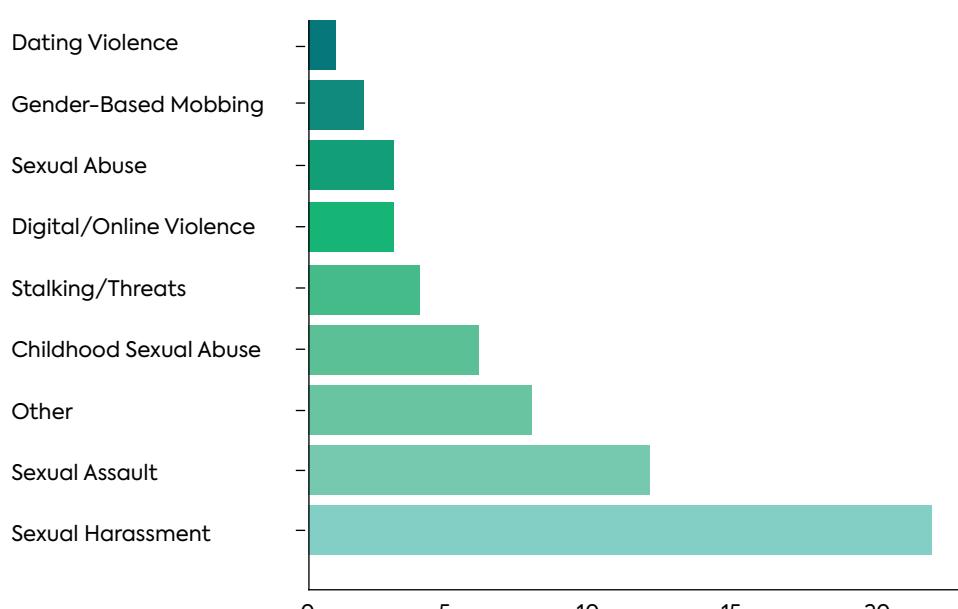


Figure 5: Reason of application

## Impact of the Support System on Survivors

### Survivors' Knowledge Level Increases

#### Increased Knowledge of Application Mechanisms

The research demonstrates that contact with the support line functions for beneficiaries not merely as a form of crisis intervention, but also as a **process of knowledge**.

**edge-based empowerment.** According to feedback received from all 13 participants, the vast majority reported that, through the support line, they gained clarity regarding which institutions they could apply to and which free sources, particularly legal and psychological services, they could access.

All participants (100%) stated that, following contact with the support line, **they became aware of the availability of free legal and psychological counseling services.**



For me, the most important contribution was moral support. You came into my life at a moment when I was desperately seeking help. Thanks to you, I understood the legal framework. You also helped me establish contact with other NGOs. **(Survivor)**



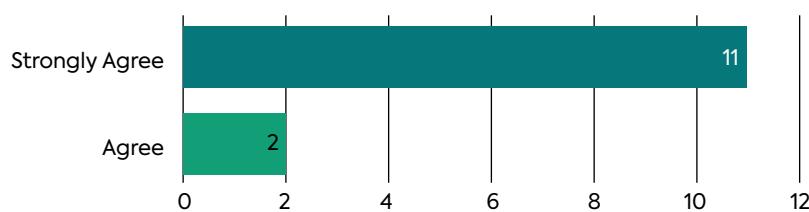
Thanks to this support, I realized how important it is to work with a lawyer. The biggest impact is that we now have a lawyer. Legal counseling helped me understand the legal system better. **(Survivor)**



Thanks to this support, I realized how important it is to work with a lawyer.

The biggest impact is that we now have a lawyer.

Legal counseling helped me understand the legal system better.

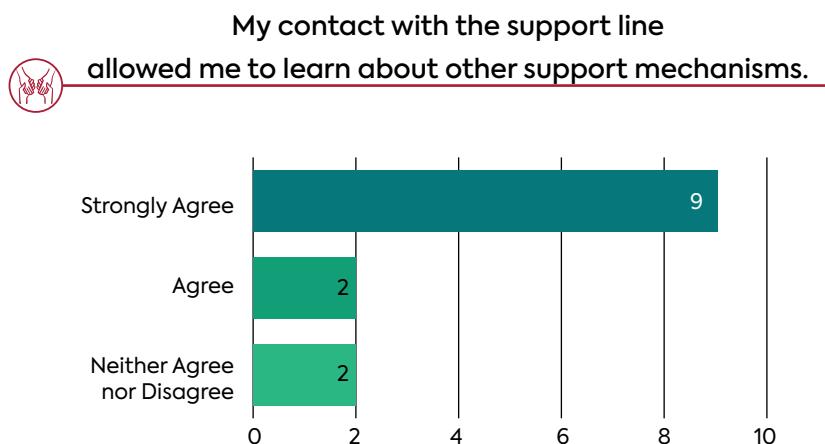


— **Figure 6:** Empowerment regarding free support mechanisms-1 —

Approximately 92% of participants (12 individuals) reported that they now have a clearer understanding of which institutions or individuals they can turn to in the future when they need support.

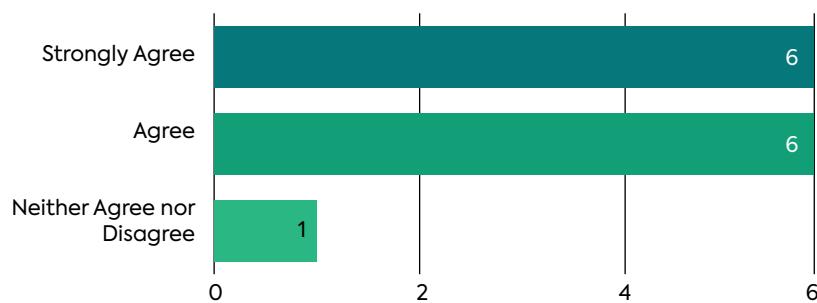


The open communication I encountered on the line was very important. Many civil society organizations were mentioned, and I was put in contact with them. The support line expert took initiative and was flexible in communication tools. This flexibility and openness made a major difference. I felt stronger; being informed about other civil society organizations also made me feel empowered, and I received support from the organizations introduced by the line expert. **(Survivor)**



— **Figure 7:** Empowerment regarding free support mechanisms-2 —

**After speaking with the support line, I now know more clearly which institutions/ individuals I can contact when I need help.**



— **Figure 8:** Empowerment regarding free support mechanisms-2 —

## Increased Knowledge of Rights

The support process enhanced participants' capacity in relation to understanding their own rights. More than 85% of participants (11 individuals) confirmed that this contact increased their level of knowledge about their rights. In addition, participants reported becoming aware of alternative sources of information through which they could learn about their rights more effectively. Over 80% provided positive feedback regarding becoming informed about different information sources, such as [csdestek.org](http://csdestek.org) and written materials.



We currently have a volunteer lawyer, whom we found through the support system's referral, this was the biggest impact. We now have a lawyer. We also understood what might happen legally and what our options were when we spoke with the legal counselor. **(Survivor)**



We don't know the procedures. I'm not a legal professional, and I had no idea what I could do in this context. Through [the support line], I understood that I could consult a lawyer and take certain steps. **(Survivor)**



We talked about what I could do legally – what can be done, how it is done. What can I do, what can they do? What can the Association do= They first listened, then the legal counselor became involved and followed the process. For example, I learned about statutes of limitation and how much time can pass before a case becomes time-barred, which was very important. People who apply to the Association are looking for a way forward, and I was the same. Being referred to a legal counselor was critical. We discussed the details of the process I needed to follow. **(Survivor)**

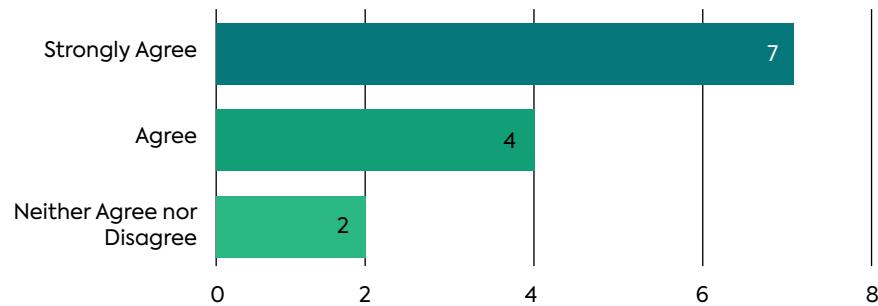
My contact with the support line made me aware of different information sources ([csdestek.org](http://csdestek.org) and written materials, etc.) regarding combating sexual violence.



— Figure 9: Having knowledge about rights —

My contact with the support line  
made me aware of different information sources

([csdestek.org](http://csdestek.org) and written materials, etc.) regarding combating sexual violence.



— Figure 10: Having knowledge about rights —

## Capacity to Understand and Be Aware of Violence Increases

Another core outcome of contact with the Association for Struggle Against Sexual Violence support line is that it enables survivors **to reinterpret their experiences through a rights-based perspective** and to develop self-awareness regarding this process.

## Naming and Understanding the Experience

One of the most critical thresholds in the aftermath of violence is being able to define what has been experienced as “violence.” A large majority of survivors (69%) reported that, following their contact with the support line, their awareness increased in terms of understanding and making sense of the violence they had experienced. This process of meaning-making helped individuals overcome internal barriers to “seeking support” and raised their level of awareness in this regard.

After contacting the support line, my awareness increased regarding understanding the violence I was experiencing and seeking support.

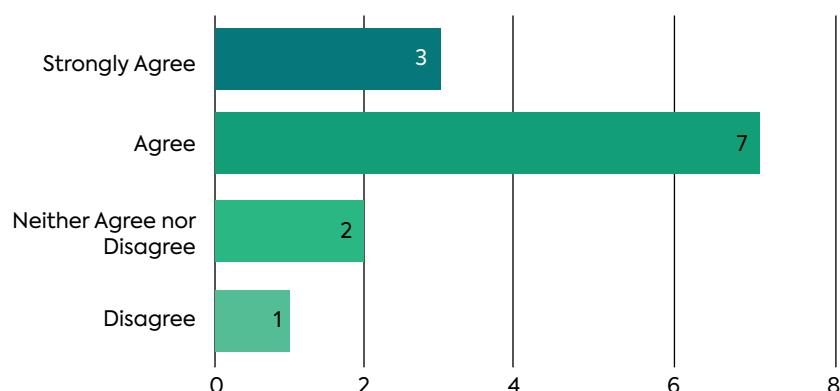


Figure 11: The capacity to make sense of violence-1



I called CSMD to make sense of what I had been through. When I called, I didn't really know what to say, but I knew the Association. When I was triggered during the disclosure process, calling the Association was the first thing that came to mind. I don't know exactly why or how I decided to call, but I did. I called simply to get help. In that first conversation, I wanted to understand what I had experienced, what was its name. While talking, I realized that I was describing psychological violence as if it were less important. Hearing the support line expert say that there is no hierarchy among forms of violence was very relieving for me. **(Survivor)**



There was no time limitation. On the one hand, I wanted to tell a lot; on the other hand, I was very anxious about whether I was unfairly taking someone else's place. When I cried while talking, I thought, "Am I being too much of a burden right now?" During the support, we were trying to find names for what I had experienced, but actually that wasn't what I was looking for. I was looking to be understood, in and of itself. I realized this when I understood that what I wanted was to be understood. After hanging up the phone and continuing my life, I realized that the names of violence exist mainly for mechanisms of power, and that what really matters is what happens to the body. **(Survivor)**

## Awareness of Systemic Violence

Positioning individual experience within a broader social context is a factor that alleviates feelings of loneliness and guilt among survivors. 54% of participants stated that, through contact with the support line, they developed a new understanding of the scope and prevalence of sexual violence. This increase in awareness opened the way for individuals to see what they experienced not merely as a personal incident, but as a social phenomenon and a rights violation that requires collective struggle.

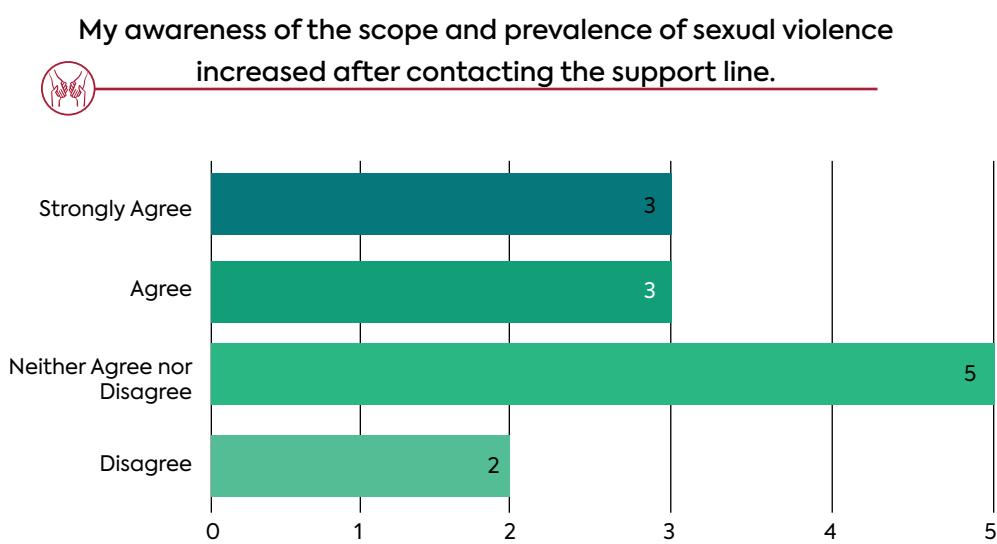


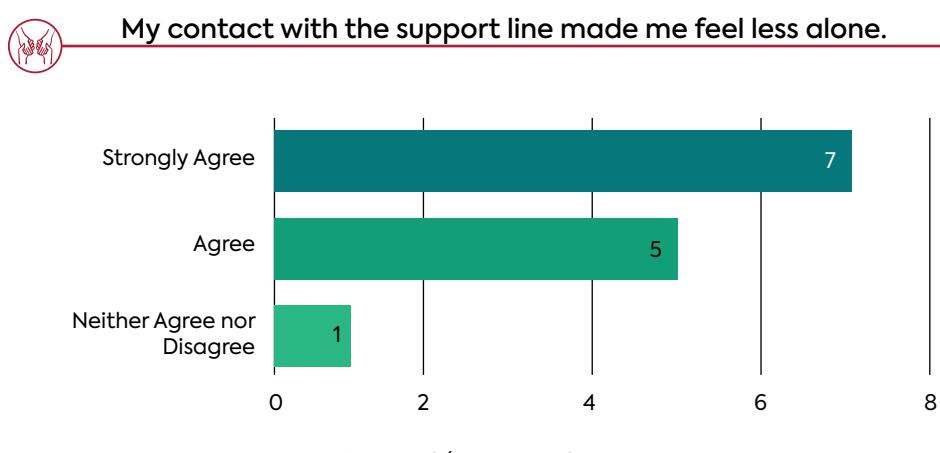
Figure 12: The capacity to make sense of violence-2

The information obtained after contacting the support line enabled survivors to make sense of their experiences. Moreover, the emerging awareness that sexual violence is not a personal issue but a structural one strengthened the understanding that taking action at the end of this process is a form of social responsibility. The increase in participants' knowledge of their rights became the most significant reference point in the process of understanding the violence they experienced. By recognizing the existence of free support resources such as legal and psychological services, survivors began to reframe their experiences not as an "unsolvable crisis," but as a "manageable situation in which rights can be claimed."

## Transition from "I Am Not Alone" to the Idea of Solidarity

### Reduced Feeling of Loneliness

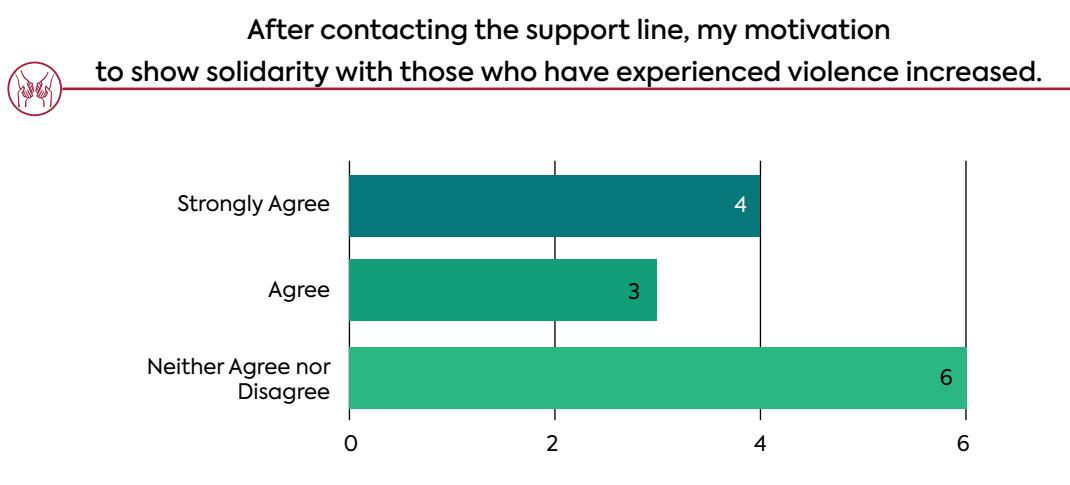
Contact with the CSMD support line does not remain limited to an increase in survivors' cognitive capacities or the acquisition of mental awareness alone; it also reduces the sense of loneliness (social isolation), which constitutes one of the most severe consequences of violence, and relocates the individual within a framework of collective solidarity. The reduction of the sense of "loneliness" experienced in the aftermath of violence represents the most critical psychosocial threshold prior to the transformation of awareness into action. Nearly all research participants (92%) stated that contact with the support line made them feel less alone. This theme also emerged as the most frequently emphasized issue in the in-depth interviews.



-  When I was applying, I did not have an aim such as receiving legal support, but if CSMD had not existed, I would have continued to feel alone and to think my hands were tied. **(Survivor)**
-  It made me feel good because I thought I was completely alone. For me, it was not something I could tell anyone. I shared it for the first time, and it gave me strength. I could not reach an outcome due to circumstances related to me, but they made me feel very clearly that I was not alone. Since then, I have always recommended it to people who have experienced similar situations. **(Survivor)**
-  Making the application made me feel that I was not alone, and receiving free support was incredibly beneficial for me. **(Survivor)**
-  If I had not applied, I would have been completely alone. Since I did not receive this level of support from any of my friends or family, I would have become an utterly lonesome, isolated woman. **(Survivor)**
-  I felt that there was someone who understood me, who tried to help me psychologically, and who spoke with me seriously. **(Survivor)**
-  Wanting to be understood... This changed everything for me. Not wanting to be validated or soothed, but wanting to be understood. I experienced that I could want to be understood even when the world does not accept my reality, and this means a great deal to me. Thank you. If CSMD had not existed, I would probably feel a much heavier burden than I do now and would not have been able to access psychological support. **(Survivor)**

## Increased Tendency Towards Solidarity

A large proportion of survivors who, at the awareness stage, come to grasp the social prevalence of violence develop a motivation to build connections with “other survivors.” More than half of the participants (54%) reported that, following contact with the support line, their motivation to stand in solidarity with others who have experienced violence increased. The shift of the lived experience from an isolated incident to part of a collective struggle indicates that beneficiaries are reconstructing their “survivor” identity as a solidaristic subject.



Sharing what I experienced with an institution and having it listened to by the right people reduced my sense of shame. It gave me courage to take steps for myself and made me feel responsible for preventing this from happening to others in the future. **(Survivor)**



I am not sure whether it falls outside your scope, but I think it would make a significant contribution to the process if there were platforms where people at different stages – those hesitant to initiate legal proceedings, those who have already started, those receiving psychological support – could come together anonymously and share their experiences. **(Survivor)**

## Motivation to Continue the Process Increases

Contact with the CSMD support line not only enhanced individuals' mental awareness but also strengthened their capacity to remain engaged in the often lengthy and emotionally taxing process of seeking support and healing. In the aftermath of sexual violence, the pursuit of professional support (legal, psychological, and similar services) is highly susceptible to interruption due to secondary traumatization and external constraints. Approximately 54% participants (7 individuals) stated that contact with the support line increased their ability to continue with the process. The fact that 3 of these 7 respondents selected "Strongly Agree" indicates that the support provided generated a particularly strong motivational impetus for these individuals.



The process prompted me to take action. Things that were unclear in my mind became clearer. **(Survivor)**



Nothing concrete changed in my life; I was not able to initiate the process, but this was not related to the Association. I was in a very bad position, it was a very difficult period and it lasted a long time. Yet, at the point where I could no longer endure it, I realized, through you, that I could do something, that it was not the end of the world. You gave me this strength. **(Survivor)**

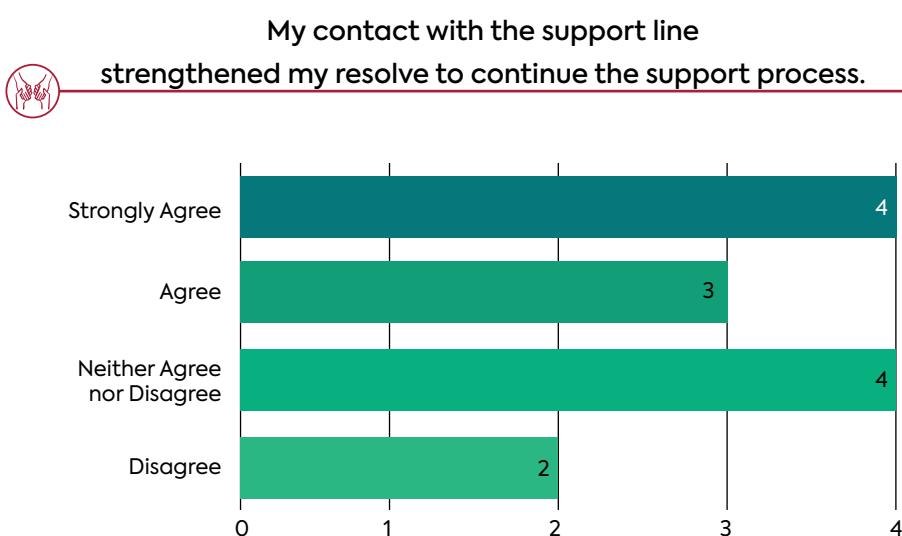


Figure 15: The strength to continue the process

# Process Evaluation



The operational process of the Association for Struggle Against Sexual Violence (CSMD) support line was examined in terms of accessibility, the construction of a safe space, and case management standards.

## Accessibility and Continuity of Communication

The continuity and immediacy of the support process, its openness to multiple communication channels, and its freedom from bureaucratic barriers are key factors that directly shape the beneficiary experience.

**Accessibility and Ease of Communication:** Among participating survivors, 77% (10 individuals) reported that they were able to reach the Association easily on their first attempt, while 61% (7 individuals) stated that they were able to contact the Association whenever needed following the initial interaction. However, some participants indicated that they experienced difficulties accessing the Association at certain times. The primary reason for this challenge was that the support line operates only on specific days of the week and is periodically required to suspend operations.



I had difficulty contacting the Association during only one period; other than that, I did not encounter any problems. **(Survivor)**



Sometimes it took time to receive a response. Since I was trying to find my way during a very critical period, this was psychologically challenging, although this may not apply to everyone. **(Survivor)**

A significant majority of participants (84%) stated that they did not have to reintroduce themselves each time they contacted the Association. This finding indicates that the Association has a robust documentation and case-tracking system in place, effectively protecting beneficiaries from the burden of having to “repeatedly recount their experiences” – a factor that carries a risk of secondary traumatization.

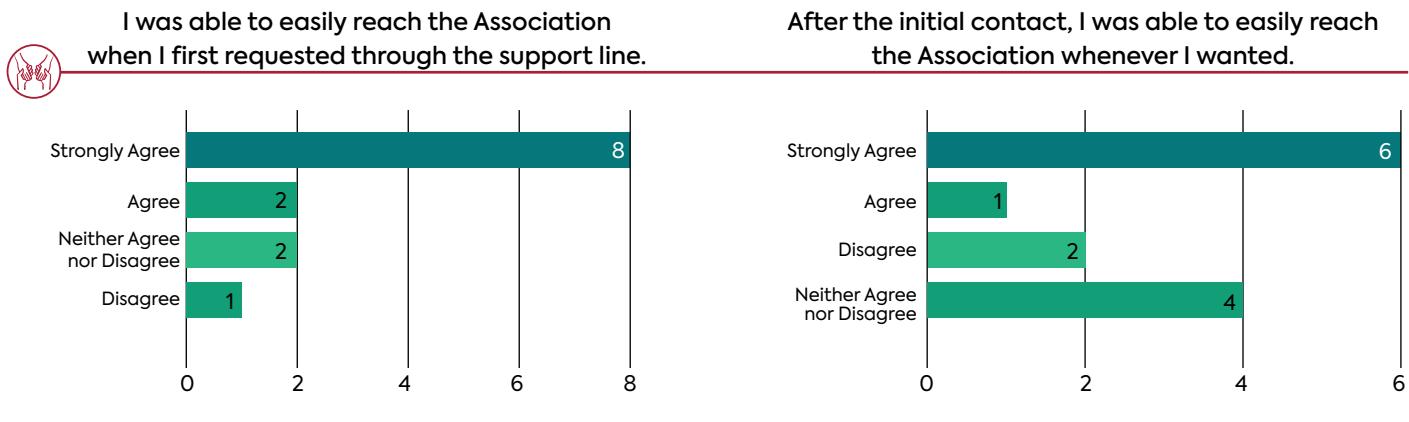


Figure 16-17: Level of accessibility

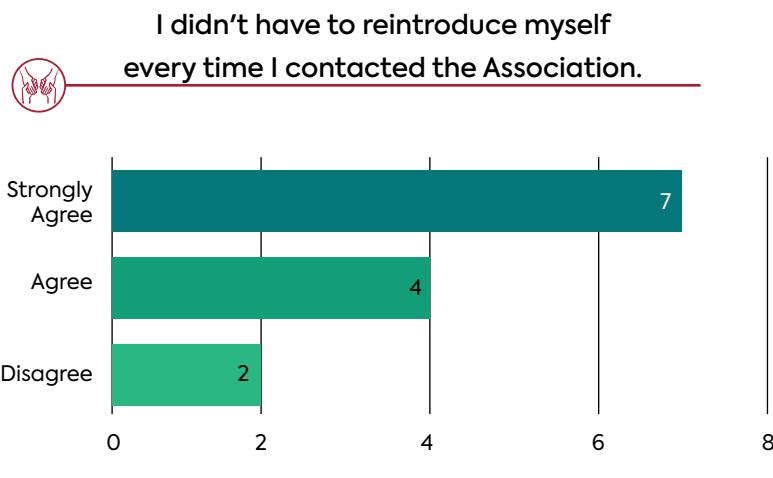


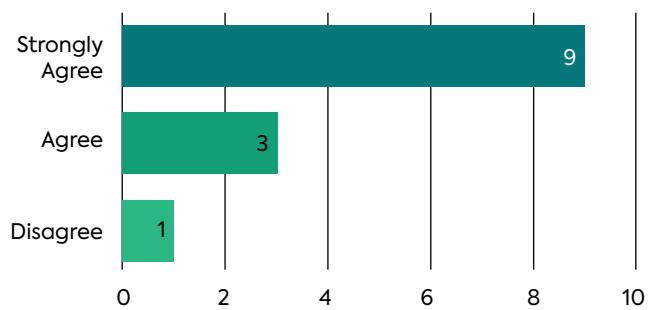
Figure 18: Process tracking

## Building a Safe Space

The fact that 12 out of 13 participants reported feeling safe throughout the process demonstrates that the referral support is grounded in ethical principles such as anonymity and the non-disclosure of information to third parties. Overall, 92% of participants stated that they felt “comfortable and safe” during the support process. This rate constitutes one of the most fundamental indicators of operational success for an organization working in the field of sexual violence. This secure and safe environment fosters emotional empowerment by reinforcing survivors’ feelings of being “understood” and “accepted.”



I felt comfortable and safe during the support process.



— Figure 19: Building a safe space —

## Support Team

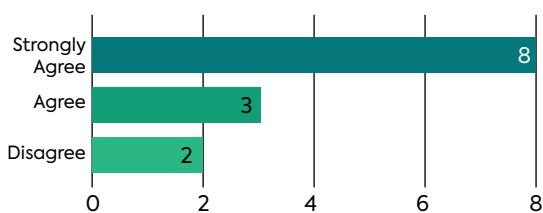
The professionalism of the support line experts in identifying beneficiaries' needs, which may at times be multiple and overlapping, and directing them to appropriate forms of support is also substantiated by the data. A total of 84% of beneficiaries reported that the support team helped them clearly identify their actual needs. This finding demonstrates that the experts assume a "facilitating" rather than a directive role. Furthermore, 92% of participants stated that they were referred to "appropriate units" in order to access the support they required.



I didn't have a specific request during the conversation, but I was referred to psychological support during the process. I said yes – it turned out this might indeed be something I needed. Being asked sincerely and truly listened to changed a lot for me. I felt as though my existence was acknowledged. **(Survivor)**

I believe I was referred to the appropriate unit(s) by the support line so that I could receive the support I needed.

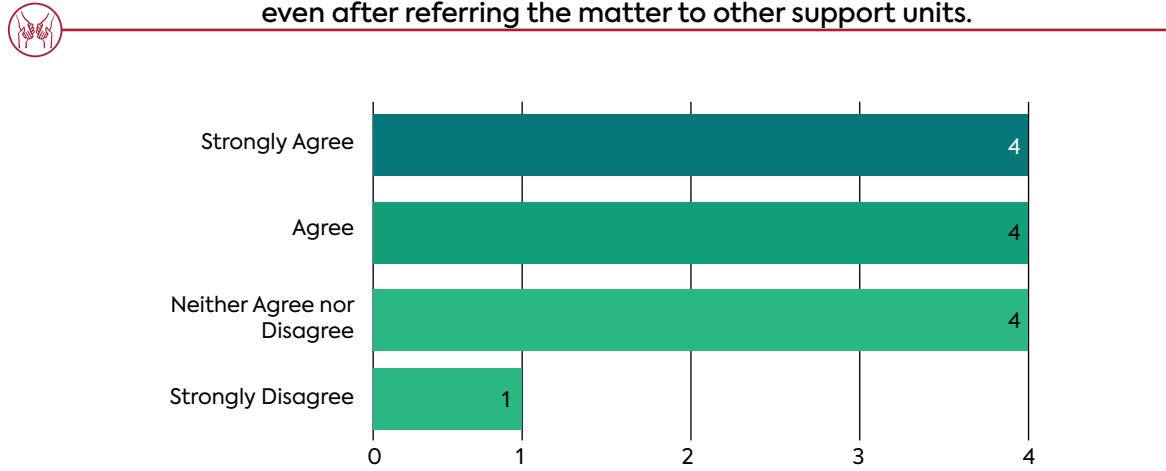
Through the referral I received from the support line, I was able to access the legal and/or psychological support I needed.



— Figure 20-21: Appropriate referral to needs —

## Case Follow-Up

The bridges the Association builds with external units (legal, psychological, etc.), as well as its follow-up of these processes, reflect a holistic support approach. While a satisfaction rate of 69% was observed regarding the post-referral follow-up stage, 31% of the participants remained neutral on this issue. This suggests that post-referral follow-up constitutes one of the Association's strong areas that remains open to further institutional development.



— Figure 22: Case follow-up —

## Legal Counseling

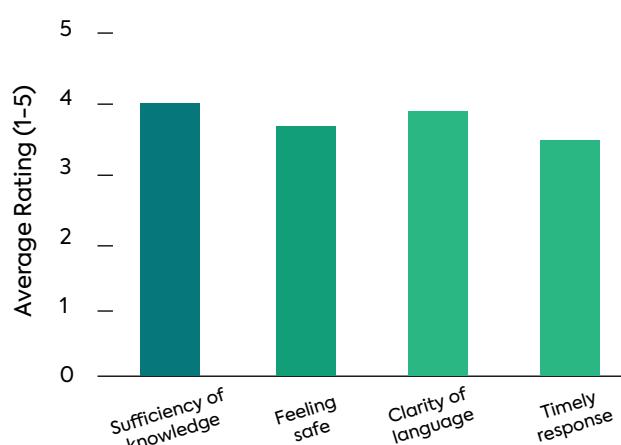
Finally, the legal counseling provided by the Association as part of its referral support was also included in the evaluation and analyzed across four key dimensions. The results of this analysis, based on average scores from Likert-scale questions included in the impact survey, are summarized in Figure 22. Accordingly;

- **The information provided by the legal advisor in response to survivors needs** fully met their expectations, with responses reflecting a high positive average (80%). This finding indicates that legal information functions as a strong support mechanism, enabling survivors to continue the process with confidence. Moreover, the data shows

that the information provided by the legal advisor plays a critical role in facilitating survivors' access to rights and institutional mechanisms.

- The **clarity and comprehensibility of the language used by the legal advisor** was also positively evaluated, with a high average score (75%). The advisor conveyed legal processes, often perceived as complex and intimidating, in a clear and accessible manner, preventing these processes from being experienced as incomprehensible or frightening by survivors.
- With regard to **feeling safe during the legal counseling process**, the average evaluation stands at 70%, indicating that survivors who received legal counseling largely felt safe.
- Assessments related to **timely responses and process follow-up**, however, parallel the general accessibility limitations of the support line and display a comparatively lower average score of 67.5%. This outcome is associated with the Association's structural capacity, the advisor's workload, and the period and days during which the support line was not operational.

Legal Consultancy Process Evaluation – Average Scores



— Figure 23: Legal consultancy process evaluation —

# Results



When the year 2025 is assessed as a whole, disclosure waves and the prevailing political climate appear to have increased survivors' need for support mechanisms. In this context, the support line functions as **a safe threshold, a guiding first point of contact, and an empowering intermediary space** for survivors. The support system is positioned not merely as a mechanism addressing individual well-being, but as a structure that carries **the potential for rights advocacy, solidarity, and broader social transformation** in the struggle against sexual violence.

This evaluation confirms that individual empowerment constitutes the primary and immediate objective of the support line, while also demonstrating that, in certain cases, this process expands, often unexpectedly, toward collective awareness and solidarity. Through the information and awareness gained during the support process, survivors begin to interpret their experiences not only as personal incidents, but within a structural and political framework. This shift in perspective enables the reconfiguration of the relationship between "empowerment for oneself" and "taking responsibility for others." In particular, during periods of heightened public visibility and intensified public debate on sexual violence, there is a marked increase in the tendency to perceive individual experiences as part of a collective issue.

## **1. Rights-Based Empowerment and Access to Information**

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The support line operates not only as a referral mechanism but also as **a space for information and awareness that enables rights-based empowerment** for survivors. Contact with the support line significantly increases **survivors' knowledge regarding their rights, available application pathways, and free legal and psychological support resources**. The quality and clarity of the information provided with the scope of legal counseling contribute to survivors' perception of the process as more predictable and manageable. Access to information allows survivors to reframe their experiences from an "insurmountable crisis" to a situation in which **rights can be claimed and intervention is possible**.

## **2. Meaning-Making of Violence and Cognitive Transformation**

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The support process strengthens **survivors' capacity to name and interpret their experiences as violence**. The absence of hierarchical distinctions among different forms of violence and the holistic approach to survivors' experiences contribute to the alleviation of individual feelings of guilt and shame. Through contact with the support line, survivors begin to conceptualize sexual violence not merely as an individual experience, but as a **social and structural human rights violation**. This cognitive transformation reduces internal barriers to seeking support and engaging in the support process.

## **3. Psychosocial Empowerment and Resilience**

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One of the most significant impacts of the support line is **the marked reduction in survivors' feelings of loneliness and isolation**. Experiences of being understood, taken seriously, and not judged enable survivors to feel safer and more empowered. The decrease in loneliness enhances psychosocial resilience and strengthens **the capacity to sustain engagement in the support process**. Contact with the support line reinforces survivors' **motivation to “remain in the process”** during recovery journeys that are often long and emotionally demanding.

## **4. Solidarity and the Tendency Toward Collective Empowerment**

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Increased awareness of the structural dimensions of violence strengthens **survivors' motivation to build solidarity with other survivors**. Perceiving the experience as shareable and as part of a collective struggle contributes to the reconstruction of the “survivor” identity as a solidaristic subject. Following their engagement with the support line, survivors demonstrate a greater tendency to recommend support mechanisms to others and to share information.

## **5. Process Management and Structural Limitations**

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- Access to the support line was generally evaluated by most participants as an easy and direct process. A significant proportion of survivors reported that they were able to contact the Association whenever needed following their initial interaction. Nevertheless, some participants experienced difficulties accessing the hotline during specific periods.

The primary reason for this limitation is that **the support line is operated by a single expert**, and the sustainability of the service requires that **this expert be able to exercise their right to rest and leave**. The findings indicate that periods during which the support line is closed should be understood not as operational shortcomings, but as **a structural necessity** to maintain the quality of support over the long term. In other words, the identified limitation stems from **institutional capacity and workload** rather than individual performance.

- With regard to the legal counseling process, a high level of satisfaction was observed in terms of the adequacy of information and the clarity of the language used. The legal advisor's professional identity as a lawyer strengthens the perception of legal knowledge as a reliable support resource. However, for some survivors, this professional identity may generate expectations of deeper, long-term, or litigation-oriented legal representation; when the service provided is limited to counseling, this may **be perceived as a mismatch between expectations and scope**. This finding points not to the quality of the legal counseling itself, but to a structural need for clearer communication regarding the boundaries and scope of the service provided.

- The fact that the vast majority of participants reported not having to reintroduce themselves during each interaction demonstrates that **the Association has a strong documentation and case-tracking system in place**. This practice emerges as a key protective mechanism, reducing the risk of secondary traumatization by shielding survivors from the burden of repeatedly recounting their experiences.

- One of the strongest findings of the process evaluation is the support line's capacity to create a safe space. The fact that nearly all participants reported feeling comfortable and safe throughout the process indicates that a **practice grounded in anonymity, confidentiality, and ethical principles** has been successfully implemented.

This safe foundation enables not only the delivery of technical services but also an emotional empowerment space in which survivors can experience being “understood,” “accepted,” and “taken seriously.” In this respect, the support line functions not merely as a referral mechanism, but as a restorative point of contact.

- The competence of support line experts is disentangling survivors' multiple and interrelated needs and directing them to appropriate forms of support is strongly substantiated by the data. The majority of participants reported that **experts helped**

**them recognize their own needs and assumed a facilitating rather than directive role.** This approach supports survivors' participation in the process not as passive recipients, but as active subjects capable of defining their own needs.

## Recommendations

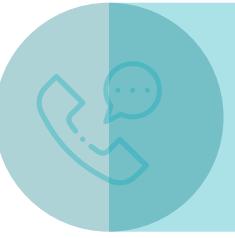
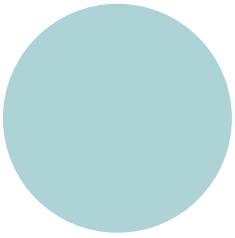
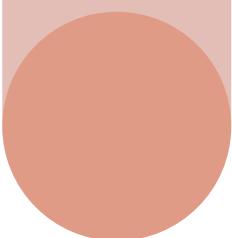
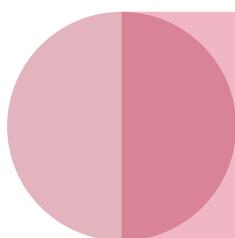
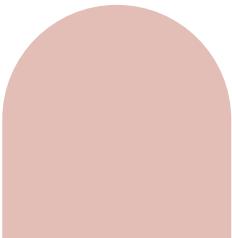
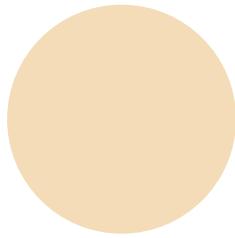
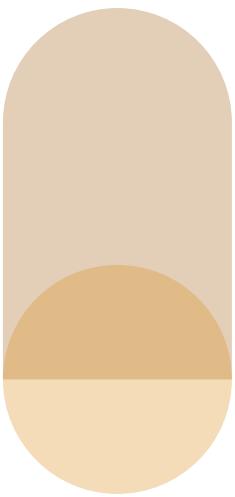
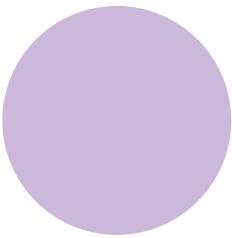
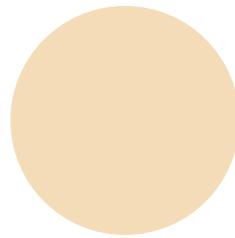
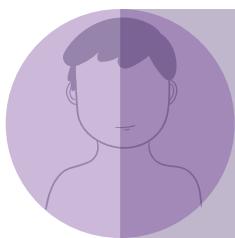
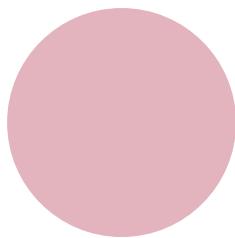


The recommendations focus not on reproducing the existing strengths of the support system, but on the limited and fragile areas identified through the evaluation findings. The objective is to enhance the system's sustainability and accessibility while preserving its current rights-based and empowering approach.

In this context, complementary measures to improve accessibility gain particular importance. Given that the referral responsibility of the support line is carried by a single expert and considering the associated workload, accessibility has emerged as one of the project's primary areas for development. Politically charged periods, such as disclosure waves, significantly increase demand for support mechanisms, rendering the continuous availability of the support line more critical. During such periods, the increased workload placed on the support line should be explicitly taken into account, and **temporary capacity-expansion models tailored to peak-demand phases (e.g., disclosure waves)** should be explored within the limits of existing resources.

Another recommendation related to accessibility concerns the clearer and more visible communication of the support line's operating schedule, including the fact that services are provided on limited days of the week and that the line may be closed at certain times. More transparent dissemination of information regarding working conditions, access limitations, and periodic closures can strengthen expectation management. Rather than undermining the credibility of the support system, such transparency would **enable survivors to engage with the process in a more realistic and predictable manner**.





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