Members of the African American Domestic Peace Project (AADPP) met in San Diego recently to update and enhance a report sharing lessons about reducing domestic violence in their respective cities and to discuss evidence-based practices and strategies they use to more effectively export their message of nonviolence in their communities and throughout the U.S.

Attended by administrators of eight AADPP cities, the session was intended to establish ways to update information about shared best practices and to strengthen partnerships among domestic violence advocates across the U.S., said AADPP coordinator Dr. Oliver J. Williams, executive director of the Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community.

“Domestic violence advocates are doing outstanding work in addressing gender-based violence around the country, but much of the good work is limited to the geographical area in which it’s performed,” Williams said. “By comparing notes about what is working in various communities, we’ll connect the dots among non-violence initiatives in America while helping to identify, strengthen and, ultimately, export the best of these initiatives throughout the nation.”

Once the research is updated and finalized, AADPP will work with IDVAAC to create a digest of effective evidence-based domestic violence programs that can be exported to other locations around the country, Williams said.

During the San Diego session and in several subsequent surveys, group members shared information about evidence-based and trauma-informed practices around local programs – largely focused on battered women, youth & dating violence, faith-based initiatives, male batterers and imprisoned men and women – they said could strengthen outreach initiatives and reduce gender-based violence.
Specifically, the group sought to enhance responses to five key questions:

I. What specific books, newsletters, magazines, trade publications, journal articles or other literature have you read or do you regularly read to keep you informed/empowered about the work that you do?

II. How do you apply the information from this literature to your work?

III. What specific strategies/formats do you use to evaluate programs and assess their effectiveness?

IV. From where do you draw the basis of your knowledge/understanding on how to best serve African American women who are battered (or on how to develop and implement programs that serve African American women who are battered)? Also, please juxtapose the relative value of research, literature and client interviews in informing the work you do.

V. Do you have any DV/SA/GBV initiatives that target battered women, youth (dating violence), the faith community, men who batter or incarcerated men or women? If so, what are they?

Finally, group members identified and described (where appropriate) any DV/SA/GBV initiatives they have that target these segments of the population: battered women, youth (dating violence), faith community, men who batter, incarcerated men or women.

**QUESTION ONE**

What specific books, newsletters, magazines, trade publications, journal articles or other literature have you read or do you regularly read to keep you informed/empowered about the work that you do?
Advocates reported that they regularly survey academic, professional, spiritual, industry and culturally based literature to supplement their curriculums, stay fresh on industry trends, issues and developments, and strengthen their practices, presentations or treatments.

Most of the advocates serve victims who self-identify within the Black Diaspora or Black experience and, therefore, focus on culturally specific advocacy for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Many of the respondents reported that their work centers on or involves culturally specific and Christian faith-based populations in their communities. These respondents reported that they read scholarly articles and theological studies that have proven outcomes that are qualitative and empirically driven. Among the authors they analyze and incorporate into their work include:


These respondents said they also regularly survey specific websites to inform their work, notably: the National Network to End Domestic Violence; Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community; American Psychological Association Articles, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control.
Among these varied resources, Kesslyn & Goodley’s work was reported as being particularly useful in that it is religious based and culturally sensitive to the growing need for domestic violence research and competent application for prevention resources in the church.

The scholarly article, “A refuge for my soul...” also was reported as useful as it helps to better train clergy on how to effectively interact with Christian women who are in a crisis of faith regarding violence within their marriages, advocates reported.

“The patriarchal interpretation of the Bible presents many barriers to clergy bringing comprehensive resources and information to Christians suffering in domestic violence,” one advocate said. “This article is a definite qualitative tool for enlightening those in the ministry about domestic violence treatment and awareness.”

Other commentary about these resources included:

**The article by Popescu et al.,** was reported as instructive as it enlightens the reader about the reasons why some abuse victims do not seek help.

**Advocate comment:** “There are Christians who are so indoctrinated with religious practices and their role in their marriages that even potentially lethal force is not a reason for them to seek help.”

**The article by Hambleton titled, “Cause-of-Death Disparities in the African Diaspora,”** also was deemed to be useful.

**Advocate comment:** “African Americans have so many health challenges – many of them related to stress and the constant pressures of over-indexing in every systemic institution in the nation – that domestic violence many times is not seen as a pressing problem among some Christians. This article helps put that reality into context when providing counseling for help and healing in certain communities.”

**The article titled, “Christian Counseling by Professional, Pastoral, and Lay Counselors from a Protestant Perspective”** was seen as key in helping to explain the effectiveness of Christian counseling.

**Advocate comment:** “Christian counseling, especially in the Black church historically has been an untouchable area when it comes to contemporary psychology. And for some populations, it’s downright oppressive, subservient, archaic, and gender minimizing. With people suffering with addictions, terminal illnesses like cancer and HIV, domestic violence and sexual assault, poverty, racism, hunger, un-forgiveness, as well so many other challenges to mankind, this article shows how Christian counseling can be a very effective tool.”

Other advocates reported that they read and applied literature from a variety of sources to inform and strengthen their programs in and outreach to youth, battered women, male batterers and incarcerated populations. [SEE APPENDIX FOR A COMPLETE LIST OF STATED RESOURCE LITERATURE]
QUESTION TWO

How do you apply the knowledge you’ve gleaned from this literature to your work (i.e., how has this knowledge helped you to better serve your clients and constituents?)

Respondents reported that the literature they read and the research they conducted reflecting evidence-based and trauma-informed practices helped to strengthen their programs, outreach and training in many practical ways.

“The literature and research provides sounding board information that prevents me from having to reinvent the wheel,” one advocate said. “It also helps me to refine a holistic approach to treatment and advocacy that includes clinical, diagnostic, cultural and spiritual/faith-based methods and procedures.”

“I read the stories and the research and I formulate these questions or state these facts to clients in a way that constitutes compassion, accountability, healing and wholeness,” another advocate said. “I utilize the information in a very deliberate manner. I use dialogue; I allow role-playing... I engage them in my lesson.”

Another respondent said the knowledge she gains from reading industry literature is most effectively applied in her support group counseling sessions, which she called “the most satisfying part of what I do.”

“The women come alive in group; they nurture, validate, support, laugh, cry, swear, scream, sing and pray. It is the most validating space I think I have ever been in for a Black woman,” she said. “It is a closed Vegas type of environment: What happens there, stay there. I have seen healing, deliverance, sisterhood, forgiveness, business ideas, and reconciliation happen for these women over the years.”

“As a result, my research is very important to me, as it informs the questions I ask, how I ask, suggestions I make to clients and the homework [group members] are given.”

Another respondent said the knowledge and information gained from various literature is adapted to the Black experience to “provide culturally relevant and gender specific services to crime victims, survivors of gender based violence and other clients and survivors.”
Other respondents said the literature they read consistently informs their work in several practical ways, as well as in academic and theoretical ways. For example, they said the literature has helped inform specific areas of organizational development, including staffing, board development, training, program development, outreach and education. Practical applications include:

- Advancing outreach efforts to recruit and hire more African-American male and female mental health specialists.
- Ensuring that all clients (women and children) receive counseling and therapy.
- Insisting that professional and peer level staff demonstrate a history of providing services to African American clients.
- Mandating that mental health specialists demonstrate and introduce models and practices that best meet the needs of the client.
- Introducing new and innovative programs and services. For example, one agency sought and secured funding to design a program called, “Faith and Domestic Violence for African American Ministers and Clergy.” The project was designed to examine the role of the Black church in helping to overcome domestic violence.

Another advocate said the knowledge she gleans from literature helps her better serve her clients/constituents by identifying:

- Secondary victimization and oppression that African-American and Black women have survived, such as: racism, slavery, poverty, domestic violence, sexual abuse, rape, distrust and lack of response from the criminal justice system.
- Stereotypes that limit service providers’ ability to engage or assist Black or African American survivors.
- The complexities and challenges associated with parenting and child custody issues.
- Reentry issues for formerly incarcerated individuals as they relate to victim safety and family re-unification.
- The dearth of effective support systems for domestic abuse survivors.
- The significance and potency of faith and religious institutions.
Other advocates said the content they consume empowers them to be more understanding, more culturally competent and more aware of how victims and perpetrators think – making them more effective facilitators and service providers. Others reported that they apply knowledge gleaned from literature and research in many other significant ways, including to:

- Enlighten and educate clients and group members.
- Confirm data and approaches within their teaching materials.
- Examine the context of the data to see how it relates to the service population of African Americans (essentially, as a “guiding backdrop” in approach and application, one advocate said).
- Support departmental or industry emphases on cognitive-based and trauma-informed interventions and EBPs.
- Remain informed and updated on trends in the movement or obstacles and barriers for victim/survivors.
- Help guide clergy trainings, focus groups, post-session evaluations, domestic violence training, community awareness sessions and culturally specific training for mainstream service providers.
- Strengthen and buttress RFPs for funding resources.
- Create case-study exercises to better engage clients.
- Use updated information and facts to strengthen appeals for funding.
- Create and implement new programs and initiatives.
- Establish or strengthen initiatives with religious, civic, educational, health-based and/or community-based organizations.
- Determine risk assessments and/or lethality risks re: DV offenders.
- Help support a trauma informed and gender responsive culture.
- Train staff to be trauma informed.

Another respondent said her research also helps her dispel myths about domestic violence, helps inform programs dealing with what she called the “holy hush” of domestic violence in the church, and helps her expose the danger of traditional faith-based couples counseling when domestic violence is suspected.
Respondents report using a variety of pre-program and post-program tests, surveys, evaluations and personality reviews to assess the effectiveness of their programs. Comparing pre- and post-program responses helps to measure comparative knowledge about the practices and consequences of domestic abuse and sexual assault, advocates reported, while also evaluating the learning experience and providing feedback about the effectiveness of program sessions.

Survey respondents – some who work with batterer intervention programs, court services and battered women’s programs – said they also conduct follow-up interviews with abusers to determine the recidivism rate for abusers and compare that rate to the mean recidivism rate for abusers. Some respondents said they critique the abuser’s self-endorsed “accountability plan” – which pledges a violence-free lifestyle – to assess whether the abuser has remained true to his/her stated convictions.

Other respondents said they consult with other service providers – the court system, social service agencies, health providers, churches, community-based organizations, etc. – to assess whether clients have engaged in any criminal or anti-social behavior and to gather constructive data on how to strengthen services.

In further response to the question of effective programs, respondents also reported conducting “victim/offender dialogues” to give victims an opportunity to share their experiences and tell their stories of survival. Evaluating survivor’s personal accounts – i.e., analyzing temperament, emotion, mood, “body language,” etc. – allows counselors to further evaluate the effectiveness of programs on the healing process, respondents said.

Another respondent reported that government, institutional or funder guidelines established to evaluate program effectiveness – consisting of compliance surveys, data collection, program monitoring and on-site compliance reviews – also help to ensure program effectiveness.

Overall, these program assessments, evaluations and reviews help to strengthen domestic violence programs, respondents said, ultimately helping to improve services and outcomes. The assessments also help to inform funding agencies about how they can enlarge their capacity to provide more culturally relevant services for victims and survivors, advocates said.
QUESTION FOUR

From where do you draw the basis of your understanding on how to best serve African American women who are battered (or on how to develop and implement programs that serve African American women who are battered)? Also, juxtapose the relative value of research, literature and client interviews in informing your work.

Advocates said that while academic literature is instructive in informing the work that they do, their own experiences and interaction with clients also play a vital role. Many conduct their own community needs assessments, distribute and review victim questionnaires, and conduct pre- and post-service tests to supplement scholarly research and augment and enrich their approaches to client servicing.

Research is most useful and valuable when it validates and corroborates the anecdotal and experiential evidence gathered over years of work in the field, one advocate said.

“It is important to be able to draw upon relevant and current research to ensure that interventions are as effective as possible,” one advocate said. “But I draw the basis of my knowledge from a combination of experience, research/resources and shared information from my colleagues in the field. The culmination of these resources informs my daily work.

“While information and research are necessary in guiding my work, ultimately, the voice of the victim or survivor determines the direction and outcome,” another advocate added. “Research, literature, experience and shared knowledge guide and inform my work; but client interviews (goals/desires) produce the action plans that result in the client’s/community’s desired outcome.”

“It is vital that I am not only up-to-date with the latest research, but that I have (and provide for my students and trainees) the tools and understanding to successfully apply this to my/their work. I don’t believe in a cookie-cutter approach. Every victim/survivor is an expert in his/her own life.”

The experiences and shared insights from practitioners, stakeholders, advocates, victims and scholars all provide specific perspectives that help inform the work that domestic violence activists do, one advocate said.
Others said much of their knowledge is developed from living – and being embedded – in Black culture and in the Black community most of their lives. Others said their knowledge about the subject is rooted in years of experience in the field and years of association with organizations that deploy advocates to do the work.

“As an advocate with 23 years of experience working with survivors of sexual and domestic violence, I draw the basis of my knowledge and understanding from my experience as a volunteer and an advocate working in this field, basing it on what victims have shared with me,” one advocate said.

Still others acquired much of their knowledge the hard way – as a victim.

“As a survivor who had to stay in a domestic violence shelter for almost five months before my batterer was captured, I began to understand, 1) the practices of primary prevention, secondary and tertiary services and applications applied to prevent the initial perpetuation of DV, 2) the principle of advocacy and, 3) the services given to victims and their children,” one respondent said.

“I watched the programming and how services were offered to all kinds of women from different backgrounds and ethnicities. I began to see a cookie-cutter approach to services and began talking to victims of color, including Latinas. This informed me culturally and also gave me first-hand experience being a victim.”

“I began studying everything I could get my hands on and started volunteering at domestic violence shelters. Eight years later, I was hired as director of the same shelter where I’d lived as a victim. What was heartbreaking for me was that one of the victims who lived at the shelter with me eight years before was back again. That’s when I started focusing on culturally specific programming, but now I thought about the concept of healing – not just surviving – being key.”
QUESTION FIVE

Do you have any DV/SA/GBV initiatives that target battered women, youth, the faith community, men who batter or incarcerated men or women? If so, what are they?

Advocates reported having a variety of effective outreach initiatives targeting various populations, including battered women, male batterers, youth and incarcerated men and women, among others. They included:

BATTERED WOMEN

- “Restore Program” is a 16-week support group for women survivors of domestic violence (re-launched in January 2016). “Its goal is to provide support, hope and healing with the goal of restoration and wholeness as the victim becomes a survivor and works towards the goal of self-sufficiency in mind, body and spirit,” respondent said.

- “Partner Advocate Program” uses e-mail, snail mail and telephone contact to support and communicate with survivors who are enrolled in agency’s programs. Program is staffed by volunteers, interns and victim advocates.

- “Domestic Violence Victim’s Empowerment Treatment Program” instills survival tactics, personal progression and the building of self-esteem for domestic violence victims.

- Agency provides culturally specific domestic violence training for mainstream service providers and law enforcement agencies.
YOUTH / DATING VIOLENCE

- YAVE – Youth Anti-Violence Education program (re-launched in February 2016)
- “College Club Dating Violence Prevention Program” (in conjunction with local community-based organization)
- “DV 101 for Teens” – Two-day workshop for teens about dating violence and domestic abuse (in partnership with a local church)

FAITH COMMUNITY

- Christian “Faith-based Training on Domestic Violence for Pastors & Faith Leaders” approaches the issue of domestic violence from a faith perspective, addressing DV 101, victimization, and the impact of domestic violence on children. Issues covered include: the role of faith in addressing domestic violence; the prevalence of domestic violence; why pastors struggle in addressing domestic violence; proper counseling techniques; understanding confidentiality and boundaries; holding batterers accountable; starting a domestic violence ministry; domestic violence policies and procedures; connecting with community resources; and leadership and domestic violence.
- Clergy Training and Faith-Based Domestic Violence Prevention program.
- Domestic violence training, events and presentations at churches during National Domestic Violence Awareness Month.
- Ministerial alliance partners with domestic violence agencies to develop strategies to more effectively address the issues of domestic violence and sexual assault in the church.
- Agency uses community-based forums, presentations and workshops to better inform and empower churches about domestic violence and how best to respond to it.

INCARCERATED POPULATION

- “Safe Return Initiative Domestic Violence Program” is part of the Safe Return Prison Re-Entry Program. It is a dynamic domestic violence curriculum that specifically focuses on the unique circumstances involving men in prison or on parole. The 22-week program is designed for men who are incarcerated due to domestic violence and for men who re-offend or get new charges while on parole. “The highly interactive program includes practical scenarios that address incidents and situations that most commonly lead
to conflict and violence,” advocate reports. The program also includes: Exploration of definitions of manhood within a social context of male identity, sexism, power & control, inter-generational transmission of trauma and violence, fathering, parenting challenges, video presentations and an interactive discussion forums.

• “Welcome Home Program” addresses the behavior that led to the incarceration of male and female inmates, with the intention of giving inmates more developed skills to deal with conflict. Program also addresses any related drug or alcohol issues, mental health needs and employment barriers after conviction, as well as helps inmates meet any spiritual needs.

• “Gender Responsive Initiative” has a pilot project using a Women’s Risk Needs Assessment (WRNA) for justice-involved women.

• Agency works with imprisoned women and men and helps them prepare for their transitional/rehabilitation period. Counselors help inmates address any mental and behavioral health issues, empower inmates to make better life choices, and provide resources designed to lower chances of recidivism.

• “Thinking for a Change” program promotes the idea that thinking drives actions. Inmates learn to recognize and restructure risky thoughts, regulate emotional responses, improve pro-social skills and increase personal responsibility for their actions – thereby developing skills to make better choices, ultimately leading to lower recidivism and safer communities.

MEN WHO BATTER

• “Batterers Intervention and Prevention Program” is a 24-week initiative designed to provide perpetrators with better conflict resolution and anger management skills.

• Agency works with male abusers to help them build effective communication skills, constructive conflict resolution skills and positive stress management techniques. It also helps men understand the definitions, phases and treatment options related to anger, violence and abuse.

• “Doors to Change Perpetrator Treatment Program” helps male batterers identify and address their problems so they are empowered to change. Change is identified one of the measurable outcome goals to determine both individual and program success, responding advocate says.

• “Purple Sunday” workshop consists of men in a roundtable forum examining domestic violence / sexual assault and discussing the need for responsible men to hold other men accountable as it relates to abuse. Conducted during National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, the program motto is simple: “Be an up stander, not a bystander.”
ADDENDUM

List of books, newsletters, magazines, trade publications, journal articles or other literature advocates have read or regularly read to keep them informed and empowered about the work that they do.


New Directions From the Field: Victims Rights and Services 21st Century- The U.S. Department of Justice : Office of Justice and The Office of Victims of Crime

Centers For Disease Control and Prevention: Intimate Partner Violence Surveillance, CDC Reports on Sexual and Intimate Partner Violence
World Health Organization Journals addressing domestic violence

*What Every Pastor Should Know About Domestic Violence* – Rev. Al Miles

*Pastors Handbook on Domestic Violence* – Violeta Olmoguez

*Parenting By Men Who Batter: New Directions for Assessment and Intervention* – Jeffrey L. Edleson and Oliver J. Williams

*No Place For Abuse: Biblical & Practical Resources to Counteract Domestic Violence* – Catherine Clark Kroeger & Nancy Nason-Clark

*Why Do They Kill?: Men Who Murder Their Intimate Partners* – David Adams

*Controlling People: How to Recognize, Understand, and Deal With People Who Try to Control You*

*Creative Pastoral Care and Counseling Series: Women Battering* – Carol J. Adams

*Healing Violent Men: A Model for Christian Communities* – David J. Livingston

*A Biblical Perspective of What Do You Do When You Are Abused By Your Husband* – Debi Pryde & Robert Needham

*DELTA FOCUS* – (Domestic Violence Prevention Enhancements and Leadership Through Alliances, Focusing on Outcomes for Communities United with States)

*Futures Without Violence* (newsletters and surveys)

*Safe Return Initiative Curriculum for men in Prison or Parole* by Dr. Oliver J. Williams

*Blood Relatives*, by Darlene Greene

*The Macho Paradox: Why Some Men Hurt Women and How All Men Can Help*, by Jackson Katz

*Loving Your Partner Without Losing Your Self*, by Martha Baldwin Beveridge

*Violent Partners A Breakthrough Plan for Ending The Cycle of Abuse*, by Linda G. Mills, J.D., Ph.D.

Several Scientific Journals: *Social Work, Counseling, Criminal Justice, Family Violence*
**Books**
We Real Cool: Black Men and Masculinity by Bell Hooks

Breaking Out of the “MAN BOX” – The Next Generation of Manhood by Tony Porter

Trauma Stewardship by Laura VanDernoot Lipsky

Violence in the Lives of Black Women, Battered Black & Blue by Dr. Carolyn M. West

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**Publications**

*Sage Journals:*

*Domestic Violence in the African American Community: An Analysis of Social and Structural Factors*, Violence Against Women May 2003


*Journals of the North American Association of Christians*

*Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs:*

- Connections
- Partners in Social Change
- Research & Advocacy Review
- SNAPS! (Short, Nifty Advocacy Pointers)
- The Advocacy Station
**IDVAAC newsletters**

Reports / Articles

- Ten Truths That Matter When Working with Justice Involved Women National Resource Center on Justice Involved Women
- Office of Crime Victims Advocacy-OVC Advocate Newsletter


Work-In-Progress & Lessons Learned Using Community-Based Participatory Research to Develop the PARTNERS Youth Violence Prevention Program (John Hopkins University Press)


**Websites and Webinars**

4. IDVAAC: http://idvaac.org/
5. WCSAP: http://www.wcsap.org/
7. Sisters of Color Ending Sexual Assault (SCESA): http://sisterslead.org/
9. Domestic Violence Child and Advocacy Center: https://www.dvcac.org/contact-us

**Blog**

Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (WSCADV): http://wscadv.org/
**Additional Reports and Articles**

- Domestic Violence / What Every Pastor Needs to Know: Rev. Al Miles
- Trauma Stewardship / An Everyday Guide to Care for Self While Caring For Others: Laura Van Dernoot Lipsky
- Violent No More – Helping Men End Domestic Violence: Michael Paymar
- Women Under Fire / Abuse in Military: Sarah L. Blum
- Battered African American Women / A Study Gender Entrapment: Sharon Ellis Davis
- Workbook to Accompany Ending Spouse-Partner Abuse / A Psycho-educational with Approach for Individuals and Couples: Robert Geffner and Carol Mantooth
- SAFE-Stopping Abuse for Everyone
- The Change Companies
- Why Does He Do That?, by Lundy Bancrott
- Psychology Today
- Journal of Marriage and Family
- US Department of Health & Human Services
Members of the African American Domestic Peace Project (AADPP)