

Plenary #8

Working in a Community That Does Not Look Like You: Thoughts From A White Girl in Baltimore City



Conference Faculty



LISA NITSCH

Lisa Nitsch, Director of Training & Education at House of Ruth Maryland, Lisa serves as Director of Training & Education at House of Ruth Maryland. She is responsible for oversight and development of the agency's abuse intervention programs for perpetrators of intimate partner violence, and the agency's Training Institute. Lisa oversees the day-to-day operation of these programs and coordinates new program initiatives to improve the quality and scope of services.

Lisa has been with House of Ruth Maryland since 1998. She is a dynamic teacher with a strong grasp of the history of the violence against women movement. She served as the Vice President of the national organization, Women in Fatherhood, for over six years and as Chair of Maryland's Abuse Intervention Collaborative for over a decade. She currently serves on the Governor's Family Violence Council as the advisor for abuse intervention services in the state.

[Full bio at conference website](#)




REFLECTING FORWARD

BISC-MI

21st Annual Conference

November 2nd, 3rd, and 4th, 2016




House of Ruth Maryland

Working in a Community That Does Not Look Like You:
Tales from a White Girl in Baltimore City

Prepared by Lisa Nitsch
 For BISCMJ 21st Annual Conference: "Reflecting Forward"
 November 2, 3, & 4, 2016




Hello
my name is






Lisa



©2016 House of Ruth Maryland







©2016 House of Ruth Maryland

Hello
my name is


Lisa

©2016 House of Ruth Maryland

Baltimore's History

- 1729 – Baltimore is founded
- 1790 – Flourishing slave trade due to labor needs for shipping industry in the harbor
- 1840's – Irish and German immigration flood increased racial tensions between white and black communities, with black men only allowed to take the most low paying labor jobs
 - Curfews on African Americans were used to limit the number of shifts they could work
 - Saw an increase in manumissions during this time



©2016 House of Ruth Maryland

Baltimore's History

- 1860's – Saw a reduction, and ultimately an end, of slavery in Maryland and boasted the country's largest free black community
- 1891 – Roland Park becomes one of the first planned communities required new owners to sign legal agreement not to sell their property to African Americans. These contracts would quickly become a national model.
- Early 1900's – Baltimore is home to rich black culture with Morgan State University being the region's first HBCU, founding of an NAACP branch and being a notable stop on the jazz community's "Chitlin' Circuit"
- 1910 – In response to African-American lawyer, W. Ashbie Hawkins buying a home in a prestigious neighborhood, the first law was enacted to segregate city blocks
 - 1917 – US Supreme Court deemed it unconstitutional... because it restricted the rights of white owners to sell to whomever they wish

©2016 House of Ruth Maryland

Baltimore's History

- 1925 – Return to the voluntary Roland Park model and Baltimore Mayor forms the Committee on Segregation
 - Federal Housing Administration refused to give mortgages to African Americans in segregated neighborhoods; "redlining"
 - Redlining continued well into the 1940's when many families purchased homes through the newly created GI Bills for WWII veterans
 - African American families were forced to rent or buy homes in monthly installments. One missed payment = eviction, so families co-habited and worked long hours and multiple jobs.
 - Overcrowded neighborhoods = overcrowded schools
- 1930's – African Americans made up 20% of the city's population, but were confined to 2% of its landmass
- 1968 – April – Riots following King assassination. More than 6,000 national guardsmen called in. 300 fires, 400 arrests and a cancelled James Brown concert

©2016 House of Ruth Maryland

18

Baltimore's History

- 1970 – HUD Secretary George Romney refused Baltimore funding for sewers, water lines and other redevelopment plans due to what was perceived as resistance to integration
- 2000's – African American families were targeted for sub-prime mortgages.
 - The City of Baltimore sued Wells Fargo Bank, presenting evidence that the bank targeted African Americans for subprime loans.
- Today – One of the most segregated city's in America
 - April 2015 – Riots following the funeral of Freddie Gray
 - August 2016 – DOJ report on Baltimore City Police Dept found it "engaged in a pattern or practice of serious violations of the US Constitution and federal law that has disproportionately harmed Baltimore's African-American community and eroded the public's trust in the police." – Principal Deputy Assistant AG Gupta

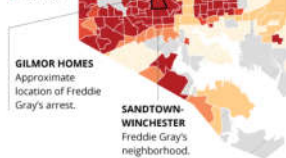
©2016 House of Ruth Maryland

19

PERCENT OF RESIDENTS WHO ARE BLACK, 2010

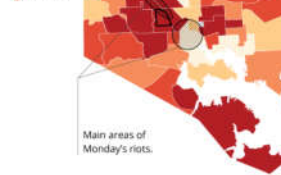
Industrial area/park (no residents)

- 0%
- >0-20%
- 21-40%
- 41-60%
- 61-80%
- 80-100%

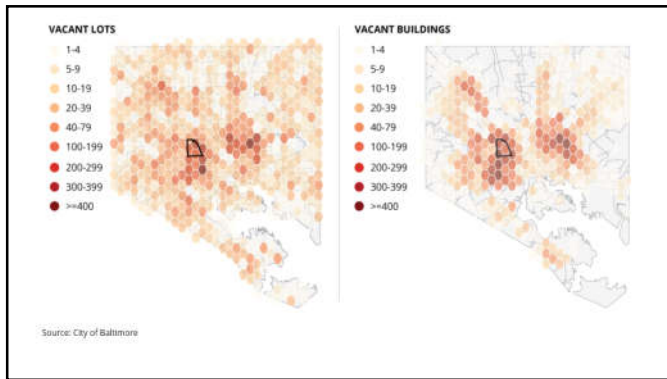


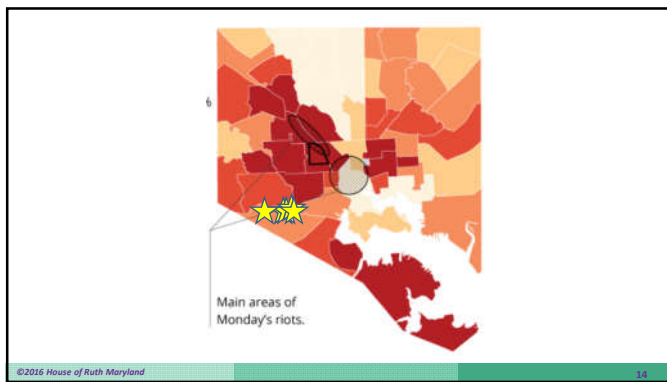
PERCENT OF POPULATION 16-64 THAT IS UNEMPLOYED AND LOOKING FOR WORK, 2009-2013

- 2.8-5.4%
- 5.5-8.3%
- 8.4-10.5%
- 10.6-13.2%
- 13.3-17%



Source: Census Bureau, Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance, The Jacob France Institute, Baltimore Police Department, The Baltimore Sun





Baltimore City, Maryland

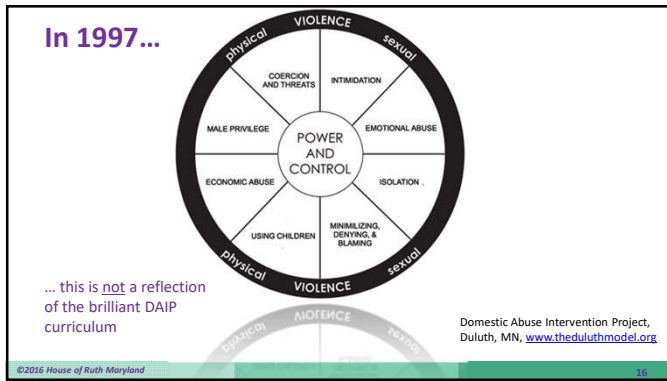
Last year, of the men who enrolled in House of Ruth Maryland's intervention program, The Gateway Project...

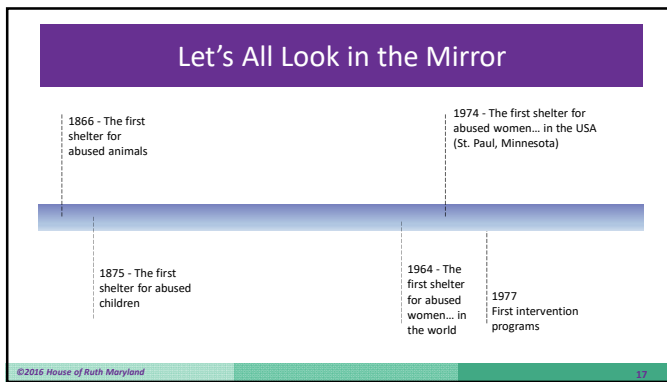
- 48% unemployed (7%)
- 57% no high school diploma or GED (16%)
- 75% single, 8% married
- 44% between 18-29, 34% between 30-44, 20% between 45-59
- 84% Black/African American, 11% White/Caucasian (63% African American, 31% White)
- 85% are fathers

In Si Puedo (100% Hispanic or Latino)...

- 12% unemployed
- 76% no high school diploma or GED
- 72% 1st generation immigrants, many undocumented, ESL
- 60% married
- 85% are fathers

©2016 House of Ruth Maryland







Intersectionality Theory: The Angry Black Woman 1989

- Black Feminism – the experience of being a black women cannot be understood in terms of being black or of being a woman. Must consider the interactions of oppressions (racial & gender), which frequently reinforce each other.
- Dual role of black women - to work against the racism in feminist efforts and sexism in anti-racism work

Crenshaw, Kimberle (January 1, 1989). "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics". *The University of Chicago Legal Forum* 140: 139–167.

©2016 House of Ruth Maryland

18

"White Feminism"

- Feminist strategy that does not consider or include the priorities of women of color
- Accusing women of color of being "divisive" for insisting on incorporating issues of race and culture in feminist efforts

©2016 House of Ruth Maryland

19

1970's - In the first national survey regarding feminism, women of color were much more likely to indicate their support of the feminist movement and the effort for equal rights for women.



©2016 House of Ruth Maryland

21

A Tale of Two Victims

- HRMs serves over 9,000 survivors each year
- ... has one of the largest emergency shelters in the country
 - ... Receives 7,500 calls to its 24-hour hotline annually
 - 2/3 of those calls are requesting shelter
 - 2/3 of those requests for shelter will be turned away



©2016 House of Ruth Maryland

23

A Tale of Two Victims

- There are a significant number of victims who will never reach out for traditional services
- ... because they don't identify as victims
 - ... because they don't trust us
 - ... because they normalize violence
 - ... because the violence isn't the priority
- ... and they are most likely to be killed.
- We have to adapt. We have to protect them too.**

©2016 House of Ruth Maryland

24

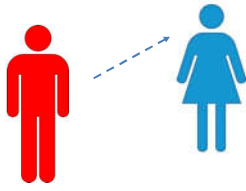
This is Joe. He is referred to your program after being found guilty of assault...



©2016 House of Ruth Maryland

25

... against Tonya. We know she has not and most likely will not engage in traditional services. She may not have even called the police. She may think this is all a big mistake. He didn't mean to hit her that hard.

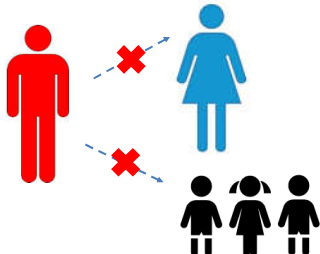


©2016 House of Ruth Maryland 25

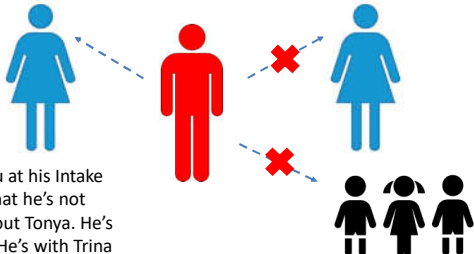
Besides, the court says he has to stay away from her.

Now she only has to see him when he comes to pick up the kids.

Who are afraid of him.

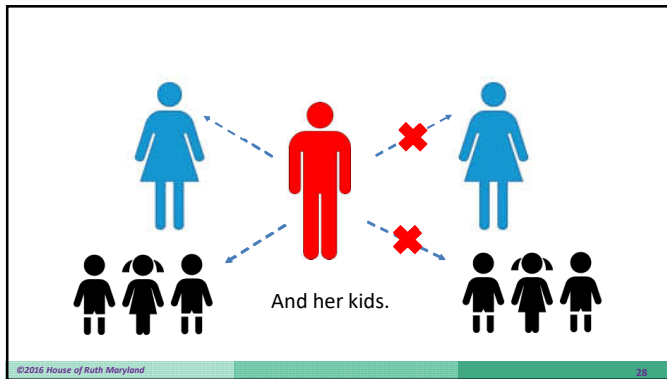


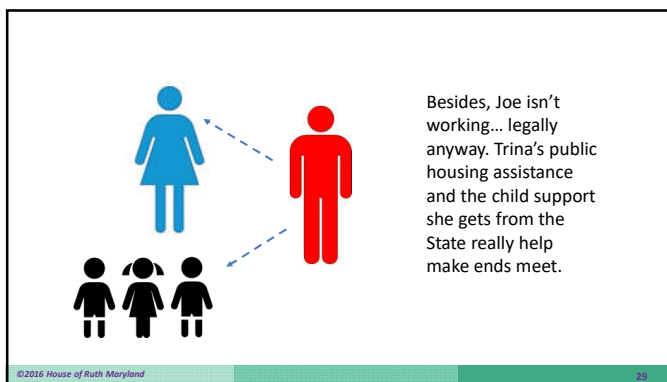
©2016 House of Ruth Maryland 26

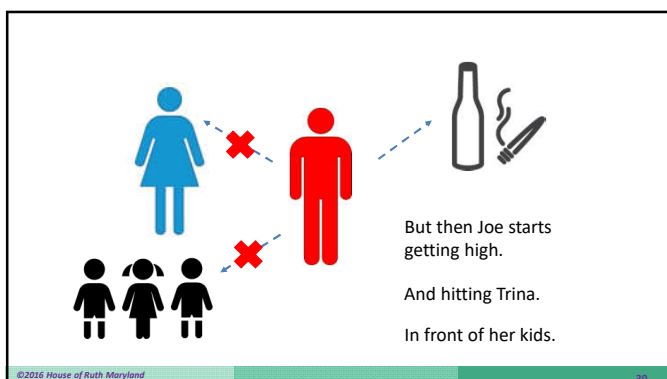


Joe tells you at his Intake interview that he's not worried about Tonya. He's moved on. He's with Trina now. He loves Trina.

©2016 House of Ruth Maryland 27







Tonya doesn't need DV services.
She needs Joe to get a job and
help her support these kids.

©2016 House of Ruth Maryland 31

Trina doesn't need DV services. She
needs Joe to get help with the drugs
and alcohol.

©2016 House of Ruth Maryland 32

We need to help the Tonyas and Trinas
... and we know they more than just victims

©2016 House of Ruth Maryland 33

"OPPRESSION" - Excerpts from article by Marilyn Frye, 1983

Consider a birdcage. If you look very closely at just one wire in the cage, you cannot see the other wires... It is only when you step back, stop looking at the wires one by one, microscopically, and take a macroscopic view of the whole cage, that you can see why the bird does not go anywhere.



©2016 House of Ruth Maryland

34

2013 OVW Study Center for Family Policy & Practice

"While many victims of domestic violence experience a loss of income or face financial insecurity as a result of leaving an abusive partner, women from low-income communities experience violence within the context of chronic poverty and need, with or without an abusive partner present in the home."

"many African American women report that despite a partner's violence toward them, they delay calling or involving law enforcement because they don't want to be responsible for 'putting another black man in jail.'"

"Many low-income African American women who are domestic violence victims do not access local programs or develop a beneficial relationship with an advocate when they perceive the available services will not respond to what they have identified as their most urgent needs."

Many victim services have broadened their service menus to include case management, housing assistance, employment, food assistance, etc. and this is praised as national best practice.

©2016 House of Ruth Maryland

35

Cultural Humility

- The "ability to maintain an interpersonal stance that is other-oriented (or open to the other) in relation to aspects of cultural identity that are most important to the [person]."*
- A way of developing cultural competence without being overwhelmed with the complexity and the dangers of stereotyping the culture of others.



*Hook, J.N. (2013). *Cultural Humility: Measuring openness to culturally diverse clients*. Journal of Counseling Psychology.

©2016 House of Ruth Maryland

36

Cultural Humility: Three Dimensions

1. **Lifelong learning & critical self-reflection** —understand that culture is, first and foremost, an expression of self and the process of learning about individuals' culture is a lifelong endeavor, because no two individuals are the same; each individual is a complicated, multi-dimensional human being who can rightfully proclaim *"My identity is rooted in my history... and I get to say who I am."*
2. **Recognizing and challenging power imbalances for respectful partnerships** —the root of effective practice is in acknowledging and challenging the power imbalances inherent in our practitioner/client dynamics.
3. **Institutional accountability** — organizations need to model these principles as well (from micro, to mezzo and macro practice)

"Cultural Humility: People, Principles and Practices," by Vivian Chavez, 2012, Associate Professor of Health Education at SF State University

©2016 House of Ruth Maryland

37

We need to help the Tonyas and Trinas
... by seeing Joe differently



©2016 House of Ruth Maryland

38

2013 OVW Study Center for Family Policy & Practice

"many women in contact also identify that providing services to men who have used violence against them could provide victims with some relief. Simply getting him out of the house more often, sending him to a social welfare agency where he can get some assistance dealing with his issues, or helping him get a job so he can contribute to the household finances would help ease her burden."

"Women living in poverty who are marginalized by race and class recognize that the men in their families and communities share similar experiences of disenfranchisement. Despite the privileges of being a man in a male-dominated society, not all men are granted the same degree of privilege; men of color are disadvantaged by their race. Women of color know this to be true and see the effects throughout their communities."

Are we still willing to be guided by her voice when she asks for help for him? How can we be responsive?

©2016 House of Ruth Maryland

39

A Tale of Two Abusive Partners

There are a significant number of abusive partners who will never engage in traditional services

- ... because they don't identify as abusers
- ... because they don't trust us
- ... because they normalize violence
- ... because the violence isn't the priority

... and they are most likely to kill.

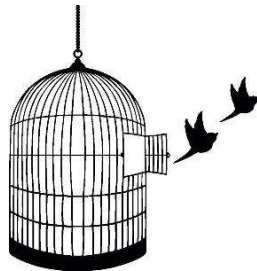
We have to adapt. We have to engage them too.

©2016 House of Ruth Maryland

40

"OPPRESSION" - Excerpts from article by Marilyn Frye, 1983

Consider a birdcage. If you look very closely at just one wire in the cage, you cannot see the other wires... It is only when you step back, stop looking at the wires one by one, microscopically, and take a macroscopic view of the whole cage, that you can see why the bird does not go anywhere.



©2016 House of Ruth Maryland

41

Questions to ask...

- Do your group rooms represent the demographics of the area you serve?
- Does the staffing of your program reflect those demographics?
– If not, how is your program/work informed by the community you serve?
- Does your curriculum create space to speak to those differences if they exist?
- If the participants you serve face unique barriers, is your program (or a partner) able to address them?

©2016 House of Ruth Maryland

42

Strategic Partnerships

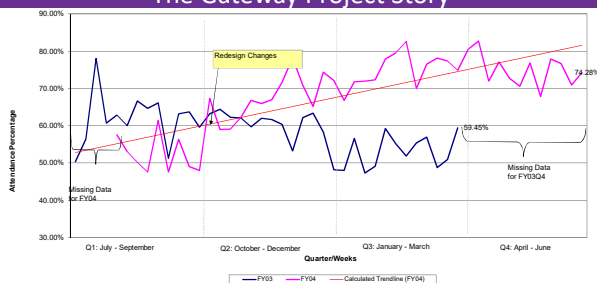


- Cross-training of staff
- Group observations & feedback
- Case consultation
- In 2002, participants in our intervention program were 25% more likely to complete if they were also enrolled in CFUF's partnering employment program.

©2016 House of Ruth Maryland

43

How this can impact: The Gateway Project Story



©2016 House of Ruth Maryland

44

How to "leave it at the door"...

- Honest and continuing self reflection
 - Checking personal beliefs, biases and stereotypes
- Monitoring of our own self-talk
- Good and consistent supervision
- Focus on cultural humility, for ALL staff
- Having culturally humble and informed policies, curriculum, and guidelines
- Get feedback from your participants
 - See Participant Feedback handout in your materials

©2016 House of Ruth Maryland

45

**THE HOUSE OF RUTH MARYLAND
GATEWAY PROJECT**
"A Path to Nonviolence."


This information will be kept confidential and will have no effect on your status in the program.
Thank you for your help in our work to provide quality services.

Facilitator Name →	1.		2.	
Explains topics clearly	YES	NO	YES	NO
Seems to know a lot about topics presented	YES	NO	YES	NO
Makes the group/topics interesting	YES	NO	YES	NO
Communicates respectfully	YES	NO	YES	NO
Has given me some information I can use in my own relationship	YES	NO	YES	NO
Encourages me to participate in discussions when I'm being quiet	YES	NO	YES	NO
Gives the group enough time to talk (does not talk too much)	YES	NO	YES	NO
Helps the group stay focused on the right topics	YES	NO	YES	NO

©2016 House of Ruth Maryland 45

Let's Take A Moment for The White Folks

- It's okay that we're white. Talk about it.
- Learn and know our own cultures; don't hijack another.
 - Learn the anti-oppression work accomplished by your culture
- Bravely ask questions.
- Do not minimize the need for diversity in our field.
 - Diversity will improve your services and increase your reach
 - Without it, you are working at a deficit
 - What will YOU do to promote diversity?
- Being an ally is an earned status and that "status expires at midnight each day"



©2016 House of Ruth Maryland 46


My Accountability Team



©2016 House of Ruth Maryland 48

Exercises

- Pyramid Analogy
 - DAIP, Duluth, MN
- Stereotypes
 - Men Stopping Violence, Decatur, GA
- Cage of Oppression
 - Cultural Bridges to Justice, Questa, NM



©2016 House of Ruth Maryland

Culturally Specific Resources



Asian & Pacific Islander
Institute on Domestic Violence
www.api-gbv.org



Mending the Sacred Hoop
www.mshoop.org



www.idvaac.org




www.nationallatinonetwork.org



www.nwnetwork.org

©2016 House of Ruth Maryland

And yet...



Some abusive partners have no desire or intention to ever change their behaviors.

©2016 House of Ruth Maryland






Over the Next Couple of Days...

- Cultural humility is an important tool for reducing resistance and improving your program outcomes
- “Excuses” presented by abusive partners may be their sincere perceptions
 - There are creative ways to engage those “excuses” as tools
- Work with the whole person, not just the “abuser”
 - ... do it for his victim, his children and his future partners

Thank You

Lisa Nitsch
 Director of Training & Education
 House of Ruth Maryland
lsanitsch@hruthmd.org





Working in a Community That Does Not Look Like You: Thoughts From A White Girl in Baltimore City Faculty: Lisa Nitsch	Code In: J3 Code Out: X11
--	------------------------------
