

ABSTRACT

THESIS: Interpersonal Violence Services and the Rural-Urban Divide: Applying the Ecological Model to Compare Rural and Urban Advocacy Experiences

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DATE: May 2022

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Interpersonal violence advocacy research has attempted to understand advocates' experiences by locale; however, in-depth analysis of the advocacy experience has almost exclusively reported on the experiences of rural advocates—so much that it is as if urban experiences are assumed to be understood even though few studies explicitly address their experiences. This research was guided by the ecological model to gain a better understanding of how advocates' perceived barriers, relationships, and solutions vary depending on the personal and environmental factors of their locale. Using 24 qualitative interviews with current and former advocates, analysis revealed how urban and rural advocates experienced similar challenges within their communities which effected service provision and relationship building with clients. However, where rural and urban advocates differ is in the solutions utilized due to differences in accessible resources within their communities. Ascertaining advocacy differences by locale is critical for adequate resource allocation and training implementation in the future.