

COMMUNITIES OF COLOR AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE 101

Annual Rural Women's Health Symposium



The Governor's Office
of Youth, Faith
and Family

ACESDV'S MISSION

Our mission is to end sexual and domestic violence in Arizona by **dismantling oppression** and **promoting equity** among all people.



“WHAT HAPPENS TO ONE OF US, HAPPENS TO ALL OF US”: COMMUNITIES OF COLOR AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE 101

The project was supported by Subgrantee No.15J-OVW-21-GG-00553-STOP awarded by the state administering office for the Office of Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice's STOP Formula Grant Program. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the state or the U.S. Department of Justice.

Community Guidelines

Being respectful and present

Gender inclusive language

This presentation may contain information that is uncomfortable to hear, watch or read

This training was developed using current research and statistical data, which may not always be completely accurate

Please be good to yourself



Some Disclaimers:

**We may not all be a part of all these
discussed communities**

This is an educational opportunity

**Recognizing that nuance is a part of
our experiences navigating through
the world we live in**

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO LEARN MORE..

- SWIWC
 - Statewide domestic and violence coalition serving Indigenous communities all throughout the state of Arizona
 - <http://www.swiwc.org/>
- Poder in Action
 - Nonprofit organization in Phoenix, AZ that strives to support and uplift communities of color through public policy and leadership
 - <https://www.poderinaction.org/>
- Punjabi Seva
 - Volunteer program that provides wellness support, advocacy, and community outreach to the Indian-American and Sikh community
 - <https://www.punjabiseva.com/>
- Black Alliance & Social Empowerment (BASE) Arizona
 - Collective organization created to empower the Black community in Arizona through promoting solidarity and resilience
 - <https://www.basearizona.org/>
- Arizona Asian American Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander (AZ AANHPI) for Equity
 - Statewide organization created to help build power and community-directed organizing for the Asian American Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander community
 - <https://aanhpi.org/>
- Chicanos Por La Causa
 - Advocacy organization originally created to empower and assist the Mexican-American community and today provides supportive services to people of all backgrounds
 - <https://cplc.org/>
- Greater Phoenix Urban League
 - Nonprofit organization serving minority families and underserved groups in the Greater Phoenix area through housing, education, and advocacy
 - <https://www.gphxul.org/>



Road Map

- Identify the intersections of race, racism, and sexual violence
- Understand the history of sexual violence in communities of color, as well as the connection between marginalized identities and victimization
- Recognize the various traumatic impacts and barriers that survivors of color may experience in seeking services and support
- Reflect on the ways in which we can reduce communal harm towards survivors and highlight empowerment through best practices via recognizing resilience and community supports as potential steps towards healing



THE BASICS (KIND OF): RACE, IDENTITY, AND INTERSECTIONALITY

Oppression is...

The use of power to **marginalize, silence, or otherwise subordinate** one social group, often to further privilege the oppressing and/or dominant group or person.

Oppression Can Be:

Sexism, ableism, ageism, classism, homophobia, xenophobia, **racism**



What does Anti- Oppression mean?

- Actively fight to dismantle oppression
- Helping survivors get what they need to thrive
- Not just enough to be aware of your biases, we have to continuously be **against** it and diligently work to prevent it



Intersectionality

The term “intersectionality” was first created in 1989 by legal and academic scholar Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw to describe how the **overlapping of human circumstance** complicates the experience of discrimination.

Intersectionality impacts the way a person experiences the world and the way the world perceives them too.

For social justice movements, including the movement to end violence, intersectionality reminds us that if we do not think broadly and holistically about the interplay of multiple identities, then **our movements cannot succeed.**

Dominant

Non-dominant

White

US citizen

Adult

People of Color

Child/Older adult

Financially Stable

Jewish/Muslim/Buddhist/Hindu

Cisgender

Man

Dominant groups are groups of people in power. They are often considered the default group or "**normal.**"

Lesbian/Gay/
Bisexual/Queer

Woman

Trans

Heterosexual/Straight

Immigrant

Able-bodied

Undocumented

Person with disabilities

Christian

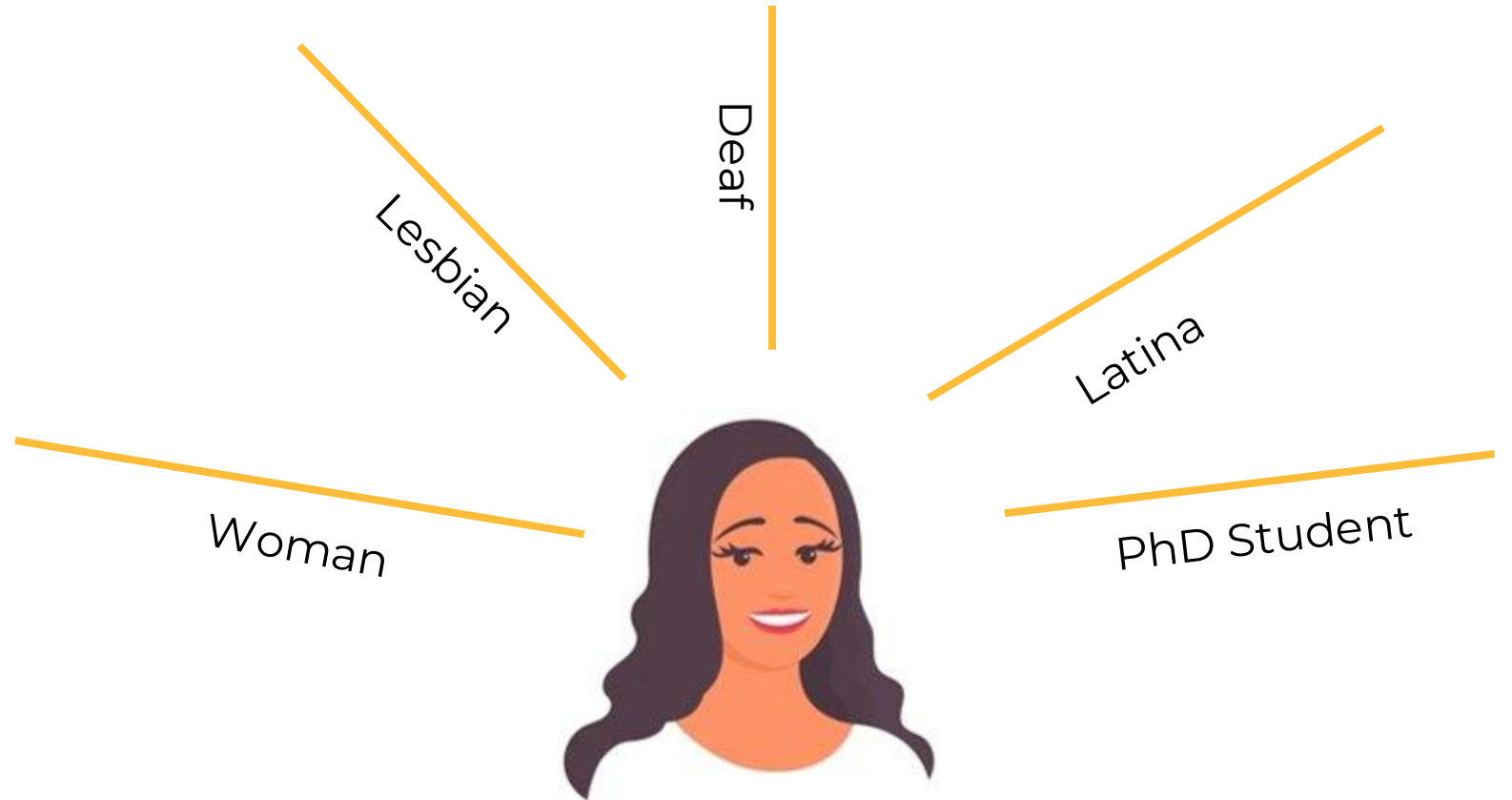
College educated

High school
educated/dropout

Working class

Intersections

- Gender identity
- Age
- Sexuality
- Education/work status
- Race
- Immigration status
- Culture
- Religion
- Economic status
- Ethnicity
- Ability/Disability
- Language spoken
- More



**“THERE IS NO SUCH THING
AS A SINGLE-ISSUE
STRUGGLE BECAUSE WE
DO NOT LIVE SINGLE-
ISSUE LIVES.”
-AUDRE LORDE, 1982**



SOME TERMS YOU'VE HEARD BEFORE (OR HAVEN'T)

- BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color)
- POC (People of Color OR Person of Color)
- WOC (Woman/Women of Color)
- MOC (Man/Men of Color)
- Marginalized Communities
- CoC (Communities of Color)
- Racial/Ethnic Minorities
- Minorities
- Underserved Populations (more common in healthcare/clinical settings)
- Non-white*
- Colored*

What is the correct term to use???

WHAT IS RACE?

RACE AND IDENTITY

- Definition: A social category used to group together people who share genetic characteristics and physical features
- Divides human populations into groups across nations, regions, and the world
- The ways in which race is determined = complicated/messy
 - Sometimes presumed to be based on social factors or biological traits (such as skin tone, hair texture, genetic ancestry)
- American Census Categories: Black, White, Asian, American Native or Alaska Native
- Brazil: Over 30 categories, more than 100 terms that are commonly used to refer to a person's race
- **RACE IS A SOCIAL CONSTRUCT**
- Race is **not** rooted in biology, but it does have very real-life consequences:
 - Has been historically and contemporarily used to justify and reinforce harms committed against people of color to maintain racial hierarchies–
 - Slavery, colonization, forced sterilization, state violence

RACISM

- Racism: Prejudice or discrimination by an individual, community, or institution against a person or people on the basis of their membership in a particular racial or ethnic group
 - Racial profiling, SB1070 – “Show me your papers”
- Anti-Black Racism: A term for a specific form of racism directed towards Black people and Black culture
 - Maternal Mortality Rate - Black women are 3-4 times more likely to die from pregnancy related causes than white women
- Xenophobia: Dislike, fear, hatred, and prejudice towards people from other countries
 - Poking fun at someone’s speaking ability or accent – “Go back to your country”

COLORISM

- Practice of racial discrimination within group of people of the same race/ethnic background, which results in the preference to those of a lighter skin tone/features and unfair treatment towards members with darker complexions
- Emerged throughout class origins in various countries and evolved through colonization as a form of hierarchical-based violence
- Effects are still seen today



Research has linked colorism to smaller incomes, lower marriage rates, longer incarceration terms, and fewer job prospects for people with darker complexions

Microaggressions

- A term used for commonplace verbal, behavioral or environmental slights, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative attitudes towards a marginalized group
- Assuming someone is not from the US based on their name or skin color
- “You speak English really well.”
- “You are so articulate.”
- Mistaking a person of color as a service worker
- A person of color being followed around the store
- Touching a person’s hair without permission
- Refusing to correctly pronounce a non-English name; attempting to anglicize someone else’s name because it’s “too difficult to say.”





TRAUMA AND COMMUNITIES OF COLOR

**“TRAUMA IS PERHAPS THE MOST
AVOIDED, IGNORED, BELITTLED,
DENIED, MISUNDERSTOOD,
AND UNTREATED CAUSE OF
HUMAN SUFFERING.”**

Peter Levine

TRAUMA

Trauma is a widespread, harmful and costly public health problem. It occurs as a result of violence, abuse, neglect, loss, disaster, war and other emotionally harmful experiences.

Trauma has no boundaries with regard to age, gender, socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, geography or sexual orientation.



ARE THESE EXAMPLES TRAUMA?

- Child maltreatment
- Witnessing violence
- Interpersonal victimization
- Terrorism/war
- Natural disasters
- Loss of loved ones
- Accidents
- Medical Trauma

NO

- Homelessness
- Hunger
- Bullying
- Disability
- Being in the foster care system
- Abandonment
- Exposed to substance use by caregivers

TRAUMA IS NOT THE EVENT.

**IT IS HOW THE BODY REACTS TO
THE EVENT.**



Trauma

Is the lasting **emotional response** that results from living through a distressing event.

COMMUNITY TRAUMA

- Historical Trauma (see: “Exterminate All the Brutes”)
 - Colonization, slavery, segregation, military/overseas occupations
- Immigration Trauma
 - Process of immigration
 - Forced assimilation
- Systemic Racism and Xenophobia
 - Anti-immigrant fear mongering
- Mistreatment & Oppression
- Sexism
- Systemic Discrimination
- Poverty
- Intergenerational Trauma
 - First generation trauma
- Violence
 - Domestic violence, sexual violence, structural violence (see: Paul Farmer, 2016)
- Institutional systems
 - Healthcare, legal, financial institutions



INSTITUTIONAL TRAUMA & HARM

Actions

- Historic use of inequitable health care policies
- Enforcing segregation and Jim Crow laws, criminalization of substance use that disproportionately impacts people of color
- Taking lands away by force from Indigenous peoples
- Barring students of color from attending and receiving a higher education
- Refusing to give out loans to help purchase a home or provide financial assistance
- Passing acts of legislation that bar certain communities from entering the United States (Chinese Exclusion Act, Muslim Ban)

Impacts

- Minimized, belittled, or blamed patients for their medical concerns
- Neighborhoods occupied by communities of color are simultaneously over-policed when it comes to surveillance/social control, unjustified arrests/severely high sentences in corrections
- Lack of educational wealth in community in receiving higher opportunities for success
- Significantly lower net worth and home ownership rates
- Further social alienation (a "danger" to society and ostracized or unwanted)

IMPACT OF TRAUMA & TRAUMA RESPONSES

- Physical impact
 - Chronic pain
 - Fatigue/Exhaustion
 - Gastrointestinal disorders
 - Migraines and other frequent headaches
 - Avoiding healthcare
- Psychological impact
 - Shame/Blame
 - Irritability
 - Emotional numbness
 - Trouble sleeping/Nightmares
 - Hypervigilance
 - Depression/Fear
 - Guilt
- Mental Impact:
 - Difficulty concentrating/making decisions
 - Disassociation
 - Avoidance
 - Overworking
 - Detachment
 - Imposter Syndrome
 - Anxiety
- Bury it deep inside and keep moving forward



A close-up photograph of a dandelion seed head. A bright orange flame is directed at the seed head from the upper left, causing it to glow and release a cloud of tiny seeds that are being blown away by the heat. The background is dark, making the light from the flame and the seeds stand out.

INTERSECTION OF RACE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

“SEXUAL VIOLENCE IS NOT A RACE NEUTRAL ACT”

"Racism and violence
have long been
intricately linked, feeding
off each other like rivaling
wildfires."

-Amanda Kippert



SEXUAL VIOLENCE

**Sexual
Exploitation**

Rape

Sexual Coercion

Sexual Harassment

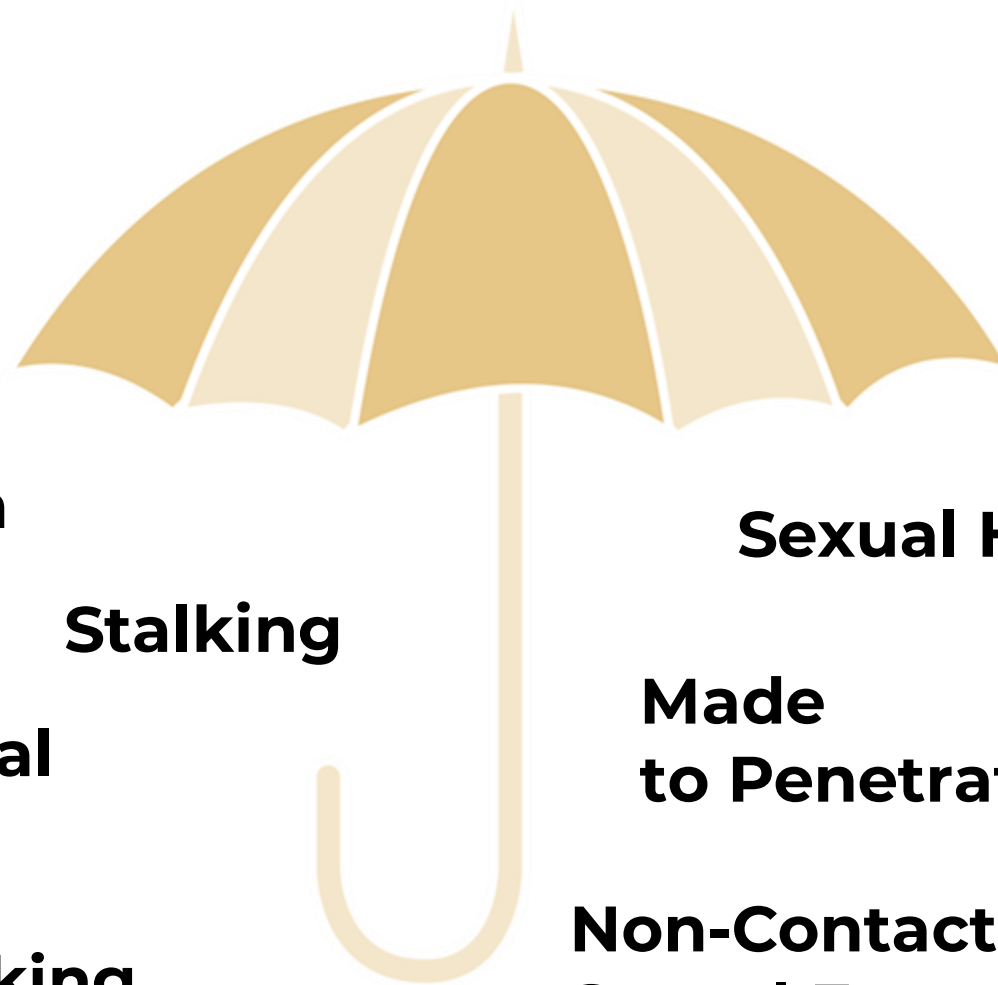
Stalking

**Made
to Penetrate**

**Unwanted Sexual
Contact**

**Non-Contact Unwanted
Sexual Experiences**

Sex Trafficking



SEXUAL VIOLENCE

- An umbrella term that refers to a variety of sexual acts that were unwanted or without consent.
 - Someone's bodily autonomy has been taken from them
 - Sexual violence = power and control over someone's else body
 - Through use of violence, threat, coercion
- No only one form of sexual violence
 - Ex: Sexual harassment, forced penetration, rape
- Therefore, Sexual Violence is a form of oppression
- "Silence, Power and Inequality: An Intersectional Approach to Sexual Violence" (Armstrong et al, 2018)

“ANY ASSUMPTION THAT SEXUAL VIOLENCE IS A UNIVERSAL EXPERIENCE INSULTS THE SPECIFICITIES OF INDIVIDUAL HISTORIES. TERROR IS ALWAYS LOCAL.”

Scholar Joanna Bourke

WHAT WE KNOW

The history into the developing of this continent we currently live on was built on systemic violence, power and enforced social hierarchies

Students of color also face higher risk of sexual assault victimization on college campuses (AAU, 2022)

AZ: Collected hospital data shows that while patients of color do not appear to ER as often as white patients, the ones who do often show up with more graphic injuries (ADHS, 2023)

- More than half of of Native American women (56%) have reported experiencing sexual violence in their lifetime and are 9 times out 10 assaulted by a non-Native individual (NCIC, 2022)
- 28% of Indigenous men have reported experiencing some form of sexual violence during their lifetime (NIOH, 2016)
- 35% of Black women have reported experiencing some form of contact sexual violence during their lifetime (NISVS, 2017)
- For every Black woman that reports their assault, there are at least 15 Black women who do not report theirs (NISVS, 2017)
- Married Hispanic/Latinas are less likely than other women to immediately define their experiences of forced sex as rape and terminate their relationships; some view sex as a marital obligation (Bergen, 1996).
- 19% of Hispanic men have reported contact sexual violence (Smith et al, 2017)
- 77% of Latina women in the workforce have expressed sexual harassment as a major issue (SPLC, 2009)
- Of API women, 23% experienced some form of contact sexual violence, 10% experienced completed or attempted rape, and 21% had non-contact unwanted sexual experiences during their lifetime (NISVS, 2017)
- 56% of Filipinas and 64% of Indian and Pakistani women had experienced sexual violence by an intimate partner in a study of 143 domestic violence survivors (2011)

MYTHS, MEDIA, AND OBJECTIFICATION

- All of these tropes (created and shaped by historical roots) justify victim blaming and committing sexual violence against communities of color –
 - Colonization of the Americas led to the systemic assault of Indigenous and Hispanic/Latina women = “sexual temptations”, along with other harmful tropes
 - U.S. Military occupation of Asian countries overseas created a rise in local sex industries in which people were exploited = Fetishization and exoticizing of Asian and Pacific Islander women as obedient servants
 - Exploitation and continuous forms of sexual violence on Black women during and after slavery as a weapon of control = Hypersexualized experiences of misogynoir
 - These tropes don’t exist in a vacuum – they often perpetuate sexual assault
- Media representation, lack of diversity in environmental settings, implicit bias, lack of education/social awareness
- Ideal/Perfect Victim Complex: A damaging belief about how a victim should, act, and behave following a traumatic experience in order to be deemed as a credible source
 - Immediately make a report to law enforcement
 - Moderately dressed
 - Sober, conscious
 - Attempted to fight back
 - Outwardly expressing emotions and gratitude
 - Cooperate with an investigation and/or law enforcement
- Demonization of Men of Color
 - In general, male survivors of color face lower access to healing services and assistance in part because of the perpetuating myths that men of color are not to be trusted
- Objectification: When you no longer see a human being but a thing - “Parts, not people”
 - When you don’t see someone as human, it becomes much easier to commit violence against them.



Reproductive Justice & Medical Trauma

- Involuntary or coerced removal of a person's ability to reproduce. Sterilization is usually done through surgical procedures, often through tubal ligation
- Popularized use of practice against communities deemed "useless" throughout the 19th and 20th centuries
 - The practice or advocacy of controlled selective breeding of human populations (as by sterilization) to improve the population's genetic composition
- Historical trauma within various communities of color; "La Operación" "No Más Bebés", 2015 documentary
 - Tuskegee Experiments (1932-1972)
 - Guatemala Syphilis Experiment (1946-1948)
- Long historical collection of Black and Brown women's bodies used for medical experimentation without consent (see: J. Marion Sims, "Father of Gynecology")
- Form of sexual violence that takes away a person's bodily autonomy in reproductive choice

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AhPAs8bOeBg>

("Time and Time Again:
The Reincarnations of
Coerced Sterilisation":
Fofana, 2022)



Sexual Violence in Correctional Facilities and Detention Centers

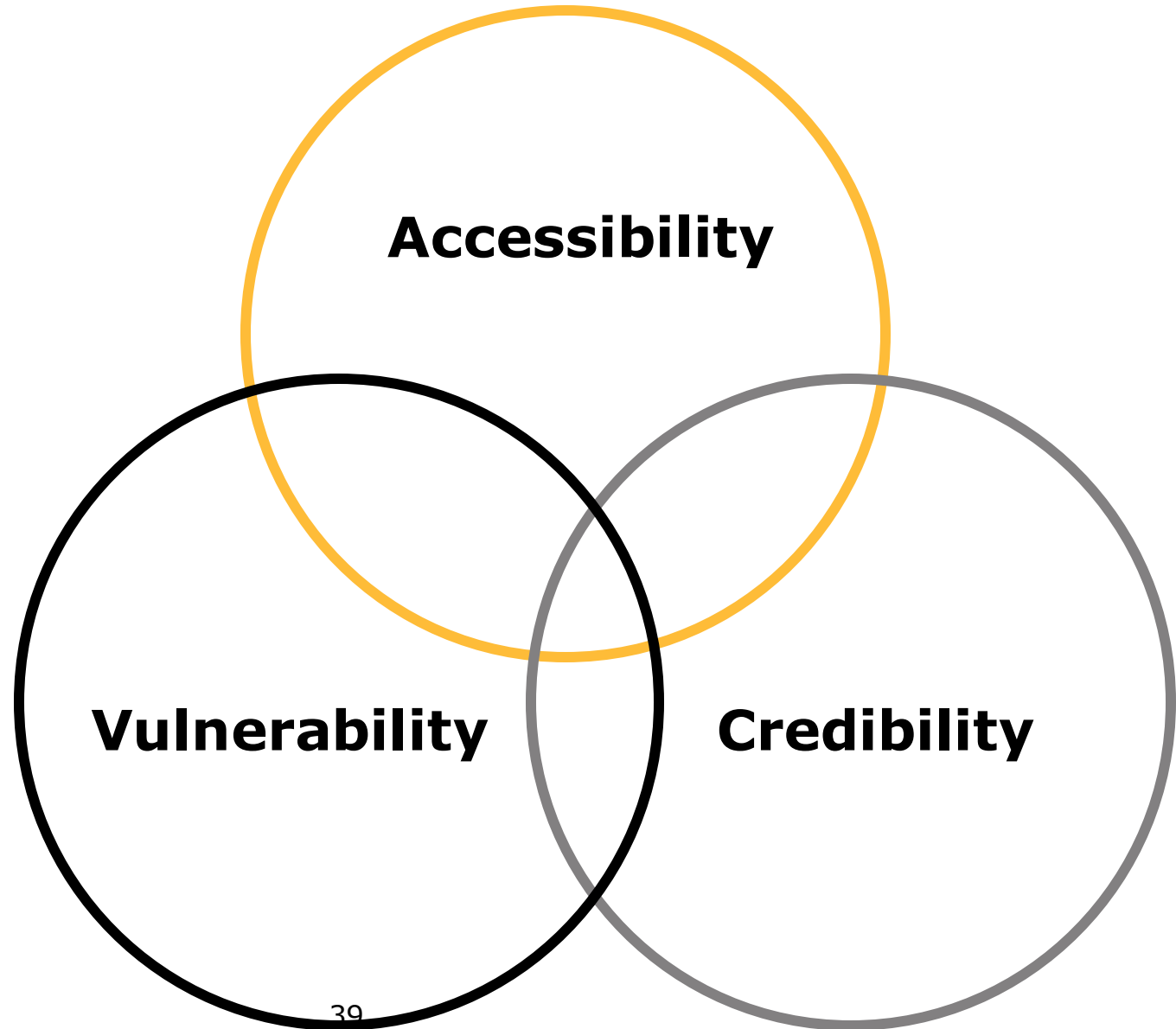
- According to the Federal Bureau of Prisons of who makes up the population:
 - People who identify as Black: 38%
 - People who identify as Hispanic/Latinx: 30%
 - People who identify as Indigenous: 3%
 - People who identify as Asian: 1%
- Based on data from the National Survey of Inmates (2017), Black, Hispanic, and multiracial incarcerated people reported experiencing high rates of sexual misconduct from both staff and other inmates (30%)
- Sexual assault allegations are often underreported in immigration detention centers due to lack of knowledge of reporting systems and fear of retaliation (Thompson, 2022)
- Many incarcerated survivors face overt forms of violence during their stay in corrections, including sexual violence:
 - Inmate on inmate sexual abuse
 - Staff on inmate sexual abuse
 - Between 40-60% of substantiated incidents of sexual victimization involved staff sexual misconduct against inmates (2013, 2018)
- Research cited in a study found that people of color who are incarcerated are more likely to face deplorable conditions involving violence as a form of punishment, such as sexual assault or solitary confinement, than their non-POC counterparts

Hierarchies and power structures are inheritably fundamental to correctional/detention settings

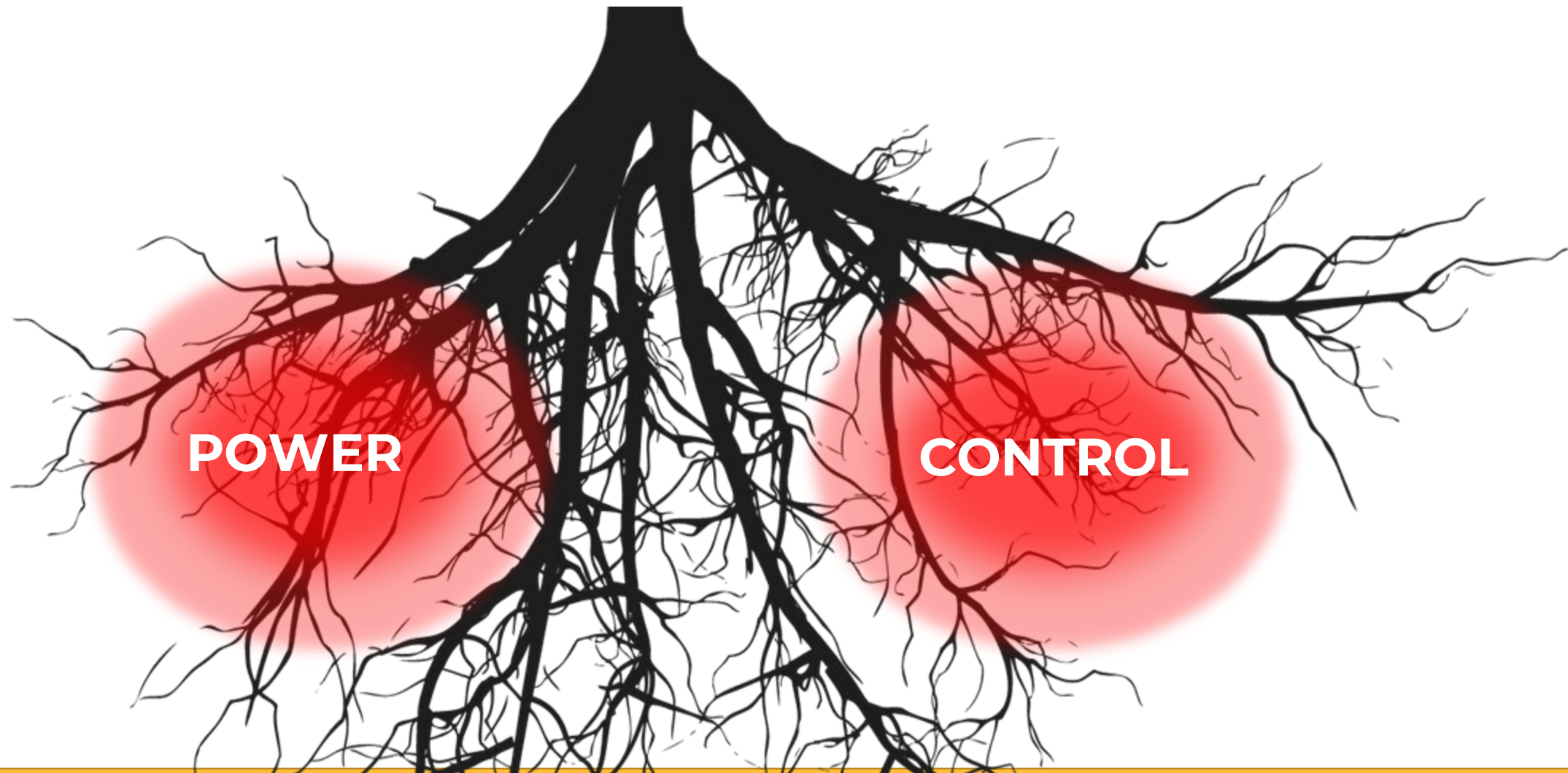
Crawford et al., 2022 & FBP, 2023

Hundreds of immigrants have reported sexual abuse at ICE facilities. Most cases aren't investigated

MOST SURVIVORS ARE TARGETED



SEXUAL VIOLENCE

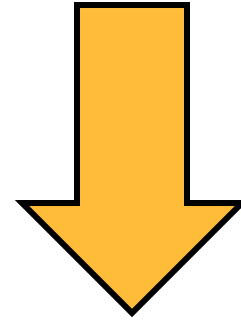


BARRIERS

- Cultural (stigma) and familial ties
- Shame and fear of not being believed
- Immigration status/Fear of being reported
- Discrimination
- Financial
- Linguistic
- Reduced access to care/services (such as healthcare or counseling)
- Racial erasure in research/data
- Fear of retaliation
- Historical and current mistrust of established systems
- Lack of service structures that honor cultural needs and beliefs
- Traditional gender norms
- Violence



Communities of color are at an increased risk of sexual violence.



There are gaps between the sexual violence these communities experience, especially related to disclosure and response





COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND RESILIENCE

What Does it Mean to be an Ally?

Someone who will actively fight for the rights of a community they are not a part of

1. Understand the privileges you have
2. Spend more time actively listening than speaking
3. Educating yourself is **vital**
4. Unlearning your own inherent biases (which is easier said than done)
5. You will make mistakes and it's okay – try to learn from them and account for them so you can avoid causing harm again in the future

Allyship should not be transactional or performative

To do nothing is to be complicit



Saviorism

- Building a strong sense of self-awareness and creating boundaries is key to being an advocate
- Reminder: As an advocate, you not here to save or rescue anyone.
 - Survivors of color are resilient and should not be infantilized.
- What it means to de-center yourself
 - Not assuming what they need but instead asking
- Recognizing the power you hold in your position when it comes to information and knowledge
- Helping with empowerment, not doing *the* empowerment



ACTIVELY EDUCATING SELF

- “I May Destroy You” (Drama series)
- “On the Record” (Documentary)
- “Surviving R. Kelly” (Documentary series)
- “Rape in the Fields” (PBS Frontline)
- “Working Woman” (Film)
- “All Boys Aren’t Blue” (Memoir)
- “An Untamed State” (Novel)
- “Cairo 678” (Film)
- “The Revolution Starts at Home: Confronting Intimate Violence Within Activist Communities” (Nonfiction)
- “Bodies in Evidence: Race, Gender, and Science in Sexual Assault Adjudication” (Textbook)
- “Rape on the Night Shift” (PBS Frontline)
- “Not That Bad” (Anthology)
- “To Kill a Tiger” (Documentary)



CREATING A SPACE

- Paradigm Shift from Cultural Competency to Cultural Humility
- Humility is a part of the term's name, reflecting your own thoughts and views about the world
- Acknowledging that there are power imbalances that historically/current exist in society, including the space you work in, and that marginalized communities often have lower access to said power
- Holding each other accountable and being aware of implicit bias
- Dismantling institutional racism is not going to happen overnight



HOW WE CAN REDUCE HARM

- Representation matters – both in outreach work and in staff visibility
- Trauma-Informed Approach: Recognizing all the different ways a person has been impacted by trauma before even arriving to your agency
- Being receptive to feedback on how changes can be made to include the voices of those from marginalized communities
- Creating and establishing relationships with other agencies that are providing support to folks within the communities
- Attending and asking to table at community cultural events, prepping by finding more about the event's significance
- Highlighting cultural holidays and days of remembrance at program
- Safety planning considerations
 - May not always be an option to report/disclose to law enforcement or hospitals – consider finding specific and culturally respectful resources for your client and their needs
- You can make a difference in how you treat a human being with kindness, respect, and dignity we all inherently deserve



EX) RACIAL JUSTICE & VIOLENCE PREVENTION WORK

- Using an Anti-Oppression framework, fighting to end sexual violence also means fighting to end racism
 - Doing anti-racism work is **critical** to ending sexual violence and creating safety
 - Risk and Protective Factors
 - Building Healthy Relationships
 - Creating Protective Environments
- Engaging in anti-racism and equity through prevention work
 - Developing policies, outreach work, and community collaborations to address and dismantle racism at its roots



COMMUNITY SOLIDARITY

**It's about all of us working to
dismantle oppression and
create positive social change**

“We've got to face the fact that some people say you fight fire best with fire, but we say you put fire out best with water. We say you don't fight racism with racism. We're gonna fight racism with solidarity.” –Fred Hampton



RESOURCES

- Race Forward
 - <https://www.raceforward.org/>
 - (212) 513-7925
- Equal Justice Initiative
 - <https://eji.org/>
 - (334) 269-1803
- Futures Without Violence
 - <https://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/>
 - (415) 678-5500
- National Sexual Violence Resource Center
 - <https://www.nsvrc.org/>
 - (877) 739-3895
- American Civil Liberties Union
 - <https://www.aclu.org/>
 - (212) 549-2500
- U.S. Department of Justice
 - <https://www.justice.gov/>
 - (202) 514-2000
- Arizona Department of Health Services
 - <https://www.azdhs.gov/>
 - (602) 542-1025





FURTHER READINGS

"The Cultural Betrayal of Black Women & Girls: A Black Feminist Approach to Healing from Sexual Abuse" by Jennifer M. Gómez

"Grabbed: Poets & Writers on Sexual Assault, Empowerment & Healing", edited by Richard Blanco, Caridad Moro, Nikki Moustaki, and Elisa Albo

"Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide" by Andrea Smith

"How Does It Feel to Be a Problem?: Being Young and Arab in America" by Moustafa Bayoumi

"The Beginning and End of Rape: Confronting Sexual Violence in Native America" by Sarah Deer

"Comfort Women" by Yoshiaki Yoshimi

"Border Bodies: Racialized Sexuality, Sexual Capital, and Violence in the Nineteenth-Century Borderlands" by Bernadine Marie Hernández

"Invisible: Theology and the Experience of Asian American Women" by Grace Ji-Sun Kim

"Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence – From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror" by Judith Lewis Herman

QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, OR TAKEAWAYS?

Ada Acero

ada@acesdv.org

602-806-7017