Expanding Intimate Partner Violence Services for Women of Color by Using Data as Evidence

A National Technical Assistance Guidance by Women of Color Network, Inc.

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The mission of the Women of Color Network (WOCN, Inc.) is to eliminate violence against ALL women and their communities by centralizing the voices and promoting the leadership of women of color across the Sovereign Nations, the United States and U.S. Territories.

The purpose of WOCN, Inc. is to work in and beyond the fields of domestic violence and sexual assault to address a broad range of violence affecting communities of color such as human trafficking, police brutality and over-incarceration. We accomplish this by examining and responding to a global context of colonialism, imperialism, capitalism, racism, sexism, heterosexism, transphobia, and other forms of oppression that intersect with violence against women of color and their communities.

The Women of Color Network, Inc. works closely with state and local programs to improve their approaches to reaching and serving communities of color and other marginalized populations.

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Background

In 1997, a group of women of color from across the country gathered to establish an entity to address the unique challenges facing women of color advocates and activists within the violence against women movement. Since that time, the Women of Color Network Inc. (WOCN, Inc.) has created a national medium where women of color can dialogue, network, organize, and obtain resources to support their efforts.

WOCN, Inc. is at the frontlines of advocacy for the health and safety needs of survivors of color. It is through this broad lens of multiple intersecting forms of violence that WOCN, Inc. centers its advocacy and training. Additionally, WOCN, Inc. promotes the development of independent, women of color led initiatives that are more likely to reach and effectively serve communities of color. This includes leadership development, capacity building, and supportive mentorship for anti-violence advocates of color.

In 2014, WOCN, Inc. sought to understand the relationship between the help-seeking patterns of women of color and homicide risk. WOCN, Inc. conducted a secondary analysis using data on homicide reports of women of color and on calls to the National Domestic Violence Hotline by women of color across the United States. We compared this related data to look for patterns and connections. The purpose of that analysis was to illuminate the collective, disproportionate homicide rates across and within communities of color and to intensify local, state, and national responses to intimate partner violence. To achieve this, we obtained 2011 and 2012 data related to cases involving a single female victim killed by a single male offender from states with the highest rates of such homicides and conducted a secondary analysis of the data focused specifically on women of color. Utilizing the Hotline data, we examined the help-seeking patterns of women of color. Additionally, this analyses offers preliminary information to guide future evaluation, training and stimulate strategic planning on gaps and barriers in services to marginalized communities. The WOCN, Inc. Homicide and Hotline reports cited in this TA Guidance were never released but are available to view as the data is still relevant and points to trends that remain across the country. The recommendations listed in each report are important for advocates, anti-violence
programs, state coalitions, and other allied organizations and government agencies. This technical assistance guidance is an extension of the policy recommendations of the Hotline and homicide reports utilizing data from 2012 and 2013. It provides advocates and policy makers with insights on how to use such homicide and Hotline data to better reach and serve women of color.
Introduction

The burden of violence on women of color is staggering. Across racially, ethnically, culturally and linguistically diverse women of color communities, violence persists. Although there are unique circumstances within the context of a particular community of color, common factors and considerations exist which may account for under-reporting of DV by women of color and a failure to seek appropriate help services.¹ They include²:

- Cultural and/or religious beliefs that restrain the survivor from leaving the abusive relationship or involving outsiders.
- Strong loyalty binds to race, culture and family.
- Distrust of law enforcement, criminal justice system, and social services.
- Lack of service providers that look like the survivor or share common experiences.
- Lack of culturally and linguistically appropriate services.
- Lack of trust based on history of racism and classism in the United States.
- Fear that their experience will reflect on or confirm the stereotypes placed on their ethnicity.
- Assumptions of providers based on ethnicity.
- Attitudes and stereotypes about the prevalence of domestic violence and sexual assault in communities of color.
- Legal status in the U.S. of the survivor and/or the batterer.
- Oppression, including revictimization is intensified at the intersections of race, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability, legal status, age and socioeconomic status.

There are numerous sociocultural factors affecting communities of color that contribute to violence and to patterns of seeking help. Some of these factors include lack of culturally appropriate services, fear of community rejection, language barriers, immigration concerns, traditional gender norms, and distrust of law enforcement.³

In 2011, the Center for Disease Control reported that approximately thirty-five percent of women living in the United States had experienced some form of violence by an intimate partner.⁴ Given the high prevalence of violence in this country, supportive mechanisms must be available to provide accurate, nonjudgmental
information about the dynamics of violence, as well as safety planning, crisis support and referrals to local services, as well as offer resources to community members, family and friends.

Studies have shown that women of color face more, and more severe domestic violence. Black women are more likely than white women to be murdered by a partner. Approximately 4 out of every 10 non-Hispanic Black women, 4 out of every 10 American Indian or Alaska Native women, and 1 in 2 multiracial non-Hispanic women (53.8%) have been the victim of rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime. Advocates and policy makers must attend to the varying experiences of women, and specifically the differences among women of color, when considering programming and policies that impact survivors of domestic violence.

WOCN, Inc. works in and beyond the fields of domestic violence and sexual assault to address a broad range of violence affecting communities of color such as human trafficking, police brutality and over-incarceration. We accomplish this by examining and responding to a global context of colonialism, imperialism, capitalism, racism, sexism, heterosexism, transphobia, and other forms of oppression that intersect with violence against women of color and their communities. It is this intersectional lens that led WOCN, Inc. to explore the connection between women of color’s help-seeking patterns and the domestic violence homicides.

In 2012, WOCN, Inc. suspected that there were linkages between the two sets of data, and that there was another way to look at the Violence Policy Center (VPC) data that is released annually. WOCN Inc. saw an opportunity to enhance understanding of the particular experiences of women of color by using a culturally specific lens to reexamine data on domestic violence homicide rates (provided by the Violence Policy Center) and data on help-seeking patterns of women of color (provided by the National Domestic Violence Hotline). This TA Guidance summarizes the findings that emerged from these secondary data analyses and highlights recommendations to improve outreach and response. While the WOCN, Inc.’s Homicide and Hotline reports cited in this TA Guidance were never released, the data is still relevant and points to trends that remain across the country. The recommendations listed in each
report are important for advocates, anti-violence programs, state coalitions, and other allied organizations and government agencies. Specifically, WOCN, Inc. conducted secondary analysis of Violence Policy Center (VPC) reports with data from 2011 and 2012. And Hotline data from 2012 and caller chat data from 2013. WOCN, Inc. explored questions of disproportionate violence in communities of color, and help-seeking patterns of victims of color. We conducted a descriptive analysis of VPC data specifically focused on Black/African American, Native American/Alaska Native, and Asian/Pacific Islander women. The purpose of the report was to illuminate the collective, disproportionate homicide rates and support service needs across and within each community of color, and to intensify local, state, and national responses to violence, including Hotline capacity.

Both reports conclude with recommendations for advocates, community members and policy makers to mobilize efforts to both monitor trends and to develop and implement policy-preventing violence. Links to the longer study reports prepared by WOCN, Inc. are provided later in this document.

This TA Guidance reasserts the recommendations from these longer reports with examples of best and promising practices from the field. We offer the field a unique way to utilize data that has been offered by such national organizations as the National Domestic Violence Hotline and the Violence Policy Center. The overall intent of the guidance is to provide a broad perspective to the field that states that women of color lives matter, the data that is often released is limiting, and it is imperative that we all should reach to the margins and bring this key information to the center. The lives of women of color and their communities depend on it.

With this guidance, Women of Color Network, Inc. seeks to begin a dialogue to develop multiple individual- and community-level interventions designed to shift cultures of gendered violence, increase safety and address survivors’ immediate and long-term needs. The data and recommendations listed in this guidance may be used to:

- Advocate for funding;
- Mobilize community partners around the issues; and
- Develop an awareness or community education campaign.
Limitations

There were limitations to the Hotline data WOCN, Inc. subjected to secondary data analyses. First, summary data limited the extent to which results could be analyzed and interpreted to provide more detailed information about specific group differences. Second, a large amount of unknown demographic data and statistically different than the known data. This could have impacted the racial trends in frequencies. Future analysis should be conducted to determine whether specific group differences by race were statistically significant.

Related to the homicide data, the findings presented do not reflect the rates by all fifty states; instead, it focuses on the rankings among the states that reported the top homicides rates across all racial groups, which excludes U.S. territories. Next, while the rates of the differences among women of color are disparate, these rates are simply a description and have not been tested to determine whether actual statistical differences exist between the groups. In addition, there was not information available for Hispanic/Latino communities as this demographic data was not available.

Taking these limitations into consideration, data from these reports suggest the need for further research and evaluation such as looking at differences in race and other Hotline caller characteristics such as caller/chatter/texter need, caller type, and where contacts were referred and more deeply understanding the relationship between race, ethnicity and homicide rates for women of color. WOCN, Inc. strongly advocates for enhancing access to disaggregated data specific to the experiences of women of color and encourages discussion of the policy and practice issues raised by these data sets.
Data Summary

From: “LIVES AT STAKE: A Review of the Violence Policy Center’s 2010 and 2011 Women of Color Homicide Rates”

(For a copy of the WOCN, Inc.’s full unpublished report see: Lives at Stake)

WOCN, Inc. examined the 2012 (which reports 2011 homicide data) and 2013 (which reports 2012 homicide data) Violence Policy Center’s (VPC reports and summative data tables to identify patterns specifically related to homicides of women of color. All descriptive data used in WOCN, Inc.’s unpublished report were provided by the VPC. Data utilized were based only on the states with the top ten single female victim/single male offender homicide rates in the country across all racial groups. The VPC report did not include data on Hispanic/Latino homicide victims because “Hispanic/Latino ethnicity could not be determined on a national level because of the inadequacy of data collection and reporting”. VPC calculated rates by dividing the “rate of females murdered by a male in a single victim/single offender incidents by state and female population estimates” from the 2011 and 2012 census data.

The state rankings for women of color homicide rates varied differentially when compared to the original 2010 VPC rankings (VPC, 2012).

— The top three states with the highest reported homicide rates for women of color in 2010 were Nevada, Texas, and Tennessee.

— Black women had the highest number of homicides of all women of color

— in 2010 and 2011, and made up all of the homicides in 2011 in the states of Tennessee, Louisiana and Delaware.

— The single female victim/single male offender homicide rates were highest among Black women across eight of ten reported states.

— Arizona is the only state across both years that reported high homicide rates of Asian/Pacific Islanders.

— In both rate and sheer numbers of Native American or Alaska Native Women homicides in 2011, Alaska ranked highest.

(For a copy of WOCN, Inc.’s full unpublished report on which this TA Guidance is based, see: Hotline Report)

In this unpublished Hotline report, WOCN, Inc. presented results from a secondary data analysis of the 2012 National Domestic Violence Hotline caller data and the 2013 online chat and text data. The aim of this report was to analyze one year of national Hotline caller data and one year of national Hotline online chat and text data in an effort to identify promising trends about the help-seeking patterns among people of color and whether group differences existed across races. We found:

— The largest group of chatters, texters and callers of color came from the South. And in fact, in Louisiana, Georgia and Washington, DC, Black callers were the highest number of all callers to the Hotline.  
— Black women made up the largest percentage of callers of color to the Hotline. Among all callers to the Hotline whose race was known, Black callers comprised the greatest percentage of callers from the South.  
— Black women (43.6%), Native American (43.2%) and Native Hawaiian (42%) women reported the highest percentage of physical abuse.  
— Hispanics were the largest group of people of color to use the text and chat functions of the Hotline.
Recommendations

1. Anti-violence organizations should continue to design and implement creative community outreach strategies and programming in partnership with culturally specific organizations in order to connect with survivors who might not normally reach out for help from a formal system.

Domestic violence happens across race, class and ethnic lines, although at disparate rates and with disproportionate impacts for women of color. Additionally, survivors of color may face more barriers when attempting to leave abusers due to economic, social and cultural barriers. Studies have shown that the risk of domestic violence increases when abusers experience job instability and unemployment, which may help explain some of the factors that contribute to higher rates of violence in communities of color and communities experiencing poverty. Because women of color and their families experience higher rates of poverty, they are at risk of abuse, and have fewer options for safety when they escape.

Studies have shown that Black women are more likely than other races of women to call the police in instances of domestic violence, despite expectations to the contrary. In the “Preliminary Analysis of 2012 DV Hotline Caller Trends Among People of Color and 2013 Online Chat and Text Trends” report, we learned that Hotline callers who identified as Black and texters and chatters who identified as Hispanic/Hispanic represented the highest number of contacts within each category across communities of color. Yet, in our report “LIVES AT STAKE: A Review of the Violence Policy Center’s 2010 and 2011 Women of Color Homicide Rates” we found that Black women experienced the highest number of single female victim/single male offender homicides of all women of color in 2010 and 2011, and made up all of such homicides in 2011 in some states.22

Women of color are reaching out for support; they are also being impacted by disproportionate and more severe acts of violence with fewer resources. Anti-
violence organizations should continue to design and implement creative community outreach strategies and programming in partnership with culturally-specific community based organizations to connect with survivors who might not normally reach out for help from a formal system or who may have had negative experiences with formal systems. WOCN, Inc. recognizes that some survivors need services that address the multiple layers of oppression and discrimination they face in a healing environment that shares their cultural values. Many women of color describe a “double-bind” of being both a woman and a racialized minority or immigrant in the United States. They may experience feelings of racial and cultural loyalty, fear of law enforcement, and historical trauma impacting their decision to pursue criminal actions against their abusers.

While cultural competency is an expectation of all domestic violence service providers and advocates, culturally specific programming intentionally creates space for survivors of color to understand their experiences in the context of a gender and racial analysis -- a place for “them.” Hispanic callers comprised the greatest percentage (99%) of people who requested interpreter services to the National Domestic Violence Hotline in 2012. Culturally specific and linguistically relevant services can help survivors find the supports they need to survive. Outreach to women of color and culturally specific community based organizations can act as an early intervention tool.

Additionally, mainstream anti-violence service providers should seek to partner with long-standing culturally specific providers who may not have an explicit focus on gender based violence, including religious communities, cultural centers, and other broad based community support centers. This allows mainstream DV/SA providers greater access to underserved populations, an opportunity to gain trust within communities, and to extend their advocacy for the safety of survivors within those communities. A relationship with cultural stakeholders allows growth, synergy and educational opportunities for all involved, and is essential to changing community norms about interpersonal violence.

Finally, because women of color are over-represented in rates of domestic violence homicides, and Black women are murdered at a rate 2.5 times higher
than white women, organizations should seek to implement strategies to reduce
domestic violence homicides in their communities drawing on best and promising
practices. Studies on the relationship between domestic violence and homicide
underscore that women are especially at risk. Intimate partner homicides account for
14 percent of all homicides in the US, and most of the victims are women. As our
knowledge about domestic violence homicide grows, so does our capacity to reduce
the risk and even prevent increased level of violence, especially for survivors with the
most barriers to services and safety. Community response is crucial to keeping
survivors safe from escalating violence, keeping guns—the weapon of choice for
domestic violence homicides—out of the hands of abusers, and for tracking data that
helps uncover the risks and resilience factors for domestic violence survivors.

Resources

— In the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence’s 2016 special online
collection titled Intimate Partner Homicide Prevention, the authors, Patty
Branco and Casey Keene detail a wide range of tools and practices from across
the United States on domestic violence homicide prevention, and coordinated
community response.  http://www.vawnet.org/special-
collections/DVHomicide.php

data, like previous reports and reports since, however the 2014 report is unique
in that it also includes best and promising practices for a coordinated
community response with contributions from state prosecutors, advocates and
other stakeholders.
http://www.endabusewi.org/sites/default/files/resources/2013_wisconsin_dom-
estic_violence_homicide_report_0.pdf

— Outreach to Underserved Communities, End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin: The
Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Obtained August 2016
http://www.endabusewi.org/ourwork/outreach

WOCN Cultural Competency, Sensitivities and Allies in the Anti-Violence Against
Women Movement: a Resource Manual for Advocates and Aspiring Allies Reaching
Out to Underserved Populations.
This eight-chapter manual was developed by WOCN, Inc. staff, advisors and national partners and is intended as a tool for advocates and staff working at Office of Violence Against Women (OVW) funded organizations and community-based advocates seeking to enhance their services to underserved populations. The purpose of this resource is to provide an introduction to cultural competency, offer an array of resources and information on underserved populations to aid individuals and programs to move through the cultural spectrum and the stages of cultural service delivery, and to share tips and helpful steps for serving as an Aspiring Ally to marginalized communities. (July 2009) http://www.wocninc.org/publications/cultural-competency-sensitivities-and-allies-in-the-anti-violence-against-women-movement/

2. Anti-violence organizations and culturally-specific organizations should design and implement strategies and programming that focuses on strengthening social and economic safety nets to reduce poverty.

According to the “Preliminary Analysis of 2012 DV Hotline Caller Trends Among People of Color and 2013 Online Chat and Text Trends”, among known callers of color, Black callers made up the greatest percentage of people requesting services for basic needs (31%) and economic/financial services (28%). When women of color reach out for support services, they are navigating violence and a lack of community access. Women of color are more likely to live in poverty and low-income neighborhoods than white women, due to historical inequities in distributions of wealth, redlining, and systematic educational disparities. Additionally, Black women specifically, are more likely to be the single head of households with children, and more likely to live below the poverty level. Again, this stems from a complex set of laws and policy initiatives, like the war on drugs which unequally targeted Black and Latino young men, resulting in skyrocketing incarceration rates and devastated communities. Resources, employment, financial support and safe housing are all important parts of the healing process for survivors of domestic violence, however, some survivors have less access than others. While violence happens across class, it impacts some survivors more severely due to limited means to escape. In a study by the National Institute of Justice, data showed that neighborhood disadvantage was associated with increased prevalence and severity of intimate violence against women, and in fact, rates of domestic violence doubled when the abusive partner experienced periods of unemployment.
Given the correlation between historical inequity, poverty and intimate partner violence, WOCN encourages organizations and allies to implement poverty-reducing strategies and economic empowerment models into all facets of community life.

Resources


— My Brother’s Keeper Challenge, initiated by President Barack Obama, is a public-private partnership of the United States Federal Government to promote intervention by civic leaders in the lives of young men of color to address their unique challenges and to promote racial justice. This includes economic justice, addressing disparities in education, and ending police profiling and brutality. https://www.whitehouse.gov/my-brothers-keeper

— Boggess, J., Groblewski, J., Safety and Services: Women of color speak about their communities, (2011), Published by the Center for Family Policy and Practice. Safety and Services is based on a series of listening sessions with women who shared their experiences and knowledge of domestic violence, economic support services, and community. The paper explores cultural differences, community influences, a role for churches, and the value of a broad range of economic and social support services for increasing the safety and well-being of low-income women of color. http://cffpp.org/our-publications/safety-and-services/
Advocacy to raise the federal minimum wage. Currently, the federal minimum wage is 7.25/hour. That equals $15,080 per year for a worker who works 40 hours per week, 52 weeks per year. Yet that wage falls far below the poverty threshold for a family of three or four members. For more on how to advocate for fair wages, see YWCA USA.

www.ywca.org

3. Anti-Violence organizations should increase access to services and supports for women of color and their communities.

The impact of sexual and domestic violence can be felt across racial, ethnic and class lines but as we have previously noted, women of color bear the disproportionate burden of violence, with fewer resources. Anti-Violence organizations should increase access to services and supports for women of color and their communities through meaningful engagement. One way to begin increasing access to communities is to conduct needs assessments, listening sessions, recruit and retain diverse staff, and expand culturally specific programming.

Needs Assessment

A needs assessment helps identify the gaps between what is being done in a community, and what the community still needs. It is a systematic way of determining gaps in services, and helping to set priorities about what will be done. Needs assessments are often focused on a particular group or community and stem from curiosity about something we see occurring. It allows us to see what is currently happening, and what could be happening in an ideal world. This process may involve staff from various service agencies, survivors, advocates, clergy, and other community stakeholders. In addition to helping assess whether you are meeting the needs of the community, it helps identify key partners in the work, and develop a sense of community solidarity among members.
Unlike focus groups and needs assessments, a listening session recognizes that the participants themselves hold the keys to change. While facilitators take back messages and recommendations from the sessions, WOCN, Inc. staff and consultants work to enable session participants with strategies that they can utilize to take action for themselves.

Recruitment and Retention of Women of Color Staff

Another way to increase access for underserved and unserved populations is by seeing them as more than clients and service recipients, but as active participants in change in their own lives, and in their communities. This means hiring from the communities your agency serves, investing in leadership within those communities, valuing a wide range of skill-sets and types of educations, and investing in the women of color staff your agency employs. There should be widespread, continued support for women of color advocates and culturally specific programs that provide information about supporting women of color surviving gender-based violence.

Further, advocates of color, and culturally and/or linguistically competent work should not be an afterthought within agencies. The work of addressing the needs of communities of color should be integrated into all levels of organizational policy, and should be the responsibility of all employees—not just those most impacted. Mainstream programs would do well to utilize this data to advocate for increased recruitment and leadership opportunities for women of color within their organizations. Organizations may also want to seek additional funding for advanced training on retention of women of color advocates in their programs.

Improving Support to Expand Culturally Responsive Programming and Options

Culturally specific domestic violence and sexual assault service organizations are often under-funded, under-staffed, and lack the historical access to resources that mainstream providers enjoy. While all intimate partner violence programs are seeing a decrease in federal funding, this reduction in funding and services overly impacts women of color and agencies that provide culturally specific services. According to the Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women, survivors are more
likely to seek services from organizations and advocates who are familiar with their language and culture. Culturally specific organizations provide a crucial link in services for survivors who might otherwise fall through the cracks.

In the “Preliminary Analysis of 2012 DV Hotline Caller Trends Among People of Color and 2013 Online Chat and Text Trends” report, WOCN, Inc. learned that Asian Americans and Hispanic callers were most likely to be calling about culturally and linguistically appropriate services. Mainstream programs with large populations of English language learners will want to consider using this data to advocate for the expansion of culturally and linguistically appropriate and competent services in their own communities. Advocates and organizations may also want to seek additional funding to allow for an expansion of those services, or a collaborative partnership with a local culturally specific organization, religious organization or community center.

Improving Response by Anti-Violence Programs in Ways that Will Strengthen Community Response and Expand Options for Survivors

Anti-violence organizations should create comprehensive approaches that address community and system change in order to generate and reinforce new social norms and implement strategies that direct efforts to the general population instead of working solely with victims, their children and abusers. Community engagement should be central to the work of anti-violence programs. Survivors of color are often part of tight-knit social, racial, and ethnic communities, and separation from those communities due to domestic violence is a cost survivors of color should not have to pay. Engaging with the whole community allows increased access to safety for survivors, a safety net when violence occurs, and could reduce instances of violence overall.

Communities have nuanced understandings of their culture and the intersections between state and interpersonal violence. By supporting engagement across the community, anti-violence organizations can help communities address multiple forms of violence, from poverty, police brutality to domestic violence. Faith-based
institutions are often cultural cornerstones of communities, and many are already engaging with survivors who never reach our doors. Partnering with these institutions increases our connection to those unreached and underserved survivors, helps survivors get culturally competent care in a crisis, and helps us understand how to serve them.

Additionally, community engagement allows the community to develop accountability measures that work for them. Whether that is a community based safety task force, or a community advisory board at the local rape crisis center, community engagement can bring together survivors and their allies all sharing a common goal: to end all forms of violence in their communities. Anti-violence organizations and culturally specific organizations should design and implement strategies that enable safe, healthy relationship behaviors, and equitable relationships.

Anti-violence organizations should begin with raising awareness about the nature and scope of violence, and the connection of gender-based violence to other forms of state violence. This can be done through campaigns, public service announcements, newspaper op-eds and community block parties or tabling events. Breaking the silence around domestic violence helps community members understand that these issues are not just private matter, but impact the entire community. This also helps community members identify signs of domestic violence and begin to change cultural and community norms that contribute to or exacerbate that violence. Awareness campaigns should be culturally and linguistically appropriate.

Once community members begin discussing violence, they may start to recognize signs of abuse and wonder where to go. Conducting outreach in underserved communities gives community members the information they need to respond in a crisis, and gives survivors immediate support in instances of violence. Survivors get their needs met as the community continues to address root causes of violence. Organizations should assess their capacity to provide culturally and linguistically competent services before conducting outreach.
Anti-violence organizations should seek to engage the community in meaningful ways with a deep understanding of cultural norms, expectations, barriers and historical context. The work of changing community norms must be survivor centered and community led to avoid creating additional stigma in already marginalized communities. Community engagement can be a long process and involves rapport building, great deals of trust and patience.

**Community Engagement**

→ Always keeps the safety of survivors at the center of the work.
→ Is not punitive or stigmatizing.
→ Is strengths-based, instead of deficit based, and assumes that communities are the experts in their lives and experiences and that they can find meaningful solutions to the barriers they face.
→ Values collaboration and partnership.
→ Takes time; building trust in historically underserved communities doesn’t happen overnight and without investment.
→ Involves accountability from the organization and communities they serve.
→ Is holistic. It considers the community in all of its historical, social and cultural diversity when creating solutions.
→ Recognizes that those closest to the problem are also those closest to the solution.
→ Allows for the most marginalized to remain at the center of the work.

**Resources**

— Somewhere to Turn: Making Domestic Violence Services Accessible to Battered Immigrant Women - A 'How To' Manual For Battered Women’s Advocates and Service Providers, Leslye E. Orloff and Rachael Little Published by National Resource Center on Domestic Violence, 2011


The American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) created a toolkit for their constituents, which outlines how to hold a listening session. While it was created specifically for AFL-CIO members, it could be easily adapted by advocates and non-profits for community based listening sessions. This is available by contacting the AFL-CIO at [http://www.aflcio.org](http://www.aflcio.org)

(1) Mason, Nicole and Garcia, Lisette. Authors for Women of Color Network, Inc. (April 2014) Gaining Ground, Breaking Through: A Report on the Leadership Experiences of Women of Color, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender People of Color, Individuals with Disabilities, Native Women, Immigrant Women and Aspiring Allies Working in the Anti-Violence Against Women Movement in Four States. The Women of Color Network, Inc.’s Gaining Ground Reports feature a collection of survey data, and stories and experiences gathered through focus groups conducted within the four states that participated in the First Round Academy of the Expanding Leadership Opportunities for Underrepresented Populations Project from December 2011 through June 2013. The reports are in partnership with the Family Violence Prevention and Services Program (FVPSA Program), Administration of Children, Youth and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The purpose of these comprehensive reports is two-fold. First, to highlight the need for movement-wide programming and promising practices better support and sustain the leadership of those from underrepresented populations. Second, to further diversify anti-violence organizations and enhance their outreach and services to marginalized populations. [GainingGround.pdf](GainingGround.pdf)

4. Anti-violence advocates within community organizations, state and federal officials, law enforcement, and court personnel should continue to collect and analyze data to determine patterns that contribute to disproportionate risk of homicides for women of color.
Our understanding of the depth and scope of intimate partner violence has increased dramatically throughout the years. While our knowledge about violence has increased, it continues to impact women of color at alarming rates. WOCN, Inc. advocates for the enhanced collection and analysis of disaggregated data specific to the experiences of women of color to help community organizations, state and federal officials, law enforcement, and court personnel utilize data-driven decision-making. Central to this data is an assessment of the quality of services survivors of color receive when they interact with these institutions. While we know survivors of color are reaching out, research is still needed to tell us whether they are getting culturally competent, non-stigmatizing, linguistically appropriate services. This may also guide the creation of increased culturally specific interventions to address the undue burden of violence on women of color. Data from this report suggest promising places for further research and evaluation to understand risks, resiliencies and help-seeking behaviors of women of color.
Conclusion

Domestic Violence has a devastating physical, psychological, and economic impact on women’s lives. One-third of women reported experiencing IPV over the course of their lifetime. Across racial, ethnic, and linguistic differences, women of color and Native American women bear the overwhelming and disproportionate burden of violence. Survivors of color report barriers to accessing services and experience severe acts of violence at the hands of partners. When women of color reach out for help and support, it is vital that they are met with culturally relevant support. By continuing to analyze disaggregated data focused specifically on homicides and help-seeking patterns of women of color, we can shine a light on the incredible disparities women of color face and implement safety nets, so that women of color are safe and protected.

Advocates and policy makers must keep marginalized communities at the center of conversations, when considering programming and policies that impact survivors of domestic violence. We invite partnership from community organizations, state and federal officials, law enforcement, and court personnel. This effort must prioritize the voices of women of color, community specific solutions, and consistent research and data collection.

Survivors of color must have access to life-saving resources to meet both immediate and long-term needs. Organizations advocating with and for survivors of color must have increased access to funding and resources to increase culturally specific programming and outreach. Finally, we must continue to research and create data that highlights the disparities in experiences of violence for women of color.
Resources


3. Ibid.


5. Shannan Catalano, Ph.D., Erica Smith, Howard Snyder, Ph.D., and Michael Rand (2009), Female Victims of Violence, Bureau of Justice Statistics http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/fvv.pdf


12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.


16. Ibid., Page 16.


18. Ibid., Page 19.


23 END DOMESTIC ABUSE WISCONSIN Report On Focus Groups Conducted With African American Female Victims Of Domestic Violence In Wisconsin, 2014

24 For the purpose of this report, WOCN, Inc. Defines “Mainstream” as organizations that either serve primarily White women or are historically White women led.


27 African American Attitudes toward Domestic Violence and DV Assistance, Vetta Sanders Thompson, Ph.D. & Anita Bazile, Ph.D., National Violence Against Women Prevention Research Center, 2000 https://mainweb-v.musc.edu/vawprevention/research/attitudesdv.shtml

28 Concentrated Disadvantage, Economic Distress, and Violence Against Women in Intimate Relationships, Michael L. Benson and Greer L. Fox, National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, 2004

29 Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women Grants to Enhance Culturally Specific Services for Victims of Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence and Stalking Program Solicitation, 2016


31 Adams et al., 2008; Black et al., 2011; Lacey et al., 2013

32 Black et al., 2011

33 Abu-Ras, 2003; Gillum, 2009


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