University of Minnesota IDVAAC
Assembling the Pieces
An African-American perspective on community and family violence
Winter 2007, Volume 8, Number 1

The journey toward healing: *how we can help survivors of domestic violence*

By Susan Bonne

Women suffering at the hands of abusive partners need many things, but first and foremost they need safety: a place where they know they are out of harm's way; a place to rest and regroup; a place to assess the future.

But while safety is a critical first step, it's only that: a first step. Healing may take months or more likely, years, and many survivors of intimate violence suffer post-traumatic stress syndrome, which can trigger fears and difficult feelings throughout a lifetime. What should women in recovery from abuse do to seek out and facilitate that process? And what can professionals in shelters and battered women's programs do to help women on their journey?

Consensus points to four crucial components of recovery: **connection** with other survivors; the support of **community**; access to professional **counseling**; and **cultural/spiritual context**, a faith in something larger than oneself. Each plays a unique role in helping women work through their difficulties both practical and emotional. Shelters and battered women's programs that wish to provide the groundwork for healing should seek to ensure that they can offer their clients assistance in each of these areas—and educate them as to their importance in the process.

Connection: survivors need to know they're not alone

As both a survivor and professional in the field, Adrienne LaMar, now associate director of L.A.'s Jenesse Center, knows how important it is for women to tell their story. That's one of the reasons she facilitated Sister Circles, a healing group for African-American women that encouraged participants to freely talk about their experience among other survivors.

"Women are often told by friends or family that they should leave the relationship, or get a restraining order, or do this or do that. But that's not always helpful." —*Adrienne LaMar*

Adrienne LaMar

"Women have to have a protective environment where they can be themselves," she says. "To say, 'it's okay to be who I am. I don't have to lose myself in a relationship because I'm catering to someone else.'"

Perhaps just as important for women in crisis as speaking openly is the right to simply be heard.

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Executive Director's Message— Examining how women can heal from domestic violence and preview of our upcoming conference in Long Beach, Calif.

Dr. Oliver J. Williams

By Dr. Oliver J. Williams, executive director

We've gotten a lot of positive feedback on the article in our last issue that focuses on how men who are abusive can transform themselves. If you missed it, check out the Fall 2006 newsletter on our web site www.dvinstitute.org. It's the front-page article.

This edition features an equally important article on women and the process of healing from domestic violence from a victim's standpoint. Research indicates that four crucial components are key for women's healing: the support of **community**, including family and friends, but ideally a larger circle; **connecting** with other survivors and sharing stories; access to **counseling**, via battered women's shelter **counselors** and therapists; and a **cultural** and/or spiritual grounding, or belonging to something larger than oneself. And as this and other articles in this issue point out, advocating for changes that help others has healing effects.

The cover article of this issue also addresses women's safety, which must remain paramount during the healing process.

DV interferes with community's capacity to care for itself

This issue also is dedicated to the notion that we must develop a common agenda with our community partners to end domestic violence in the African-American community.

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Helping survivors *(continued from cover)*

"Women are often told by friends or family that they should leave the relationship, or get a restraining order, or do this or do that. But that's not always helpful," says LaMar. She goes on to explain that empowerment comes when a woman is asked what she wants and needs. "That allows her to begin to take control of her life and situation….if you start there, then you open the person to hear and respond to survival options." When a woman is asked what she wants, she is able to choose the path that makes the most sense for her, as well as to ask for help as she takes the next steps, whatever they might be.

A caring and supportive community affirms a survivor's own actions, and by doing so, builds her confidence. *—Vickii Coffey*

Vickii Coffey

Vickii Coffey, executive director of the Chicago Metropolitan Battered Women's Network, also draws on her experiences as a survivor and practitioner in sharing her views on how women can best be helped. According to Coffey, empowerment comes from respecting the survivor's intuition and knowledge of the situation, and stresses that shelter workers or advocates should strive to involve women in assessing their own situation, rather than assessing it for them. "She knows the abuser best," says Coffey. "Instead [of telling someone what to do] I say, here's what I've learned from my experience. How does that relate to you? How can I help you?"

Community: drawing support from others

Community was the cornerstone of Coffey's healing. It was community that led her to seek help, and community that provided support once she'd left her abuser to begin a new life.

Her survival story began in a hospital emergency room. A chance encounter with a doctor who wouldn't accept her explanation for her injuries — falling — brought her face to face with denial. Bringing her a mirror, the doctor told her the injuries she had sustained could not have come about through a fall. Recalls Coffey, "I screamed and dropped the mirror…that was the beginning of recognizing that something was terribly wrong."

That experience enabled her to leave the relationship, which led to the second milestone on her journey to healing: a family member who took her in, believed in her, and instilled in her the idea that she had value. This support gave her the "opportunity to change not only my environment, but internally," Coffey says. "The more I was away from violence, the stronger I became. I had the space to reflect and be creative…to just be myself for a moment and not be constantly trying to please someone so they wouldn't hurt me."

Others in her community stepped up to help as well—an older woman offered daycare to her two children so she could attend school. "I was so motivated by school, by seeing others doing things with their lives. I felt I had no time to waste."

In Coffey's view, a caring and supportive community affirms a survivor's own actions, and by doing so, builds her confidence. "The community believes what happened to [her] and helps in practical ways." Community is also a resource that is often under-utilized, she notes, adding that neighbors, friends, family members can all be called on to help.

Counseling: it's okay to get help

Adrienne LaMar's experience with battering was to watch her father abuse her mother throughout her childhood, and she resolved early in life that she would never allow herself to be in the same situation. But repressed anger over what she'd witnessed led to bouts of depression that LaMar couldn't shake. As a young adult, she sought help from the California Black Women's Health Project, where she learned "it was okay to be a woman and have any issue you want." LaMar took ownership of her issues, and began a quest to make herself better, which included starting and facilitating Sister Circles.

Today, LaMar, like most practitioners, encourages women to take advantage of the full range of services available to them, from groups to career workshops to mental health services. Yet many hesitate when it comes to counseling and therapy, seeing it as an admission of some deeper illness. Says LaMar, "There's this idea that if you go to a psychiatrist or counseling, you're 'crazy,' when the opposite is true. Counseling takes women to another level where we're learning to fly."

"There's this idea that if you go to a psychiatrist or counseling, you're 'crazy,' when the opposite is true. Counseling takes women to another level where we're learning to fly." *—Adrienne LaMar*

Counseling also offers the opportunity to reflect on one's own situation and how it has evolved, which may lead to unexpected insights. One of the many steps in Coffey's healing process was a recognition of what she'd been through, and of how she'd been helped along the way, by healthcare workers, her family and the extended community. She decided, as many survivors do, to use her experiences, insights and gratitude by coming back to help other women. "Working in the field, I learned about patterns, cycles, dynamics…now I have the opportunity to educate others."

Cultural context: a source of strength

Atum Azzahir had to go through many phases before she even began to understand what full healing meant. "I had to get on a path where I believed in myself…where I felt I was a person with a purpose on this earth," she said.

Atum Azzahir

"You can't deal with healing as an individual. That leads to disconnection. You have to know yourself in the context of a bigger self." —*Atum Azzahir*

Azzahir's path started in the pre-civil rights era south, where she saw her father abused and brutalized by white employers and society at large. Yet her father never retaliated or became angry. Instead, he maintained a calm dignity in the face of disrespect, a demeanor that made a huge impression on Azzahir. "I was so devoted to ending the violence that was perpetrated against my father and my community that I made an absolute commitment to never being a part of anything that would lower the respect and honor of black men," she recalls.

That attitude and determination carried through to her marriage. Her husband's rage was a constant in the family, resulting in injuries both to herself and her four young sons, yet she protected her husband. "I kept thinking it would change…this is not who he is. I can change this, I can make him feel better." That focus on others kept a deeper truth from emerging. "I don't think I realized that I needed to take care of myself."

The turning point came when she heard her sons discussing killing their father to end the abuse. A spiritual vision of the situation began to take hold; if this event came to pass, Azzahir felt "it would be a violation of everything I believed in, everything I knew." She left, but her husband continued to follow her, finally shooting her and committing suicide. She survived, and her true healing began.

"It took me many years to realize that I needed to protect myself, that protecting myself was part of fulfilling my purpose. If you're going to honor men, you can't allow yourself to be brutalized; it causes them damage too."

Azzahir began to work in the battered women's movement, running the Harriet Tubman Shelter in Minneapolis and eventually starting the Powderhorn Phillips Community Wellness Center, a Minneapolis neighborhood initiative that promotes health and well being within a cultural context.

In working with others, she often pulls from her own story, but she is quick to say that even in the worst moments, she never felt like a victim. "I couldn't stand the victim stuff; it didn't fit with me. There's this thing about the universe: if there's a victim, then there's a perpetrator."

What works better in Azzahir's view is for those in abusive situations to develop a larger vision, to connect to their own strength and courage, and to use their cultural legacy as a building block. "You can't deal with healing as an individual. That leads to disconnection. You have to know yourself in the context of a bigger self."

IDVAAC Steering Committee Member Shelia Hankins, project director of Michigan Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment Board, also sees cultural context as an important part of healing for African-American women. "The events of your life are one issue," Hankins says, "and how you see yourself is another." She explains that women need to put their experience in the larger context of their culture. "The way we respond to what happens in domestic violence is culturally based, and it is different for each culture – African American, Latina, white…it's how society has defined you. We need to ask, 'What is it in [our] culture that helps us? And what doesn't help us?'"

Spirituality: the healing power of faith

One of the things that helps, according to Hankins, is spiritual life. She points out that much of African-American spirituality dates from the slave days, and that this 'cultural spirituality' still informs the way most African Americans experience their

Continued next page

Executive Director's Message (continued)

To do this, our partners need to be educated about the role domestic violence plays in other issues undermining our community: HIV and AIDS, gangs, teen dating violence, the absence fathers from families, prison re-entry, and poverty.

Creating a common agenda for change is the focus of our March 19-20 conference in Long Beach, Calif. (See the page 7 of this newsletter for more details.) Our overall objective is to strengthen families and communities. We want to look at the Civil Rights movement, which was strongest during the 1950s-70s and the Domestic Violence movement, which for the most part has been in progress since the early '80s.

Both of these movements involve human rights issues that intersect with race, class and gender. However, the movements themselves have not intersected. We want to take this opportunity to look at what can be learned from the Civil Rights movement and reflect on how social justice is defined. Ultimately, we hope to make a pledge that participants can take back to their communities. We hope that pledge will be a commitment to change.

March 19-20 conference in Long Beach features national experts

The keynote address at this year's conference will feature Dr. Gail Wyatt, professor of psychiatry and associate director of the UCLA AIDS Institute, on grassroots initiatives across the nation that are igniting change in African-American communities.

Our conference will feature panels on Grass Roots Organizing and the Civil Rights Movement, Re-Examining Efforts to Address Domestic Violence (to learn from past successes and mistakes) and a look at other Community Mobilization Models that have been successful in stimulating change.

We're inviting experts with a variety of backgrounds to help us consider what we can learn from the last 30 years. Activist and former boxer Rubin "Hurricane" Carter and Dr. Beth Richie, professor of criminal justice and women's studies at the University of Illinois – Chicago, will oversee our closing ceremonies.

Your presence at this conference will help us create a commitment to the kind of collaboration that will be required in the Domestic Violence movement to get the impressive results our Civil Rights leaders achieved.

Helping survivors *(continued from page 3)*

lives, even though they may not be practicing their religion. "In the African-American community, religion is really a major force in our lives, in terms of leadership, support, hope," says Hankins. "Healing is somehow being able to recognize pain and see beyond it, and the church is critical to that."

Many studies support the idea that faith helps women recovering from abuse.

"The way we respond to what happens in domestic violence is culturally based….We need to ask, 'What is it in [our] culture that helps us? And what doesn't help us?'" —Shelia Hankins

Shelia Hankins

According to a report published in Violence Against Women in March 2006[1], "Religious involvement appears to promote greater psychological well being for domestic violence survivors, including greater quality of life and decreased depression." Quoting another study, the authors also note that "Social support from religious institutions…has been found to be a key factor in many women's abilities to rebuild their lives and family relationships."[2]

Currently, many shelters provide a haven for physical safety but fail to provide an environment for spiritual healing. Part of the reason stems from respect for privacy and the wide variety of spiritual paths followed. Publicly funded shelters must also refrain from endorsing specific faith traditions, making discussion a sometimes tricky endeavor. Many find it easier to simply avoid the entire topic.

On the other hand, churches themselves often sidestep domestic abuse. Practitioners note that there is a need for faith communities to address the issue and offer services to members of their congregations and communities who may suffer from abuse. Church leaders are often reluctant to address the fact that male congregants may be abusing their partners, but some are beginning to recognize that faith communities can no longer afford to ignore this reality.

A foundation for hope

Whether or not faith is specifically addressed, one way domestic violence care workers can help their clients explore this pathway, says Hankins, is to work toward identifying where their sense of hope centers. From there, personal empowerment and self-worth can grow. "What gives hope also inspires resiliency," Hankins says.

Hope doesn't often come from the social systems women expect to protect them, notes Hankins, but instead re-victimizes them. "The legal justice system often takes children from mothers

"Landlords evict families where violence occurs. Even though this is not her fault, she's losing her home, her children; she's left with these threats, and 'which one do I fight first?' —Shelia Hankins

experiencing violence; landlords evict families where violence occurs. Even though this is not her fault, she's losing her home, her children; she's left with these threats, and 'which one do I fight first?' There are more crises coming at you than you have the wherewithal to address."

For some survivors, hope begins with fighting back. In 1999, New Yorker Sharwline Nicholson wound up in the emergency room after an assault by her partner, from whom she was separated. Amidst the trauma, she arranged for a neighbor to look after her two young children, and asked the police who questioned her to contact a close cousin who could come and stay with the children until Nicholson could go home.

Child welfare followed up the next day. Instead of praise for her handling of the situation, she was told that, as someone who was "engaged in domestic violence", she was an unfit mother. Her children were taken and placed in foster care; it took Nicholson three weeks to get them back.

Scarred by the system, she made changing it her path to healing. First she sued the city and won, and in 2002 led 50 other women in a class action suit against child services, winning again. Today, as board chair of New York's Child Welfare Organizing Project, she says she continues to stay involved to continue healing. Nicholson is a Susan Schechter fellow and the producer of a film on domestic violence, that will be reviewed in the next issue of this newsletter.

"To uplift and inspire—that is the feminine in the universe…the healing force. If a woman is strong and in a good place, that is going to bring about amazing healing." *—Atum Azzahir*

From taking care of the self to reaching out to others, from individual counseling to community action, the paths to healing are many. Those who have been there say while healing takes time, women who can utilize all the resources available, working toward economic and emotional well-being as well as physical health, have the best chance.

Says Azzahir, "To uplift and inspire—that is the feminine in the universe…the healing force. If a woman is strong and in a good place, that is going to bring about amazing healing."

1. "The Importance of Spirituality in the Lives of Domestic Violence Survivors," by Tameka L. Gillum, Cris M. Sullivan and Deborah I. Bybee, Violence Against Women, Vol. 12, No. 3, March 2006, pp. 240-250.

2. Ibid.

Meet Karma Cottman

Program Director of National Network to End Domestic Violence

By Michelle Theilmann

Karma Cottman has participated in advisory planning meetings for IDVAAC's national conferences for the past three years. In addition to contributing to IDVAAC's initiatives, Cottman currently works as the program director for the National Network to End Domestic Violence Fund (www.nnedv.org), where she has been working for the past six years.

The National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) consists of two agencies. The NNEDV oversees all policy and lobbying initiatives, while the NNEDV Fund, which Cottman works for, provides training and technical assistance.

As program director of the NNEDV Fund, Cottman coordinates national and regional meetings among state coalitions in order to establish a network, combine resources, develop solutions, and address emerging issues. Cottman provides ongoing assistance for state coalitions and oversees the direct assistance program. "This program provides direct funding for emergency needs to women who are fleeing violence, such as a plane ticket, a hotel room, or other urgent requests," Cottman explains.

"IDVAAC is an absolutely amazing organization that bridges a gap that exists in providing programming specific for African Americans."—Karma Cottman

The NNEDV relies on IDVAAC to provide research, expertise, presentations and advocacy recommendations for state coalitions, which is how Cottman first became involved with IDVAAC three years ago. "IDVAAC is an absolutely amazing organization that bridges a gap that exists in providing programming specific for African Americans," says Cottman. "They engage the community and explore questions that others are unable to tackle."

The two organizations have a good working relationship, explains Cottman, and she credits IDVAAC for broadening the view of state coalitions. "I want to take what I learn from IDVAAC back to my personal job," says Cottman. Cottman identifies community engagement and education as the two best strategies to end domestic violence in the African-American community.

As program director of the NNEDV Fund, Cottman also works with organizations across the country to address rising issues and concerns, such as the recent immigration raids in several states. "This is a human rights issue as women, children, and families are being separated," says Cottman. When emerging situations like this arise, Cottman works with organizations to determine their response and whether or not they should mobilize national media. "We need to engage our programming to be responsive to situations and stand up for something we think is wrong," says Cottman.


Karma Cottman

Cottman became interested in the domestic violence arena after seeing it affect so much of her community. She then took a course about domestic violence while studying criminal justice during college. After graduation, Cottman worked for Florida's state coalition against domestic violence, where she assisted with the development of a community assessment tool that was used to identify service gaps in numerous Florida communities. Cottman also conducted diversity training and provided assistance to local programs.

She enjoys working with NNEDV because its mission resonates with her personal values. The NNEDV strives to instigate social change and end domestic violence by working with state domestic violence collations and allied organizations. They serve as an advocate and public policy voice for battered women and children. One of their most significant public policy successes was spearheading the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) in 1994, and playing crucial roles in the law's reauthorizations in 2000 and 2005.

The VAWA combines resources and creates collaborations to provide services to domestic violence victims and their families. In addition to providing safety and security for domestic violence victims, the act focuses on prevention and an improved criminal justice and legal response to domestic violence.

The NNEDV's sister organization, the NNEDV Fund, provides onsite training and assistance to these state coalitions, who lead local and state efforts to implement the Violence against Women Act. The NNEDV Fund also increases awareness of domestic violence, trains advocates, and provides resources to communities working to address domestic violence.

Cottman notes, "I'm pleased to work for NNEDV, an organization that addresses domestic violence on so many levels: at the hour of need for victims, at a community level, and at the legislative level. And my association with IDVAAC strengthens my connections with other professionals throughout the country; it also helps keep me on the leading edge of new information about this field. "

Book Review:

Knowing What We Know, by Gail Garfield

By Dr. Oliver J. Williams

In *Knowing What We Know*, author Gail Garfield encourages readers to rethink the way they view violence against women. Her approach is to interview women who are older now and have some distance from the domestic violence they experienced as young women.

Rather than allowing "knowers" or experts to frame the issue, Garfield allows domestic violence victims to frame the issue in their own terminology. This is a book that allows people who have experienced domestic violence to define the problem.

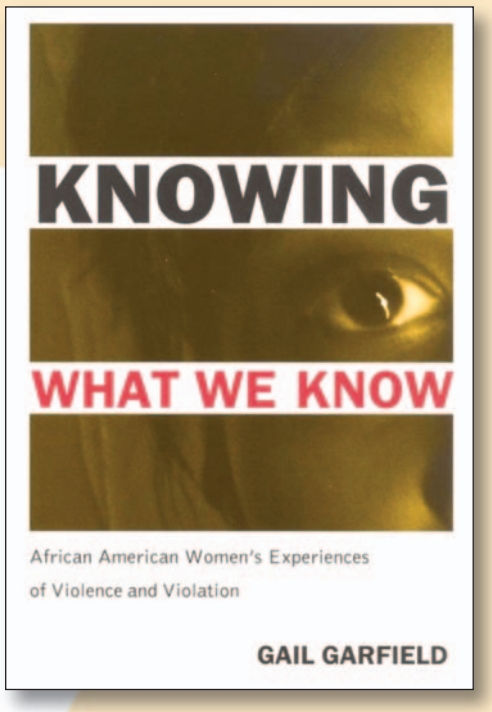
It allows readers to approach the topic in a more effective way. Let's listen, and ask ourselves "how can I help?" As our cover article also suggests, we need to listen carefully to victims before we can effectively define our solutions.

Facing social and cultural constraints

Garfield, an activist and sociologist, uses interviews with nine African-American women who have experienced racialized, class-based, and/or gender-based violence. She implies that cultural and social restrictions imposed on black women conflict with a women's individuality, and sometimes lead to these forms of violence. She shows how racialized, class-based, and gender-based violence intersect, as well as how, over time, the nine women overcame adversity.

Garfield encourages readers and those who study violence against women to take life experiences into consideration, like the nine women she interviewed. By doing this, Garfield believes people will look at violence against women in a more comprehensive manner, exploring woman's relationship with men, as well as the social and cultural context of women's lives.

Garfield explains how an individual's interactions in a social and cultural environment influence their experiences. These interactions and experiences then shape how an individual perceives and responds to reality, and ultimately, how an individual sees his or herself. She argues that social and cultural constraints frequently conflict with black women's individuality, needs, interests, aspirations, decisions and actions. Despite cultural and social practices that interfered with their sense of personhood, the nine women in *Knowing What We Know* maintained, and in some cases, regained their sense of self-worth.



Garfield conducted in-depth conversations with nine African American women who were born during or just after World War II, ensuring that the women had ample life experiences as well as informative reflections of their past. To tell their stories, these women describe who they were and who they've become as they experience the cycles of violence and transformation. Although Garfield realizes that their stories do not apply to all black women, she believes their stories, experiences and perceptions of reality contribute to what it means to be an African-American female.

Effects of facing DV with no official support

Garfield exclusively interviewed women who have not received support from institutional systems that provide assistance to female victims of violence, such as human, legal, clinical, or criminal justice organizations. Garfield found that some women who go through these institutions become influenced by the standards imposed on them. Garfield argues that women's experiences and problems have not been addressed, or included in funding decisions, by these systems as much as they should.

When attempting to understand violence against women, Garfield notes that there are two intersecting parts to consider. First, is an understanding of how these violent encounters reflect one's response to cultural and social constraints. Second, is knowing what violence was done, by whom, and why. The way a woman's individuality collides with social and cultural restraints expose how violence is experienced by women.

Knowing What We Know also addresses broader issues, encouraging readers to think about and discuss what it means to value the lives of women. Reflecting about women's life experiences and how they are valued in our society enables us to explore what needs to be done in order for women to live in a society that treats them fairly.

This book provides unique insights into the perspectives of domestic violence victims. In her next book, Garfield will examine the lives of black men and their experience with violence. Both books remind us that people lives are multi-dimensional and domestic violence solutions must be as well.

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Mobilizing to End Domestic Violence in the African-American Community: A Contract for Change

Mark your calendars now for IDVAAC's annual conference 2007, which promises to be a powerful, informative, and inspiring national event. Speakers and panelists include key leaders in the domestic violence and civil rights movements, as well as experts from related fields, with an agenda that will illuminate strategies for confronting violence and related challenges facing the African-American community. The conference will be March 19-20 at the Hyatt Regency in Long Beach, Calif.

Setting the stage for the conference, **Gail Wyatt, Ph.D. will deliver the keynote** address, examining how grassroots efforts across the nation are igniting movement toward recommitment and mobilization among African Americans. A professor of psychiatry and behavioral science at UCLA and associate director of the UCLA AIDS Institute, Wyatt has spoken and written extensively on violence against women.

Day 1 also includes a panel on the history of grassroots organizing in the domestic violence and civil rights movements, moderated by noted author and professor Beth Richie, Ph.D. Exploring lessons learned from these successful models, the panel will discuss how we can move the community to take on the challenge of effecting change aimed at reducing intimate partner violence in the African American community.

IDVAAC Executive **Director Dr. Oliver Williams will lead a plenary session on connecting domestic violence to other social issues** in the African-American community, including disparities in health and mental health, over-representation in the criminal justice and child welfare systems, and the high rate of HIV/AIDS infection.

A panel discussion on re-examining efforts to address domestic violence in the African-American community will focus on **what we've learned from past approaches, and what has been missed** or left out. The panel includes social critics, grassroots leaders, scholars and advocates as well as victims and formerly abusive men and will be moderated by Dr. Esther Jenkins, professor of psychology at Chicago State University.

Day 2 offers another inspiring agenda, beginning with a plenary/panel discussion on **community mobilization models**, led by professor and leading gerontologist Linner Ward Griffin, professor and leading scholar in mental health and geriatric issues. This skill-building session will present examples of such efforts at the individual, organizational and community levels.

A number of **concurrent workshops** take place throughout the morning, exploring the intersection of intimate partner abuse and other social problems, with breakout groups focusing on topics from health, substance abuse and sexual assault to gang and teen dating violence, prisoner reentry, and fatherhood.

Dr. Williams will lead off the afternoon with a presentation and plenary session on the **necessary elements of a contract.** A discussion on developing and implementing the contract against domestic violence will follow, providing opportunities for participants to connect with other attendees in small groups.

Rounding out the day will be a ceremony with speaker, activist and author Rubin **"Hurricane" Carter,** providing an opportunity for participants to ponder what they have learned and commit to reducing domestic violence the African-American community.

Be sure to come out and be a part of this pioneering event, where we will strengthen ties, build bridges and make personal commitments toward mobilizing our communities for change. Mark you calendar and stay tuned for details. For more information, visit www.dvinstitute.org.

Let's learn from the past and make a contract for the future

Join future history makers by attending the spring IDVAAC conference, "A Contract to Change" in Long Beach, Calif.

To register for the conference and to obtain lodging, please register first online or by contacting registrar Lynne Matthews at IDVAACConference@comcast.net or 410.597.9912.

A block of rooms has been reserved at the Hyatt. You will receive a special rate of $159 per night if you make reservations by Feb. 19, and let them know you are connected with the University of Minnesota's Institute on Domestic Violence in the African-American Community.

Sign up today!
www.dvinstitute.org

SIGN UP TODAY!

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Report on Contract for Change Conference • Meet Tameka Gillum
Review of Sharwline Nicholson's new film • New teen dating hotline

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