

**“THE IMPORTANCE OF ENGAGING
THE FAITH-BASED COMMUNITY IN
ENDING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND
SEXUAL ASSAULT IN THE AFRICAN
AMERICAN COMMUNITY”**

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OVW DISCLAIMER

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ◉ To better recognize barriers survivors face when seeking support from the faith-based communities
- ◉ To explore promising practices for engaging faith-based communities around DV and sexual assault education

WHY ENGAGE THE FAITH-BASED COMMUNITY?

Without understanding the significant role spirituality has historically played in the lives of African Americans, we misunderstand the significance in engaging the faith-based community

AFRICAN AMERICANS AND THE CONCEPT OF SPIRITUALITY



Slave Songs and Spirituals

- ◉ During slavery spirituality was a means of connecting with others to survive
- ◉ It was a quest for liberation from injustice
- ◉ The whole of life is religious
- ◉ God is found in all of God's creation
- ◉ A deep connection exist between humans, God, family and group
- ◉ The Black church which was formed during slavery is **central** in the black community

AFRICAN AMERICANS AND THE CONCEPT OF SPIRITUALITY

- ◉ The church served as a place of worship, an educational center, shelter for fleeing African slaves, a resource for economic support, a venue for political organizing



- ◉ Black churches today serve as extended family, a refuge for emotional and financial support, role models for African American children, and boosts self-esteem

AFRICAN AMERICANS AND THE CONCEPT OF SPIRITUALITY

- ◉ Eight-in-ten African-Americans (79%) say religion is very important in their lives, compared with 56% among all U.S. adults
- ◉ The Black church is seen as “the most organized, visible, and nurturing institution”

Slavery

Jim crow

Civil rights

Now

“From slavery, to the Jim Crow Era, through the Civil Rights Movement, and up to contemporary times, the Church as an institution has long been regarded as a source of strength, comfort, and refuge for the African American Community.”

BARRIERS WITHIN THE FAITH-BASED COMMUNITY



- ◉ Messages that dv and sexual assault do not happen in the church
- ◉ Families do not want to “air dirty laundry” - embarrassment/shame
- ◉ Clergyman have used doctrine as justification for “remaining in the marriage”
- ◉ The faith-based leader was the abuser

BARRIERS WITHIN THE FAITH-BASED COMMUNITY

- ◉ Faith-based leaders' perception of gender role (submission and head)
- ◉ Silence in lieu of racial solidarity
- ◉ Desire to “counsel” the victim and the perpetrator simultaneously
- ◉ Marriage licenses men to physically and sexually dominate women
- ◉ Leaders not equipped with how to support victims and unaware of community resources

Why might faith-based communities resist attending and/or hosting a Bystander training on domestic violence and sexual assault?



PLC'S PREPARATION FOR ENGAGEMENT

NTU - Bantu term from Central Africa that loosely translates to mean “essence.”

Characteristics:

- Family-focused
- Spiritually-oriented
- Values-driven
- Strength-based
- Culturally-competent
- Holistic and systemic

PLC'S PREPARATION FOR ENGAGEMENT

Principles of NTU

Harmony
Balance
Interconnectedness
Authenticity

Phases of NTU

Harmony
Awareness
Alignment
Actualization
Synthesis

PRINCIPLES OF NTU

Harmony: Union of body, mind and spirit; oneness with life; ability to be adaptive.

Balance: development of equilibrium between opposing forces; Complimentary as opposed to competitive processes.

Interconnectedness: Oneness; internal/external connection; as above, so below; systemic;

Authenticity: realness; genuineness; spontaneity; closely connected with true self (spirit).

NTU PHASES (HARMONY)

Harmony (creating an intangible space/environment that creates a sense of emotional openness, receptivity, mutual respect and trust)

Skills: develop authentic rapport, offering legitimate praise/compliments, do your research then share something positive about the faith-based community

Example:

I'm excited about how involved your faith-based leaders are in the community, I attended the health fair last week!

NTU PHASES (AWARENESS)

Awareness (identification of strengths and illumination of the core issues and concerns)

Skills: clarify needs, identify problem, prioritize, consult, accentuate the positive

Examples:

I understand that your church has a domestic violence program.

Are you aware that Prince George's County has the highest rate of domestic violence in the state?

NTU PHASES (ALIGNMENT)

Alignment (Ownership of the Issue;
Accountability; Problem Solving; Return to
System Homeostasis)

Skills: confronting fears, exploration of
feelings

Example:

What is your biggest concern if your faith-
based leaders attend a DV and sexual assault
training?

NTU PHASES (ACTUALIZATION)

Actualization (Plan of Action)

Skills: Develop action plan, practice new behaviors

Examples:

How about my staff attends the next leadership meeting to better explain the importance of the bystander training?

I have a video that I would like to share with you featuring other faith-based leaders discussing the effects of dv and sexual assault on their congregation.

NTU PHASES (SYNTHESIS)

Synthesis (Internalization and Continuity of a Healthy Problem-Solving Process)

Skills: self-evaluation, reflect on progress, re-adjustments, summarization, review changes

Examples:

I'm so glad that your leaders responded positively to the video and are now ready to host a training!

So you have some leaders that are willing to attend our upcoming training. That's a shift from the last time we talked, that's great!

PROMISING PRACTICES FOR ENGAGING THE FAITH-BASED COMMUNITY

- ◉ Gain the support of a collaborative that can draw in the involvement of the faith-based community
- ◉ Utilize relationships to share facts about the state of DV and sexual assault in the County



- ◉ Utilize relationships of the faith-based leaders to engage other faith-based leaders

PROMISING PRACTICES FOR ENGAGING THE FAITH-BASED COMMUNITY

- ◉ Identify faith-based communities that already have a DV and/or sexual assault ministry
- ◉ Design a video that includes congregants and faith-based leaders
- ◉ Employ a Bystander training (can't assume that leaders and congregants know)
- ◉ Interrupt oppression and call it by its name: domestic violence and sexual assault

CHALLENGES/CONSIDERATIONS

- ◉ Emphasis have not been focused yet on multiple **types** of faith-based communities
- ◉ PLC is new on the scene of domestic violence and sexual assault in the County so we need get better connected
- ◉ There are a few churches who are already on board with this movement. We have a lot of work to do to connect with the faith-based communities across the County
- ◉ Due to the approval and hiring process, we are behind on our timeline to execute this project.

IT'S HAPPENING...NOW LET'S DO
MORE

Video

<http://www.wusa9.com/news/local/rev-on-crusade-to-stop-domestic-violence-in-prince-georges-co/78172511>

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