

Conclusion and Recommendations

This report is unique among research because it points to the need to find culturally- sensitive, creative solutions to domestic violence in the African American community of Memphis, Tennessee. It presents the voices of respondents selected from the African American community in Memphis and analyzes their perceptions about the types, causes, solutions, and barriers to violence and domestic violence. Their voices are reflected in this community assessment project report. The report examines those policy issues that can make a difference in the lives of children and families and communities that are struggling to deal with this domestic violence. Respondents in this Memphis-based assessment strongly asserted that domestic violence requires a multi-pronged approach. One cannot address domestic violence without responding to the complex and compound issues, particularly racism, substance abuse, mental illness, economic inequity, and unemployment, that surround it. The multiplicity of intervention points, i.e., individual, couple, family, group, community, and societal intervention is important to ensure a sustained change effort. Developing and maintaining policies that create opportunities for economic prosperity while also protecting groups, and establishing safety nets, is key to any effort to eradicate domestic violence in the African American community.



Social context is all-important when making strides to resolve any issue. Finding ways to define domestic violence that reflect the values and messages of this minority community are also critical to fully addressing this issue. Relevant definitions are essential. They set parameters for legal and non-legal situations by creating perceptions as to what is domestic violence and what is not domestic violence while also establishing an agenda for change. Many African Americans do not concur with the majority race's definition of domestic violence; they feel that their circumstances place them outside the parameters of the definition and, consequently, make the interventions irrelevant to them. Whether violence is a natural occurrence spurred by the stressors of helplessness and social and economic oppression was discussed and debated by focus groups in this experience. No consensus was reached about this concern. But, what was agreed upon was that by helping communities define this issue for themselves, policies can be developed that more accurately reflect the needs and solutions unique to African Americans.





Service providers and policymakers often underestimate issues of desegregation, racism, and contemporary discrimination. This report suggests that having to negotiate living in a hostile and discriminatory society creates feelings of powerlessness and internalized oppression that greatly impacts relationships in homes and communities. How much issues of racism and contemporary discrimination affect African American relationships is not known. More research is necessary before targeted interventions can be developed to address these broader issues. But, without formally addressing these issues, service providers and policymakers cannot truly eradicate domestic violence in the African American community.

Although the historical context was repeated time and again in this report as a component that must be understood if one plans to change the tide of violence in African American homes, there is little research that has been conducted to illuminate the ways in which history impacts African American intimate relationships. Research is needed to explore the intricate relationship between history, historical African American responses, and current trends

of domestic violence in the African American community. As participants have discussed, the historical context is interwoven throughout these relationships, and thus, indicates the need for greater study.

The differential treatment experienced by African American men and some African American women by child welfare programs, law enforcement, and the judicial system in particular, is staggering. Time and again reference was made to the staggering number of Black men in prisons as a cause of single parent families. In addition to tracking this inequity, protocols need to be established that protect African Americans from the question of abusive use of power. There must be an effort to rebuild positive relationships within the African American community, to develop the supportive networks that teach and mentor young men and women. African American women often do not report violence because they do not want police or a child welfare worker to remove their partner and primary support person or their children. The woman may also choose not to call law enforcement into a violent situation because of fear of police brutality or dual arrests. Consequently, in addition to addressing the systemic inequities that exist, there must be a clear effort to strengthen the relationships and trust within and outside communities of color through leadership changes, imposed accountability, and the generation of sustained efforts of quality, concerned, and consistent services in African American communities.

The limited services available for domestic violence prevention and intervention were discussed across each of the groups. Ideally, strategies can be community developed and community based. These initiatives also should be community led. In addition to be geographically rooted in the community, the services should be led by community members or those with a history of working in the community. This genuine concern and established relationship is important if helping communities feel that the providers have integrity and a history of being responsive and caring is to be a goal. Such ideas are necessary if the services are to be trusted and utilized. These community-based organizations should be provided with equal opportunities for funding.



They should not receive lower competitive scores for a shorter organizational histories or experience levels. If organizations can prove that they have a history with the community that is successful, they should be given opportunities to receive funding while developing their infrastructure. Such actions will nurture the minority organizations by providing funding opportunities in place of funding more established organizations that are not necessarily sensitive to the community's interest or have the ability to achieve successful outcomes.

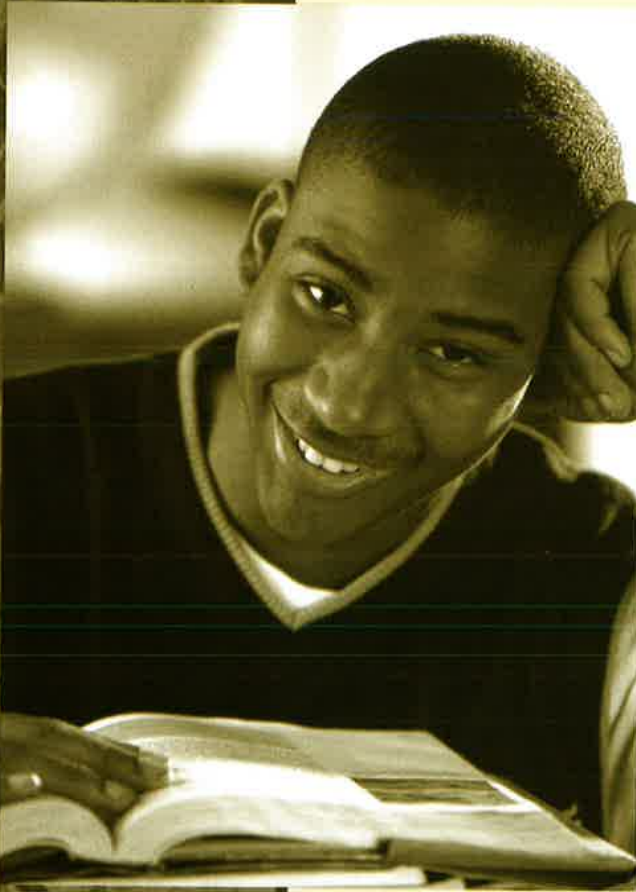
Ensuring that all services are of the highest quality and culturally competent is critical to the success of this endeavor. Culturally competent intervention methods are needed across all levels of intervention: individual, couple, family, group, community, and societal. In addition to providing such interventions, they should be documented to provide greater confidence in results and to offer opportunities for replication in other comparable places. (Bent-Goodley & Williams, 2004, p. 41)

It is imperative that funding opportunities be linked to culturally competent service provision; programs not able to demonstrate cultural competence should not receive public funding to support their ventures in minority communities.

The next step for the Memphis Community Advisory Group, that facilitated the gathering of data from this community assessment experience, is to use the information contained in this report to educate the citizen of their community about domestic violence there. The author commends the focus group respondents who shared their insights in this process for their willingness to take risks and be honest about this dark issue in their community. These group respondents provided clear recommendations that can inform policy, practice, and research. Their comments can change the conditions of their vocational communities and the problem of domestic violence within the larger Memphis community. There is only the need to listen to the voices.



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Steering Committee



IDVAAC Steering Committee. Back row, left to right: Oliver J. Williams, Ph.D.; Kelly Mitchell-Clark; William Oliver, Ph.D.; Linner Ward Griffin, Ed.D., MSW; Robert Hampton, Ph.D. Front row, left to right; Joyce N. Thomas, MPH, RN; Shelia Hankins; Esther J. Jenkins, Ph.D.; Antonia Vann, CDVC; Beth E. Richie, Ph.D.





Fact Sheet on Intimate Partner Violence in the African American Community

STATISTICS

In a nationally representative survey, 29% of African American women and 12% of African American men report at least one instance of violence from an intimate partner.¹

African Americans account for 1/3 of the intimate partner homicides in this country² and have an intimate partner homicide rate four times that of whites.³

Black women comprise 8% of the U.S. population but account for 20% of the intimate partner homicide victims.²

RISK FACTORS

The poorer African American women are and less educated the more severe the abuse they suffer

Alcohol problems (drinking, binge drinking, dependency) are more frequently related to intimate partner violence for African Americans than for whites or Hispanics.⁵

Among African American women killed by their partner, the lethal violence was more likely to occur if there had been incidents in which the partner had used or threatened to use a weapon on her and/or the partner has tried to choke or strangle her.

Among African American women killed by their partner, almost half were killed while in the process of leaving the relationship, highlighting the need to take extra precautions at this time.⁴

Among African American women who killed their partner, almost 80% had a history of abuse.⁴

As with other women, domestic violence is more likely to end in the serious injury or death of black women when there is a history of her partner having used or threatened to use a gun or knife or the partner has tried to choke or strangle her.⁴

IMPACT OF ABUSE

Battered women are at greater risk for attempting suicide⁶ particularly if they were physically abused as a child, for being depressed⁷ and to suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).⁸

DYNAMICS OF ABUSE

Women do better in abusive relationships when they have the support of friends and family. Battered black women who reported that they could rely on others for emotional and practical support were less likely to be re-abused,⁹ showed less psychological distress,¹⁰ and were less likely to attempt suicide.⁶

TEEN DATING VIOLENCE

Black youth are over represented as victims and perpetrators of teen dating violence.¹¹

African American girls are as likely as boys to slap or hit their partner,¹² but studies of racially diverse groups find that girls are more likely than boys to be violent with their partner in self defense¹³ and to be injured as a result of dating violence¹⁴

Fact Sheet References

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Memphis, Tennessee Domestic Violence Resource List

MEMPHIS

First Call for Help Memphis, TN website:
www.memphislibrary.org
<http://www.uwmidsouth.org>
Bobbie R. Thompson, MSSW
Coordinator of Field Services
Domestic Violence Resource List 2005
University of Tennessee College
of Social Work
822 Beale Street Room 228B
Memphis, Tennessee 38163
Office Phone: 901-448-4466
College Phone: 901-448-4463
Email: bthomp10@utk.edu

The Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA)

1156 Peabody Avenue
Memphis, TN 38104
Contact: Dara Davis, J.D.
Phone: 901-276-0576
Fax: 901-276-7409
Domestic Violence Crisis Hotline: 901-
725-4277
Email: dara.davis@memphisywca.org
Services under Abused Women's Services
include: Shelter, Court Advocacy, Arrest
Grant Program, education, job training
and Immigrant Women's Services:
The YWCA is culturally competent for
African Americans and immigrant
populations.

The Shelby County Crime Victim Center

600 Adams Avenue
Memphis, TN 38115
Contact: Anna Whalley, MSW
Alternate: Debra Davis-Williams, MSW
Phone: 901-545-4357
Fax: 901-545-4208
email: www.co.shelby.tn.us or
awhalley@co.shelby.tn.us
Services includes: victims' assistance
(counseling and resources) and court
advocacy.

The Exchange Club - Domestic Violence Assessment Center

2180 Union Avenue
Memphis, TN 38104
Contact: Robert Holford, MSSW
Phone: 901-276-2200
Fax: 901-276-6828
Email: RDHolford@yahoo.com
<http://www.exchangeclub.net>

Memphis Sexual Assault Resource Center (MSAC)

2675 Union Avenue
Memphis, TN 38112
Contact: Angie Dagastino, Director
Phone: 901-327-0233
Fax: 901-274-2769
Email: Angie.Dagastino@memphistn.gov
Provides comprehensive/clinical services to
children and adult women, they deal more
with sexual assault cases than domestic
violence cases

The Salvation Army

696 Jackson Avenue
Memphis, TN 38105
Contact: Barbara Tillery
Tel: 901-543-8584
Fax: 901-543-8599
Provides shelter for victims of domestic
violence:
The Salvation Army Shelter provides
short-term place for women to live. They
refer and coordinate with community
resources for assistants in counseling,
support groups, and other resources.

A More Excellent Way, Inc.

766 S. Highland St. Memphis, TN 38111
Fax: 901-323-2833
rrnichols@worldnet.att.net or
sisters4life@angelfire.com
<http://www.amorexcellentwayinc.org>
Contact Rev. Rosalyn R Nichols, Founder
and Director of organization.
Agency goal is to eliminate relationship
violence.

**Catholic Charities -
Refugee & Immigration Services –
International Women's Resource
Center**

1000 S. Cooper St. Memphis, TN 38104
Tel. 901-278-6786/Fax: 901-722-4766
internationalwomen@cathchar.org
<http://www.cathchar.org/refugee/iwrc/index.htm>

Agency helps Refugee's and Immigrants in Memphis, TN who either fled their country because of war or lived in camps, they help them with the transaction here in the south of the USA.

**Cocaine & Alcohol Awareness
Program-Domestic Violence
Program**

4023 Knight Arnold Memphis, TN 38118
Tel. 901-272-2227/fax:901-272-9519
main number for Albert Richardson
Executive Director 901-794-0915
cocaine@bellsouth.net
<http://caapincorporated.com>

**Police Dept. Memphis Community
Family Trouble Center**

3633 Old Allen Rd.
Memphis, TN 38127
Tel. 901-377-3127 or 901-377-3700
fax: 901-377- 0559
<http://www.memphispolice.org>

**Family Services of the Mid-South-
Strong Women, Strong Children**

2430 Poplar Ave. Suit 300
Memphis, TN 3811
Tel. 901-324-3637/fax:901-324-9114
Brian O'Malley, Executive Director

**World Overcomers Outreach
Ministries Church**

2124 E. Holmes Rd.
Memphis, TN 38116
901-345-1966 or 901-365-4155 Women
Oasis Transitional Housing
information@worldovercomers.org
<http://www.worldovercomers.org>

**YWCA of Greater Memphis-Abused
Women's Services**

766 S. Highland St. Memphis, TN 38111
901-323-2211/Fax: 901-725-0161
Mary Cole Nichols, Executive Director



**Shelby County Domestic Violence
Council**

Carmen Mills, Director
66 N. Pauline, Suite 633
Memphis, TN 38163
(901) 448-1845
(901) 448-7641 (fax)
cmills8@utmemo.edu

Victims to Victory

1548 Poplar Ave. Suite 200
Memphis, TN. 38104
Telephone: 901-274-6828
Contact: Dr. Kitty Lawson, Director
Faith based, serve those who have been affected by violent crime, they offer crisis counseling, court advocacy, they do social services referral, speaker and presentation, church voluntary training, to help move crisis to comfort. Dr. Kitty Lawson.

**Whitehaven Southwest Mental
Health Center**

1087 Alice Ave
Memphis, TN 38106
Tel: 901-259-1920
Fax: 901-259-1922
Website: <http://www.wswmhc.net>



*Community Insights on
Domestic Violence among
African Americans:*

**Conversations About Domestic Violence And
Other Issues Affecting Their Community**



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Institute on Domestic Violence in the African-American Community

Memphis, Tennessee, 2005

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Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community
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St. Paul, MN 55108-6142
877-643-8222
www.dvinstitute.org*