



House of Ruth Maryland

Cultural Consideration in Providing Intervention Services

Prepared for the BISC-MI 2020 Conference
Presented by Lisa Nitsch, MSW, Director of Training & Education
November 19, 2020

Land Acknowledgement
<https://native-land.ca/>





We're going to do some writing!

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House of Ruth
Maryland

- Established in 1977
- 84-bed Shelter, Transitional Housing & Safe Homes
- Legal Clinic
- Counseling
 - Victim
 - Children & Family
- 24-hour Hotline
- Abuse Intervention Programming
- *Services available to all, regardless of gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation.*
- *All programming is offered in English and Spanish. Most programming can be offered in other languages using the Language Line.*

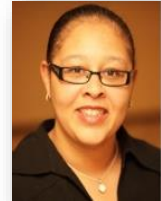
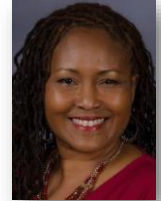


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white privilege



Learning Objectives

- Define and distinguish between cultural competence and cultural humility
- Receive tools for engaging your service community in program design
- Speak to the impact of racism and privilege on the work to end intimate partner violence
- Describe at least one activity intervention service providers can use to clarify their values around the work
- Locate at least one resource to support continued learning about culturally relevant program design

The Role of Culture in Intimate Partner Violence

- How do I describe what is happening?
- Do I need help?
- Do I feel worthy of help?
- Will I call for help?
- Who do I turn to?
- Which, if any, services will I use?
- How do I engage with others?



Cultural Competence

Individual

The ability to understand, appreciate and interact with people from cultures or belief systems different from one's own

APA, March 2015, Vol 46, No 3

Organizational

The integration and transformation of knowledge about individuals and groups of people into specific standards, policies, practices, and attitudes used in appropriate cultural settings to increase the quality of services; thereby producing better outcomes.

CDC, National Prevention Information Network

Tell Us About Your Culture



Breakout Groups: How does your one identity influence how you move in the world?



The Trouble with Terms

Terms are Crucial

- Inquiring about how a person describes themselves conveys openness and respect
- Using someone else's preferred terms tells them you are listening and respect their self-definition
- Invites sharing about cultural practices and builds rapport

Terms are meaningless

- Terms tell you almost nothing about a person or what you need to provide them with
- What you really need to know about a person to serve them appropriately is related to their needs, concerns, and experiences

The Invisible Majority

Jackson Katz, "Tough Guise"

Gender

Women

Race

Black, Indigenous and
Other People of Color

Sexual Orientation

LGBTQ+

Gender

Men

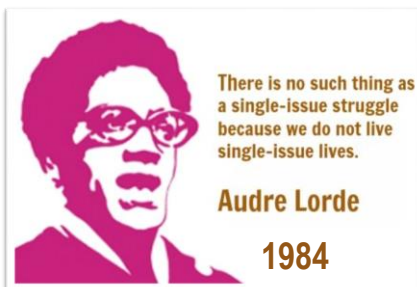
Race

White People

Sexual Orientation

Heterosexual, Cisgender

Intersectionality



Intersectionality: the ways in which oppressive institutions are interconnected and cannot be examined separately from one another.

Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989). "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics"

Cultural Humility

- The ability to maintain a worldview that is other-oriented
- Focus on self-humility rather than achieving a state of knowledge or awareness
- A method 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*.



What's the Difference?

Cultural Competency

- Implies cultural learning is finite
- Seeks to avoid mistakes through knowledge
- Gaining power through learning

Cultural Humility

- Focus is ongoing learning from the community
- Seeks to avoid mistakes through inquiry
- Giving power through learning

Whole Person Perspective



“Oppression” by Marilyn Frye, 1983 in *The Politics of Reality: Essays in Feminist Theory*

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.

Full essay in the materials section.





Safety and Services: Women of color speak about their communities (2013)

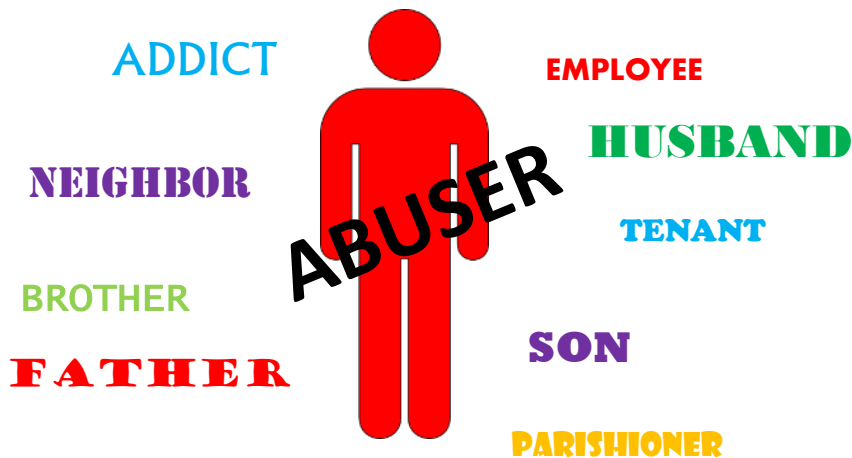
“While many victims of domestic violence experience a loss of income or face financial insecurity as a result of leaving an abusive partner, women from low-income communities experience violence within the context of chronic poverty and need, with or without an abusive partner present in the home.”

“Many 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 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.”

Ways service agencies have been responsive: outreach services, food pantry, case management, rapid rehousing, no requirement to “leave” or take criminal action, all services are voluntary, extensive peace/protective order representation, restorative/Transformative Justice models, Sentencing recommendations

Whole Person Perspective





Safety and Services: Women of color speak about their communities (2013)

“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 the voice of survivors when they ask for support for their abusive partners? How can we be responsive?

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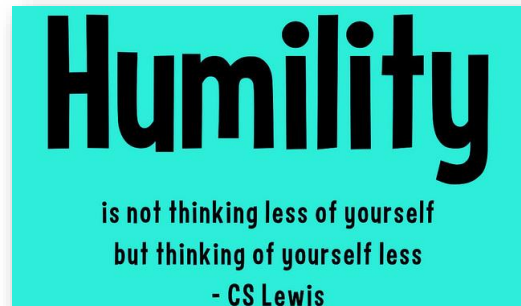
The Power of Helpers

- Seeking assistance requires vulnerability
- You are a gatekeeper of necessary resources
- Service processes are already in place
- You possess skills and knowledge to provide the assistance



The Humility of Helpers

- The participant is the expert in their own culture
- You are always actively learning from them
- You are able to identify and put aside your own beliefs
- You acknowledge people's actions and ideas are shaped by their life and cultural experiences may see things differently and others



Two Experts Working Collaboratively

- Rather than service providers, we can see ourselves as social change agents
- Our work will take on a different stance, because we will no longer be the experts
- We will approach our work from a horizontal (rather than vertical) perspective



Dr. Julia Perilla
Emerge's "Abusers 201"
Conference, 2013

How can your organization demonstrate cultural humility?



Intentional Program Design

1. Learn about the history and current dynamics of the community you intend to serve
2. Know the history of your own organization and the social, economic and political influences on service design
3. Engage the communities you intend to serve
4. Examine your own values and compare them with your current policies and engagement strategies
5. Create an intentional service model
6. Define and measure success, modify accordingly, and begin again

1. Learn about the history and current dynamics of the community you intend to serve

- Do your group rooms/service recipients reflect the demographics of the larger community?
–Why or why not?
- Who were the original inhabitants of the land you serve on?
- How and when were Black people introduced to your community?
–Were they free or enslaved?
–If they were enslaved, how were they freed?
- How are racial and economic demographics mapped in your community?
–How do those maps compare?
- What are the social service systems available in your community?
- What is it like to depend on public transportation in your community?

WARNING: Biased history ahead!

- All recorded history has bias.
- The version you are about to hear is Lisa's and not necessarily HRM's, yours, or anyone else's.

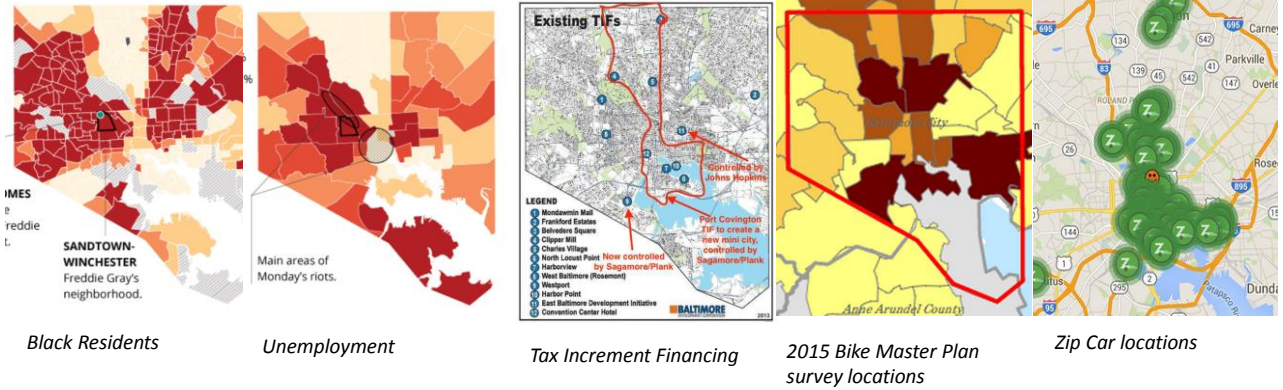


Baltimore's History of Systemic Racism & White Supremacy

- 1634 – First known Black people in Baltimore brought as indentured servants
- 1729 – Founded; Flourishing slave trade
- 1840's – Irish and German immigration flood increased racial tensions & increased manumissions = large free black community → Curfews, multi-family homes
- 1910 – first segregation contract for homeowners
- 1925 – 18 neighborhood associations form the "Allied Civic and Protective Association"
- Early 1900's – Rich Black culture: Coppin & Morgan State, NAACP branch, "Chitlin' Circuit"
- GI Bills & Redlining = no loans in Black neighborhoods &
- 1968 – MLK assassination uprising: 6,000+ national guardsman, 300 fires, 400 arrests, cancelled James Brown concert
- 1970 – HUD Secretary George Romney refused infrastructure and development funding
- 2000's – Black families targeted for sub-prime mortgages; City of Baltimore successfully sues Wells Fargo Bank
- April 2015 – Uprising following the funeral of Freddie Gray
- August 2016 – DOJ report on BPD 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 Asst AG Gupta

The Black Butterfly vs. The White L

Lawrence Brown, Morgan State University



Brown, Lawrence T., *The Black Butterfly: The Harmful Politics of Race and Space in America*, Johns Hopkins University Press, publication date: 01/26/2021, ISBN: 9781421439877

2. Know the history of your own organization and the social, economic and political influences on service design



“White Feminism”

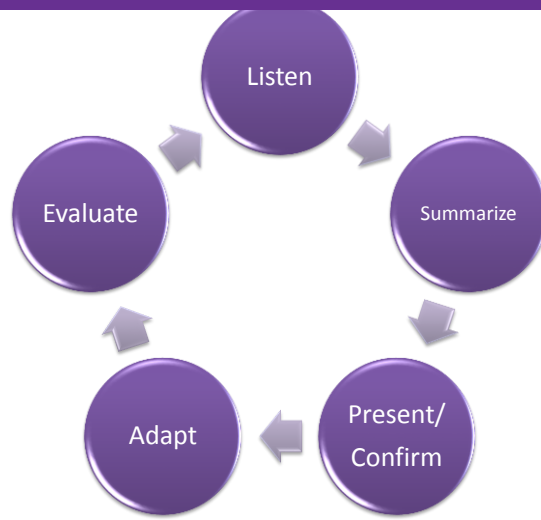
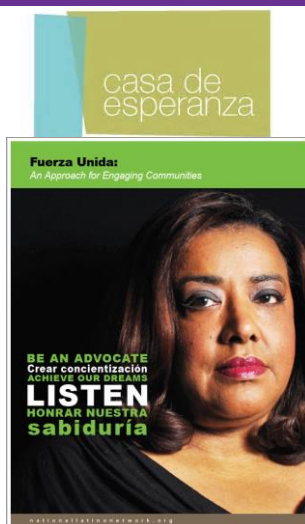
- Feminist strategy that does not consider or include the priorities of women of color
- Accusing people of color, especially women, of being “divisive” for insisting on incorporating issues of race and culture in feminist efforts
- Many traditional, long-standing women’s service organizations are born of this framework

–“I did then what I knew how to do. Now that I know better, I do better.”

– Maya Angelou

–It’s long past time we do better: <https://www.racialequitytools.org/>

3. Engage the community you intend to serve



Listening Sessions



Available in conference materials!



GATEWAY PROJECT
 "A Path to Nonviolence."

Please do not put your name on this paper. Your answers will have no effect on your status in the program. Thank you for your help in improving our work.

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 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

4. Examine your own values and compare them with your current policies and engagement strategies

We complete the following statements in a way that EVERYONE in the group believes to be true:

- Abusive Partners are...
- Victims/Survivors are...
- Abusive partners abuse because...
- People change when...

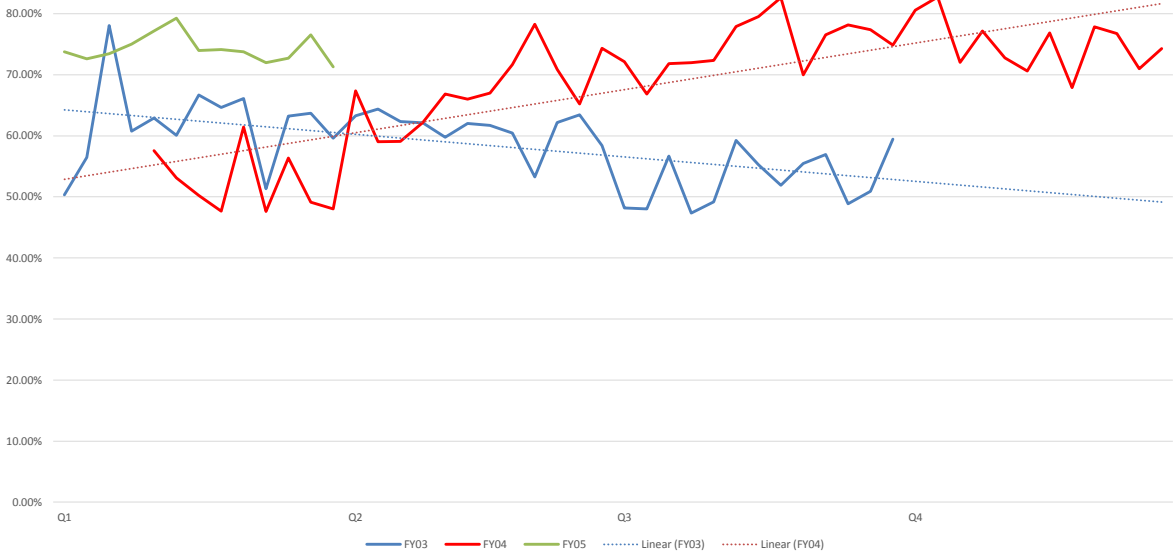
See worksheet in materials section.



We believe our participants...

- Use abusive behavior as a tool, from which they benefit
 - Some have cultural messages encouraging their use of violence
 - “Get or be gotten”
- Have both experienced and perpetrated oppressions
 - We give space for them to speak to and heal from their victimization, and that is an appropriate use of our group room
- Bring as much knowledge to the room as the staff
- Most of our participants have experienced and/or are experiencing traumatic stress
 - Which impacts their information retention
 - Physical, psychological & behavioral response
- May not have a kind word said to them all day before walking through our doors
- Are most often resistant out of fear
 - Of vulnerability
 - Of failure
 - Of the unknown

Gateway Project's Beliefs & Guidelines



5. Create an intentional service model



In 2002, participants in our intervention program were 25% more likely to complete if they were also enrolled in CFUF's employment program.

Expanded Supports to Increase Completion Rates

- Community partners offer supportive services that increase the likelihood of successful program completion and reduce lethality & recidivism
 - Employment Navigation & Support
 - Parenting Support
 - Mental Health & Substance Abuse: Mosaic Community Services
 - Probation Agent Meetings
- Program is more accessible to participants
 - Bus line and easy to find

Better Practices for Serving LGBTQ+

- **Be more inclusive in your intake processes**
 - Ask your participants' gender (don't assume based on name, voice, or physical presentation)
 - Do not make assumptions about the gender of their partners/victims - use inclusive terms (such as "they/them")
 - Inclusive gender and sexual orientation options on intake forms
- **Stand up to homophobia & transphobia in your group room**
 - This shows all group members that you value people who identify as LGBTQ and makes you, your team, and your group room a "safer" space
- **Make an informed decision about participants' placement**
 - Allow your clients to have a voice in decisions about their experience with the program
 - Consider safety

<https://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/health/lgbtq-ipv/>

Exercises

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



6. Define and measure success, modify accordingly, and begin again

Research supported by the Governor's Office of Crime Control & Prevention:

Findings:

- Participants who successfully completed the Gateway Project
 - Were less likely to commit a domestically related-crime
 - 40% less likely to commit any violent crime at all!

Statistically significant even after controlling for variables!

5. Define and measure success, modify accordingly, and begin again

- Working with our research team to evaluate the success of our model expansion
 - Dr. Chris Murphy (UMBC), Dr. Charvonne Holliday (Johns Hopkins University), Dr. Tara Richards (University of Nebraska)
- November 1st - launched a 3-year, federally funded research project
 - Will incorporate qualitative element that includes victim/partner and participant interviews



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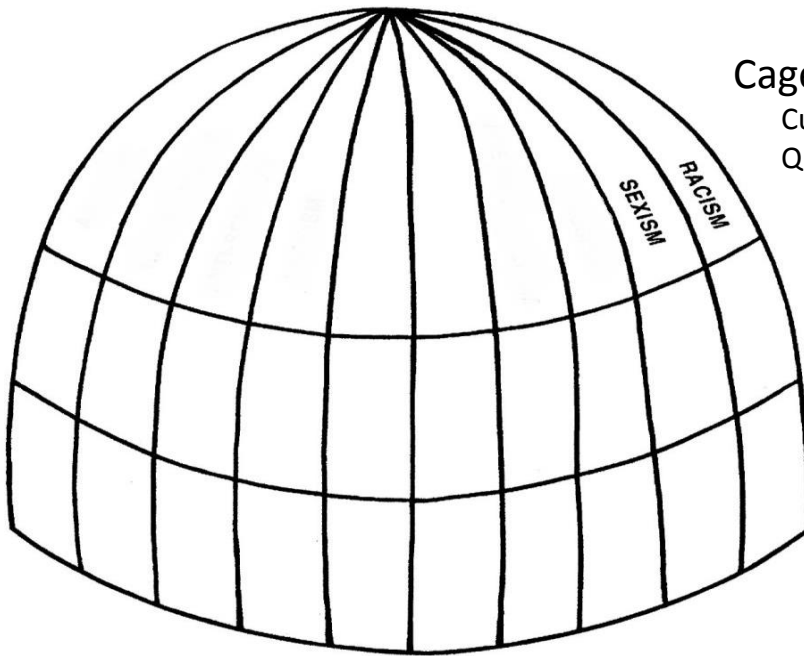
Culturally Specific Technical Assistance



The National Center on Violence Against Women in the Black Community



National LGBTQ Institute on IPV



Cage of Oppression
Cultural Bridges to Justice
Questa, NM

Have An Accountability Team



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Final Takeaways

- Engage in intentional program design
 - Know the history & dynamics within the community you serve
 - Know how your own organization's history fits within that context
 - Engage your participants in design
- No one has all the answers, so experiment.
 - Just do it with informed intention
 - Examine and declare your shared values
 - Define and measure your successes and adapt
- Don't forget to **enjoy** the journey!



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Thank you!

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