

**Domes**



**cans:**

**Adults**



## **Domestic Violence Across the Lifespan of African Americans: Adults Introduction**

*Ms. Antonia A. Vann*

A clear perspective from the Institute is that the work being done in the field of domestic violence has resulted in some critical understandings. We have learned that battered women's experiences with violence are not the result of some pathology on her part, and that battered women are not responsible for starting or stopping the violence perpetrated against them. Further, we understand that what may seem like women's bad judgement or women obeying commandments are, in actuality, women operating in very high-risk, unsafe, lethal situations or relationships with potentially murderous predators.

Take, for example, the case of Kemba Smith, who received a 24-year prison sentence for her participation in a drug ring. This first-time, nonviolent offender was battered, preyed upon, and exploited by drug kingpin Peter Hall, who was also Smith's boyfriend. Prosecutors acknowledged that Smith never possessed or sold any of the crack cocaine that Hall and his brother handled. Yet, Smith pled guilty to cocaine conspiracy charges because she was promised leniency. The judge disregarded testimony regarding Smith's abuse in her relationship with Hall, dismissing claims that Smith committed acts—lying to authorities about Hall's whereabouts, renting an apartment for him, and allowing him to purchase a jeep in her name—out of fear. Ultimately, Smith was charged with trafficking all 255 kilos of crack handled by the Hall brothers' syndicate and sentenced according to Federal guidelines for that quantity of drugs. Indeed, the judicial system failed Smith by not only renegeing on a promise of leniency, but also by holding her accountable for her exploitation (Stuart, 1996).

Just as policies like mandatory sentencing in drug cases can be counterproductive, so can intervention strategies designed from a singular "one size fits all" perspective. These strategies cannot continue to lack information, understanding, and insight regarding the context in which violence occurs. Further, the strategies must consider social underpinnings and how African American boys and girls are socialized in their communities. Indeed, existing service methodologies for African American women and men contain several gaps. Accordingly, the intent of the *Adult/Partner Abuse* session was to explore culturally relevant intervention strategies—both traditional and contemporary—and provide perspective on how these strategies can begin to address unmet social needs and help mitigate violence in African American communities.

## References

Stuart, R. (1996, May). Kemba's nightmare. *Emerge*.

## Violence in the Lives of African American Adults

***Presenter:***

Dána Davis  
Activist and Health Educator  
Bronx, NY

Domestic violence impacts members of diverse communities. As this social problem emerged from the shadows of privacy, it became apparent that victims of domestic violence include heterosexual men and women, lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and transgenders. The depth of victimization reaches into communities at astonishing levels reflected in reporting. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) (1998), nearly 1 million females were victims of intimate violence annually from 1992 to 1996. During that same time period, 12 out of every 1,000 African American women experienced violence by an intimate partner each year.

The New York City Gay and Lesbian Anti-violence Project (GLAVP) and the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP) (1997) report that domestic violence among lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgenders has tripled since 1989. According to the *Anti-Gay and Lesbian Violence in 1994* report, a study in San Francisco found that 25 percent of gay and bisexual men had partners who had been violent. It has also been estimated that 1 out of every 3 lesbians has survived domestic violence victimization in 1994. Statistics for 1996 indicate that 25 percent of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender victims of domestic violence in New York City were African American. These findings represent only reported cases. It is very likely that incidents of domestic violence among this population are underreported because of definitional instability, inconsistent data collection and reporting methods, and/or exclusion from reporting systems due to gender bias.

These statistics also represent survivors of abuse who were able to report by taking advantage of at least one formal, organized resource—calling the police, calling a hotline, or requesting an order of protection, for example—from the existing traditional system of victim services (Garfield, 1998). This traditional system is a product of the Battered Women's Movement that is now nearly 40 years old (Schechter, 1982).

Despite literature to the contrary, a range of informal, unorganized strategies preceded the Battered Women's Movement. In the history of family violence, these less formal approaches, some used by African Americans, are often not discussed or are unevenly documented (Pleck, 1987). The fact is that resistance to violence may not always be expressed in ways considered traditional. Tradition may be established at any moment and becomes such over time. Thus, it is equally important to explore the informal, unorganized tactics that African American women—and probably lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and transgenders—historically practiced.

History documents that early African American presence in the United States was replete with abusive experiences. These experiences were not limited to the master-slave dynamic. A liberal definition of domestic violence might include the relationships that

masters had with slaves because of the established domestic units within the households. For this definition, intimacy is not equated with romance, but rather familiarity and production. During this period, violence also existed in relationships between free and slave men and women (Jones, 1985; Fronner, 1988; Bynum, 1992). Given African Americans' virtually non-existent legal and social status, it was rarely possible to invoke a sense of wrongdoing in domestic violence situations among this population. With so few protections for African Americans in general, strategies in response to domestic violence were often self-generated.

Slave narratives offer some insight into how individuals dealt with violence and the fear of violence. One strategy was hiding and taking shelter. Shelter was found in many locations and with differing structures. South Carolinian fugitive Harriet Jacobs, for example, hid in a crawl-space—measuring 3 feet high, 9 feet long, and 7 feet wide—for 7 years to escape the sexual violence resulting from the bond of being a favorite slave (Brent, 1973). Surely others hid in places with no walls. The forest, for example, was a place of respite where slaves could gain composure. Sometimes it was the first stop on a journey leading them north or west—away from violent victimization. Escaping from violence and sexual exploitation was a strong motivating factor for the phenomenon now known as migration. While many have examined migration in terms of failing economies, hopes of prosperity, and the flow of money (Sassen-Koob, 1988), others have recently explored the gendered aspects of migration where domestic and sexual violence were compelling reasons for moving (Arguelles & Rivero, 1993; Bhabha, 1996). Some historians have supported this theory, maintaining that African American women's participation in the great westward migration was an attempt to circumvent violence (Giddings, 1984; Hine, 1990).

This line of alternative strategies might also include recent examples outside the mainstream victim service model. For example, a group of African American women living in a Chicago housing project developed a wall knock system. Neighbors have knocking codes that, when heard, indicate that someone is being beaten and the police are to be called.

These historical and contemporary responses to intimate violence illustrate a variety of approaches used by the African American community prior to the implementation of the anti-violence movement. There are several examples of culturally specific responses to violence that should be included when discussing tradition. It would indeed be beneficial if activists, community members, and scholars were to re-examine both historical and contemporary examples of how African Americans created and continue to create strategies outside the mainstream. Adrienne Rich, in *Resisting Amnesia*, best summarizes this ideology:

We need to be looking above all for the greatness and sanity of ordinary women, and how these women have collectively waged resistance. In searching for that territory we find something better than individual heroines—the astonishing continuity of women's imagination of survival, persisting through the great and little deaths of daily life.

## **Traditional Approaches**

Several traditional approaches to domestic violence prevention emerged from the Battered Women's Movement in the 1970s. These approaches do not necessarily contrast the informal strategies, and they certainly represent parallel and intersecting interests—survival and safety.

In working to increase public awareness of domestic violence, the movement framed battering as a social problem (Kanuha, 1995; Loseke, 1992). During that time, creative solutions to the problem were formulated. Ultimately, the approaches informed the types of resources to address the needs of battered lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgenders, and heterosexual men—although with varying degrees of success.

The strategies to address domestic violence encompass roughly four broad approaches: community organizing and education; shelters, safe homes, and support services; advocacy; and law enforcement and court systems (Garfield, 1998). These approaches were based primarily on the experiences of and utilization by White, middle-class women (Schechter, 1982; Garfield, 1998). But the African American community and African American women, in particular, played a significant role in challenging the approaches to ensure that diverse needs were met. African American women played an important role in energizing individual, community, and institutional solutions to address domestic violence. However, this history is less chronicled.

### *Community Organizing and Education*

From the beginning, African American women led community organizing and education efforts and helped to found national and State coalitions on domestic violence. The engagement of African American community groups and institutions in consciousness raising around violence has a long-standing history. For example, the organization CRISIS was a non-feminist community group that organized neighborhood networks and support groups within the African American community to deal with the murders of African American women in Boston (Grant, 1992). A total of 13 women were killed in Boston within a 4-month period in 1980. Twelve of the women were African American, and all of the women lived within a 2-mile radius of each other. The Combahee River Collective, a group of African American women engaged in political activism since 1974, also responded to the murders of the women in Boston. The core members of Combahee, who are identified as African American lesbian feminists, incorporated community education and organizing around violence against women. They produced educational materials that included a 16-point self-protection plan for women (Grant, 1992).

Organizing also took the form of national and State coalition building. African American women initiated some of these coalitions in the 1970s. Ruth Slaughter, for example, is one of the four founding members of the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (B. E. Richie, personal communication, November 30, 1998). Within these coalitions, African American and Third World women developed a political analysis of the movement, challenging race and class ideologies about leadership and power. The potency of their arguments resulted in the formation of women of color task forces and caucuses at

national, State, and local meetings. Women like Dr. Beth E. Richie brought invigorating leadership to the Women of Color Task Force of the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, of which she was co-chair. The cascading effect of these earlier efforts has been that most large State coalitions now have women of color caucuses. In addition, most conferences incorporate women of color institutes, within which African American women convene separately.

The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs have also advanced education efforts. These groups have been promoting public education about bias-motivated crimes against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people since 1984. As the prevalence of domestic violence in various communities has increased, organizations have been responsive by developing appropriate services.

### *Shelters, Safe Houses, and Support Services*

Living a life free of violence often entailed removing women and children from the site of abuse, in effect making them homeless (Schechter, 1982). To alleviate homelessness and maximize protection, approaches to addressing domestic violence began centering on the development of shelters, safe houses, and support services. Across the country in the 1970s, women transformed their homes into safe spaces, bought houses, and rented apartments for battered women. Because women of color had particular needs living in communal situations, shelters for Latina, Native American, South Asian, and African American women were also founded.<sup>1</sup> There are over 20 shelters and programs in the United States that are specifically for African American women, including Asha Family Services, Inc., founded by Antonia Vann (Richie, 1998; N. Carter, personal communication, November 30, 1998).

Shelters offer more than safe space. They provide referrals, individual and group support, and advocacy. But most importantly, shelters provide an alternative reference group validating and connecting survivors with others experiencing similar victimization (O'Brien, 1994).

Battered lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and transgenders did not embrace the utilization of shelters in the 1980s. Part of the aversion to shelters had to do with this community just recently dealing with the issue of domestic violence publicly. Additionally, this population's desire to present positive images in defense of accusations of pathology has prevented open admission of the problem (Fenway Community Health Center, 1994). Finally, domestic violence has been represented primarily in terms of heterosexual male power. However, the development of anti-violence projects and an increase in awareness have resulted in changes within programs in Boston, Los Angeles, and San Francisco, with battered women's shelters and services beginning to access and coordinate resources for the

---

<sup>1</sup> Casa Myrna Vasques was the first shelter for Latinas; Tillie Black Bear founded White Buffalo Calf Women's Society on the Lakota Sioux Reservation in South Dakota. These were the first shelters for other women of color.



gay, lesbian, and bisexual communities. Responding to the needs of battered transgender women has been more challenging, however, because shelter staff often perceive them as men (GLAVP & NCAVP, 1997).

It is crucial to recognize the important role that African American women, along with other women of color, have made in drawing connections between racism, heterosexism, and violence, opening up the dialogue about the needs of survivors of domestic violence. There are few anthologies in which African American activists have contributed to an understanding of issues in relation to gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender domestic violence.

The distribution of resources for services has by and large been directed toward women, in part because 85 percent of all victims of domestic violence are women (U.S. Department of Justice, 1998). While the victimization of men does exist in the African American community, males are the primary aggressors. Nonetheless, African American men who are battered experience the neglect of a society where lack of male control and vulnerability transgress imposed gender norms. Consequently, men often find themselves with few support services.

Developing resources to provide treatment services to batterers has been part of the solution to domestic violence. Batterer programs typically deal with issues of male dominance and concepts of power (Schechter, 1982). Practitioners and scholars, such as Dr. Oliver J. Williams (1992), have argued that treatment programs should be designed in a more culturally competent fashion to increase success rates in program completion.

### *Advocacy*

Advocacy is yet another approach employed to address domestic violence. During the Battered Women's Movement, activists quickly discovered that survivors of battering needed more than just safe space. Because domestic violence is not an isolated experience and involves multiple issues, shelter staffs were exposed to the many facets of abusive situations and, as a result, became experts on housing, police systems, criminal and family court, social services, and welfare rights. Indeed, advocates mastered bureaucracies. Advocates' institutional interactions and diligent work also led them to undertake organizing, technical assistance, and skills-building efforts. Part of the advocacy strategy has entailed highlighting systemic deficits. Advocates have confronted systems, sometimes forcing them to be more responsive to survivors' needs. This, in turn, influenced policy changes and, ultimately, funding streams. Articulating the particular needs of diverse populations, including African American women, when engaging with systems generated a stream of consciousness and, in some cases, funding from private foundations and Federal agencies. Several initiatives, both a part of and separate from the Battered Women's Movement, are employing new strategies to deal with violence and to reorganize systems.

Initiatives that are part of the movement include the Women of Color Network, a project of the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence in connection with the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence. Coordinated by Nita Carter, the project

seeks to provide networking opportunities and develop leadership and capacity building skills among women of color.

Several initiatives to respond to domestic violence have emerged since the movement. Among them is the African American Task Force on Violence Against Women, which has implemented a community involvement model in Central Harlem. The Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community, housed at the University of Minnesota-St. Paul, is an interdisciplinary project focused on preventing and reducing family violence in the African American community. The Institute on Violence, Inc., a New York-based project, conducts research on the experience of violence in the lives of African American women and offers technical support to community groups interested in developing programs. These are just a few examples of the work being done within African American communities.

Traditional organizations, such as the Links, the Coalition of 100 Black Women, Black Women in Higher Education, and the National Black Law Enforcement Executives have been influenced by African American leaders in the anti-violence movement. The Black Church and Domestic Violence Project, directed by Reverend Aubra Love, is another example of African American institutions meeting the needs of the community (Richie, 1998). These institutions are also advocates, and they wield the power to illuminate issues of domestic violence and take on the responsibility of developing programs to meet needs in an environment where resources for social issues are becoming scarce.

### *Law Enforcement and Court Systems*

Law enforcement and court systems' response to domestic violence in the African American community has been far from neutral and often reflects the privilege of the dominant society. Historically, law enforcement and courts have responded to the interests of those in power, making African American women and men's engagement with these systems abysmal. This has been the case regardless of whether the African American is gay, heterosexual, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender.

Some researchers suggest that African American adults victimized by violence do not come into contact with systems (Garfield, 1998; Crenshaw, 1994). Yet recent studies indicate that race is not an accurate overall predictor of whether a victim seeks help (Hutchison & Hirschel, 1998). This same study suggests that African Americans were more likely to call police and sign a warrant for the arrest of their partners.

African Americans are increasingly engaging law enforcement and court systems to address domestic violence, and, fortunately, orders of protection are more rigorously enforced than they had been in the past. A recent BJS report (1998) found that 68 percent of African American women victimized by an intimate reported the crime to police. The success of law enforcement and court systems in protecting victims and prosecuting perpetrators is directly related to the work of advocates within the anti-violence and Civil Rights movements, as the advocates challenged law enforcement and criminal justice systems to respond more positively to domestic violence in African American communities.

Despite apparent successes, African American women and men have had tenuous relationships with law enforcement and court systems. In cases of domestic violence involving African Americans, police and courts have often viewed injuries with indifference. Racist, sexist, and classist assumptions that violence is the norm in the African American community have resulted in this population's underutilization of these systems. These same systems have trivialized non-heterosexual relationships, thereby creating barriers to employing justice as a strategy to eliminate violence (Fenway Community Health Center, 1994).

Courts, particularly family courts, have framed domestic violence within the context of husband-wife relationships in State definitions. Violence in relationships other than heterosexual is subject to being legitimated by society and its institutions (Robson, 1992). Seven States—Arizona, Delaware, Indiana, Michigan, Montana, North Carolina, and South Carolina—currently define domestic in such a way that same-gender relationships do not qualify. Therefore, heterosexuality is required in order to make a charge of domestic violence (GLAVP & NCAVP, 1997).

Police personnel and courts have had to reconsider the meaning of domestic violence in relation to gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender relationships. Still, at least seven states have not criminalized violence in same-gender relationships. While legal ties may not exist to prevent dissolving the relationships of gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgenders (Renzetti, 1992), legal intervention and protective interventions are required. Legal interventions in the form of civil protection orders have been crucial in reducing abuse, although the strategy also requires aggressive prosecution and arrests (U.S. Department of Justice, 1997). It is essential that law enforcement and court systems not minimize the importance of abuse, regardless of the relationship dynamics.

## **Conclusion**

The traditional approaches used to address domestic violence in the lives of African American adults have a broad history. In weaving together the threads of the Battered Women's Movement and the participation of the African American community, particularly African American women and gay and lesbian activism, it is apparent that the development of traditional approaches has been based on the engagement and critique of services. Even though the traditional approaches were developed in a liberal environment, African Americans, lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgenders feel the backhands of sexism, racism, and heterosexism in ways that influence the provision of services. Clearly, the traditional responses to domestic violence in the lives of African American adults has been informed by the tenacious work of African American activists, scholars, community members, workers, and survivors of violence—both within and outside of the anti-violence movement.

Still, there remain gaps in service provision and distribution of institutional and social justice. These gaps do not have to be sustained as negative; rather, they can be viewed as part of an incomplete circle awaiting yet another innovative strategy to fill in an empty space. An emerging strategy is the utilization of the popular media—a mighty force in the African American community. As a tool to address violence, its impact should not be

underestimated; for it can shift or least contribute to shifts of consciousness. The popular media's power is not only in depicting violence, but also in motivating positive individual responses to this phenomenon.

In a recent issue of *Emerge Magazine* (1999), radio talk show host Bob Law comments that Black music radio has the ear of this generation. It represents, he says, a unique opportunity to introduce new ideas. So let us embrace the potential of popular media as a new member to the cast of traditional approaches in addressing violence in African American communities.

## References

- Arguelles, L., & Rivero, A. M. (1993). Gender/sexual orientation violence and transnational migration: Conversations with some Latinas we think we know. *Urban Anthropology*, 22 (3-4), 259-275.
- Bhabha, J. (1996). Embodied rights: Gender persecution, State sovereignty and refugees. *Public Culture*, 9 (1).
- Brent, L. (1973). *Incidents in the life of a slave girl*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Bynum, V. E. (1992). *Unruly women: The politics of social and sexual control in the old south*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.
- Crenshaw, K. W. (1994). Violence against women of color. In M. A. Fineman, & R. Mykitiuk (Eds.), *The public nature of private violence: The discovery of domestic abuse*. New York: Routledge.
- Dobash, R. E., & Dobash, R. (1979). *Violence against wives: A case against the patriarchy*. New York: The Free Press.
- Eaton, M. (1994). Abuse by any other name. In M. A. Fineman, & R. Mykitiuk (Eds.), *The public nature of private violence: The discovery of domestic abuse*. New York: Routledge.
- Fenway Community Health Center. (1994). *Anti-gay and lesbian violence in 1994: Massachusetts and the United States*. Boston: Author.
- Fronner, E. (1988). *Reconstruction America's unfinished revolution*.
- Garfield, G. (1998). *Knowing what we know: African-American women's self-defined experiences of violence*. Unpublished manuscript.
- Giddings, P. (1984). *From when and where I enter: The impact of Black women on race and sex in America*. New York: Bantam Books.
- Grant, J. M. (1992). Who's killing us? In J. Radford, & D. E. H. Russell (Eds.), *Femicide: The politics of woman killing*. London: Twayne Publishers.
- Greenfeld, L. A., Rand, M. R., Craven, D., Klaus, P. A., Perkins, C. A., Ringel, C., Warchol, G., Maston, C., & Fox, J. A. (1998, March). *Violence by intimates: Analysis on data on crimes by current or former spouses, boyfriends, and girlfriends* (BJS Report NCJ-167237). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.
- Hine, D. C. (1990). Rape and the inner lives of Black women in the Middle West: Preliminary thoughts on the culture of dissemblance. In E. C. DuBois, & V. L. Ruiz (Eds.), *Unequal sisters: A multi cultural reader in U.S. women's history*. New York: Routledge.

Hutchison, I. W., & Hirschel, J. D. (1998). Abused women: Help seeking strategies and police utilization. *Violence Against Women, 4* (4).

Jones, J. (1985). *Labor of love, labor of sorrow: Black women, work and the family from slavery to the present*. New York: Vintage Books.

Kanuha, V. (1995). Race and spouse abuse: A social constructionist's analysis of battering. In J. Edelson, & Z. Eisikovits (Eds.), *The future of intervention with battered women and their children*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

Kelly, R. D. G. (1994). *Race rebels, culture politics, and the Black working class*. New York: The Free Press.

Law, B. (1999, January). An open letter to Black music radio and the music industry. *Emerge, 70-72*.

Loseke, D. (1992). *The battered woman and shelter: The social construction of wife abuse*. New York: State University of New York Press.

New York City Gay and Lesbian Anti-Violence Project, & National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs. (1997). *Report on lesbian, gay, bisexual & transgender domestic violence*. New York: Authors.

O'Brien, P. (1994). *Impact of a stay in a battered women's shelter on the self perceptions of women of color*. Unpublished dissertation, University of Illinois, Chicago.

Okun, L. (1986). *Woman abuse: Facts replacing myths*. New York: State University of New York Press.

Pleck, E. (1987). *Domestic tyranny: The making of American social policy against family violence from colonial times to the present*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Renzetti, C. M. (1992). *Violent betrayal: Partner abuse in lesbian relationships*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Richie, B. E. (1996). *Compelled to crime: The gender entrapment of battered Black women*. New York: Routledge.

Robson, R. (1992). *Lesbian (out) law: Survival under the rule of law*. Ithaca, New York: Firebrand Books.

Sassen-Koob, S. (1988). *The mobility of labor and capital: A study in international investment and labor flow*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Schechter, S. (1982). *Women and male violence: The visions and struggles of the battered women's movement*. Boston: South End Press.

U.S. Department of Justice. (1997, July). *Legal interventions in family violence: Research findings and policy implications* (NCJ-171666). Washington, DC: Author.

Williams, O. J. (1992). Ethnically sensitive practice to enhance treatment participation of African-American men who batter. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Human Services*, 73 (10), 588-595.





**It's Your Business:  
A Popular Culture Radio Campaign and Community Mobilization Project**

***Presenter:***

Kelly Mitchell-Clark  
Senior Program Specialist  
Family Violence Prevention Fund  
San Francisco, CA

**Introduction**

The purpose of this paper is to discuss two complementary efforts initiated by the Family Violence Prevention Fund (FUND) that seek to reduce domestic violence against African American women nationwide. The first initiative, an innovative public service radio campaign, will be the primary focus of the paper. The second initiative to be discussed is a community mobilization project that serves as a companion effort to the radio drama and is currently being implemented in the San Francisco Bay Area region.

*It's Your Business* is a radio-based, educational campaign designed to promote anti-domestic violence behaviors among African Americans.<sup>2</sup> *It's Your Business* is the newest component of the *There's No Excuse for Domestic Violence* national public education and action campaign launched by The Advertising Council and the FUND in 1994. The San Francisco-based FUND is a nationally recognized nonprofit organization focusing on domestic violence prevention, education, advocacy and public policy reform.

The *It's Your Business* serialized drama is the culmination of collaborative efforts by the FUND, The Advertising Council, the Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community, American Urban Radio Networks, UniWorld Group, the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School for Communication, and a cadre of distinguished writers. The campaign has emerged from several critical questions raised by the project partners regarding the role of communications and mass media in influencing individual behaviors and cultural norms. While other social movements have grappled with these questions, this kind of inquiry represents a relatively new direction for the domestic violence movement, as it seeks solutions to the devastating problem of violence against women by their intimate partners.

---

<sup>2</sup>For the purposes of this project, African Americans are defined as English-speaking, U.S.-born persons of African descent.

The questions posed in the development of the campaign are as follows:

- 1) How can the influence of mass media be utilized and how can the extraordinary power of African American culture and traditions be brought to bear on the problem of domestic violence?
- 2) How can communications be employed to prompt interventions that help prevent and reduce domestic violence by establishing and/or strengthening anti-abuse norms—i.e., domestic violence is wrong, victims/survivors deserve unconditional support, and abusers must be held accountable for their violence?

It is the hope of the project partners that the *It's Your Business* campaign will elicit useful answers to these questions and contribute to the body of knowledge regarding effective uses of mass media and popular culture to achieve positive social change.

### **Goals and Objectives**

*It's Your Business* seeks to prompt changes in behavior that will heighten awareness of domestic violence, generate dialogue about abuse, and render intimate partner abuse socially unacceptable. The 12-week series employs an entertainment-education approach, using a soap opera-like format, and develops recurring characters that struggle with the issue of domestic violence over the course of the series. Against a backdrop of humor and music, the radio series enables listeners to expand their understanding of the problem, gain accurate information about domestic violence, and learn solutions that promote community-wide involvement.

The goals of this primary prevention initiative are to:

- Use African American language, traditions, and culture as a lens through which to discuss the impact of and proposed solutions to domestic violence.
- Frame domestic violence as a social and cultural phenomenon that can be prevented through individual and community action on the issue and counter misconceptions and myths that contradict this notion.
- Generate increased concern about domestic violence by facilitating community-wide discussions (peer communication) about the seriousness of the problem.
- Stimulate specific behavioral responses to domestic violence that are aimed at creating and strengthening community sanctions against intimate partner abuse, and supporting its victims.

Because domestic violence thrives on the silence and shame that surrounds and, ultimately, supports it, getting concerned individuals to take action helps change the climate from one of acceptance to one of active resistance to violence and abuse. In this

context, domestic violence ceases to be a private matter among the family members it directly affects. Rather, it becomes everyone's concern; hence the campaign slogan, *It's Your Business*.

*It's Your Business* is intended to stimulate adoption of new behaviors by directing audience members to specific responses to domestic violence, creating a climate in which people feel safe and confident enough to act, and dispelling myths that hinder individuals from taking specific action steps. The central messages that the series seeks to convey are:

- 1) Domestic violence poses a serious threat to the African American family and community;
- 2) While it happens within the confines of intimate relationships, domestic violence is rooted in social norms and, therefore, demands a reversal of those norms;
- 3) The problem of domestic violence can be reduced through safe and simple concrete steps that create intolerance for intimate partner abuse; and
- 4) Community members have the ability to perform these action steps.

### **Theoretical Rationale**

#### *Entertainment-Education Strategy*

*It's Your Business* employs an approach that Shefner-Rogers and Rogers (1997) define as the "intentional incorporation of educational messages in such entertainment genres as soap operas, dramas and comedies that are disseminated through radio, television, film, theater, popular music, and comic books." Using this approach, forms of popular entertainment are crafted to convey messages that stimulate the adoption of new attitudes and behaviors for health promotion purposes—in this case, domestic violence prevention. This strategy is much more widely used in developing nations around such issues as family planning, female equality, and HIV/AIDS prevention. Still, this same entertainment-education strategy can be effective in the United States to promote domestic violence prevention by enacting social and cultural norm changes that discourage abusive behavior. Indeed, the use of entertainment media to promote concern and action around a particular issue could heighten the effectiveness of health promotion initiatives, as indicated by findings from Maibach and Holtgrove (1995). They note the following:

- 1) Entertainment-oriented media communication attracts a larger (voluntary) audience than education-oriented communication;
- 2) People understand and are receptive to educational messages presented in the context of entertainment experiences; and

- 3) Because of heightened audience size, attention, and receptivity, entertainment education messages are capable of influencing cognitive, affective, and behavioral outcomes that underlie many public health problems.

As an entertainment-education intervention—a groundbreaking development for the field of domestic violence prevention—*It's Your Business* relies heavily upon the social learning/modeling theory, which suggests that individuals learn new behaviors by observing and imitating the behaviors of those perceived as role models, whether real-life or fictional. Social learning theory serves as the underpinning of the entertainment-education strategy.

Fundamental to the social learning theory is the concept of self-efficacy—the extent to which individuals perceive their ability, or inability, to perform the specific behavior that is being promoted. Individuals with high self-efficacy are more likely to adopt the modeled behavior; as a result, many entertainment-education projects seek to increase audience members' self-efficacy as a means of achieving behavior change (Shefner-Rogers & Rogers, 1997). The potential for adoption of a desired behavior is greatest when audience members receive messages from peers whose circumstances are closely related to those of the target population, the messages and modeled behavior are reinforced by members of the individual's social network, and the desired behavior is accompanied by or associated with positive consequences.

This understanding of how the entertainment-education strategy affects change had important implications for the message development and design of *It's Your Business*. Effective health communication interventions depict behaviors that the target audience has the skills and capacity to enact, preferably by using role models who closely resemble the target population and whose actions meet with positive results. Therefore, *It's Your Business* portrays male and female African American characters from varied backgrounds who perform safe and simple actions that prove beneficial for battered women, e.g., a woman leaves her abusive husband after her family creates a safety network to protect her and her children. Furthermore, based on evidence that entertainment-education strategies affect behavior change by stimulating interpersonal peer communication about the educational content (Shefner-Rogers & Rogers, 1997), *It's Your Business* seeks to spark among African American radio listeners discussion about domestic violence and the ways they can help prevent it.

Fear can also motivate behavior change. Accordingly, fear-arousing communications have been used by numerous health promotion campaigns—particularly those related to HIV/AIDS—to influence changes in conduct. However, behavior change messages that rely solely on fear may in fact hinder such behavior modification. Stiff (1994) notes, “Messages that create high levels of perceived threat and efficacy are maximally effective. Conversely, when perceived efficacy is low, perceived threat is negatively related to message acceptance. This finding suggests that effective fear appeals must include information that poses a threat to message receivers and then prescribe effective action for alleviating the threat. Fear appeals that fail to accomplish both objectives are unlikely to be persuasive. Thus, fear appeals that warn teenagers

about their susceptibility to the AIDS virus without also providing workable recommendations for prevention are unlikely to be persuasive.”

In the case of *It's Your Business*, any attempt to appeal to listeners by arousing fear about the potential consequences of abuse—i.e., physical and emotional injury and death—was used with caution so as to avoid creating the unintended effect of overwhelming listeners with the enormity of the problem and inducing feelings of hopelessness. Such appeals were balanced with the need to direct people to solutions and to communicate their ability to “make a difference.” Thus, each segment of the series sends the message that caring individuals can help prevent and reduce domestic violence, and identifies concrete ways of doing so.

### *Culturally Sensitive Approach*

As an African American-specific intervention, *It's Your Business* emerges in part from the growing body of evidence in marketing and advertising literature that African Americans respond best to messages tailored for them, particularly those that are conveyed through targeted media vehicles, such as Black radio, television, and magazines (Legette, 1993). Based on this realization, public health professionals are increasingly testing the effectiveness of targeted health promotion campaigns. Take, for example, a recent study examining how the race of models in an instructional video impacted African American women's self-efficacy beliefs, perceptions of model appropriateness, and likelihood of performing breast self-examination. The study found that participants who viewed the video featuring African American models were more likely to examine their own breasts (Anderson & McMillion, 1995).

While *It's Your Business* may hold special appeal for African American radio audiences, such an emphasis could potentially reinforce among listeners outside the targeted population negative stereotypes about African Americans' proclivity toward violence and dysfunctional situations. To address this concern, the FUND recruited American Urban Radio Networks (AURN), which syndicates programming to approximately 250 African American-owned radio stations nationwide, to promote and distribute the series to its member stations.

The FUND's partnership with an African American-focused syndicator is intended to facilitate a “private” conversation with the Black public. However, the popularity of such formats almost guarantees that non-African Americans will constitute at least some proportion of listeners. For example, AURN's national audience is 75 percent African American and 25 percent people of other races, with the proportion of non-African American listeners higher in some markets than others.

To offset any such unintended effects, the series features numerous non-violent Black male characters of various ages and socioeconomic status that express strong opposition to violence against Black women. *It's Your Business* depicts only two abusive African American men. The intended message is that while domestic violence is a serious problem among African Americans, as it is for all groups, most Black men

respect and value Black women, non-violent men view abuse as a threat to families and the larger community, and “real men don’t hit.” In another attempt to ensure the series does not inadvertently foster racist assumptions, media advocacy efforts around the *It’s Your Business* project are targeted toward African American outlets. Such advocacy will also be directed toward a limited number of mainstream outlets with high Black readerships and whose staffs include African American journalists with a track record of responsibly covering issues facing the Black community.

## **Formative Research Findings**

Prior to developing the series, project sponsors first conducted formative research for the drama. The purpose of this research was to gather data that would inform the campaign's strategic development and message design. The University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School for Communication conducted the study, which included random telephone surveys of 405 African American women and men in Philadelphia; Oakland; and Mobile, Alabama. The study was designed to discern respondents' receptivity to two proposed action steps: talking to an abused woman to offer support and expressing disapproval of domestic violence in conversations with others in order to lessen acceptance of abuse. A report of the findings will be available through the FUND in the fall of 1999.

The polling elicited information that had significant implications for message development and campaign strategy, as well as expanded the sponsors' knowledge of African American attitudes toward and perceptions of domestic violence.

- Nearly two-thirds (64.8 percent) of those polled agreed that domestic violence is one of the most important issues facing their communities.
- A little less than half of the respondents (42.9 percent) said they had strong reason to believe that a woman they knew had been physically abused by her husband or boyfriend in the past year. Of these, a vast majority (83.2 percent) had spoken with the abused woman about her situation.
- For those who did not know of an abused woman in the past year, an overwhelming majority of the respondents said that if they did know of an abused woman, they would speak with her if she were a family member (95 percent), a close friend (92.2 percent), a neighbor or co-worker (72.7 percent), or a relatively new acquaintance (46.8 percent).
- When asked what information they would offer if in a conversation with an abused woman, 87 percent said they would tell the woman they would help her find a domestic violence program, while 33 percent said they would advise her to "stop doing whatever is making him so angry."
- In general, respondents were quite supportive of speaking with other people about domestic violence and saw few difficulties or negative repercussions. A majority of those polled reported feeling comfortable talking about abuse with different types of people. More than 8 in 10 reported that they would feel comfortable talking about domestic violence to friends, parents, religious leaders, and other family members, while 6 in 10 reported feeling comfortable talking about the issue with acquaintances or co-workers.

Recognizing that a sizable percentage of survey respondents already considered domestic violence a serious issue and that many were willing to talk publicly with victims

about the problem, the project sponsors set out to encourage these interventions on a broad scale. Specifically, it was decided that the focus of *It's Your Business* would center on teaching listeners how to effectively intervene with battered women, advance the idea that abusers alone are responsible for their violence, and promote the necessity of community involvement as the first step in domestic violence prevention.

### *Action to Help Stop Domestic Violence*

Through powerful dramatic presentations, *It's Your Business* models two effective interventions aimed at removing acceptance of abuse and establishing community-driven sanctions against domestic violence. First, the characters have conversations with abuse victims that convey concern for their safety, express disapproval of the perpetrator's violence, and direct the victim to supportive services. Secondly, the characters talk to one another about the inappropriateness of domestic violence, devising group strategies that hold abusers accountable, and establishing safety networks for victims. These are the two central behaviors the series encourages African Americans to adopt as appropriate and effective responses to abuse.

As previously noted, findings from the formative research gave strong indications that African Americans were willing to talk about the problem of domestic violence; yet, there was also evidence that when conversing with survivors about their situations, respondents frequently made statements that could be construed as victim-blaming. *It's Your Business* addresses this realization by portraying characters who offer victims encouragement and support. Characters make comments like, "He's got a problem you can't fix" or "You can come to me, or any of the family. Let us help." The intent of such dialogue is to dismiss the idea that the victim's behavior is causing the violence.

The formative research also uncovered evidence that while many respondents reportedly feel comfortable talking about domestic violence with others, about half admitted they didn't like talking with others about their private lives and that it would be easier to talk with a woman than with a man about domestic violence. *It's Your Business* confronts the attitudes that prevent individuals from talking publicly about domestic violence through its central character, Ma B. As the host of an immensely popular radio talk show, Ma B challenges the notion that abuse should be considered a private matter. She remarks that it's "better to air the dirties in public than lose your sister-friend-mother-child." Ma B repeatedly urges her listeners to "speak up, speak out, speak often" against domestic violence and to reach out to those facing abuse. *It's Your Business* also portrays men talking amongst themselves about domestic violence, devising a strategy for confronting an abusive relative, and rallying other male family members to carry out the intervention.

### *Specifics of the Radio Serial*

*It's Your Business* is a radio "micro-drama" comprising 12 episodes, each of which are 90 seconds in length. A seven-member team that was headed by a principal of the GeM Communications Group developed the series pro bono. UniWorld Group, Inc.,



a New York-based agency that is the nation's largest African American-owned and operated advertising concern, produced the series and provided creative consultation.

*It's Your Business* centers around a fictional but realistic domestic violence trial, as reported and discussed on a radio call-in show. Ma B, the show's celebrated host, enjoys a large listening audience in local African American radio. With pointed commentary and dare-to-air tactics, Ma B makes no topic taboo and speaks out on the sensitive issue of domestic violence against African American women. Family violence prevention is a personal topic for Ma B, a domestic violence survivor who escaped because a friend continued to talk to, support, and help her.

Ma B seizes the opportunity to discuss domestic violence issues through the trial of Damon DeCur, using the events in the news as catalysts for discussion on her radio show. Damon DeCur is a high-profile local businessman who is accused of assaulting his intimate partner and paramour, Denise Champion. Together, DeCur and Champion appear publicly to be the perfect couple. They are considered successful, prosperous, glamorous, attractive, well educated, and sophisticated. Few would associate them with any stereotypical profile of couples dealing with domestic violence.

As the series opens, news of the assault is hitting the airwaves. The story is that DeCur had a surprise birthday party for Champion. Immediately following the departure of the guests, DeCur and Champion began to argue. Neighbors overheard the altercation that was punctuated with the sounds of breaking glass and crashing furniture. The next door neighbor called 9-1-1 when she saw Champion fly through the plate glass patio door. DeCur says Champion ran through the door, not realizing that it was closed. The neighbor says Champion was thrown through the window. Reports from undisclosed parties note that Champion's injuries indicate more than lacerations from an accidental trip through the plate glass door. Previous 9-1-1 calls have been made from that residence and police have had to escort DeCur out of the house on each occasion. Because of the prior reports of abuse and the appearance of things at the scene, DeCur was arrested on charges of assault. As Ma B summarizes events in the news, DeCur is out on bail while Champion remains in a coma, on life support.

### *The World of the Radio Drama*

Loyal listeners hear and discuss Ma B's show each week in different locations—the barber shop, a boutique, a car, an apartment, and the emergency room. The show is always heard through the filter of the individual radios of Ma B's fictional listeners. Over the course of the series, real world listeners come to know the friends and relatives of Charlise, who is being beaten by her husband, James. Charlise's family members regularly listen to Ma B's show and decide they can no longer turn the other cheek to James's violence after hearing Ma B speak out about the problem. They learn—along with Ma B's other listeners—how to reach out and support victims of domestic violence, as well as how to let abusers know that the community will no longer tolerate abuse.

While each episode is self-contained and can be heard separately, the series itself develops the story of Charlise and James as their friends and family find ways to make

sure Charlise and James understand that they know about the violence, believe it is wrong under any conditions, are watching the couple like a hawk for any signs of continued violence, and are prepared to surround Charlise and the children with their support and willingness to help. When Charlise ends up at the local hospital emergency room, Charlise and James can no longer pretend that her injuries are accidental. Ultimately, Charlise's family and friends help ensure that she stays safe, and James is told in no uncertain terms that "20 eyes are watching" him and "20 feet will come" to protect Charlise and the children.

### *Message Exposure*

Health communications research suggests a strong correlation between repeat message exposure and the efficacy of entertainment-education interventions to prompt desired outcomes. This presents a significant challenge for public service efforts such as *It's Your Business*. These initiatives rely on donated air time and their successes are contingent upon advocacy groups' ability to convince public service directors that such investments are beneficial, and perhaps even profitable. Taking these realities into account, *It's Your Business* has developed distribution and media advocacy strategies aimed at securing frequent and repeated exposure to the messages in the targeted markets.

As previously mentioned, AURN is distributing the 12-episode *It's Your Business* series to approximately 250 African American-oriented stations nationwide. The campaign will also air on other Black-oriented outlets. Media advocacy efforts are currently underway nationwide with the goal of securing station commitments to broadcast the series repeatedly during prime listening hours.

Message saturation is also critical to the project sponsors' ability to assess whether *It's Your Business* promotes social norms that result in domestic violence reduction and prevention. Such an impact evaluation is being conducted in four cities by a team of veteran researchers at the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School for Communication. These are the same researchers who conducted the formative study for the series. The evaluation seeks to discern the effects of exposure to the campaign messages on African Americans' reported attitudes and behavior in relation to domestic violence. The evaluation cities selected met the two criteria established by the research team: each has a substantial African American population, and each has a major Black-oriented radio station that attracts much of the adult listening audience.

In December 1998, the first of five waves of telephone polling began in Dayton Ohio; Kansas City, Missouri; Charlotte, North Carolina; and Louisville, Kentucky to assess baseline measures of public opinion and actions being taken related to domestic violence. Project sponsors are concentrating their media advocacy efforts in these markets in order to gain optimum exposure. Results of the polling are expected to be available to the public by the fall of 1999.

### *Securing Airtime*

Persuading stations to donate prime broadcast time to *It's Your Business* has required the development of a multi-faceted public service lobbying campaign. An important component of this campaign has been the endorsement of the series by institutions that are well respected among African American radio gatekeepers, such as AURN. Another strategy that has made station decision-makers more amenable to the request is the development of a public relations plan designed to garner coverage of the campaign and supporting stations in national and local African American media outlets. Third, project partners recruited African American recording artists to record promotional spots that urge listeners to tune in to the series, thereby potentially boosting the audiences of participating stations.

Cultivation of relationships with domestic violence advocates and other leaders in the targeted markets in order to intensify lobbying at the local level has also aided station recruitment. An organizing kit has been created that details steps community advocates can take to promote station involvement through media advocacy and community outreach, and includes sample news releases and newspaper columns that can be adapted locally. The sponsors' partnerships with local domestic violence programs and community groups are also part of a larger goal to enlist the African American public in abuse prevention.

### *Organizing Activities*

More than a media outreach campaign, *It's Your Business* is also designed to spur grassroots activity to end domestic violence in the African American community. The goal of these efforts is to maximize the series' potential to foster opposition to abuse and encourage solution-oriented interventions. Collateral materials have been developed that reinforce the campaign's messages of awareness and action and offer practical steps individuals can take to make a difference in the lives of family members and friends who are facing abuse. Eye-catching and informative, these materials include a community action kit, man-to-man brochure, poster, neighborhood sign, and window sticker. The men's brochure is an especially innovative material that provides helpful suggestions for nonviolent African American men who want to help stop domestic violence.

*It's Your Business* is also fostering community action through development of the organizing kit, which provides domestic violence advocates and community activists suggestions on how to use the radio drama as an organizing tool. The kit contains talking points, information on how to recruit allies, tips for placing the PSAs on local stations, and suggested community activities.

### *Bay Area Mobilization Project*

In July 1997, the Family Violence Prevention Fund sought to capitalize on the momentum expected to be generated by the national radio serial by establishing a project to engage African Americans in the San Francisco Bay Area in domestic violence education and prevention. This project is based on the premise that while media campaigns can play the vital role of focusing public attention on domestic violence,

sustained social change can only be achieved when such efforts are coupled with ongoing community-based advocacy and organizing.

Using a more emphatic version of the radio campaign theme, *It Is Your Business* is a culturally specific, 2-year prevention effort that works in partnership with community leaders and agencies to create a community-wide climate that condemns domestic violence, supports African American women who are victims of abuse, and stimulates individual and community action to stop the problem. The project's activities are focused in Oakland and San Francisco, two of Northern California's largest cities, with Oakland being a major center for the State's African American population.

*It Is Your Business* targets 18- to 45-year-old African American men and women who are Bay Area residents. In order to activate community members, the project concentrates its efforts on:

- developing more visible leadership on domestic violence,
- creating and widely distributing materials that offer suggestions on how community members can take effective action against abuse and promote family peace,
- creating avenues for African Americans from all sectors of the community to speak out against domestic violence,
- organizing community events that raise awareness of the devastating effects of abuse and inspire individuals to get involved in stopping the problem,
- conducting media advocacy with Black-oriented outlets in order to promote messages that foster opposition to abuse and provide guidance on how individuals can make a difference, and
- encouraging African American agencies and institutions to make women's and children's safety a priority.

## **Conclusion**

*It's Your Business* represents a groundbreaking initiative to prevent and reduce domestic violence against African American women through implementation of a culturally focused media campaign and community-based organizing strategies. It is the sponsors' hope that the campaign will result in reliable data on the efficacy of using communications to establish social sanctions and prompt intervention in relation to domestic violence. Project sponsors also hope that information gained through *It's Your Business* will prove useful to other social change movements seeking to use mass media and popular culture to achieve a safer, more peaceful, and more just world.

## References

Shefner-Rogers, C. & Rogers, E. (1997, May). *Evolution of the entertainment-education strategy*. Paper presented at the Second International Conference on Entertainment-Education and Social Change, Athens, OH.

Maibach, E., & Holtgrave, D. R. (1995). Advances in public health communication. *Annual Review of Public Health, 16*, 219-238.

Stiff, J. B. (1994). *Persuasive communication*. New York: The Guilford Press.

Legette, C. (1993). Marketing to African Americans. *Business & Economic Review, 39* (3), 3-7.

Anderson, R., & McMillion, P. (1995). Effects of similar and diversified modeling on African American women's efficacy expectations and intentions to perform breast self-examination. *Health Communication, 7* (4), 327-343.

## **Domestic Violence Across the Lifespan of African Americans: Adults Conclusion**

Ms. Dána Davis and Ms. Kelly Mitchell-Clark presented the traditional and contemporary components, respectively, for this plenary session. Ms. Davis provided an overview of partner abuse as it impacts heterosexual men and women, lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and transgenders in the African American community, while Ms. Mitchell-Clark focused on intimate partner abuse in heterosexual relationships.

Ms. Davis' work promoted an understanding of the various traditional responses to intimate violence that include community organizing and education; shelters, safe houses, and support services; advocacy; and law enforcement and court systems. She explored the early tactics that preceded the Battered Women's Movement. In her presentation, Ms. Davis noted that traditional approaches to domestic violence fail to fill the gaps in service provision created by sexism, racism, and heterosexism. In addition, Ms. Davis presented findings from studies on violence victimization to illustrate and emphasize the magnitude of this problem and reminded us that the statistics only represent reported cases of abuse. Finally, Ms. Davis introduced the use of popular media as an emerging strategy to shift consciousness and motivate positive individual responses to addressing domestic violence.

Ms. Mitchell-Clark's popular culture presentation focused on the development of the Family Violence Prevention Fund's *It's Your Business* public service radio campaign. This educational campaign is intended to reduce domestic violence against African American women by eliminating community acceptance of abuse. *It's Your Business* employs a culturally specific, "edu-tainment" approach to encourage listeners to adopt behaviors that demonstrate support for domestic violence victims/survivors, demand accountability from batterers, and communicate intolerance of abuse. Ms. Mitchell-Clark's presentation also highlighted a companion effort that uses media advocacy, materials development, and event sponsorship to mobilize African Americans against domestic violence.

Both presenters for this plenary session conveyed important messages regarding how traditional and contemporary strategies can begin to address unmet social needs and help mitigate violence in African American communities. Ms. Davis stressed the importance of exploring informal, nontraditional tactics that diverse communities of African Americans have historically practiced and noted the importance of culturally specific responses in discussions around tradition. Ms. Mitchell-Clark shared with the audience preliminary excerpts from the *It's Your Business* campaign, a groundbreaking initiative to prevent domestic violence against African American women, and reiterated the need to include African American culture and traditions in prevention and intervention strategies intended to address this population. Ms. Davis and Ms. Mitchell-Clark both provided insight into the mass media's ability to not only depict violence, but also motivate positive individual responses to this phenomenon. The combined benefit of reviewing traditional approaches to addressing partner abuse and the introduction of a

radio series as an alternative intervention strategy certainly provide a basis for filling the gaps in services to African American adults impacted by domestic violence. We must continue to look to such culturally specific intervention models if we are to achieve the ultimate goal of ending domestic violence in our communities.