The Importance of Culturally Specific Intimate Partner Violence Services for Communities of Color

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Overview

- Highlight unique challenges experienced by survivors of Color – community response and identified needs
- Benefits of culturally specific intervention services for communities of Color
- Highlight the need for and importance of allocating funding towards culturally specific intimate partner violence (IPV) services for survivors of color
- Primary research in IPV African American Community
Intimate Partner Violence and Communities of Color

- Cuts across all races, cultures, social classes and sexual orientations

- Unique experiences of survivors of Color are often neglected in research and services

- Many services tend to take a Eurocentric approach to assisting survivors

- Survivors of Color not seeking or receiving full benefit of services
Factors That Compound IPV in Communities of Color

- Racism
  - Stereotypes of people of color
  - Myth that communities of Color are inherently violent/dysfunctional
  - Disempowering of African American and Latino men by larger society
  - Feeling of loyalty to community/family
  - Knowledge of racist legal system

- Disproportionate economic disadvantage
Community Response to Survivors of Color

Many services/interventions take a color-blind approach to assisting survivors and perpetrators - persons of color not seeking or receiving full benefit of services
Mainstream Services

♦ Culture of organization not welcoming to survivors of Color
  ♦ Survivor was a minority in the setting
  ♦ White environment
  ♦ Services not designed to meet needs of survivors of Color
Community Response to Survivors of Color

- African American survivors have expressed dissatisfaction with domestic violence shelters, legal services, social services, response of church

- Survivors, services providers, and researchers have called for culturally specific services
Need for culturally specific services

“Yeah it’s important. Black women need it. We need help ‘cause... not too many people that like to help us... You don’t find too many groups out here like to help Black people. A lot of us Black folks don’t get too much help.”
Need for culturally specific services

“… Yeah, because black people, black women understand other black women. Ain’t no way a white woman understands what a black woman going through... So, it’s good for Black women to be together... if you’re dealing with going to a group with a white woman, it’s going to be hard.”
Components of Culturally Specific Interventions

- Designed for and developed in collaboration with target population
- Uses language familiar to target population
- Uses channels of dissemination which will successfully reach target population
- Representative staff
- Conducted in environment comfortable for participants
- Incorporates cultural values, norms, expectations and attitudes of target group into the intervention
A welcoming environment for survivors of Color

“...it keeps you in the atmosphere of being at home... it just umm gives you a sense of... knowing that it’s cultural, knowing that this is geared towards you... it just gives you that sense of... environment, gives you a warming, it gives you a little... it kind a makes you not so defensive... I think it is because umm... that sterile White atmosphere too clinical for us... too clinical for us.”
Incorporate cultural values, norms, expectations, and attitudes of the target community

♦ For many communities of Color, religion, spirituality, and/or church are central to their being

♦ “...because most black people um, men and women, but most black women were raised in church, raised spiritually, you know... And that part brings a whole ‘nother meaning to the, you know, changing your life... I think that’s very necessary... I do... Because I need that in my life... Me personally, I need that. Without the spiritual part, it would just be another group... You know?... I don’t need just a group... I need a foundation, and that’s what the spiritual part gives me, a foundation.”
Incorporate cultural values, norms, expectations, and attitudes of the target community

“It makes me more comfortable because everything is pretty much African-American like the setting and just everything pretty much that we discuss and stuff it’s...more relating to African-Americans and how we deal with situations and how we can better deal with situations. How we was brought up and stuff like that.”
Culturally Specific Services

- Uniquely welcoming to survivors of Color
- Feel comfortable
- Has more to offer and are created for communities of Color
Implications

♦ Survivors of Color have unique needs that are not being met by mainstream intimate partner and sexual violence services

♦ Race/Ethnicity/Culture matters in assessing factors that influence violence in intimate relationships and designing intervention and prevention programs

♦ Women benefited from the culturally specific services

♦ Need culturally specific services

♦ Healing from trauma in a safe, comfortable space for optimal healing and recovery
Why VAWA re-authorization is particularly important here...

- Funding for targeted outreach to enhance access to victim services for underserved populations
- Funding for victim services to meet needs of underserved populations
- Targeted prevention, outreach, intervention to address barriers to accessing services experienced by underserved populations
- Strengthening the capacity of underserved populations to provide population specific services
Thank you for your time and attention