

## Forum targets abuse among immigrants

**W**ASHINGTON, D.C. – When it comes to domestic violence prevention, one size does not fit all – especially when dealing with immigrant communities.

That was among the central themes addressed during an African women's roundtable discussion held June 20-21 at the Hilton Garden Inn in the nation's capital.

Coordinated by IDVAAC, the two-day session was convened to identify unique strategies to help lower the rate of intimate partner violence and gender abuse within immigrant populations.

Dr. Oliver J. Williams, co-director of IDVAAC, said the first step to reducing domestic violence in immigrant communities may be to

develop a greater awareness of – and respect for – cultural differences.

“The ways that men subordinate women is different in every culture,” Williams said. “Second-class stature for women, for example, is something that’s relatively common in many African nations, and control of women – which frequently includes physical control or abuse – is not uncommon.”

While increased awareness of domestic violence has led to better services for most Americans, he said, many immigrant populations aren't quite as fortunate. For African immigrant women, accessing services can become difficult for various reasons, ranging from a difference in language to a difference in cultural norms.

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Domestic violence advocates pose for photographers after an African women's roundtable discussion June 20-21 in Washington, D.C. The session was convened to identify ways to reduce gender abuse within immigrant populations.

## Islamic leaders meet to tackle domestic violence

**H**ARLEM – Several African Imams and other leaders of the Islamic faith community participated in an invitation-only roundtable discussion Aug. 24 to tackle two critical issues devastating many faith communities – sexual assault and gender-based violence.

Coordinated by IDVAAC and the African Imams Council, the session was convened to identify strategies Islamic leaders can implement to more effectively treat, prevent and respond to incidents of domestic violence in Islamic faith communities, said IDVAAC co-director Dr. Oliver J. Williams.

“Faith-based activists from throughout the diaspora are looking for leadership to help deal with the challenge of domestic violence from a spiritual, philosophical and functional perspective,” Williams said.

“Our forum was intended to identify specific ways that Imams and other leaders in the Islamic community might support victims of domestic violence and how that leadership might engage their community to help overcome gender-based violence,” Williams said.

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# Action, not just reaction, key to reducing abuse



Dr. Oliver J. Williams  
IDVAAC Co-Director

Perhaps America's first black supermodel Beverly Johnson expressed the sentiment best.

Johnson, who joined a chorus of females accusing comic icon Bill Cosby of drug abuse and/or sexual misconduct, said she waited 30 years to publicly tell her story because she sympathized with the historic plight of black men in America.

"As I wrestled with the idea of telling my story... the faces of Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, Eric Garner and countless other brown and black men took residence in my mind," Johnson wrote in *Vanity Fair* magazine, claiming that Cosby drugged her at his home in the 1980s.

"A voice in my head kept whispering, 'Black men have enough enemies out there already, they certainly don't need someone like [me] – an African American with a familiar face and a famous name – fanning the flames,' " she added.

Although Cosby's lawyers have steadfastly denied all accusations of sexual misconduct, Johnson's powerful allegation nevertheless symbolizes the predicament faced by many women of color who've been victims of abuse:

Suppress your anger, loneliness and fear and you suffer – often painfully – in silence. Reveal the name of your abuser and you become a racial sellout, an angry black woman leading a regiment of oppressive forces seeking to undermine, weaken or castrate black men.

Not only is the label tragic and unreasonable, it's wildly unfair. Black women who've been abused should not feel they have to suppress or conceal their personal trauma to maintain their badge of ethnic loyalty.

Yet, many do. One of our steering committee members, Beth Richie, refers to this as a kind of gender entrapment – a racial quandary of "damned if you do and damned if you don't." So these women find themselves held hostage, in a way. And without an outlet to manage their pain and confusion, they rarely get better.

Let's be clear: One reality has nothing to do with the other. Yes, we know that the Trayvon Martins, Michael Browns, Eric Garners and Oscar Grants of the world are part of a long lineage of black men who've been hunted and lynched and

killed since we arrived on America's shores. That's real.

What's also real, though, is that abused women – especially black women – have real issues. Our collective challenge is to acknowledge the historic obstacles facing black men in America, without negating the reality of issues facing black women who've been abused.

We also must learn to distinguish the message from the messenger. Frequently when claims of abuse are made against black celebrities – especially someone at the level of a Cosby – the first thing some black people ask is: "Where'd you hear that?" And if the source is not a respected community source, some people dismiss the information because they believe the accuser has an impure agenda.

Killing the messenger, however, does not negate the veracity of the message. We must understand the cultural realities and historic oppression of black men, while still dealing with domestic violence in our community. Black men's issues are real, but so, too, is intimate partner violence. At the end of the day, we have to do like we've historically done in America: Deal with multiple sets of issues.

Now let's not get it twisted, as the young folks might say. Much of the news media still is biased against black men. If you listen to the news, you might think that Bill Cosby and Ray Rice and Chris Brown are the only men accused of assaulting or abusing women. Hardly.

When you look at someone like a Charlie Sheen, for example, allegations of his historic abuse of women are almost laughingly ascribed to his colorful and charming Bad Boy image.

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Former black supermodel Beverly Johnson – who says Bill Cosby drugged her while she was auditioning for his TV show in the 1980s – said she waited 30 years to tell her story because she sympathized with the historic plight of black men in America. (Courtesy photo).



# Web radio show explores solutions to domestic abuse

**M**INNEAPOLIS – The Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community (IDVAAC) continues to export its message of non-violence, awareness and understanding through its weekly blog talk radio show called IDVAACRadio.com.

The hour-long show provides news and information designed to educate listeners about “best practice” violence prevention initiatives and approaches throughout the U.S., said IDVAAC co-director Dr. Oliver J. Williams.

“Our show provides a vehicle to discuss critical issues and solutions associated with domestic violence in the African American and African diaspora communities,” Williams said.

“It is a primary prevention and public education tool to inform African Americans across the U.S. about the problem, research and solutions to understanding domestic violence and approaches to reducing domestic violence.”

The weekly, call-in show – hosted by various domestic violence activists from

**WHAT:** “IDVAAC Talk Radio.com,” a weekly Internet radio show  
**WHEN:** Every Thursday, 7 p.m. (CST)  
**WHERE:** [www.blogtalkradio.com/idvaac](http://www.blogtalkradio.com/idvaac)  
**WHY:** To discuss viable solutions to domestic violence

around the nation – explores particular aspects of gender-based violence or sexual assault, Williams said, and typically is solution-oriented.

Recent hot-button topics included: The NFL and Violence Against Women, The Intersection of Domestic Violence and Sex Trafficking, Domestic Violence and HIV in the African Immigrant and Refugee Communities, Domestic Violence in the Faith-Based Community, and Can Men Who Batter Change?

Upcoming show topics include: Fatherhood and Domestic Violence, Strengthening Partnerships to Address Domestic Abuse, Gender Violence on Black College Campuses, Domestic Violence Among Sex Traffickers, and Domestic

Violence in Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) communities.

Suggestions for other show topics are welcomed, Williams said.

The show broadcasts at 7 p.m. CST every Thursday at [www.blogtalkradio.com/idvaac](http://www.blogtalkradio.com/idvaac). Shows will be archived on the website and can be reviewed or downloaded.

The program is produced by IDVAAC, in collaboration with the Women of Color Network and the African American Domestic Peace Project. It is made possible by a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Administration for Children and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau, and Family Violence Prevention and Services Program.

To tune into the show or listen to past shows, visit [www.blogtalkradio.com/idvaac](http://www.blogtalkradio.com/idvaac). For more information, including a list of hosts, guests and show topics, visit [www.idvaac.org](http://www.idvaac.org). ♦

## Activists meet to advance domestic peace project

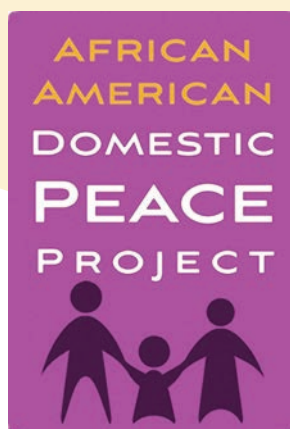
**O**AKLAND, Calif. – Peace activists from throughout the U.S. met here in separate forums in late October to share lessons about ending domestic violence in their communities and plot a course for building stronger and healthier communities across the U.S.

The two sessions, part of IDVAAC’s overall outreach initiatives, were designed to fortify a strategy to end domestic violence by building or strengthening partnerships between domestic violence advocates and activists from community based organizations, organizers said.

“While there are lots of organizations out there doing good work in addressing violence in our communities, their effectiveness is mitigated by limited resources and finite reach,” said IDVAAC co-executive director Dr. Oliver J. Williams.

“We need to do a better job of connecting the dots, sharing ideas and resources, and identifying best practices that can be exported to communities throughout the U.S.”

During a two-day session Oct. 28-29, advocates from eight African American Domestic Peace Project (AADPP) cities met to update attendees on activities in their respective cities and to



develop action plans for the upcoming year.

Representatives from AADPP sites in Boston, Tacoma and Oakland outlined their strategic plans to mobilize their communities, develop and promote initiatives to address domestic violence, and attract funding to finance those initiatives.

Developing such strategic plans is critical to effectively addressing domestic violence, Williams said, because it produces a commitment from all involved parties to support a common mission and to engage in a community action to change the paradigm in that city.

AADPP representatives from Dallas, Detroit, San Francisco, West Palm Beach, and Greenville-Cleveland, MS also discussed how they seek to partner with community stakeholders – like civic groups, health and service providers and government agencies

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# IDVAAC Steering Committee members commemorate fight for women's justice

**W**ASHINGTON, D.C. – Several IDVAAC steering committee members participated in separate celebrations this fall to commemorate three major legislative acts in the violence against women movement.

IDVAAC co-director Shelia Hankins and steering committee members Johnny Rice, Karma Cottman, Gretta Gardner and Trisha Bent-Goodley attended various events celebrating the 20-year anniversary of the Violence Against Women Act and the 30-year anniversary of both the Victims of Crime Act and the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act.

One of the key events was a Pillars of Empowerment affair showcasing the public-private partnership that united women's activists and congressional leaders. The event, hosted by the National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence Against Women, celebrated three decades of progress while recommitting to providing new and more effective pathways to prevention, justice, safety and healing, organizers said.

IDVAAC steering committee member Gretta Gardner, chair of the Austin/Travis County Family Violence Task Force in Austin, Texas, was one of five “unsung heroes” honored at the event for their “valiant work to address the heartbreak of sexual and relationship violence.”

Gardner, a longtime domestic violence activist, called the unsung hero recognition “an immeasurable honor.”

“When I left prosecution to do policy work, a survivor I’d helped gave me a bracelet that said: ‘To an angel... Thanks for believing.’ It is a reminder that believing a survivor is the greatest empowerment tool we can give her,” said Gardner, a former Maryland prosecutor.

“The Unsung Hero Award from the movement is an affirmation that my colleagues and mentors believe in me and the work I do on the local level,” she added. “The award has empowered me to continue giving and serving until we collectively end violence against women.”

The other awardees were: Luz Marquez, formerly with Sisters of Color Ending Sexual Assault; Cherrah Giles, secretary of the Department of Community and Human Services for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation (Jenks, Okla.); Cassie Luna, technical assistance coordinator at The Network/La Red (Boston), and Orchid Pusey, associate director at Asian Women's Shelter (Oakland, Calif.).

IDVAAC members Hankins and Cottman also were on hand at the Pillars of Empowerment event to join the celebration and support their fellow committee member.



IDVAAC steering committee member Gretta Gardner (center) was one of five “unsung heroes” honored at a “Pillars of Empowerment” event for her work as chair of the Austin/Travis County Family Violence Task Force in Texas. The National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence Against Women hosted the event. (Courtesy photo).



**"While the fight is not over to eliminate domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking, we must take time to acknowledge and commemorate the milestones that have been accomplished on our pathway to realizing this goal."**

"This celebration was not only a testament to the commitment of the unsung heroes, but also to the dedicated advocates, judges, attorneys, law enforcement officers, legislators, community activists, and others who have worked tirelessly to redress and prevent the traumatic occurrences that survivors, fatality victims, their families and their communities have experienced," Hankins said.

"While the fight is not over to eliminate domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking, we must take time to acknowledge and commemorate the milestones that have been accomplished on our pathway to realizing this goal."

Hankins and Cottman also participated in two other events this fall to commemorate the fight for women's justice – one at the home of Vice-President Joe Biden and another at the National Archives.

Joined by activists Condencia Brade, executive director of Sisters of Color Ending Sexual Assault, and Kalyn Risker, executive director of Sisters Acquiring Financial Empowerment, Hankins and Cottman attended the event at Biden's home to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Violence Against Women Act – the first federal law that labeled violence against women "a violation of basic civil rights and fundamental human dignity," Biden said.

"It had three simple goals: Make streets safer for women. Make homes safer for women. Protect women's civil rights," Biden wrote in an op-ed for a Delaware newspaper. "It met those goals comprehensively by: increasing violence prevention, investing in shelters, enhancing services, and training police, lawyers, and even judges to better investigate, prosecute and adjudicate domestic violence cases."

"But it took four years for the bill to get signed into law in 1994," said Biden, who introduced the bill in 1990 when he was U.S. senator. "It was a struggle with setbacks, but also a journey that has changed America."

President Barack Obama said the historic legislation "changed the way our country responds to domestic abuse and sexual assault."

"At a time when many considered domestic abuse to be a private family matter and victims were left to suffer in silence, this law

enshrined a simple promise: every American should be able to pursue her or his own measure of happiness free from the fear of harm," Obama said in a proclamation written for the occasion.

"VAWA has provided hope, safety and a new chance at life for women and children across our nation," he added. "With advocates, law enforcement officers, and courageous women who have shared their stories joined in common purpose, our country has changed its culture; we have made clear to victims that they are not alone and [we have] reduced the incidence of domestic violence."

"But we still have more work to do," the president added. "Too many women continue to live in fear in their own homes, too many victims still know the pain of abuse, and too many families have had to mourn the loss of their loved ones."

"It has to end – because even one is too many," he concluded. "We must continue to work toward a more perfect society, where the dreams of our mothers and daughters are not limited by fear and where every person can feel safe." ♦



# IDVAAC's Beth Richie joins NFL panel on domestic abuse

**C**HICAGO – Longtime IDVAAC steering committee member Beth Richie has been named a senior adviser to the National Football League's policy group addressing domestic violence and sexual assault.

Richie, director of the Institute for Research on Race and Public Policy at the University of Illinois, joins a newly appointed committee charged with helping the league improve its policies on domestic abuse and sexual assault, develop its educational and service programs and revise its personal conduct policy.

Richie said she looks forward to helping the league develop policies that will have a positive impact on players, survivors, victims and society at large.

"This is a unique moment in our national consciousness as we consider the impact of violence against women and the role of institutions in preventing and responding to it," said Richie, a professor in the departments of African American studies and Criminology, Law and Justice at UIC.

"The problem of violence, particularly against women and children, can't simply be addressed by public policies relying on incarceration," she added. "So it's important for organizational and grassroots efforts to take into account the need for education, resources, outreach and social change."

The league formed the expert panel after video footage surfaced of former Baltimore Ravens running back Ray Rice knocking out his then fiancée (now wife) in a hotel elevator. Since that footage surfaced, several other domestic or child abuse incidents involving NFL players also have surfaced.

Initially, NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell appointed three members to the advisory council – all female and all white. Richie and others were added after the Black Women's Roundtable, a Washington, D.C.-based civic group, wrote a protest letter to Goodell, pointing out the omission and requesting a meeting to strategize on domestic and child abuse and "other diversity issues" in the league.

Goodell named Richie to the panel in October, calling her "one of the nation's leading experts on issues of sexual assault and domestic violence."


Richie's academic work focuses on the experiences of African American battered women and sexual assault survivors, and emphasizes how race/ethnicity and social position affect women's experience of violence and incarceration.

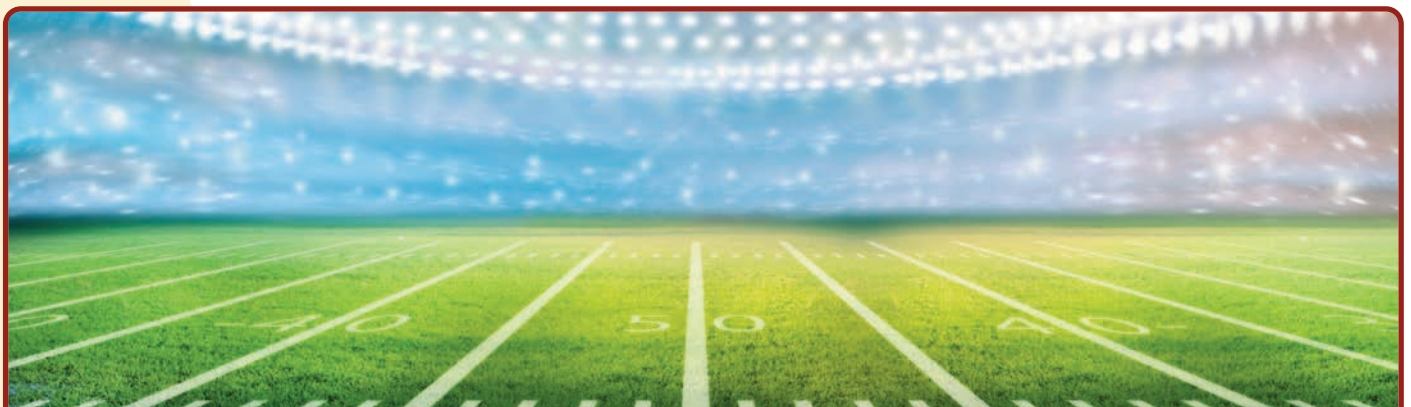
She is the author of "Arrested Justice: Black Women, Violence and America's Prison Nation," which chronicles the evolution of the contemporary anti-violence movement during a period of mass incarceration in the U.S. Her first book, "Compelled to Crime: the Gender Entrapment of Black Battered Women," is taught in many college courses and is popularly cited for its original arguments concerning race, gender and crime.

Richie joined the IDVAAC steering committee in 1996 to help the organization enhance society's understanding of and ability to end violence in the African-American community.

"IDVAAC is a leading organization challenging the movement to take up issues of race, class, age, sexuality, faith and community as they relate to gender violence," Richie said. "I am very proud of the work that we do because it integrates an analysis of structural racism into the work, as well as builds on the strength of our communities."

Besides IDVAAC, Richie is a board member of the Center for Fathers' Families and Public Policy, and A Call To Men. She also is a founding member of INCITE!: Women of Color Against Violence.

Other members of the NFL's domestic violence expert panel include Lisa Friel, former head of the sex crimes prosecution unit in the New York County District Attorney's Office; Peter Harvey, board member for Futures Without Violence and former New Jersey attorney general; Tony Porter, co-founder of the violence prevention organization A Call to Men; Jane Randel, co-founder of the anti-violence campaign NO MORE and Rita Smith, former executive director of the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence. 





# 'Listening sessions' explore ways to end abuse, FGM among African immigrants

**W**ASHINGTON, D.C. – IDVAAC board members and supporters participated in two listening sessions earlier this year to explore ways to end domestic violence and female genital mutilation in African populations.

Co-sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, IDVAAC and domestic abuse prevention advocates, the sessions facilitated a dialogue about existing efforts to address trauma related to domestic violence, sexual assault and rape, female genital mutilation and trafficking for African immigrants, organizers said.

"Listening sessions like these give us critical insight into the cultural and social challenges facing African immigrants as it relates to domestic violence and sexual assault," said IDVAAC co-director Dr. Oliver J. Williams. "At the end of the day, we cannot serve if we do not understand."

The first session, held on June 19, explored information on the unmet needs of African immigrant and refugee victims of violence, identified collaboration opportunities for community-based organizations serving African victims of violence, and identified opportunities for training and technical assistance to community-based organizations serving African victims of violence – including

a program model for their economic empowerment, organizers said.

Civic organizations serving African immigrants and refugees who are impacted by domestic violence presented data on service needs, challenges and culturally relevant programming. IDVAAC, meanwhile, featured its African Women Network, which highlights the diversity of African immigrant communities and works to make available culturally relevant support for victims of violence.

IDVAAC co-executive directors Dr. Oliver J. Williams and Shelia Hankins, steering committee members Fatima Porgo and Uju Obianuju Obi, and IDVAAC supporters Fatimata Kourouma, Grace Aron, Yvonne Mbebe-Palmer and Veronica Saccoh attended the session, which provided insight on the cultural challenges immigrant and refugee women face in dealing with intimate partner violence.

Presenters shared information about the many challenges to ending domestic violence in African immigrant communities, including cultural oppression, religious and social traditions, language barriers, inadequate education and awareness, and lack of economic empowerment among women.

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## 'Tightrope' provides glimpse into America's racial future

*Editor's Note: Each issue, IDVAAC's newsletter profiles a book, program, initiative or organization that is helping to serve the interests of black America.*

*This month, we feature "Tightrope: A Racial Journey to the Age of Obama," written by Dr. Gail Garfield, longtime advocate for poor women and children and associate professor of sociology at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York.*

**N**EW YORK – How could America be progressive enough to elect a black man as president – twice, no less – while still clinging tightly to some longstanding traditions of bias and generations of racial fear and hatred?

Sociologist Gail Garfield examines this question and others in her provocative new book, "Tightrope: A Racial Journey to the Age of Obama."

The book, published by Rowman & Littlefield, explores race and politics in the United States, addressing racial inequalities and injustices that have led to a point in history where, seemingly improbably, Americans have elected (and re-elected) a black man as president.

"We, as a nation, have taken precarious steps to arrive at the age of Obama, while remaining steeped in contradictions," the book publishers say. "Our steps on this racial tightrope are a work in progress – a history in the making – that will largely influence who we are and who we hope to become as Americans."

In her book, Garfield retraces our steps along this wavering racial tightrope, blending in her own experiences, including her childhood in the Jim Crow south, with the nation's broader racial history to trace the remarkable shift in America's racial landscape.

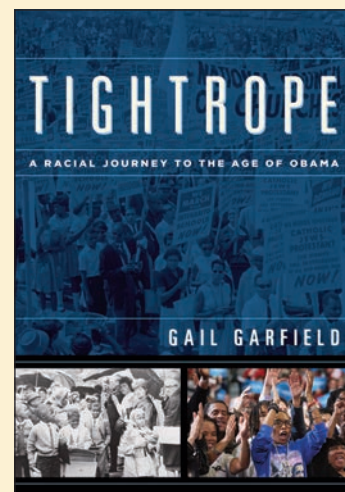
The divergent steps we have taken, teetering between regressive and progressive racial politics, between stifling continuity and meaningful change, have led us to where we now tread as a nation, in this new Age of Obama, the book contends.

The halting, swaying missteps created by racial fears, hatred and anger reveal the important imprints of separation and difference, and the bold, assured steps open up possibilities for inclusion, acceptance and belonging.

In the end, Tightrope challenges readers to reflect on their own steps on the racial tightrope and to ask basic questions about racial identity and progress in the United States.

Garfield said she wrote Tightrope to dissect the racial "changes and challenges" America is experiencing "in this supposedly post-racial new age of Obama."

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# Islamic leaders meet to tackle domestic violence

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“Our forum was intended to identify specific ways that Imams and other leaders in the Islamic community might support victims of domestic violence and how that leadership might engage their community to help overcome gender-based violence,” Williams said.

Williams said the forum was a continuation of work IDVAAC has done in recent years to help faith leaders “develop and implement intervention and prevention programming for congregational members and the community addressing domestic violence, intimate partner violence, and dating violence in the black community.”

**The following five topics were discussed at the meeting:**

- What does the Quran say about domestic violence?
- What can we do to support the mosques to respond to domestic violence?
- What is the responsibility of Imams and the community in preventing domestic violence?
- What would a good collaboration look like among Imams, Mosque leadership and domestic violence programs?
- How important is the issue of polygamy as it relates to domestic violence?

Participants agreed that the Quran calls for the just treatment of all people, especially within the family. According to the teaching of the prophet of Islam, “the best amongst you is he who is best to his family,” they said.

The religion lays out the guidance on how to interact with one another and teaches that transgressing against a person, their honor or their property is not permissible, participants agreed.

“There is no verse in the Quran where Allah calls men to control women and treat them as slaves,” said Souleymane Konate, Imam of Masjid Aqsa in Harlem, explaining how Quran clearly reprimands behaviors of abuse.

“Islam is against domestic violence and, especially when it comes to children and women, Allah says that ‘Men are the protectors of women (Q.4:34).’ Women are your sisters and they should never be abused,” he said. “Allah tells us that women are a most beautiful creation of the Almighty. Women treat men like kings, they should be treated with respect.”

Konate and other participants said the abusive and unfair treatment of women in Islam comes more from culture and tradition than from religious dictates. Others said certain verses in the Quran sometimes are interpreted incorrectly or recklessly to justify the subordination and abuse of women.

Mouhamed Seifou, whom is the Imam of Masjid As-Salam, said the problem is that many Muslims wrongfully “mix culture and religion.”


“The Quran contains an entire chapter titled ‘Women’ and not ‘Men’. This chapter about women tells us how we are supposed to treat them with mercy and give them their rights,” he said. “It is important for Imams to do a lot of work educating the community with regards to what the rights of women and men are. The prophet (peace be upon him) used to help women cook. Anything a woman would do around the house, our prophet used to do.”

Participants agreed that the Qur’an is clear that men and women are to be treated equally, and that abuse of women is a clear violation of Islamic law. They agreed that the Qur’an is clear that women have an exalted and revered place in Islamic society and that anything other than that violates Islamic law.

Men who abuse, disrespect or subjugate women, therefore, must be better educated about true Islam and oriented on how their actions violate the intent and true meaning of the religion, participants said.

Participants agreed that courses on true Islam – combined with workshops on domestic violence and forums on cultural sensitivity and awareness – are key to tackling the problem of domestic violence.

It is only through awareness and enlightenment can the Islamic community be empowered to overcome sexual assault and gender-based violence, they said.

To read a full report on the roundtable discussion, visit [www.idvaac.com](http://www.idvaac.com). 



Several African Imams and other Islamic leaders joined IDVAAC at a roundtable discussion on domestic violence. Pictured here are: (standing, L-R): IDVAAC co-director Dr. Oliver Williams (USA); Dr. Bonita McGee (USA), Islamic Social Services Association of Maryland; Patricia Gonzales (Cuba), writer; Fatima Porgo (Burkina Faso), IDVAAC/Nerlow Afriki Inc.; Salim Hassimi Sombounou (Côte d'Ivoire) Aqsa-Salam. (sitting, L-R). Imam Muhammed (Ghana) Bronx, New York; Mariama Lami Kanla (Burkina Faso), Nerlow Afriki, New York; Imam Konaté Souleymane (Côte d'Ivoire), Harlem, New York



# Center a 'healing place' for domestic abuse victims

**L**OS ANGELES – Every nine seconds in the United States a woman is assaulted or beaten. It's a statistic that Vivian Thomas knows all too well.

For five years, she lived in terror, a prisoner of her boyfriend's moods and violent outbursts. Until one day, he went too far.

"I knew it was time to leave when I woke up in a pool of blood," Thomas said. "After enduring months of almost daily physical, psychological and emotional abuse... I retrieved the phone book and began looking for a shelter. I called five shelters but none of them had room for me. Finally, I came upon a name I couldn't even pronounce – Jenesse Center."

It was a phone call that changed her life, Thomas said.

Founded in 1980 by five black women who survived domestic violence, Jenesse Center has been a safe haven for families in crisis and a beacon of hope to those who have been traditionally underserved. With an emergency shelter, two transitional housing facilities, an education center, and three legal clinics, Jenesse is one of the largest providers of housing, services and programs in south Los Angeles.

Known for taking clients with a myriad of challenging issues, Jenesse has built an internationally recognized program by providing culturally relevant and comprehensive programs and services with the goal of ensuring that clients become self-sufficient, officials say.

"One of the keys to Jenesse's longevity is that we are a

community defined model that really looks at and understands the myriad of needs facing this community," said Jenesse's CEO, Karen Earl. "In the past three decades, we have managed to put together a team that can actualize and implement solutions that lead to real and lasting changes in the lives of families in crisis."

In order to give clients all they need to succeed, Jenesse transformed its housing facilities into self-contained learning communities where clients can focus on self-sufficiency. Sites contain classrooms and computer labs, children centers, clothing boutiques and, in some cases, even a salon.

But for Jenesse, shelter is just the beginning, officials say.

"What we do here goes far beyond shelter walls. It's about more than providing a bed to sleep in or some food to eat," Earl said. "We provide comprehensive services designed to meet clients where they are and take them to where they believe they need to be."

These services include vocational education, mental health services, parenting classes, legal assistance, health and wellness, and exposure to people and opportunities outside of their community.

The onsite legal clinic services about 2,500 community residents a year, giving clients immediate access to legal assistance. The "IMPACT LA" legal clinic offers face-to-face interaction with practicing attorneys and serves clients in the community dealing with immigration issues, housing issues and benefit issues.

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Jenesse Ambassador Halle Berry (center), celebrates with graduates of Jenesse's Career Transitions Center during a recent ceremony. The progressive center focuses on creating innovative techniques to help clients obtain careers that ensure their long-term self-sufficiency. (Courtesy photo).

# 'Listening sessions' explore ways to end abuse, FGM

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Presenters agreed that better coordination among service providers, a stronger commitment to advocacy, more training and education, improved outreach to affected populations, an increased number of women's support groups, and more culture and language-specific training for African immigrants all are key to reducing the level and amount of domestic violence, sexual assault and rape, female genital mutilation and trafficking among African immigrants populations.

The second session, held Oct. 2, addressed U.S. domestic efforts to prevent and respond to Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C).

The session – co-sponsored by the White House Council on Women and Girls, National Security Council Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights Directorate and the Department of Health and Human Services – was organized around four broad agenda topics: 1) what is working; 2) lessons learned; 3) gaps in knowledge, support and services; and 4) and opportunities for further collaboration between the U.S. government and civil society.

IDVAAC steering committee member Fatima Porgo, founder of Nerlow Afriki, said the good news is that campaigns designed to reveal FGM/C as a criminal act, to expose the health risks of the practice, to treat women with FGM/C, and to engage political activists about the problem appear to be working.

But she said gaps in support systems and services continue to make it tough to address the problem. To wit:

- Untrained health care or service providers about FGM/C lead to a re-victimization of women affected by FGM/C.

- Women affected by FGM/C are ill-informed about available services.
- Women who don't have insurance or have little money for health care continue to suffer.
- Uncoordinated effort between parents, victims, advocates, community activists and policy makers creates a disjointed approach to the problem.
- Lack of political will to engage, convert and heal victims, parents or intimate partners of victims.

Porgo said programs designed to hear the voices of women, men and families impacted by the practice; to build support systems for victims; to better understand, engage and offer alternatives to FGM/C practitioners and supporters; to support communities in overcoming their cultural, psychological beliefs about FGM/C; and to create more culturally specific solutions would be instrumental in changing the culture and, therefore, reducing the problem.

She also said that, when engaging immigrant communities, it is better not to start by qualifying the practice but rather by pointing out the health issues related to it, such as physical and mental (trauma) health. Then seek to create an understanding that this is gender-based violence and/or child abuse.

More resources assigned to mosques, churches, embassies and community-based organizations and groups also will help export the mission of education and cultural change, she said. ♦

Several presenters attended the African women's listening session June 19 at the Health and Human Services Department. Pictured here are (standing, L-R): Dr. Uju Obi (Nigeria); Veronica Saccob, MSW (Liberia); Grace Aron, MSCG (Uganda/Kenya); Dr. Oliver Williams, co-director/IDVAAC (USA); Fatima Kourouma, MPA (Cote d'Ivoire); Fatima Porgo, MSIA (Burkina Faso); Shawndell Dawson, senior program specialist, HHS (USA). (Sitting): Yvonne M'Bewe-Palmers, MSW (Zambia); Umi Hankins, co-director/IDVAAC (USA); Manna Teclemariam, MPH (Eritrea). The session was coordinated by Dr. Williams, Ms. Porgo and Ms. Dawson.





# Center a 'healing place' for domestic abuse victims

Continued from page 9

All of the center's programs are designed to mitigate the impact of domestic violence, one of the most chronically underreported crimes in the nation.

The recent videotape of Baltimore Raven's running back Ray Rice knocking out his then-fiancée (now wife) in an elevator in Atlantic City only underscores how uncomfortable many people are talking about domestic violence – especially African Americans, says Alice Brown, a case manager at the Jenesse Center Emergency Shelter.

"I've seen so many posts about how we need to just leave Ray Rice alone, that it's just a distraction from the 'real issues,' such as what is going on in Ferguson, or the plight of black men in America in general – as if we cannot multitask and be outraged over all the types of violence being perpetrated on the innocent," Brown said.

"Do we think so little of black women that their issues don't matter? Do we know that domestic violence affects black women on a much larger scale than it does any other race? Do we care?"

Brown said she believes that a normalization of dysfunctional relationships perpetrates a cycle of abuse because it makes it tough for people to understand what a healthy relationship looks like.

Jenesse client Dana Oliver says she can attest to that reality.

"I never even realized that I was being abused. He was

so mean to me, called me names, cheated on me and made me feel lower than dirt," said Oliver, 21. "Now, with everything I have learned at Jenesse, I would say, 'You can't do that, it's abuse'... But at the time, I thought that's just what relations are like."

Meanwhile, Vivian Thomas – who sought safety after waking up in a pool of blood – admits that it was tough to leave her abusive relationship. But it was necessary if she was going to survive, she says.

"When I made that call to Jenesse and asked for help, it changed my life for the better," Thomas said. "Speaking up is the first step – but it's also the hardest."

*The names of Vivian Thomas and Dana Oliver were changed to protect their identities. For more information about Jenesse Center, visit [www.jenesse.org](http://www.jenesse.org).* ♦



Jenesse CEO Karen Earl (left) poses with Jenesse Ambassador Halle Berry during the organization's Silver Rose Gala in 2009. The gala is part of a weekend event that celebrates the people, sponsors and donors who make Jenesse's work possible. (Courtesy photo).

## 'Tightrope' book review *Continued from page 7*

"But in my reflections, I quickly realized that I could not adequately sort out the tensions, dilemmas and importantly, the contradictions of our current racial reality – where we have the murder of a powerless unarmed black teen, Trayvon Martin, standing alone side the powerful imagery of the first African American president, Barack Obama – in the absence of drawing upon our sociopolitical history to guide me and in the absence of my own personal story to give texture to this complicated narrative of how we have and continue as a nation to balance on a racial tightrope."

Longtime Democratic strategist Donna Brazile called *Tightrope* "a compelling investigation of who we are and who we hope to become in the Age of Obama."

"Garfield combines her moving personal experiences in the Jim Crow South with a seasoned sociologist's insights on America's race evolution," said Brazile, a commentator for CNN and ABC and former campaign manager for 2000 presidential candidate Al Gore.

"By challenging us on where we have been and where we are on race relations, Garfield shows us the path forward to a more

inclusive national community."

Harvard University sociology professor Matthew Desmond said *Tightrope* may provide a glimpse into to America's racial future.

"Race in America swells with ironies and tensions. Why is racial inequality shrinking in some areas but expanding in others? How is it that the same nation that incarcerates so many black men also elected Barack Obama as president?" Desmond asks. "In this lucid and smart book that blends biography with history, Gail Garfield reveals how we got here and where we may be heading next."

*Gail Garfield is associate professor of sociology at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York. As an advocate for poor women and children, Garfield has been active in efforts to reshape social policies and practices in the areas of child welfare, public housing, foster care, drug treatment for women, and violence against women.*

Besides *Tightrope*, she's written two other books: "*Through Our Eyes: African American Men's Experiences of Race, Gender, and Violence*" and "*Knowing What We Know: African American Women's Experiences of Violence and Violation*." ♦



By Rev. Traci Jackson-Antoine  
Guest Columnist

BOSTON – Safe Havens Interfaith Partnership Against Domestic Violence (Safe Havens) is Boston's lead organization on domestic violence and faith.

The alliance has been working in Boston's African American community for more than five years, and is honored to join the Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community's (IDVAAC) African American Domestic Peace Project (AADPP).

Founded in 1991 by Rev. Dr. Anne Marie Hunter, Safe Haven's mission is to strengthen the capacity of diverse faith communities to play a role in a community-wide effort to respond effectively to domestic violence. Working as a bridge between faith communities and social service providers, Safe Havens provides education, resources, advocacy and

## GUEST COLUMN

# Safe Havens is 'bridging the gap' in Boston

technical assistance.

Safe Havens is culturally responsive to African American faith communities and has well-established connections with African American church leaders.

For example, in 2007 and 2009, Safe Havens hosted Mother's Day events, which brought together local pastors' wives and female clergy to begin a conversation about domestic violence. These were consciousness-raising events that created opportunities for education and engagement.

In October 2012, Safe Havens gathered clergy and service providers to honor National Domestic Violence Awareness Month. In August 2013, IDVAAC's co-director, Dr. Oliver Williams, joined me for an event entitled, "Speaking of Faith."

This event brought together more than 80 participants for the screening and discussion of IDVAAC's "Speaking of Faith" video. The video showcases clergy from around the country who speak of their own experiences and what they have done in their congregations to respond to domestic violence. Following this event, Dr. Williams invited Safe Havens to lead Boston's AADPP-Team Boston.

Project partners include Darnell Williams, President and CEO of the Urban League of Eastern Massachusetts; LaTeisha Adams, Sergeant Detective, Boston Police Department, and Rev. Gary Adams, Chaplain and Faith-Based Liaison to the Commissioner, Boston Police Department.

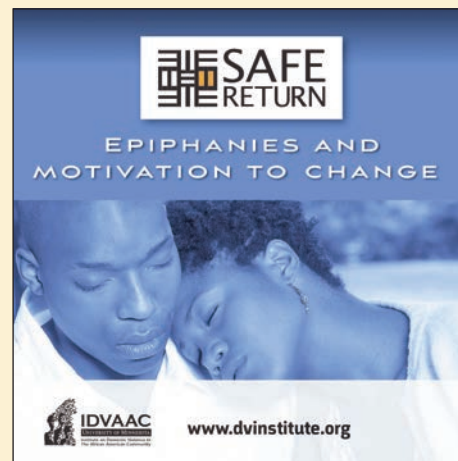
In collaboration with IDVAAC, the AADPP provides support for outreach and consciousness-raising within African American churches.

In September 2013, Darnell Williams and Gary Adams joined me in a three-day training session led by IDVAAC.

Since then, monthly newsletters, conference calls and radio blogs have allowed the Boston partners to remain connected with the other AADPP cities across the U.S. and to raise awareness in Boston area churches about domestic violence in the African American community.

My motto for this unique initiative is simple: "No one person can do this work alone, we are better together."

*Rev. Traci Jackson-Antoine is director of Boston's African American Domestic Peace Project.*







By Sherina James  
Guest Columnist

TACOMA – As a liaison between victim-survivors in the community and Washington State Department of Corrections, I have seen and heard firsthand how prisoner re-entry affects our community. The Washington State Department of Corrections Victim Services Program has established a partnership with IDVAAC and the AADPP to look closely at these issues.

Statistics show that African American women experience higher rates of domestic violence, but are least likely to access community services. In fact, all African Americans face a unique set of challenges related to this issue.

Studies show that about four out of every 10 African American women have experienced rape, physical violence and stalking by an intimate partner in their

## GUEST COLUMN

# Coordination key to ending domestic abuse

*Ms. James contributed to this article in her personal capacity. The views expressed do not necessarily represent the views of the Washington State Department of Corrections or the Pierce County Commission Against Domestic Violence*

lifetime – about 35 percent higher than that of white females, and about 2.5 times the rate of women of other races. African American women also experience higher rates of domestic violence homicide.

African American youth also are at risk. The Centers for Disease Control reports that Black youth are overrepresented as victims of teen dating violence. The reality of racism, fear of police response and mistrust of the criminal legal system are keeping the voices of African American victims in the margins.

I am reminded of Oprah Winfrey's popular refrain and monthly column "What I Know for Sure" from her magazine. As an advocate working to lessen the impact of domestic violence in ALL communities I know for sure:

We cannot END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE without discussing this serious, deadly issue in our homes, places we recreate, sister and brother circles, churches, faith groups, schools, and in our fellowship and affinity groups.

I know for sure that communities of

color need solutions to hold perpetrators of violence accountable that are not limited to the criminal legal system.

I know for sure we cannot solve this problem by failing to hold perpetrators of violence accountable.

I know for sure that domestic violence does not stop just because someone is arrested or incarcerated. Verbal and emotional abuse often continues after arrest and is equally as harmful as physical abuse.

I know for sure we can expand this movement and effect change best by including men's voices and ideas when developing strategies to end domestic and sexual violence.

I know for sure that despite what we may think, children see and hear everything and they need us to model how to treat each other with respect.

*Sherina James is a victim liaison with the Washington State Department of Corrections and Chairperson for the Pierce County Commission Against Domestic Violence.* ♦



# Forum targets abuse among immigrants

*Continued from page 1*

“Providing services to a broad community means we need to do the kind of research and provide the kind of cultural sensitivity that makes people feel treated and served, for sure, but also feel understood, loved and embraced.

“If we’re serious about developing initiatives that meet the needs of Africans and descendants of Africa in the U.S., we must develop a greater understanding and respect for customs, culture, ethnicity and history,” he said. “That’s the only way we’ll be able to take our level of engagement and effectiveness to the next level.”

“At the end of the day, we’re stronger together than we are apart,” Williams said. “We believe this initiative will go a long way toward helping to create healing among suffering and struggling people and creating healthier communities across black America.

“We need to find a way to heal our community – and reducing domestic violence is a critical element of that healing.”

The roundtable proposed four key questions to service providers dealing with immigrant populations:

- Women from immigrant populations may be dealing with several challenges beyond domestic violence, including sex trafficking, sexual assault, rape and genital mutilation – how do you deal with those intersecting traumas and what can be done to help these women heal?
- What are some of the challenges that mainstream and African American organizations face when it comes to supporting African and Caribbean women who are victims of violence? How do we provide better support for these women that takes all of their challenges into consideration?
- What do domestic violence programs need to know in working with immigrant women facing abuse? What do they need to do to serve these women in the best way possible?

**“It’s important to recognize cultural and language differences when working with immigrant communities, service providers agreed. Words and concepts like “domestic violence,” “shelter,” “female genital mutilation” and “mental health” may have no meaning in certain African cultures or may have different connotations and meanings when it comes to immigrant women.”**

**— Lui Abdulle of the Somali Women Association of Portland, Oregon**

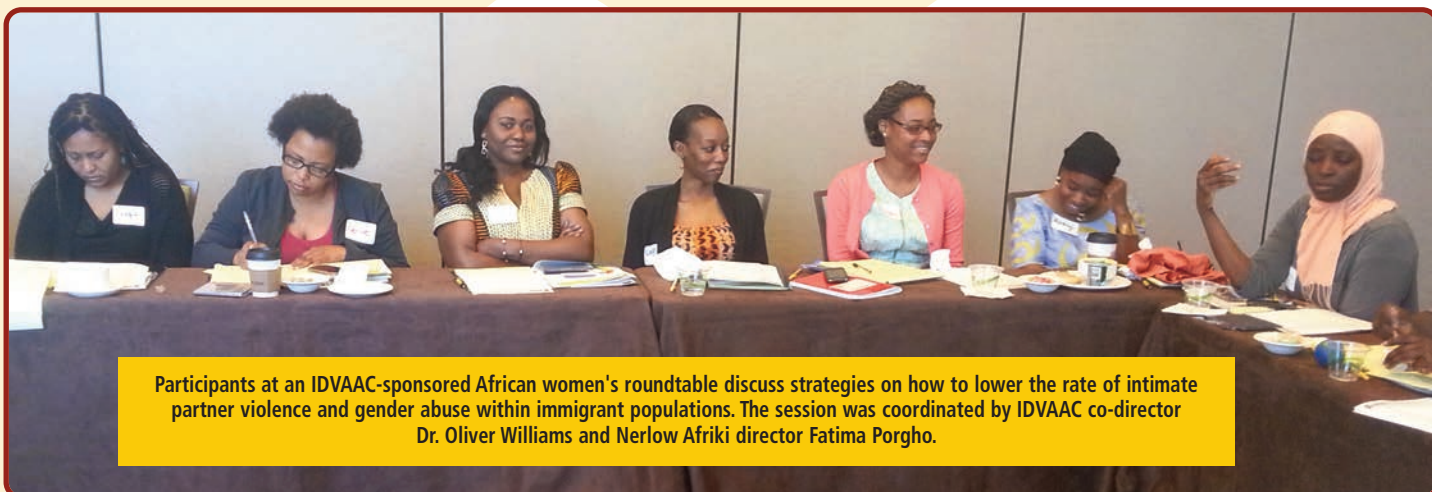
- How do we build bridges between African service providers and mainstream and African American service providers to better serve immigrant communities when it comes to domestic violence?

Grace Aron, a Brooklyn, N.Y. activist, said domestic violence organizations must take time to understand the social realities facing immigrant women.

“For most of the women we’re working with, we’re the first people that they’ve been able to talk to about this or any other kind of victimization that have been supportive to them,” she said. “At intake, their current and past traumas must be addressed because you can’t address someone’s needs holistically if you don’t talk about it.”

Manna Techlemariam of the African Community Health Institute in San Jose, California, said it’s also important to recognize that, in addition to abuse, many immigrant women also are dealing with the trauma associated with adjusting to new surroundings.

For a recently relocated family, the stress of learning a new language, adapting to a new culture, finding jobs and helping the children adjust to new schools can be very stressful and can lead to violent conflict, Techlemariam said.



Participants at an IDVAAC-sponsored African women's roundtable discuss strategies on how to lower the rate of intimate partner violence and gender abuse within immigrant populations. The session was coordinated by IDVAAC co-director Dr. Oliver Williams and Nerlow Afriki director Fatima Porgbo.



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*Assembling the Pieces* is published by the Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community (IDVAAC). The publication is written and edited by Dr. Oliver J. Williams and Gregory J. Huskisson and designed by Derek Brigham. The University of Minnesota is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to its programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status or sexual orientation. This publication can be made available in alternative formats for people with disabilities. Direct requests to the Institute 1-877-643-8222 toll free or 612-624-5357 locally. *Assembling the Pieces* is made possible from a grant from The Administration for Children and Family, Family and Youth Services Bureau U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

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While increased awareness of domestic violence can lead to better services for many Americans, accessing services can be challenging for African immigrant women, partly due to differences in language, culture and custom, said participants at an IDVAAC-sponsored African women's roundtable discussion June 20-21 in Washington, D.C.

**"For a recently relocated family, the stress of learning a new language, adapting to a new culture, finding jobs and helping the children adjust to new schools can be very stressful and can lead to violent conflict."**

**— Manna Techlemariam of the African Community Health Institute  
in San Jose, California**

"There are a lot of stressors that are connected to the pressures the family is under and this can lead to domestic violence," she said. "A lack of adjustment can cause stress, which can lead to more violence. When all of these stressors start adding up, it can create a difficult situation in the family."

But discovering the triggers for domestic violence won't help if service providers don't ask the right questions during the intake process, said Yvonne Mbewe-Palmer of the African Service Committee in New York. Because advocates often base their intake questions on what interests their funders, questions regarding domestic violence might not make the list, she said.

Service providers, therefore, sometimes have to be creative – and assertive – to fully serve client needs, Mbewe-Palmer said. In her case, that required going to her supervisor and asking to add a section that addressed domestic violence to her organization's intake forms.

"We had to create an addendum to the

intake form," she said. "We don't report [domestic violence and other traumas] because it's not a priority to our funders. But we need to address what's happening to our clients."

It's also important to recognize cultural and language differences when working with immigrant communities, service providers agreed. Words and concepts like "domestic violence," "shelter," "female genital mutilation" and "mental health" may have no meaning in certain African cultures or may have different connotations and meanings when it comes to immigrant women.

For example, leaving an abusive relationship isn't an automatic solution for immigrant women who are already having problems trying to find a job, find a place to live or learn to drive in a new country.

They're more interested in getting help for the entire family than they are in getting away from their abuser, said Lui Abdulle of the Somali Women Association of Portland, Oregon.

*Continued on page 17*

# Activists meet to advance domestic peace project

*Continued from page 3*

– to help reduce domestic and community violence. Doing so helps to collaborate community efforts, thereby expanding the reach of each AADPP site, Williams said.

“Developing independent strategies serves as an organizational and motivational tool while giving local activists an opportunity to develop culturally specific and community-specific solutions and establish relationships and partnerships that could help address the problem,” Williams said.

AADPP activists also discussed how they could develop ways to better partner with faith-based organizations to reduce incidents of domestic violence across the country, Williams said.


That subject was the topic of a separate session in Oakland on Oct. 31 entitled “The Faith Community’s Response To Domestic Violence,” Williams said.

“Our intent was to develop a collaboration between domestic violence programs and African American churches to engage victims of domestic violence – women and children – as well as engage men who batter,” Williams said.

“We addressed how churches can be better educated about domestic violence, how they can respond better to battered women and battered women’s organizations, and how they can be better prepared to promote violence prevention or to make referrals for counseling or shelter, when necessary,” he said.

That session – attended by several civic, political and religious stakeholders – also addressed how churches can examine passages of the Bible that sometimes are misinterpreted to suggest that men should rule over women, Williams said. That misinterpretation sometimes leads to a rationalization that men should dominate women, he said, and frequently is a gateway to abuse and violence.

“Sometimes, men misinterpret parts of the Bible as permission to control women by any means necessary, including violence,” Williams said. “We need to teach them that the natural consequence of conflict is not violence – it’s conflict resolution.”

*For more information about the African-American Domestic Peace Project, contact IDVAAC co-director Dr. Oliver J. Williams at 1-877 NIDVAAC (1-877-643-8222).* 

## ‘A coordinated assault on domestic violence’

The African-American Domestic Peace Project was developed by IDVAAC three years ago to develop a coordinated, national assault on domestic violence.

It’s overall objective is to develop a public, community education and mobilization strategy to effectively address and respond to incidents of domestic violence in member cities across the U.S.

It is a critical tool in linking disconnected elements of the domestic violence community and in identifying best practice initiatives that are making a difference around the country. It also provides a built-in research mechanism, which helps to better understand the problem and, therefore, develop more effective solutions.

### The project’s objectives are simple:

- Educate the public and mobilize local communities around community violence.
- Reach out to the community, in our own voice, about specific problems around domestic abuse and community violence.
- Network with civic, political and religious stakeholders to put domestic violence on the agenda in our communities.
- Establish an interactive learning community.

AADPP also works with IDVAAC to produce newsletters, video blogs and webinars designed to profile community activists and highlight effective programs in their respective communities.

*For more information about the African-American Domestic Peace Project, contact IDVAAC co-director Dr. Oliver J. Williams at 1-877 NIDVAAC (1-877-643-8222).*



# Action, not just reaction, key to reducing abuse

*Continued from page 2*

For more than 25 years, Sheen has allegedly assaulted, threatened, harassed, abused and – in one incident – shot women. His alleged abuses, however, are not seen as dangerous or as unacceptable. No one has asked him to step away from his career; nobody has fought to get him off the air. No one seems as outraged about his behavior in the same way as they seem to be, for example, about Ray Rice.

We know, too, that there are dozens of other white celebrities who've been accused, charged or convicted of assault or abuse – big-name celebrities like Mel Gibson, Sean Penn, Nicholas Cage, Steven Seagal, Mickey Rourke, Gary Busey, Christian Slater and James Caan. Yet, they rarely are put on blast as much as black men. And the consequences for them are never quite the same.

Media bias notwithstanding, however, facts cannot be refuted. We have a problem with violence in our community that we must address. Hiding our heads in the sand does nothing to solve the problem. And not solving it prevents us from cutting out the cancer that's infecting our relationships, our families and our communities.

Finally, we have to mount a sustained effort against sexual assault that extends far beyond the walls of the domestic violence community. And that effort should not rely on the alleged antics of people like Bill Cosby, Charlie Sheen, Ray Rice or Mel Gibson to create or maintain momentum.

**"We have to mount a sustained effort against sexual assault that extends far beyond the walls of the domestic violence community."**

**— Dr. Oliver Williams**

Speaking recently about the accusations against Bill Cosby, President Obama said "it's important to not focus on one case" when it comes to the broader issue of sexual assault and domestic violence.

Obama said while his administration is dedicated to raising awareness and passing legislation to prevent sexual assault, it also is committed to "changing minds and culture not only to make it safe for those who have been assaulted to come forward, but to also change the mindset of men, particularly our young men who are coming up, so they understand no means no."

In September, the White House launched an awareness campaign called "It's On Us" urging young men to take a greater role in helping to prevent sexual violence. College sports conferences, music television networks, and video game consoles agreed to air advertisements featuring top celebrities encouraging young men to prevent assaults and to intervene when they see domestic violence.

That's how we're going to change the paradigm. Not by spontaneously convulsing in the community – and in the media – every time some celebrity is accused of abuse; but by systematically changing the culture. And by getting men to realize that, as President Obama put it, "Respect for women and individuals is what makes you strong."

Now, that's a campaign we should all seek to join. ♦

## African Women's Forum

*Continued from page 15*

"You can't say domestic violence to these women, you have to say family support," Abdulle said. "When we hear domestic violence, we think of separation of the husband and wife. Family support makes us think that you're looking at the issue from both sides."

"The American system is totally different and it can be a little shocking. There needs to be time to adjust," she added. "The family doesn't want to be separated. It just needs additional support."

Rev. Daniel Mwangi, senior pastor of the United Central SDA Church in Brooklyn Park, Minnesota, said cultural dynamics play a big role in how women – and men – approach the issue of domestic violence. For many African immigrants, the idea of being able to stand up for yourself is a foreign concept, he said.

"Family dynamics play a part," Mwangi said. "When a man beats a woman, the culture says that's okay. The elders tell the

woman to obey. Church leaders tell the woman to submit. Her mother tells her that she's been dealing with that for her whole life and her sister says she's going through the same thing. She thinks that's the way it should be."

"But when we come to America, we hear about empowerment, liberation and freedom," Mwangi continued. "But the way we deal with it doesn't solve the [domestic violence] issue. We need to create awareness. People need to understand that you don't have to be a slave in your own home. You can speak up."

To read a full report on the summit, visit [www.idvaac.com](http://www.idvaac.com). ♦



# Just the Facts

- On average, nearly 20 people per minute are victims of physical violence by an intimate partner in the United States. During one year, this equates to more than 10 million women and men.
- 1 in 3 women and 1 in 4 men have experienced some form of physical violence by an intimate partner within their lifetime.
- 1 in 5 women and 1 in 7 men have experienced severe physical violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime.
- One in three adolescents in the U.S. is a victim of physical, sexual, emotional or verbal abuse from a dating partner, a figure that far exceeds rates of other types of youth violence.
- 1 in 7 women and 1 in 18 men have experienced stalking victimization during their lifetime in which

they felt very fearful or believed that they or someone close to them would be harmed or killed.

- On a typical day, there are more than 20,000 phone calls placed to domestic violence hotlines nationwide.
- In domestic violence homicides, women are six times more likely to be killed when there is a gun in the house.
- Intimate partner violence accounts for 15% of all violent crime.
- Intimate partner violence is most common among women between the ages of 18-24.

For more information, contact IDVAAC co-director Dr. Oliver J. Williams at:

**1-877 NIDVAAC (1-877-643-8222).**



**next  
issue**

IDVAAC co-director Dr. Oliver Williams pens his final message as co-editor of *Assembling The Pieces* • An insightful review of the powerful anthology "And He Restoreth My Soul," which takes a poignant look at sexual violence and spiritual intervention • Podcast topics for download on IDVAAC Talk Radio • Domestic Peace Project growing in scope and impact

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