

Inclusion and Access:

Tools to Support Culturally Competent Domestic Violence Programs

Women of Diversity Task Force
New Jersey Coalition for Battered Women
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Why Consider Diversity in Domestic Violence Work?

Although women of color and women from other marginalized communities have been involved in the domestic violence movement since its beginning, services have largely been designed for and run by mainstream communities. The battered women's movement has made some progress in changing attitudes about domestic violence, but the benefits of the progress have been experienced to a greater degree by younger, dominant culture victims with children; for example, printed materials and videos are largely produced in English. Many other domestic violence victims and their children whose first language is not English, do not have equal access to current information about seeking services, dynamics of domestic violence, current good practices and protocols.

Well documented evidence illustrates that violence against women is a significant social issue that impacts the wellbeing of all women regardless of age, culture or socio-economic status. However, the intersection of racial discrimination and economic inequity creates obstacles that often inhibit the ability of women of color to access domestic violence services. Often, distorted societal images of women from marginalized groups create another layer of complexity when victims of domestic violence seek help. Historically, accounts of culturally insensitive environments and institutionalized racism have inhibited access to shelter and outreach services by women of color and their children.

Additionally, it is important to recognize that gender-based violence does not occur isolated from other forms of oppression. Battered women do not experience gender-based violence in a vacuum, but rather as one of many factors that intersect to form each individual's complex reality. The way that a woman experiences and deals with domestic violence or sexual assault is inextricably linked with other facts that intersect to shape her reality. This includes other forms of oppression she may experience (racism, classism, discrimination based on national origin), as well as family, customs, traditions, religious beliefs, education, societal dynamics, and many other elements that may form an individual's culture.

Finally, very few outreach programs in the state of New Jersey have been developed specifically for women of color and women from other marginalized groups. The efforts being made to provide translation of existing materials and hire bilingual staff are just a start. Meaningful collaboration with people in communities of color will help to build the bridges by which communities can envision violence-free households. Outreach efforts that consider the realities of a particular community and involve its members in a meaningful way will be effective in making some change for victims in those communities. Creative methods must be employed to bridge cultural gaps, address diverse perceptions of violence and create solutions based on the victim's realities. Ultimately the goal is to create highly inclusive organizations that consider cultural nuances when developing policies and programming related to domestic violence.

Definition of Diversity

Diversity means more than just acknowledging and/or tolerating difference.

Diversity is a set of conscious practices that involve:

- Understanding and appreciating interdependence of humanity, cultures, and the natural environment
- Practicing mutual respect for qualities and experiences that are different from our own
- Understanding that diversity includes not only ways of being but also ways of knowing
- Recognizing that personal, cultural and institutionalized discrimination creates and sustains privileges for some while creating and sustaining disadvantages for others
- Building alliances across differences so that we can work together to eradicate all forms of discrimination

Diversity includes, therefore, knowing how to relate to those qualities and conditions that are different from our own and outside the groups to which we belong, yet are present in other individuals and groups. These include but are not limited to age, ethnicity, class, gender, physical abilities or qualities, race, sexual orientation, as well as religious status, gender expression, educational background, geographical location, income, marital status, parental status, and work experiences. Finally, we acknowledge that categories of difference are not always fixed but can be fluid. We respect individual rights to self-identification, and we recognize that no one culture is intrinsically superior to another.

Diversity exists when all communities, including traditionally excluded communities, and all designated groups within communities, can give voice effectively to their issues and partake equitably in the decision-making structures that determine their lives.

(Source- Adapted from the definition of diversity created by Iowa State University)

Diversity or Affirmative Action: What's the Difference?

“Diversity is just affirmative action with a new coat of paint,” is a frequent comment heard whenever the topic of diversity is discussed. But a deeper look into the differences between diversity and affirmative action may help to answer that question. While there is some overlap both in philosophy and practice, there are significant differences, as outlined below.

Affirmative action changes are driven by law. The law promotes equal employment opportunity and identifies and eliminates discriminatory practices and policies to ensure fair treatment in the workplace. Employers have been expected to make positive effort to recruit, hire, train and promote employees of previously excluded groups. Diversity, on the other hand, is strategically driven, and focuses on a commitment to understanding and accepting that each individual is unique. Diversity helps individuals respect and learn, from differences and not just similarities. Diversity focuses on benefits to the organization. Diversity can be seen as contributing to organizational goals such as profit, productivity, and morale rather than just avoiding lawsuits or meeting legal requirements.

Affirmative action is selective in mandating changes that benefit previously disenfranchised groups. Diversity is inclusive, encompassing everyone in the workplace. It seeks to create a working environment in which everyone and every group fits, feels accepted, has value, and contributes.

Affirmative action generally uses an assimilation approach, expecting that people brought into the system will adapt to existing conditions. Diversity operates with a different approach: a synergy model. This view assumes that the diverse groups will devise new, creative ways of working that will move beyond the way we've always done things to improve the organization.

Affirmative action is numbers oriented, aimed at changing the demographics within the organization. Managing diversity is behavioral, aimed at changing the organizational culture, and developing skills and policies that help staff provide the best services for everyone.

Affirmative action opens doors in the organization while managing diversity opens the culture and the system. Managing diversity does not replace affirmative action; rather, it builds on the critical foundation laid by workplace equity programs. Both go hand in hand, each reinforcing the gains of the other. Without affirmative action's commitment to hiring and promoting diverse employees, organizations would rarely have the diversity of staff to reach a stage where differences are valued and diversity is effectively managed.

(Source: Diversity vs. Affirmative Action http://www.sunysb.edu/diversity_a_affirmative.html)

Characteristics of Highly Inclusive Organizations

Characteristic # 1: A committed executive director

- ▶ sets clear expectations and requirements for all staff and volunteers
- ▶ understands diversity and inclusion
- ▶ sees that expectations are met

Characteristic # 2: A long-term, holistic approach to inclusiveness through

- ▶ programs
- ▶ communications
- ▶ board-staff-volunteer recruitment
- ▶ training
- ▶ culture and environment
- ▶ overall management practices

Shot-gun approaches have neutral or negative effects

Characteristic #3: Recognition of the potential contributions of people of color as

- ▶ centers of knowledge about clients and services
- ▶ financial contributions
- ▶ volunteer members
- ▶ staff members

Characteristic #4: Recruiting and retaining staff of color

- ▶ recruitment that is strengthened through the creation of consistent policies and practices to connect with communities of color
- ▶ effective and equitable management practices that lead to retaining staff of color
- ▶ normalizing performance review and professional development practices that level the playing field

Characteristic #5: Creation of inclusive programs in stages

- ▶ Stage one-*one size fits all*: no consideration of needs of diverse populations
- ▶ Stage two-*specific to communities of color*: developed specifically for needs of various populations
- ▶ Stage three-*universal and inclusive*: designed for all clients with an awareness of different groups' needs

Organizations often transition through the three stages as they become more inclusive.

Characteristic #6: Two-way communication with communities of color

- ▶ Organizations need to listen to and learn from communities of color and ask for feedback, especially if help is needed in overcoming major barriers.
- ▶ Organizations need to communicate about their work to communities of color.

Top Reasons Why People From Marginalized Groups Leave Organizations

I am tired of the hurtful, insensitive, remarks made by my colleagues. *Often people from dominant culture groups say and do things that are hurtful and offensive. Those making the comments may or may not be aware that they are being offensive. Institutional structure and culture may not afford the victim of such behavior any recourse for interrupting or stopping the behavior.*

It doesn't feel good or safe here. *The overall culture and climate of some organizations is so toxic for members of marginalized groups, especially those who are of particular religious faiths, that they may consider it unsafe to remain in the environment. Members of the above groups often experience a strong sense of the absence of safety because the differences they bring are unseen. Unlike race that elicits at the very least political correctness that can minimize flagrant acts of bias, homosexuality remains a topic that is joked about, ridiculed and attacked—sometimes still in open, threatening ways.*

They would not miss me if I were gone. *People from marginalized groups can be so devalued that they feel invisible in some workplaces.*

I am tired of being the only ... person in the agency. I feel isolated and overwhelmed. *Members of dominant culture groups take for granted the old adage, "There is comfort in numbers." For example, whites rarely have the opportunity to be the only white person in an environment of people of color for an extended period of time, but it is often the experience of a person of color to be the only African American, or Asian American in the workplace. Dominant culture group members generally have no idea how difficult this experience can be.*

There is no one I can turn to when I feel troubled. *The lack of colleagues and role models who share the same race or ethnicity can make it difficult to find allies who feel safe and supportive.*

My abilities are constantly challenged or disregarded. I do not get the support I need to get my job done. *A prejudice regarding members of communities of color is that they get jobs simply because of race or ethnicity—a prejudiced attitude that is not only untrue but very hurtful and damaging to people of color. One of the effects of such prejudice is that employees of color are often held to a different standard. They are scrutinized and questioned in ways that other employees are not. Seeking support is sometimes viewed as needing help because of incompetence.*

Qualities of an Anti-Racist Ally

- ↺ Identifies and names racism directly
- ↺ Takes the front line as a buffer, not as a “savior”
- ↺ Recognizes that remaining silent, “neutral” or “objective” can be racial privilege
- ↺ Is responsible for self-education; does not expect people of color to teach them
 - ↺ Cultivates genuine relationships with people of color that are mutually beneficial
- ↺ Is not hyper-arrogant about being a white ally
 - ↺ Struggles everyday with understanding and undoing aspects of their own privilege
- ↺ Understands that people of color’s experiences with racism are not debatable
 - ↺ Does not require people of color to display proof of racist injury
- ↺ Knows that people of color are the experts on their own experiences
- ↺ Acts in solidarity with people of color without taking over their liberation effort
- ↺ Does not expect to be recognized as a white ally
- ↺ Does not expect gratitude from people of color
- ↺ Takes on racism as a problem because it is *personally* offensive
- ↺ Is motivated by a quest for justice, rather than a sense of guilt
- ↺ Is open to and invites challenge
- ↺ Expects support and accountability from other emerging allies
- ↺ Unconditionally opposes oppression with no strings attached
- ↺ Accepts that making mistakes is part of becoming an effectively ally
- ↺ Acknowledges, apologizes for and learns from own mistakes without retreating
- ↺ Participates respectfully in communities of color and avoids “cultural tourism”
- ↺ Interrupts racist statements whether a person of color is present or objects
- ↺ Is committed to social justice and an end to oppression in all its forms
- ↺ Knows without doubt that the title of “ally” is not self-identified or designated by white people, but is identified by people of color

The Quick Fix vs. Real Organizational Change

We live in a fast-paced, “disposable” world. The concept of waiting is almost beyond our comprehension. Working in small, incremental steps towards accomplishment of a goal, allowing ample time for careful thought and planning, are almost nonexistent. Instead, we attach unrealistic deadlines to the majority of our work and desperately search for the “person to blame” when the slightest thing goes wrong. Many of our interactions are becoming computerized; we can do everything from booking hotel accommodations to transferring money to arranging for a new telephone system in a matter of minutes without speaking to another human being. Many of us start to feel annoyed when we have to wait a mere five minutes in the express lane at the grocery store. It is no wonder that we have become a society that relies on the quick fix.

Working to create a diverse organization with a commitment to anti-oppression cannot happen overnight. It takes a long-term commitment from the organization to work continually on the issues of racism, sexism, homophobia, religious discrimination, ableism and all other issues of oppression, both from a personal and an organizational perspective. It first requires the understanding of all those affiliated with the organization, from the top to the bottom, that they hold prejudices. This understanding comes from training--a lot of it and often. Training sessions of one or two hours once a year that teach basic cultural competence will not work. Doing the work of anti-oppression means acquiring the knowledge of how discrimination and privilege work hand-in-hand to keep systems of oppression in place. Committed individuals learn this by doing personal work on how they have experienced either privilege or discrimination, depending on their membership in dominant and subordinate groups within the society. Then staff, volunteers and board members must evaluate the policies and behaviors of the organization to determine the way in which it has perpetuated oppression even when such policies or behaviors were unintentional. Lastly, the organization must create new organizational values, requirements, approaches and assessment tools to insure that the organization can develop and maintain an environment where all staff and clients are genuinely included and valued.

Timetables for organizational change of this kind vary; however, many organizations develop a three-to five-year plan. Depending on the size of the organization, one to two years is spent on training and organizational evaluation alone. As staff, volunteers and board members receive training, they become more and more prepared to evaluate the organization’s current methods of operation in a way that allows them to bypass good intentions and look honestly at the actual outcomes of agency practices. This evaluation paves the way for changes, sometimes small and incremental, sometimes big and far-reaching, but

ongoing for the life of the organization, that moves the agency to one that is actively working to be an oppression-free agency.

There is no place for a quick fix within an agency that is committed to being an inclusive, anti-oppression organization. We did not come to the problems created by our diversity overnight and we will not solve those problems overnight. Instead real change requires a high level of commitment from all members of the organization over the life of the organization. Those committed to the agency must become lifelong learners about issues of diversity. They must step away from being blind to difference and become individuals who see race, gender, ability, sexual orientation. They must become adept at seeing differences their own and those of others--fully and clearly. They must become comfortable with being uncomfortable as they welcome assessment, even when the results are critical of their own efforts. They must learn to welcome change in a way that is contrary to the beliefs of our "quick fix" society.

NJCBW Domestic Violence Program Standards for Diversity

In 2006 the NJCBW presented its members with standards that would assist individual programs in increasing their ability to meet the needs of victims of domestic violence statewide. The standards address a wide range of services and the quality of those services. Below are the standards that guide diversity:

- A. Programs providing domestic violence services shall strive to meet the following general diversity standards:
 - 1. Respond to racism, classism, ageism, homophobia, sexism and to bias related to religion and/or ability through staff and volunteer training, consciousness raising, community education, networking and vigorous advocacy.
 - 2. Demonstrate efforts to cultivate a diverse, multicultural, multiethnic and multiracial environment that reflects the population being served.
 - 3. Cultivate and promote a diverse, multicultural, multiethnic and multiracial staff to perform and advance to all levels of NJCBW and programs providing domestic violence services.
 - 4. Develop and implement a strategy to address language barriers that respect the privacy and dignity of battered women.
 - 5. Actively work with organizations, boards, commissions and coalitions that function to address barriers related to race, socio-economic status, age, religion, sexual orientation and abilities.
 - 6. Identify culturally affirmative community resources and develop relationships with culturally diverse organizations, organizations that offer supportive services to battered lesbians, battered women with disabilities, and organizations that specialize in immigration law and advocacy.

- B. Programs providing domestic violence services shall strive to meet the following standards specific to populations with special needs:
 - 1. Demonstrate efforts towards developing physical accessibility at all sites. This includes accessibility for battered women who are wheelchair bound, blind or visually impaired, deaf or suffering from medical conditions which place limitations on them.
 - 2. Review admission requirements related to mental and physical abilities and develop and implement plans to provide services to meet the needs of battered women with disabilities.
 - 3. Clearly demonstrate and communicate the ability to accommodate battered women with diverse needs that include women with gender,

linguistic, physical, mental, religious and cultural differences by developing policy and procedures to reflect these needs.

4. Accept battered women based on their need for protection, not their ability to provide proof of citizenship and/or immigration status.
 5. Assure ongoing disability awareness concerning various disabilities and TTY training to educate staff and volunteers about the needs of people with various disabilities.
- C. Programs providing domestic violence services shall develop overall agency policies and procedures that include:
1. A definition of cultural diversity, which is inclusive of race, religion, ethnicity, economic status, sexual orientation, age and ability.
 2. Respect for all people as individuals that includes respect for cultural diversity.
 3. Provisions for celebration and expressions of culture.
 4. Accommodation of cultural needs to every extent possible.
 5. Recognition of the existence of institutional and personal racism, homophobia, bias and oppression and the agency's commitment toward their elimination.
 6. An anti-discrimination statement addressing admission guidelines, service provision and hiring practices.
- D. Programs with shelters shall also:
1. Provide opportunities for cultural expression to every extent possible.
 2. Openly display and make available culturally diverse resources, including but not limited to posters, publications and brochures.
 3. Develop policies that reflect the agency's sensitivity to and recognition of the fact that individual cultural practices may conflict with specific shelter rules. In such cases, staff will work towards a peaceful resolution.
 4. Provide residential guidelines in languages frequently spoken in the county or shelter.
 5. Develop a statement of what kind of care staff can reasonably expect to provide.
 6. Arrange to accommodate the communication needs of all residents that include the use of certified ASL interpreters, as needed.
- E. Programs with nonresidential services shall:
1. Openly display and make available culturally diverse resources.
 2. Make arrangements to accommodate the communication needs of all participants including the use of certified ASL interpreters, as needed.

Report On the Cultural Competency of the New Jersey Domestic Violence Programs

(Based on the statewide survey conducted by the Women of Diversity Task Force with the Battered Lesbian Task Force of the New Jersey Coalition for Battered Women, January 2006)

Background and Significance of the Project

Domestic violence crosses all social, cultural, racial, economic and educational lines in American society. Shelters for battered women and children have come into existence in the United States within the past 25 years. Battered women who seek the safety of a shelter environment have many urgent needs, including legal, social, economic and counseling support which is provided by professional and volunteer staff. The demands for shelter services frequently exceed the supply and many facilities operate within tight budgets. However, despite these constraints, assurance of cultural awareness and sensitivity among shelter staff and volunteers at all levels of care is essential in order to prevent secondary trauma, and to begin the healing process for survivors of violence.

While there are many similarities in the forms of abuse experienced by all domestic violence victims, there are also unique forms of abuse faced by non-majority victims because the abuse often takes place in the context of social and economic marginalization. English-speaking victims describe the effects of racial, sexual and economic oppression. Non-English speaking victims have felt the additional pressure of political oppression and the strains of immigration and acculturation. Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual and Trans-gendered (LGBT) people fear biased treatment from all professionals. All of these conditions increase the victims' vulnerability to threats of harm to self and family, deportation, and pressure not to seek help outside the community. If help is sought at a domestic violence shelter, sensitivity to the unique stresses and fears of non-majority victims must be recognized and responded to if services are to be accepted and effectively delivered.

The New Jersey Department of Human Services provides funding for at least one domestic violence shelter in each of the 21 counties in New Jersey and all of these agencies are members of the New Jersey Coalition for Battered Women (NJCBW). NJCBW is a statewide coalition of domestic violence service programs and concerned individuals whose purpose and mission is to end violence in the lives of women. Recognizing that violence against women in its various forms is a fundamental element of the oppression of women, NJCBW works to eliminate the battering of women in New Jersey in the following ways: 1) education of the public about the roots of domestic violence, 2) advocacy to increase the quality, quantity, and accessibility of public and private resources and 3) challenging societal beliefs that inhibit the empowerment and self-determination of women.

In 2003, The New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, Division on Women received a grant on behalf of the Advisory Council on Domestic Violence to plan and execute a series of 10 focus groups to determine the policies, priorities and services currently needed in the field of domestic violence in New Jersey. In December, 2003, the Women of Diversity Task Force (WODTF) and the Battered Lesbian Task Force (BLTF) of NJCBW joined the Coalition in a discussion of the issues outlined in a summary report of the focus groups. As a result of this discussion, in December 2003, the NJCBW Board of Directors requested that Task Force members assist in the development and implementation of a survey tool to assess the cultural competence of domestic violence programs in the state.

Survey Instrument

A diverse group of current and former staff and NJCBW Board members and administrators dedicated to the coordination of efforts to enhance the cultural competence of the Coalition and its member programs worked through 2004 to develop and finalize the survey tool. The instrument was designed to assess program capacity to serve culturally diverse victims and survivors, their families and communities that include but are not limited to people of color, marginalized ethnic and religious groups, lower socioeconomic and non-documented immigrant groups, and Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Trans-gendered (LGBT) people. The tool was designed to assess cultural competency in:

- ↗ organizational environment of domestic violence programs
- ↗ program management and operations
- ↗ outreach and community involvement
- ↗ service delivery
- ↗ staff development

The survey instrument included 12 demographic statements, and 54 statements that required multiple choices, Likert, semantic differential scale and narrative responses.

Survey Methods

The goal of the NJCBW survey was to achieve at least 50% participation of 23 NJCBW residential and non-residential member agencies and their staff, which totaled approximately 500 staff. The survey instrument was distributed statewide in the first quarter of 2005. NJCBW staff arranged to meet with every interested member agency, including their administrative, direct service, management and support staff, to introduce the purpose of the survey, to distribute survey tools and to assure participating staff of the confidentiality of their responses. The following procedures were used at each agency:

- WODTF member, not employed by that agency, introduced and distributed the survey to eliminate response bias.
- At each agency a survey packet was distributed to every staff person at the scheduled staff meeting.
- The packet included the survey instrument, a letter explaining the purpose and the focus of the survey and a description of those who participated in the development of the survey tool.
- Written directions were given to guide the respondents' actions regarding the date and place to return the completed survey.
- A designated staff member at each agency was assigned to return completed, anonymous surveys to NJCBW by mail.
- Instructions given at agency staff meetings included staff being asked to consider the following as they completed the survey.
 - Reflect on the needs of programs to have well informed and culturally developed staff to meet the needs of victims/survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault as related to the definition of culture stated above;
 - Consider their professional needs for growth in these same areas and their overall need for professional growth in working with the groups described.

While surveys were being distributed and completed, NJCBW sought the assistance of a UMDNJ student to manage and analyze survey data.

Survey Response

Agencies: Over 500 surveys were distributed to 22 NJCBW programs beginning in January 2005. Participation in the survey was voluntary at the agency and staff level. The deadline for acceptance of completed surveys was extended by 3 weeks in order to accommodate the additional time needed by some programs to respond. By the end of June 2005, a total of 22 programs returned surveys to NJCBW. Seventeen New Jersey counties were represented by participating programs. Ten of the participating programs had a staff response rate of 50% or greater.

Individuals: Surveys were completed and submitted to NJCBW by 277 staff members. (See Appendix A and Appendix B).

Summary of Survey Results

Analysis of the NJCBW survey showed that the majority of participating shelter and battered women programs in the state:

- Recognize the need for culturally competent staff and programs
- Do not yet believe that their agencies are culturally competent
- Recommend that additional training on all aspects of diversity would be a benefit to staff

The Battered Lesbian Task Force (BLTF) has come to the following conclusions based on an analysis of survey data:

- There is an under representation of lesbian/bisexual staff members in domestic violence programs, a reluctance in staff self-disclosing a lesbian/bisexual orientation, or both.
- There is a lack of training/outreach materials addressing the particular needs of gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender domestic violence. As a result it appears that this population is underserved.

Statements on the survey that required narrative responses provided the most detail and depth regarding staff perspectives and concerns about the cultural competency needs of staff. Those written responses also offer valuable suggestions and insights on the diversity issues that may pose barriers to staff effectiveness and service delivery in domestic violence programs in New Jersey. (See Appendix C) Those responses would suggest that overall agency ratings may be affected by two factors:

- Perception may be determined in part by good intentions rather than actual behavior
- Although agencies are working diligently to provide culturally competent services, there is still considerable need for improvement.

Recommendations

After careful review of the survey results, the Women of Diversity Task Force with the Battered Lesbian Task Force offer the following recommendations:

Organizational Environment

- Conduct regular reviews of policies and procedures regarding recruitment of diverse staff, board and volunteers. These evaluations would assess for:
 - Recruitment practices that would increase the pool of

- qualified job applicants and volunteers of color
- Internal policies regarding promotion to increase retention of staff, board and volunteers of color
- Policies regarding complaints about promotions
- Work environments that are welcoming of diversity
- Policies and procedures that reflect a zero tolerance to homophobic/heterosexist behavior and attitudes

Program Management and Operation

- ↻ Conduct agency reviews which evaluate diversity competency based on demonstrated actions rather than intentions.
- ↻ Hire more employees from communities of color, and the LGBT community. Agencies should also increase participation from these communities on boards and volunteer groups.
- ↻ Provide staff opportunity to interact with diverse communities. This increased opportunity would deepen general knowledge about diverse communities as well as provide greater opportunities for members of diverse communities to view agencies as ones in which they would want to work as volunteers.

Service Delivery

- ↻ Client services may benefit from the use of domestic violence survivors to assist in the formulation of policy and procedure related to service delivery.
- ↻ Provide agency staff with exposure to holistic and other non-therapeutic approaches that may assist in the healing process. Include training and study regarding cultural and religious traditions of various groups.
- ↻ Increase outreach to underserved communities.
- ↻ Increase services in languages other than English.
- ↻ Hire more Spanish speaking staff.
- ↻ Encourage the development of basic second language skills including American Sign Language.
- ↻ Provide materials in shelter and outreach offices such as posters, magazines and various publications that are familiar to different cultures and in particular familiar to the lesbian and bisexual community.

Staff Development

- ✎ Training on issues related to diversity. Such training should begin with an anti-oppression focus as a baseline to develop the understanding required to work in a diverse environment. Training that uses an anti-oppression approach reduces the extent to which we perpetuate the concept of “the other”. It recognizes everyone’s cultural experiences as normal and legitimate.
- ✎ Multi-leveled training to accommodate the varied competency of staff and ensure agencies reach a higher degree of cultural competency. Those agencies that choose to move on to advanced levels of training would be able to create working environments that reflect higher levels of inclusiveness, ones that truly honor cultural difference.
- ✎ Training that focuses on the particular issues of certain groups, such as the LGBT community, persons with disabilities, Latinos and other marginalized groups.
- ✎ The need for diversity training was the most frequent need expressed statewide. This need could be examined from several venues:
 - Creating a statewide, standardized training would serve as a baseline for all domestic violence staff.
 - Offering technical assistance from the Women of Diversity Task Force and Battered Lesbian Task Force on issues of training, policy and procedure evaluation and other issues related to diversity.
 - Designate a point person to schedule training by the BLTF and WODTF.
 - Send a staff member to participate in a Train-the-Trainer program to be designated as the BLTF program trainer.
 - Send staff member to participate in anti-oppression training. Begin by training those who are designated as agency trainers and Community Educators for the program.

Outreach and Community Involvement

- ✦ Designate board members (a minimum of 3) to work with the WODTF Quality Services working Group and BLTF to move the diversity agenda forward by developing a three-year strategic plan for institutional changes on diversity.
- ✦ Develop genuine collaborations with diverse community partners that allow equity in decision making and policy development concerning issues related to domestic violence.

Agency Assessment for Racial Diversity and Inclusion

The following assessment tool is designed to allow you to determine how well your organization is doing on inclusion for racial diversity.

Of the primary forms of diversity; race, gender, sexual orientation, ability and ethnicity, this tool assesses race and racial diversity. Attempting to assess each form in one general document masks the “truth” in generalities and assumptions. Each primary form of diversity must be looked at separately under its own microscope. This can be approached by using several shorter documents, one each to address the five primary aspects of diversity (as the one here), or one long assessment tool that includes questions regarding each primary aspect. Conducting such an assessment gives the agency a clear, objective picture of what it is doing well and where it needs to improve.

Assessing the organization for how it is doing around the secondary forms of diversity, including religion, socio-economic status, age and national origin is also important. They are deemed secondary not because they are insignificant, but because they do not carry with them the same long history of institutional oppression that continues even today.

Answers to the questions on the assessment are based on the following:

An answer of YES means that the agency has a policy, procedure or practice in place to address the content of the question; an answer of NO means that the agency has not addressed the content of the question within its policies, procedures or practices; an answer of IN PROCESS means that the agency is currently working on establishing a policy, procedure or practice to address the content in the question.

Answers of YES and IN PROCESS should be clearly documented. For example, assessing staff diversity means counting the number of persons of every race who are employed in the agency. Reviewing materials and counting actual persons helps the agency conduct an accurate assessment rather than one in which “perception” is evaluated.

Policies

1. The agency has a policy against discrimination based on race.

_____ yes _____ no _____ in process

2. All employees are made aware of the policy against discrimination upon being employed by the agency.

_____ yes _____ no _____ in process

3. The mission of the agency includes a statement about inclusion based on race.

_____ yes _____ no _____ in process

4. Agency procedures include familiarizing staff with agency policies of racial inclusion.

_____ yes _____ no _____ in process

5. Agency procedures include familiarizing volunteers with agency policies of racial inclusion.

_____ yes _____ no _____ in process

6. Agency procedures include familiarizing board members with agency policies of racial inclusion.

_____ yes _____ no _____ in process

7. All agency policies against discrimination and about racial inclusion are reviewed each year for accuracy and appropriateness.

_____ yes _____ no _____ in process

8. The agency rejects a colorblind approach to racial diversity and works to learn about racial differences and their effects on the goals of the organization.

_____ yes _____ no _____ in process

9. The agency has clearly documented procedures for dealing with complaints regarding discrimination, bias and racism.

_____ yes _____ no _____ in process

10. Someone within the agency is designated to be responsible for overseeing compliance with EEO/AA requirements.

_____ yes _____ no _____ in process

Services

1. All agency services are specifically designed to include people of all racial backgrounds.

_____ yes _____ no _____ in process

2. Clients are informed of the agency's commitment to racial inclusion as part of the agency overview.

_____ yes _____ no _____ in process

3. Agency brochures are available in Spanish and other languages spoken by residents of the service area.

_____ yes _____ no _____ in process

4. Staff who speak a variety of languages are available to non-English speaking clients.

_____ yes _____ no _____ in process

5. In the absence of staff who speak a variety of languages, the agency has procedures in place to provide translators for non-English speaking clients.

_____ yes _____ no _____ in process

6. Shelter supplies include personal care products that address the needs of African Americans, Asians, Latinas, and other racial groups.

_____ yes _____ no _____ in process

7. Child care providers for clients represent several races.

_____ yes _____ no _____ in process

8. Services are based on an understanding of many cultural beliefs and not just Eurocentric values and beliefs.

_____ yes _____ no _____ in process

9. Agency staff is diverse and uses its diversity to meet the needs of clients.

_____ yes _____ no _____ in process

10. Counseling theory used by the organization encompasses a range of cultural values and beliefs that allow all clients to benefit.

_____ yes _____ no _____ in process

11. The agency provides outreach to diverse populations in its service area.

_____ yes _____ no _____ in process

12. Clients of all racial backgrounds report feeling comfortable and included when they have sought the services in the agency.

_____ yes _____ no _____ in process

Training and Development

1. All agency staff receive training on antiracism and inclusion on an annual basis.

_____ yes _____ no _____ in process

2. All agency volunteers receive training on antiracism and inclusion on a regular basis.

_____ yes _____ no _____ in process

3. All agency board members receive training on antiracism and inclusion on a regular basis.

_____ yes _____ no _____ in process

4. The agency avoids a colorblind theory of racial difference and explores racial diversity to help enhance the quality of its services.

_____ yes _____ no _____ in process

5. Specific work on racial diversity is included in the performance goals and appraisal for every agency employee.

_____ yes _____ no _____ in process

6. Management encourages the open discussion of racial diversity and provides safe forums for such discussions as part of the normal operations of the agency.

_____ yes _____ no _____ in process

7. People from marginalized groups are not expected or called upon to teach all staff members about racial diversity.

_____ yes _____ no _____ in process

8. Racial diversity is seen as an asset to the agency and is one of the criteria used to hire qualified staff.

_____ yes _____ no _____ in process

9. Racial diversity is seen as an asset to the agency and is one of the criteria used to recruit qualified volunteers.

_____ yes _____ no _____ in process

10. Racial diversity is seen as an asset to the agency and is one of the criteria used to recruit qualified board members.

_____ yes _____ no _____ in process

11. Agency staff, volunteers and board members are encouraged to attend seminars, trainings and workshops on racial diversity; these offerings are seen as important to the work of the agency.

_____ yes _____ no _____ in process

12. The racial diversity of staff members is considered a positive factor in promotions.

_____ yes _____ no _____ in process

13. The racial diversity of staff members is considered when opportunities for mentoring and leadership come up; the agency is careful to include staff of color for consideration for advancement.

_____ yes _____ no _____ in process

Staffing

1. The staff of the agency is racially diverse.

_____ yes _____ no _____ in process

2. The volunteer staff of the agency is racially diverse.

_____ yes _____ no _____ in process

3. The board of the agency is racially diverse.

_____ yes _____ no _____ in process

4. People of color work at ALL levels of the agency.

_____ yes _____ no _____ in process

5. The agency has a clear commitment to making the staff racially diverse.

_____ yes _____ no _____ in process

~Please Note~

The assessment can be done annually and the results used as the foundation for developing and monitoring your agency plan for inclusion. It is also a way of to identify areas of progress to celebrate.

SAMPLE

Organizational Statements Regarding Diversity

Mission Statement of Catholic Charities Diocese of Trenton, New Jersey

(Parent Organization for Providence House Willingboro and Providence House Ocean)

It is the mission of the agency's Cultural Diversity Committee to foster a work environment that provides acceptance, respect and sensitivity for all cultural differences, including but not limited to those related to ethnicity, race, gender, and disability. This mission will be carried out through training of staff in all aspects of diversity, in the recruitment of new staff, in the development of policies and procedures that will promote cultural sensitivity, and the enhancement of awareness regarding all issues relating to diversity.

University of Arkansas Diversity Values Statement

In order to enhance educational diversity, the University of Arkansas seeks to include and integrate individuals from varied backgrounds and with varied characteristics such as those defined by race, ethnicity, national origin, age, gender, socioeconomic background, religion, sexual orientation and intellectual perspective. (Source-<http://hr.uark.edu/training/diversity.asp?/CategoryMulticultural>)

Nebraska Domestic Violence Sexual Assault Coalition Diversity Statement

The Nebraska Domestic Violence Sexual Assault Coalition affirms its commitment to diversity. We recognize and value the ethnic, religious and racial richness of our communities, and encourage mutual respect and understanding among all people. True excellence in our organization and communities results from identifying, serving and enlisting the participation of all people who represent this rich diversity.

The Coalition acknowledges our culture is steeped in racism and sexism. The historical roots of patriarchy and oppression have resulted in the marginalization and mistreatment of many people. We challenge the use of derogatory, stereotypical and other hurtful characteristics as we challenge the use of violence. We work to continually assess our progress in fostering an environment where everyone is respected, welcomed and appreciated.

The Coalition believes in the accessibility and affordability of services for all survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault. We urge member programs to serve survivors in a manner that does not discriminate on the basis of gender, ethnicity, race, age, immigration and citizenship status, sexual orientation, economic status, religion, health status, including illness, diseases and risk conditions, and disability; and to recruit staff and board members who represent and value diverse populations. (Source: www.ndvsac.org)

Mission Statement of YWCA Eastern Union County, NJ: Project Protect

The YWCA philosophy centers on the empowerment of women and their children and the elimination of racism. We are committed to embodying the core values of integrity, respect, compassion, empowerment and excellence in all that we do. Our inner purposes are:

- To heal the wounds of the women and children, whether they are of the heart, mind, body or soul
- To be change agents in the community so that women and children are supported in their healing and empowerment

Guiding Principles of the Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence

- We value the right of victims to make life decisions based on being fully informed of all of their options.
- We commit ourselves to achieving true diversity among our boards, staff, clients and volunteers.
- We value safety and justice for all domestic violence survivors, including those devalued by society through the forces of racism, classism, homophobia, xenophobia, or based upon medical status, immigrant or refugee status, disability, age, occupation, homelessness, religion, substance abuse, mental illness or the need to resort to violence*. We value open and honest communication and respect for others.
- We value stewardship. We value strong fiscal management of the funding and programs we manage. We value integrity. We value doing the right thing even when one won't get caught doing the wrong thing.

*Resort to violence means to engage in self-defense, or to otherwise resort to violence in response to another person's violence toward the victim and/or her children; to gain power, control and dominance over another person.

Philosophy of the Hawaii State Coalition Related to Forms of Oppression

The HSCADV believes that violence against women and children results from the use of violence as a threat to achieve and maintain control over others in intimate relationships. We also believe the societal abuse of power and domination in the forms of sexism, racism, heterosexism, classism, anti-semitism, able-bodyism, ageism, and other oppressions foster battering by perpetuating conditions which condone violence against women and children.

While carrying out our mission and vision, we are respectful and ethical in our communication to each other. Our working relationship is based on trust and is an example of empowered collaborating together for a common goal. We appreciate the different perspectives of each and work towards consensus, based on our shared core beliefs and values.

SUGGESTION

Steps to Bring Inclusiveness to Your Organization

- ◆ Create an agency/department inclusion plan that provides the strategic direction for the role of diversity in the creation of an inclusive workplace.
- ◆ Incorporate key aspects of human resources, e.g., recruitment, retention and career develop, in the plan.
- ◆ Develop a committee to work on issues related to access and inclusion within the organization, including the development and implementation of the plan.
- ◆ Develop a statement that articulates the benefits and the role of diversity in creating an inclusive agency.
- ◆ Integrate diversity competencies into all employee performance evaluation plans.
- ◆ Ensure that all staff members participate in diversity training, events, and mentoring initiatives.
- ◆ Work with staff on every level of the organization to establish challenging and realistic goals for diversity interventions.
- ◆ Recruit and retain a workforce that reflects the diversity of the community in which your agency operates, especially if you are not serving those clients.
- ◆ Provide training to management staff on interviewing people who are different from them.
- ◆ Provide training to management related to supervising staff that are different from them.

SAMPLE **Ten Tips for Diversity Best Practices**
Northeast Human Resources Association (NEHRA)

1. Have senior management communicate the vision of an inclusive environment

Successful business initiatives begin with management vision. Creating an environment that enables and leverages diversity is an important business initiative, requiring the same type of management support and commitment as any other. When associates and managers believe senior management is committed to creating an inclusive environment, they are more likely to behave in ways that are consistent with management's expectation. Senior management may use various vehicles to communicate the organization's vision, i.e., annual reports, company newsletters, memos, corporate policy statements, employee meetings, etc

2. Conduct an organizational assessment to identify factors that support an inclusive environment and those that present barriers

Identify systems and practices within the organization that will impact efforts to launch a successful diversity initiative. Consider such factors as:

- ◆ Recognition and rewards-Is the organization more likely to recognize individual performance or team results?
- ◆ Decision-making-Are decisions made at the top or closer to the actual work?
- ◆ Employee development-Are there mechanisms (i.e. internal job postings, succession planning, mentoring, etc.) in place to support the development of individual talent?
- ◆ Organizational demographics-How diverse is the associate and management populations?
- ◆ Organizational structure-Does the organization have centralized structures or decentralized (autonomous) units?

3. Develop a diversity strategy to guide planning, decision-making, and implementation of initiatives

Strategic planning is critical to a successful business endeavor. Without a plan with clear objectives and measures, it is easy to get sidetracked by efforts that appear attractive but do not support the desired business outcomes. A strategic plan will identify and justify the use of resources (money and other assets) for diversity initiatives. Involve a broad cross-section of employees in developing the strategic plan.

4. Incorporate accountability for diversity into the performance management and reward systems

Individuals are more likely to participate in those things that impact their performance and pay. The management sends a strong message that diversity is an important organizational focus when it becomes part of the assessment and compensation programs.

5. Link initiatives to the company's diversity strategy, as well as to other stated business goals

Those diversity initiatives that clearly relate to the organization's business goals are most likely to be successful. This is true because employees are more likely to support efforts that accomplish business goals, and resources allocated to support the initiatives are more likely to be approved.

6. Do not confuse representation (affirmative action) with diversity (inclusion)

Affirmative Action programs are designed to increase the representation of minorities and females in jobs where they have historically been under-represented. Diversity programs go a step further by leveraging the talents of all types of individuals in an organization. Bringing all employees and their views to the table to contribute to the organization's success is the goal of inclusion.

7. Educate managers and employees

Diversity awareness and diversity management training prepare associates and managers to participate fully in a diverse organization. Training that includes the traditional diversity topics as well as teambuilding communication styles, decision-making and conflict resolution will increase employee effectiveness in a diverse environment.

8. Do not attempt more initiatives than can be accomplished with available resources

Undertaking multiple projects may dilute management support and employee efforts. Like all business initiatives, diversity programs and projects need to be prioritized. The strategic use of resources will ensure that the most important initiatives can be accomplished.

9. Make sure all company-sponsored events and activities are inclusive

The organization can best recognize and value employee segments with inclusive practices. Company-sponsored events and activities that are inclusive create an environment that encourages diverse individuals to use their talents toward the achievement of organizational goals. Activities that are exclusive to a segment of the employee population are not as effective in bringing about the organization's desired results.

10. Celebrate success both internally and externally (through appropriate vehicles)

Communicate accomplishments in creating an inclusive diverse environment. Internally, celebrations send the message to employees that the company continues to value diversity and reward diversity. Externally the organization sends the message to potential employees, investors, customers and other stakeholders that a diverse and inclusive environment is one of the reasons for its success. This creates a positive public image that continues to impact the organization at many levels.

(Source: Bostonworks.com)

**SAMPLE Cultural Competency Standards of the Tennessee
Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Programs**

The Tennessee Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Coalition developed the attached standards with grant funds from the Federal Department of Health and Human Services. Along with the standards, a resource manual has been developed to support programs as they work to implement these standards and improve services for immigrant and refugee victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. A copy of the Tennessee Cultural Competency Resource Manual is available at the NJCBW Resource Center.

I. Organizational Commitment / Agency Requirements

- 1.1) Commitment to cultural competency shall be established as part of the organizational foundation; it will be incorporated into organizational values and goals. A written statement of commitment to cultural competency will be created.
- 1.2) The organization shall develop and implement clear goals, policies, and operational plans, supporting the organizational commitment to provide culturally and linguistically competent services.
- 1.3) The organization shall be diverse in composition, reflecting the makeup of communities the program serves. This should be apparent in the composition of the board, staff, volunteers, and any advisory committee or community task force.
- 1.4) The organization will have in place a structure to support a culturally competent organization that includes procedures monitoring management and staff accountability.
- 1.5) A diverse Cultural Competency Steering Committee shall be established to oversee the creation, implementation, and sustainability of the cultural competency plan. The steering committee doesn't have to be part of the board, but it shall be governed by the board.
- 1.6) The organization shall continually assess the demographics of the communities it works in and adapt practices, governance, policy, and outreach activities accordingly.
 - a. An initial community assessment of the service area should be conducted to determine target populations for future culturally competent planning.
- 1.7) Allocate sufficient funds for training, language services (translated materials, interpreters, etc), and anything else that is deemed imperative for developing cultural competency.

- 1.8) The agency shall adhere to be in compliance with Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; and the Pro-Children's Act of 1994 (Public Law 103-227, Part C, Environmental Tobacco Smoke).
- 1.9) If the program is part of an umbrella agency, these standards apply specifically to domestic violence or sexual assault services.

II. Staff

- 2.1) Staff diversity shall be incorporated into the organization's strategic plans, goals, policies and procedures.
 - a. A documented process that ensures commitment to diverse organizational composition shall be clearly outlined and implemented.
 - b. Staff and board diversity should reflect community demographics.
 - c. Bilingual, bicultural staff should be hired whenever possible and appropriate.
- 2.2) All staff, crisis line operators, and volunteers shall receive training on cultural and linguistic competency as part of their initial orientation and on an ongoing basis. This shall be adopted as part of existing written program personnel policies and staff development and training plans.
 - a. All direct service staff and volunteers shall receive 15 hours of cultural competency training their first year with the agency, and 7.5 hours of cultural competency training each subsequent year.
 - b. All administrative and support staff shall receive 7.5 hours of cultural competency training their first year with the agency, and 3 hours of cultural competency training each subsequent year.
 - c. Staff and volunteer cultural competency training shall include (but not be limited to):
 - Language access
 - Working with an interpreter
 - Appropriate referrals for immigrant victims
 - Legal advocacy for immigrants, including current, applicable immigration relief available to immigrant victims.
 - Specific issues that advocates need to be sensitive to when working with immigrant, LEP, or other culturally diverse clients.
 - d. Independent interpreters, translators, and bilingual staff contracted by the agency shall be trained on interpreting skills and ethics.
 - e. An established interpreting or translating service that has already trained its employees meets the training standard for interpreters or translators.

III. Data Collection and Evaluation

- 3.1) The program must have a basic, standardized method for collecting data on the effectiveness of the program services, including the efficacy of cultural competency strategic plan.

- a. The program must conduct initial and ongoing assessments of its cultural and linguistic competence.
- b. Cultural Competency should be incorporated into other organizational evaluations, such as internal audits, client satisfaction assessments, and outcomes-based evaluation.

3.2) The agency shall use performance measures determined by the Office of Criminal Justice Programs.

IV. Safety and Confidentiality

4.1) The agency shall establish a procedure for informing all clients in a linguistically and culturally appropriate manner of the program's confidentiality policies and limitations, as well as grievance procedures, at intake.

- a. Clarify that the agency will not report information regarding immigration status.
- b. Be aware that the concepts of grievance procedures and confidentiality policies may be unknown to some clients and make sure they are adequately explained.

4.2) The agency will inform all clients at intake in a linguistically and culturally appropriate manner that the agency is a mandatory reporter of child abuse.

4.3) A policy shall be created for securing confidentiality with interpreters and translators. Interpreters and translators independently hired by the program must sign a confidentiality contract based on said policy.

- a. The policy shall include a clause requiring dismissal of any interpreter or translator that violates client confidentiality.
- b. The policy shall prohibit an interpreter hired by the program from engaging in professional relationships that would create a conflict of interest (such as providing services to both a victim and her batterer).

4.4) A grievance procedure specifically for reporting problems with interpreters or translators shall be created and implemented in addition to existing grievance procedures for reporting problems with the agency.

4.5) Clients will be allowed to write or present complaints (through the use of a qualified translator or interpreter, if needed) in the language they feel most comfortable using, in accordance with Title VI guidelines.

4.6) Each agency shall provide an annual report to the Office of Criminal Justice Programs on the number of grievances filed related to cultural competency and the resolution of said grievances.

V. Language Access

5.1) Linguistic access shall be assured for all victims in accordance with Title VI guidelines.

a. A plan for the development of policies and procedures that ensure meaningful language access shall be created. The plan must include a clear timeframe for creation and implementation.

5.2) Specific procedures shall be developed regarding working in person with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) victims; said procedures shall be clearly communicated to staff and volunteers.

a. A list of trained interpreters and interpreting services should be developed.

b. All staff and volunteers must know how to access a trained interpreter as needed.

c. Delineate a step by step procedure for providing language access that addresses initial contact, case planning and management, referrals, and any needed follow up.

d. A clear timeframe within which an interpreter will be found and other language access services will be provided must be clearly stated to clients and adhered to.

e. Develop a list of other area agencies that provide linguistically appropriate services and create referral protocol.

f. Staff will work with the client to examine safety and confidentiality issues with regards to interpreting; an individualized language access plan will then be developed.

g. Children shall never be used as interpreters during case management, advocacy, court proceedings, therapy, or anything else related to a victim's case, as it endangers their wellbeing and the wellbeing of the victim.

h. Unless absolutely necessary, do not use the victim's companions, friends, relatives, etc. as interpreters.

i. Be certain that victim is comfortable with her interpreter before there is contact between the two; if needed, utilize telephonic interpreting services to do so.

5.3) Programs shall give specific descriptions of language appropriate/bilingual services provided and said descriptions shall be available in languages spoken by target communities in accordance with Title VI guidelines.

5.4) Agency documents and information available to English-speaking clients shall be translated into all languages spoken by target *communities in accordance with Title VI guidelines*.

a. All agency rules, regulations, policies, intake forms, information about clients' rights, or any other pertinent document or information, shall be available in all languages spoken by target communities.

b. If said documents or information are not already translated to a victim's native language, they shall be translated or verbally explained via a trained interpreter as needed.

5.5) Independent interpreters and translators shall be provided with guidelines regarding ethics, expectations, and confidentiality.

5.6) LEP clients shall be informed of their rights under Title VI, as well as of their rights in a client/interpreter or client/translator relationship.

VI. Service Delivery and Advocacy

6.1) All core services outlined in Family Violence and Sexual Assault Standards shall be provided in a culturally and linguistically competent manner to all victims.

6.2) The agency shall produce a written plan on how it intends to advocate for culturally diverse communities (a plan written as a grant narrative will suffice).

a. Clearly identify the types of advocacy the agency will provide.

b. The plan shall clearly identify how legal advocacy will be provided to immigrant and refugee clients regarding immigration cases and other pertinent legal issues.

6.3) Appropriate referrals for immigrant, refugee, LEP, and other culturally diverse victims as well as their children and other dependants will be identified; protocol regarding said referrals will be clearly communicated to all staff and volunteers.

6.4) Efforts shall be made to ensure that the setting and manner in which services are provided is sensitive to all clients.

a. Physical setting should be inclusive, displaying culturally and linguistically diverse materials and decorations that are relevant to target populations.

b. Advocates should be instructed not to ask questions that may intimidate or create fear, such as "are you illegal?"

6.5) Intake procedures should be sensitive to fear immigrant women may have in disclosing identifying information, including name, immigration status, or social security number. Services should not be denied because of non-disclosure.

VII. Legal Advocacy

7.1) The program shall provide legal advocacy specific to immigrant victims, including for immigration cases.

a. A specific referral protocol shall be developed for legal representation for immigration cases. This may include a list of pro bono immigration attorneys with experience representing victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and/or trafficking.

7.2) All staff or volunteers that have contact with victims shall be provided with clear protocol for determining the legal referral needs of immigrant victims. This shall include:

1. A legal needs assessment form.
2. Information about relevant immigration legal relief for immigrant and refugee victims.
3. Instructions for appropriate referrals.

7.3) The program will have a written policy that clearly states that it will offer legal advocacy, and not legal advice, concerning immigration issues.

7.4) Clients shall be provided with information on how to report an attorney who they feel has not represented them well in their immigration case to the TBA.

VII. Hotline/Crisis Line Protocol

7.1) Clear protocol will be created for answering hotline or crisis line calls from LEP callers. All staff and volunteers shall be trained on this protocol.

- a. The protocol will include a language identification process.
- b. A clear response/referral process will be developed and used when bilingual operators are not available; this may include the use of language line, on-call interpreters, or other over-the-phone interpreting service.
- c. Written prompts should be created to assist operators who are not bilingual in communicating with LEP callers. This could include key phrases in languages commonly spoken by target communities.
- d. Every effort must be made to find an interpreter when an LEP client calls. For times when this is not possible, the program must have a written policy for actions to be taken if no interpreter is accessible.

7.2) Appropriate referrals for immigrant, refugee, LEP, and other culturally diverse callers will be identified; protocol regarding said referrals will be clearly established and communicated to all operators.

VIII. Shelter Protocol

This section is for programs that provide shelter services. These standards are to be adhered to in addition to FVSP, STOP, VOCA, and Sexual Assault Standards.

8.1) The shelter program shall evaluate itself to identify any policy, protocol, or procedure that may discourage immigrant, refugee, or other culturally diverse clients from accessing services, tools, or inhibit their right to self-determination.

- a. Evaluation should take into consideration shelter stay limitations, food preparation, rules on child rearing practices, and any other policy that may impede the rights of victims to carry out religious or cultural practices.
- b. Necessary changes to existing policy and protocol shall be made as appropriate based on the findings of the evaluation.

8.2) Policy shall be reviewed and revised as needed and appropriate on an ongoing basis.

IX. Therapy Services

This service must be provided by agencies that offer therapy as a service component. If an agency does not offer therapeutic services, then a referral to a mental health agency providing therapy services that meet the linguistic and cultural needs of the client should be made. If funding is only through FVSP, therapy services must be referred out. If other federal funding is received, corresponding federal guidelines shall be adhered to.

9.1) The agency shall ensure that appropriate therapeutic services are arranged within 7 days of the request.

9.2) Agencies providing therapeutic services will offer short term and long term therapeutic interventions to individuals and families. Therapy length and time should not be shortened because of language or cultural barriers.

9.3) Therapy services shall be supervised onsite.

X. Outreach

10.1) The program shall develop culturally appropriate outreach plans geared towards target immigrant, refugee, or other culturally diverse populations. This may be done in collaboration with other service providers, organizations, or task forces when appropriate.

- a. Plans must be based on community input and feedback. Direct translation of existing outreach materials is insufficient; outreach must be linguistically and culturally relevant.
- b. Cultural Competency steering committee shall have input into the needs assessment and design of strategies.
- c. Conduct a needs and assets assessment with culturally and linguistically diverse populations in service area. Strategies should be based on community identified needs and realities.
- d. Outreach must connect immigrant communities with relevant information and services.

10.2) Educational outreach regarding immigrants and refugees will be conducted with mainstream communities, law enforcement, legislators, and other service providers as a form of systems advocacy.

XI. Community Engagement and Collaboration

11.1) The Program shall develop collaborative relationships with community members, community groups that work with or are led by immigrants or refugees, and other service providers.

- a. Engage existing support systems or helping networks within communities.
- b. Gather feedback for culturally competent service provision.

11.2) Establish protocol for collaborative relationships.

- a. Clearly identify and communicate strengths and objectives of each group.
- b. Clearly establish the specific responsibilities of all participants.
- c. Evaluate collaborations on a yearly basis with all partners.

11.3) Interagency training shall be arranged and carried out between the program and collaborative partners.

11.4) Immigrants and refugees will be included in collaborations whenever possible.

SUGGESTION

Recruiting a Diverse Staff

Respond to the following questions to assess your agency's practices in recruiting a diverse staff:

We use clubs and professional organizations of color as resources for recruitment.

_____ (4) Always _____ (3) Usually _____ (2) Sometimes _____ (1) Never

We subscribe to publications that reflect diverse cultural groups.

_____ (4) Always _____ (3) Usually _____ (2) Sometimes _____ (1) Never

We advertise through local foreign-language newspapers and radio stations.

_____ (4) Always _____ (3) Usually _____ (2) Sometimes _____ (1) Never

We use contacts in local community groups, churches and schools.

_____ (4) Always _____ (3) Usually _____ (2) Sometimes _____ (1) Never

We seek referrals from current or former staff members of color.

_____ (4) Always _____ (3) Usually _____ (2) Sometimes _____ (1) Never

We nurture relationships in various parts of the community to increase the referral base.

_____ (4) Always _____ (3) Usually _____ (2) Sometimes _____ (1) Never

We attend community functions that celebrate and honor diversity.

_____ (4) Always _____ (3) Usually _____ (2) Sometimes _____ (1) Never

We participate in civic groups that reflect the cultures we wish to attract.

_____ (4) Always _____ (3) Usually _____ (2) Sometimes _____ (1) Never

SCORING

Add the numbers corresponding to your answers.

If you scored 8--15: Your organization needs to focus significant efforts on identifying its informal networking opportunities and creating a process for utilizing them.

If you scored 16--23: Your organization would benefit from evaluating how increased use of informal networks would help to attract more potential staff members of color.

If you scored 24--32: Your organization is doing very well utilizing its informal networks to attract staff members of color.

GUIDELINE

Interviewing For Inclusion

A critical factor in the recruitment process is the interviewing process. An organization that is serious about developing a more inclusive workplace could benefit from the examples concerning interviewing listed here.

Questions to Assess Interviewee's Attitude Towards Diversity

- How do you define diversity? (It would be important to follow with a statement of how your organization defines diversity.)
- What specific experience have you had related to working with people of different races, cultures and ethnicities?
- Have you had any experiences which allowed you to learn about differences that were ultimately beneficial to your professional development?
- Describe a situation where you were made to feel comfortable.
- Describe a situation where you were made to feel uncomfortable about your individually and how you dealt with the situation.

Topics to Avoid During Interview

- Do not question a candidate about religious affiliation or practices.
- Comments about the candidate's physical appearance are inappropriate even when intended as a compliment.
- Avoid introducing biases into the discussion as a means of testing a candidate's reactions. For example, do not say to a woman, "You would be the only *woman* in the office."

Questions a Candidate May Ask the Interviewer

- How many other people of color are working here?
- What percentage of the people of color working here hold management positions?
- What are my chances of advancing my career in this organization?
- Do you have any employee groups that support the needs of people like me?
- What initiatives, events and programs have your organization done regarding diversity, particularly regarding people of color?

SUGGESTION

Ten Great Ways To Do Outreach to Communities of Color

(When resources are limited)

I. Meet Your Neighbors.

If you don't know it, get to know your community. Show some interest in what is going on within the community outside of your program. Make a commitment of your time to come to events in the community. Ask to join one of the boards in the community. In this way you will develop community partners who trust you and who you can respect.

II. Identify The Leaders.

Leaders are defined in very different ways according to who you ask. There are the *official leaders* (politicians on various levels and other high level professionals). On the other hand, there are the unofficial leaders of the community. This could be someone who has no official title, but is the person who everyone turns to for help (block captains, pharmacists, mail carriers, ministers, or beauticians). It is often the unofficial leaders who will know how that community operates on a daily basis. They are usually the ones who can get access and give information quickly and get the job done.

III. Volunteer Space for a Community Meeting.

Often communities are ready to organize around an issue but they don't have resources such as space, copier and access to a meeting room. You may offer space or you may offer your services as an advisor to the community. Example: help with getting needed traffic light or crossing guard, drug corners, vacant houses or services for the elderly and youth in the neighborhood.

IV. Determine Your Community.

Have you had an opportunity to review the demographics of your county? The Census 2000 results are available. Review of the census data can reveal those potential groups waiting for services within your program area. Ask the NJCBW Community Outreach Coordinator for a copy.

V. Develop Volunteer Staff.

You may already know that a well-trained volunteer staff can be one of the most valuable assets of an effective domestic violence program. The domestic violence movement was started with a volunteer staff and is the life's blood of many domestic violence programs. Many programs use volunteers to assist with community education, staffing the hotline, serve as on-call staff and replacement staff while staff is at training. They can strengthen your bridge to client services.

VI. Start Before You Get the Grant.

“Beware of strangers bearing gifts.” The most well-intentioned outreach efforts may go by the wayside when little is known about the organization presenting the “gifts”. Make a major effort to include representatives from the community you wish to reach in the decision making process when applying for grants. Let the community tell you what they need.

VII. Determine Your Common Ground.

Outreach efforts must demonstrate an awareness of and sensitivity to the cultural values of those you are trying to reach. Also, as you focus on a particular group, review the makeup of your agency. Make sure that your board, agency, staff and management reflect those to whom you are doing outreach.

VIII. Be All That You Can Be.

Training opportunities in cultural sensitivity, working with people of diverse backgrounds and disabilities will strengthen your ability to work with underserved populations. This will expand the knowledge and sensitivity both in-house and out in the community.

Your staff is your best asset in educating the community to your program and services. Therefore, consider existing staff for leadership training and other staff development and include them in the decision making process. Make room for staff to grow. This is money well spent.

IX. Little Things Mean a Lot.

If you haven't already, add a question to your phone and in-person intake forms asking women if they have any “special needs”. This can refer to disabilities, special food, or religious requirements. This question reflects your program's sensitivity to issues of disability and diversity. Naturally, every effort should be made to address any identified special needs.

X. Plan to Plan.

Although you may not currently have the resources to accomplish all your desired outreach activities, in addition to the above, you can begin to incorporate these activities into your long-range funding plans. This will strengthen your outreach goals.

Outreach: A Community-Based Approach

Culturally appropriate outreach is an essential component to effective work with diverse communities. Without it, all other planning meant to enhance services to victims from marginalized groups may be futile. A shelter program may have an extensive list of trained volunteer interpreters, materials translated into several different languages, and a staff that is culturally competent. However, if services are only publicized in mainstream communities the community targeted is not being reached. If target communities are not aware of the program and encouraged in a meaningful way to access services and relief, the program's efforts do little good for victims.

Action Steps:

- ↗ Conduct demographic survey and determine target communities; identify community strengths and needs
- ↗ Create a timeline for outreach planning and implementation
- ↗ Get to know the community
 - Meet community members, identify allies
 - Begin forming relationships within the specified communities
 - Ask questions
- ↗ Get community input in development of materials (especially from women)
- ↗ Involve community members
- ↗ Conduct focus groups
- ↗ Research best venues for outreach
 - Which locations do women frequent?
 - Where do community members get information? Word of mouth, radio, TV, newspapers?
- ↗ Develop materials based on feedback from focus groups and community contacts
- ↗ Conduct outreach using tested materials and strategies
(Source: Tennessee Coalition for Domestic and Sexual Assault)

GUIDELINES

Using Focus Groups to Assess Agency Services and Outreach to Communities of Color

Focus groups are an excellent way to help determine the needs of your organization for particular kinds of services. They also provide you with important feedback about the quality of the services you are already providing.

There are three key premises that should guide your decision to hold focus groups:

FIRST~ You should conduct focus groups *ONLY* if you genuinely want to hear and use the feedback you are seeking. No organization uses all of the feedback it gets; however, when issues involving racial and other differences are being examined, those asking for feedback are sometimes reluctant to hear and act on feedback that they feel puts them in a negative light. Focus groups only work when those who convene them are willing to put aside their good intentions and hear the assessment of how they are perceived. Different racial experiences contribute to the formation of different perceptions of the world based on those experiences; members of different racial and ethnic groups will perceive situations differently. An understanding of this will allow your organization to receive the information from focus groups with much less defensiveness and protectiveness.

SECOND~ The right people have to be invited. The best focus groups consist of participants who might use your services, who have used your services and who interact with those who might or have used your services. (For members of the community who have no voice, such as Latino immigrants who may not have legal status in the United States, choose someone who is Latino, who works effectively with that community and who feels safe enough to attend.) Use members of different racial and ethnic communities to help you decide who to invite. Beware that *prominent*, *popular* and *famous* are not necessarily best for this process. A good cross section of the community is ideal; however, you as convener must take responsibility for making all voices in the room equal.

THIRD~ You are asking a small representative group to speak for its larger community. You are not, however, asking the focus group to speak for all the members of its racial group. The focus group process is a way to take the pulse of certain groups within your community. It is not one in which all of what is said applies to all members of that community. The conveners of the focus group must be clear about not stereotyping a racial community because of the information shared by a representative group of its members.

SAMPLE

Focus Group Questions

The questions below are designed to investigate service delivery, outreach and community involvement from a racial standpoint. The WODTF has used “African American” as the racial group to provide the example. With small changes, these questions can be used to solicit feedback from all groups of color.

Prior to the meeting, all invited participants should receive materials that the agency uses to define itself and to promote itself in the community. Seeing these materials ahead of time will help participants to have a clearer understanding of the agency, its structure and its work.

Be sure to inform focus group members that you are asking for general feedback and NOT the particular stories of individuals who have used the services of your agency. Inform participants that they should not use the names or any identifying information of people they know who have been clients of the agency. They should, however, give feedback based on what they know about the experiences of members of their racial community.

Sample Questions:

1. How long have you been a part of this community?
2. What has been your experience as an African American person in this community? What has been good about living in this community? What challenges have you faced as an African American in this community?
3. What do you know about (agency’s name)?
4. What have you heard members of your racial group say about (agency’s name)? Are members of your group familiar with the agency? Do you know African American people who have used the agency’s services?
5. What feedback can you offer about how African Americans are treated when they come for services? Is the agency known as one that is welcoming of African Americans? Are certain areas of the agency perceived in different ways?

6. What are African Americans reporting in the community about their success in the agency? Do they feel the services have helped them? Why? Why not? How? How not? Are there service areas that African Americans have said were not helpful? Why? Why not? How? How not?
7. What might the agency do to improve the delivery of services to the African American community? (It is helpful here to ask for feedback on each service area separately, i.e., the shelter, counseling services, placement services.)
8. Do you feel the agency's outreach to the African American community is effective? Why? Why not? How? How not? What else might the agency do to increase its effectiveness in outreach?
9. In what ways is the African American community involved in the work of the agency? How do you see this demonstrated in the community? Is this involvement effective? Why? Why not? How? How not?
10. In what ways can the involvement with the African American community be improved? Why is such improvement important to the relationship between the agency and the African American community?
11. Do the agency's outreach materials present a welcoming and inclusive message to African Americans? How? How not? How might the outreach materials be improved?
12. Are there services, outreach activities or aspects of community involvement related to the African American community that the agency should consider adding to its current program?

~Please Note~

This list of questions is not meant to be exhaustive but instead should serve as a guide. More detailed questions can be developed by agencies that want to get more specific feedback on particular issues or aspects of the organization.

SUGGESTION

Some Tips to Make Your Focus Group Session Effective

- An effective note taking process should be part of the focus group process. The person facilitating the discussion should not be the person taking notes. If you have several small groups discussing at the same time, have a note taker for each group--someone assigned by the agency and NOT someone who is an invited participant of the focus group. This allows the participants to fully concentrate on their task. Focus group members should be asked periodically if the note taker is accurately capturing the feedback that is being given.
- Set the length of the focus group meeting long enough to adequately discuss all of the points you wish to cover. Tell participants ahead of time what the time commitment will be and be clear that you wish for all participants to remain for the entire discussion.
- If your session is planned for more than an hour--and most effective ones are--plan for breaks, snacks, or a light meal, depending on the time of day you are meeting. Being welcoming to participants is important.
- Introductions at the beginning of the session are important. Avoid long biographical statements from participants. A simple list of the names and affiliations of the participants that is handed to everyone when they arrive will help you to avoid an introductory process that invites speech making. Participants do not need long introductions from agency staff members either. A short welcome from the person from the agency responsible for the activity is fine. Keep in mind that you want to use most of your time to get feedback. Long introductory speeches from participants or agency staff signal that the participants and the information you are asking them to share with you are secondary to the process.
- Effective focus group sessions provide some feedback to participants about how the information they shared was helpful to the agency. This can range from a thank you letter that includes one example of how the agency is using the information it received to a detailed report on the findings of the group. No matter how the agency chooses to get back to participants, it is crucial that the agency does provide some feedback that demonstrates to participants that the information shared was of value to the agency.

GUIDELINES

Empowerment and Improved Service through Collaboration

Collaboration is defined as “two or more entities working together to create or achieve the same thing.” Collaborative relationships built with the goal of bridging gaps and improving service providers’ responses to victims of culturally diverse backgrounds can be very productive. Such relationships may take many forms and may be based on a variety of desired outcomes. Collaboration may involve creating relationships and protocol between service providers, agencies, and institutions that provide services needed by or make decisions that impact victims. Many domestic violence and sexual assault programs already participate in such formal and informal connections that help their clients receive the services and support they need. This experience directly applies to thinking about collaborating that is meant to promote the interests and needs of clients of color. The principals of collaborating are the same. Meeting the needs of diverse clients will require an expansion in thinking about where particular linkages are necessary.

Collaborating with other Service Providers

Collaborative relationships may be formed with a variety of other service providers, agencies, or systems. Programs may decide to work with other mainstream service providers that have some expertise in working with or providing services specifically to communities of color. Local cultural or community-based organizations may be important collaborative partners.

Such collaborations may:

- create awareness of needs and realities specific to communities of color.
- educate other agencies about the needs of victims of color.
- engender a more positive response on the part of other agencies (i.e., police, etc) to victims of color.
- create more linkages between victims and services they need.
- strengthen existing efforts (outreach etc.) of the participating organizations by the pooling of resources and information.
- help incorporate domestic or sexual violence into the greater picture of community development. This may be more palatable to the community itself, as well as more effective in creating social change.

General Principles of Successful Interagency Collaboration

- Engage agencies whose goals are ultimately similar, although your methods may be different.
- Identify the philosophies and goals of each party. Be honest about everyone's reason for participating (i.e., what everyone hopes to get out of working together). Highlight places where goals intersect and the reason why collaborating would make these goals more attainable.
- If you are working towards similar goals, point out that pooling resources and energy will make the process easier on everyone.
- Examine the methods utilized by each agency to attain common goals. Identify ways in which you could be working together but are not. Determine how efforts could be coordinated.
- Be upfront when you can't see eye to eye and are unwilling to budge on fundamental or philosophical issues, but don't let this negate the ways in which you can work together.

Collaborating with Communities

Collaboration is often understood to be the connecting of service providers, agencies, and institutions with other service providers, with the intent of coordinating efforts. However, this only represents a portion of the potential that exists when engaging in collaborative relationships. A more complete understanding of collaboration will involve the engaging of community members and should incorporate principals and strategies of community organizing. This is especially true when working with immigrant, refugee, or other oppressed communities.

Beyond interagency relationships and agreements, collaboration can involve creating relationships within communities, and mobilizing and empowering community members to end domestic violence. From this perspective, there is the potential for overlap between outreach efforts and collaboration. Many of the goals and principals are similar. Relationships made during outreach can be fostered, and community input and leadership can be further supported.

CAUTION: Be aware that not all members of a particular ethnic/linguistic/cultural group represent the concerns of victims or of the community at large. Also, when working with community leaders, make sure their participation is not based on attitudes that perpetuate violence. For example, some community leaders may believe that victims of domestic violence are best helped by reconciliation with their abuser. There may be times when working with established authority figures would be detrimental to victims, even though they seem to be an obvious gatekeeper between culturally isolated groups and dominant culture.

Source: Tennessee Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence

BEST PRACTICE

Workplace Policies and Practices that Reduce Racial Discrimination

Recruitment, Selection and Hiring

Barrier: use of personal networks (the recruiter's softball team), social relationships (friendships) and word-of-mouth referrals to recruit. These types of informal processes tend to exclude those who do not share the same race as the recruiter.

Best Practices: (1) formal job postings, which clearly describe the position and qualifications, are widely circulated through ads in newspapers, internet web sites and through the use of employment agencies; (2) advertisements in newspapers designed for particular racial groups; (3) conduct outreach efforts in places with a high representation of members of particular racial groups.

Barrier: staffing decisions based on informal processes, such as chatting informally with an interviewee to determine shared interests or whether the person will "fit" into the organization's culture.

Best Practice: use of a formal interview process conducted by a multiple-person panel using preset questions that are scored against a predetermined answer guide. Questions should be developed using the expertise of people of color and on the objective requirements of the job; decisions should not be made based on individual interviewer's sense of how "confident" the candidate appears or how "suitable" he or she seems.

Barrier: inflated job requirements, such as a Masters degree when a Bachelors degree is all that is required.

Best Practice: job requirements should be legitimate and reasonable. Using information from organizations similar to your own can help you to set realistic requirements.

Training and Development

Barrier: training opportunities that are limited to senior employees may exclude non-white persons who may be concentrated in lower level positions.

Best Practice: Training should be available to all employees. Training should enhance current job skills as well as prepare employees for different or more advanced jobs.

Barrier: informing employees of training opportunities in an informal way such as through word of mouth or selecting employees for training based on the discretion of supervisors.

Best Practice: training opportunities should be widely distributed through formal means such as postings on bulletin boards, memos and e-mails. All employees should be encouraged to seek training, and clearly articulated criteria for deciding who receives the training should be used.

Barrier: lack of appropriate mentoring. Informal systems that support managers' taking an employee "under their wing" often results in the exclusion of non-white employees.

Best Practice: Formal mentoring programs will ensure that all employees receive mentoring. Also, participation of senior staff members who are people of color should be encouraged to provide role models.

Barrier: Not providing training in anti-racism and discrimination may perpetuate unawareness on the part of the staff of how both conscious and unconscious behavior is racist and discriminatory; employees may be unaware of what constitutes discrimination, bias and harassment.

Best Practice: Ongoing training in anti-racism, discrimination and human relations should be an integral part of training for all employees, and particularly for those who serve as supervisors. Employees should clearly understand that the training is part of the organization's culture and goals and not simply "a necessary evil" that must be tolerated to comply with a requirement.

Promotion and Advancement

Barrier: Acting assignments as a stepping stone for promotion if the process for awarding acting promotions is informal.

Best Practice: Acting assignments are awarded through a formal process that includes circulating information about acting assignments to all eligible staff. A clear, public selection process including objective criteria should be in place.

Barrier: Organizations that rely on management to identify people who are “promotable”; approaching certain employees to encourage them to apply for higher-level jobs; assisting a favorite employee prepare for the selection process.

Best Practice: Opportunities to move up in the organization are openly publicized with the criteria and process that will be used to select the candidate clearly identified. Assistance with the process, such as mock interviews, background reading material, discussions with people already in those or similar positions, should be provided on an equal basis to all interested employees. It is important not to encourage only certain employees to apply but to communicate that all employees will be given fair consideration.

Barrier: The concentration of people of color in certain jobs or categories can result in dead-ends that cannot lead to advancement, particularly into management. This can be compounded when subjective criteria, such as “communication skills” or “confidence” are used to assess suitability for a promotion.

Best Practice: People should have the opportunity to demonstrate skills for higher level jobs. Training can be one mechanism an organization uses to bridge the gap between positions. The acknowledgment that there is more than one way to perform a job, even though there are specific requirements for the job, helps provide equal access for people of color to all available jobs in the organization.

Retention and Termination

Barrier: People of color may leave an organization for reasons related to discrimination, harassment or racism, whether intentional or unintentional.

Best Practice: Organizations should have in place anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies. The policies should include mechanisms to address complaints. Those responsible for administering the policies should have training in anti-racism in addition to Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action rules and issues.

Barrier: Undefined policies for discipline and uneven application of discipline are a common basis for discrimination complaints. Also, layoff or termination decisions that are not based on clearly defined, objective criteria are problematic.

Best Practice: An organization that has a well-documented, progressive performance management process in place and applies it evenly and fairly to all staff is engaging in good human resources practices as well as avoiding accusations of breaches in human rights. When disciplinary actions or terminations are necessary, the organization is better poised to demonstrate a legitimate basis for the action.

(Source:-Adapted from Policy and Guidelines on Racism and Racial Discrimination by the Ontario Human Rights Commission (August 4, 2006.)

Glossary of Terms on Diversity

Ableism - Discrimination in favor of the able-bodied.

Bisexual - A man or woman with a sexual and emotional orientation toward people of both sexes.

Class - Position in the economy, in the distribution of wealth, resources, and income.

Classism - Prejudice, discrimination, mistreatment, neglect of or lack of respect for any human being and his or her rational needs (food, clothing, shelter, education, respect, communication, etc.) based on people's socioeconomic class.

Coming Out - Letting others know of one's previously hidden sexual orientation or gender identity.

Cultural Barriers - Obstacles service providers face when serving diverse communities.

Cultural Competency - A set of congruent policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals and enables that system, agency, or those professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations.

Cultural Relativism - The view that all "authentic" experience is equally valid and cannot be challenged by others.

Culture - Integrated patterns of human behavior that include thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values, and institutions of racial, ethnic, religious, or social groups. The customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits, set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterizes a racial, religious, or social group.

Diverse Communities - Groups from a broad spectrum of demographic, social, racial, economic, religious, and cultural differences.

Diversity - The term used to describe differences that exist among individuals, cultures, communities and societies.

Dominant Culture - Includes the values, symbols, means of expression, language and interests of people in power in this society; in the United States, dominant cultures include whites (as the racial group); Christians (as the religious group); heterosexuals (as the sexual orientation group); and men (as the gender group).

Economic Intersectionality - Refers to the way people from diverse communities are economically deprived of resources, information, access to jobs, or the exploitation of labor.

Ethnicity- Belonging to or deriving from the cultural, religious, language or beliefs of a particular group of people or country. Examples include Latinos (who constitute many ethnic groups, such as Puerto Rican and Peruvian, Germans, Italians, Liberians).

Ethnocentrism - The feeling that a group's mode of living, values, and patterns of adaptation are superior to those of other groups. It may manifest itself in attitudes of superiority or hostility toward members of other groups and is sometimes expressed in discrimination, proselytizing, or violence.

Gay - Term sometimes used to refer to a homosexual person of either sex. For example, some lesbians identify as "gay." However, "gay" most commonly refers to men who have emotional and sexual attraction to men.

Gender - Culturally and socially constructed relationships between men and women; the way we perceive things to be masculine and feminine.

Gender Identity - A person's sense of self as being either male or female; gender identity does not always match biological sex; for example, a person may be born biologically male yet have a female gender identity; at birth, we are assigned one of two genders, usually based on our visible genitals.

Gender Roles — A set of expectations placed upon a person based on their perceived gender.

Heterosexism - Presumption that heterosexuality is universal and/or superior to homosexuality; prejudice, bias, or discrimination based on such presumptions.

Heterosexual - Individual with a primary sexual and affectional orientation or emotional attraction toward persons of the opposite sex.

Hierarchical - A structure based upon the classification of a group of people according to ability or to economic, social, or professional standing from highest to lowest.

Homophobia - Irrational fear or hatred of lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender people; the responses of fear, disgust, anger, discomfort, and aversion that individuals experience in dealing with gay people; often it is manifest in the form of dissemination and prejudice.

Indirect Communication - In western culture, indirect communication can be seen as passive aggressive behavior. In Asian and Pacific Islander cultures, indirect communication avoids drawing attention to another's mistakes or oversights.

Institutional Oppression - Focuses on how the major, established institutions within the society negatively impact an individual's access to resources, information, and mobility. In the United States, forms of institutional oppression include sexism, racism, heterosexism, ableism, anti-semitism. Institutional oppression manifests itself primarily in the society's educational, religious, and governmental institutions.

Internalized Oppression - The set of negative feelings and misinformation that individuals carry about themselves and other members of their group. It is the turning inward of and adopting as true the misinformation that is directed toward oppressed people by the external oppression.

Intersectional Approach - Identifying multiple forms of oppression and looking broadly at the root causes and connectedness of all forms of oppression and discrimination.

Intersex - People born with some combination of male and female genitals.

Lesbian - Women who are sexually and affectionately attracted to other women.

Marginalization - Attitudes and behaviors that relegate certain people to the social, political, and economic margins of society by branding them and their interests as inferior, unimportant, or both.

Multiculturalism - A term coined to address cultural, societal, and communal barriers in our society and the challenges that arise when working in diverse communities or with individuals from diverse backgrounds.

Multiple Oppressions - Experiencing two or more forms of oppression has an effect on one's intersecting identities or multiple differences. For example, African American women with disabilities experience three forms of oppression--racism, sexism and ableism.

Nationality - The quality or membership in a particular nation, whether original or acquired.

Oppression - The systematic, institutionalized, and socially condoned (elite sanctioned) mistreatment of a group in society by another group or by people acting as agents of the society as a whole.

People of Color- People of color as defined in the United States, refers to African Americans, Asians/Pacific Islanders, Latinos/Hispanics, and Native Americans. People of color is a fluid term, defined by the social, political and economic mainstream of a community and not necessarily by how individuals self-identify in terms of their race, ethnicity and color. This definition is based on how larger communities perceive people of color and emphasizes how discrimination and oppression intersect with race and ethnicity.

Prejudice - A closed-minded prejudging of a person or group as negative or inferior, even without personal knowledge of that group or person, and often contrary to reason or facts.

Privilege - A system of assets, benefits and power given to members of dominant culture groups in the United States; such privilege results in institutional inequalities in treatment and access to the society's goods and services. Examples of privileged groups include whites, heterosexuals and men. Individuals and groups who have privilege often do not realize or recognize it. Even though some individuals may not want it, it comes with being a member of the dominant group.

Race - The classification of people based on geographic location and physical characteristics such as skin color, hair texture, and facial features; blacks, whites, Asians, Indians.

Racism - A society's exercise of prejudice against a racial group through that society's institutions of power.

Sexism - A society's exercise of prejudice against a gender group through that society's institutions of power.

Sexual Orientation - Innate sexual attraction indicating who one is erotically attracted to.

Standpoint Theory - The view that different social and historical situations and experiences, including those of race, gender, ability and religion, among many others, give rise to different perceptions of how the world works and how individuals are affected by the particular experiences with which they are presented.

Transgendered - Transgender people are those whose psychological self ("gender identity") differs from the social expectations for the physical sex they were born with.

Transsexual - Transsexual refers to a person who experiences a mismatch of the sex they were born as and the sex they identify as. A transsexual sometimes undergoes medical treatment to change his/her physical sex to match his/her sexual identity through hormone treatments and/or surgically.

White Privilege - Unearned, social power given by historically based systems of race that puts white people at an advantage over those people of other races; white racial privilege is usually invisible to those who have it because they are taught not to see it.

White Supremacy - A historically based system of exploitation and oppression of continents, nations, and people of color; was established by white people of the European continent through violent practices of colonialism and slavery; causes the current unequal distribution of wealth, power and privilege among different races.