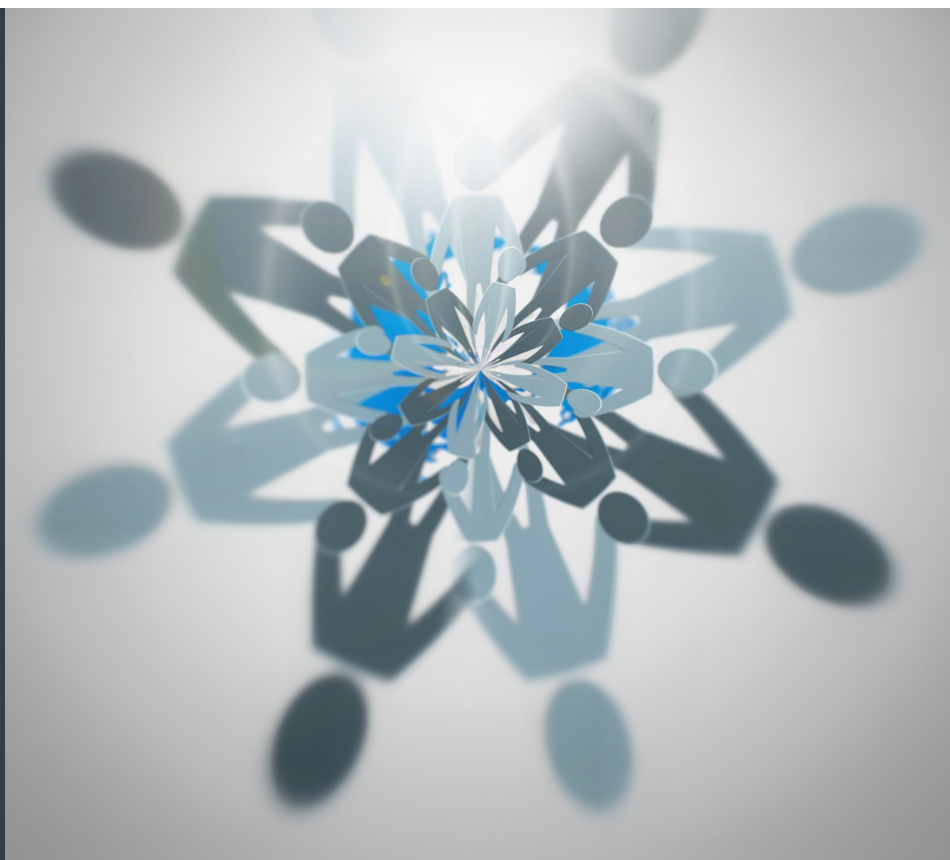


DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOMICIDE REDUCTION TIP SHEET SERIES

Engaging with Communities to Learn about Culturally Specific Community Needs

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ABOUT THIS TIP SHEET

Question Addressed

How can we learn what methods of addressing domestic violence homicide are most effective in culturally specific communities?

Now more than ever, we know that we do not all experience the world in the same way. People's social experiences are constructed by differences in race, class, ability, age, ethnicity, immigration status, gender, sexual orientation, history, and many other aspects of culture and identity. As a result, we do not all experience domestic violence (DV), the actions of interveners, the impact of laws, and enforcement efforts in the same way. The DV homicide reduction approaches most often used are mainly designed for survivors in mainstream communities, and it is generally assumed that Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC) will benefit equally from the strategies and practices. Are there approaches that work better in culturally specific communities? How can we learn about them?

Objective

Use community engagement to learn about efforts that could be more effective in Underserved and Culturally Specific communities.

As a STOP Administrator attempting to find effective approaches for reducing DV homicide in culturally specific communities, **the goal is for you to gain a deeper understanding of:**

- **DV homicide;**
- **Efforts to reduce its occurrence in culturally specific communities; and**
- **Survivors' help-seeking behaviors.**¹

What's in this Tip Sheet

- An analysis of the effectiveness of DV homicide prevention programs in communities of color;
- An exploration of community engagement as a tool to help STOP Administrators; and
- A guide for how to start engaging communities and the do's and don'ts to engagement.

¹ Help-seeking behaviors are defined as decisions made and actions taken by an individual or group to address a challenge or stressful circumstance.

WHY ENGAGE WITH COMMUNITIES ABOUT DV HOMICIDE?

Why should we engage with Underserved populations to learn about their experiences related to DV homicides?

The issue of DV homicides is one of the biggest challenges in the field of gender-based violence. In 2017, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released a landmark study that found that Black women are killed in DV incidents at higher rates than women of any other race or ethnicity, trailed closely by the homicide rates for Indigenous women. CDC's analysis of homicide data also confirmed that Black and Indigenous women are murdered at rates nearly three times that of non-Hispanic white women.

As we explored in Tip Sheet #1: Addressing the Gaps in Domestic Violence Homicide Reduction, the effectiveness of the current approaches in BIPOC communities is still in question. In fact, the authors of the CDC study concluded that

“[r]acial/ethnic differences in female homicide underscore the importance of targeting intervention efforts to populations at risk and the conditions that increase the risk for violence.”



A survivor's perception of available, viable choices is influenced and informed by their experiences and the experiences of the community.

Other studies have shown that some culturally specific communities hesitate to access responses that are heavily reliant on law enforcement and pose the question of whether such reliance of systems is effective.

When selecting and applying interventions it is critical to consider the impact of policies and practices on peoples' different social realities. The safety of system responses for these marginalized communities needs careful examination.

However, there are no national DV homicide reduction or prevention models focused on BIPOC communities. Instead, the most often used approaches focus on mainstream system responses, which rely heavily on the criminal justice system. This is one reason why these approaches may not work well for many communities of color.

How does this affect the STOP work in my state or territory?

As a STOP Administrator, you can address the need for culturally specific approaches to DV homicide reduction in your STOP Implementation Plan. One thing you can do is to explore the needs of culturally specific communities.

Together, Administrators and their planning partners can:

- **Examine** DV homicides in their state or territory;
- **Involve** culturally specific communities in the process;
- **Explore** what efforts might be effective for culturally specific communities; and
- **Design** a STOP grantmaking strategy that addresses all of these issues.



Some states have already started doing this by partnering with the Tribal communities in their state to establish task forces looking into the high numbers of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW).

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AS A TOOL FOR STOP ADMINISTRATORS

What is Community Engagement?

Community engagement is...


- The process of working collaboratively with groups of people who are affiliated by geographic proximity, special interests, or similar situations with respect to issues affecting their well-being.
- A process that connects and involves the community to achieve long-term and sustainable outcomes, processes, relationships, discourse, decision-making or implementation.
- A framework of guiding principles, strategies and approaches that foster and enhance trust and buy-in as critical elements of engagement.

Who is the "Community?"

In the context of engagement, community has been understood in two ways. It is sometimes used to refer to individuals who are affected directly by the issues being addressed such as BIPOC and otherwise marginalized survivors of gender-based violence. It has also been used in a more general way, focusing on stakeholders that are meeting the needs of or addressing the well-being of survivors in their geographic area or identity affiliation. These stakeholders may include ministers, elders or leaders of culturally specific programs. Both approaches would be helpful, but reaching out to stakeholders may be more effective for developing grant funding programs.

Why Utilize Community Engagement?

Engaging culturally specific communities to find out what helps or would help prevent DV homicides ensures they have a meaningful role in the deliberations, discussions and implementation of projects or programs that affect them.



The key purpose of community engagement is to be responsive to the needs of that community as defined by the community itself.

Engagement can help to create partnerships that can more effectively address the issue or problem. It can create other opportunities including the following:

- **Increased likelihood that projects or solutions will be widely accepted.** People and programs that participate in these processes show significant commitment to help make the projects happen.
- **More effective solutions:** Drawing on local knowledge from a diverse group creates solutions that are practical and effective.
- **Enhanced community knowledge and skills in solving the problem explored.** Participants learn more about the issues, and that greater knowledge enables them to examine multiple sides of the problem. Community members are not constrained by what is available. Instead, they can easily identify what is needed to address the issues they are facing. STOP Administrators can include this information in the STOP Implementation Plan and solicitation packages that are intended to address these needs.

- **Strengthened community-based organizations and other local networks of community members.** The more people who know what is going on and who are willing to work on the issue at hand, the more likely a community is to be successful in addressing gender-based violence including DV homicides.
- **Increased trust among community-based organizations, community members systems, and funding organizations.** Working together improves communication and understanding. Gaining an understanding of how your organization works, funding decisions are made, models are developed, and the limitations your organization faces can help build trust.
- Identification and understanding of:
 - Differing values and priorities;
 - Differing frames, or ways people view their community or a particular program;
 - Various alternatives and consequences;
 - Perceptions of benefits and risks;
 - Different ideas and potential solutions; and
 - The challenges of current efforts.

HOW TO ENGAGE COMMUNITIES

How can STOP Administrators begin engaging with communities?

Expanding your reach to communities and programs not traditionally funded is a good first step toward addressing responses and services.

Questions to consider:

- How do you know if a model works in culturally specific communities?
- Will someone who is undocumented call law enforcement when in need?
- How do we find out what works or could work?
- How do you know what these communities need?

One of the best ways to answer these questions is to ask BIPOC communities and culturally specific organizations.

What are some ways to engage communities?

There are a number of ways to engage communities, depending on what you are trying to achieve.

You can do this by:

- Holding virtual or in-person listening sessions and one-on-one meetings in the communities you want to learn from;
- Following local culturally specific organizations on social media and/or signing up for their e-newsletters to keep up with announcements and events as a relationship-building and learning opportunity;
- Responding to community needs and ideas; Celebrating their work in the community – honor their efforts on DVHP, for example;
- Engaging in leadership development; and
- Partnering in community building projects or capacity-building efforts.



Go to the
community and
create
opportunities for
engagement



DOS AND DON'TS OF ENGAGING COMMUNITIES

There are a number of **DOs** in conducting community engagement and equally some **DON'Ts**, or things to **avoid** when conducting community engagement that would set your efforts back.

DO

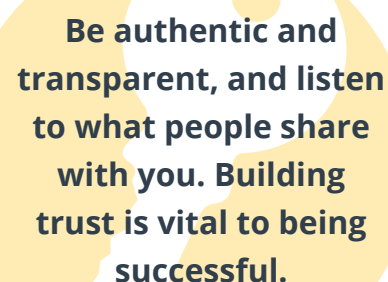
DON'T

Go to the community you want to engage.	Expect communities to always come to you.
Plan for the time to build the relationship with the community.	Expect that one outreach effort will result in a trusting relationship or engagement.
Be authentic and transparent in your relationship with the community.	Ask for information without also providing information about what you are addressing and why.
Check-in with community members along the way to make sure you are addressing their concerns openly and honestly.	Assume that because you feel a community should trust you that they do trust you. There is a history of oppression and trauma that you are working against. Building trust takes time and showing up in a consistent and reliable manner for them.
Consider the makeup of your implementation/advisory committee to make sure you have meaningful representation of BIPOC communities. This means your committee reflects the demographic population of your state and that you listen to and respect the expertise they bring to the table.	Invite one or two BIPOC people to be on the committee as a perfunctory or symbolic effort.

GETTING STARTED

Start by going to culturally specific communities across your state. If you can't physically go there, go virtually. Start with who you know and fund, and move out from there.

- Reach out to culturally specific organizations you currently fund and ask about their experience with DV homicide prevention models. Listening sessions with leadership, staff, and survivors accessing programs may be the most effective way to hear about their experiences.
- If you do not currently fund any culturally specific programs in your state, reach out to:
 - National technical assistance providers that are culturally specific to ask them about culturally specific programs they know of in your state, and their thoughts on current DVHP models.
 - Ask elders and other leaders from culturally specific communities in your state who they think are responding to survivors of violence in their communities.
 - These may be places of worship, specialized markets, schools, salons, community development groups, Head Start programs, and other civic organizations. There are many other possibilities, and this is an opportunity to be creative.
 - Use the opportunity to find out why groups responding to the needs of community members have not received funding from your agency.
 - Map culturally specific communities in your state and make efforts to visit with them when you are in the area. For example, when designing in-person or virtual monitoring visits, incorporate engagement activities such as listening sessions with survivors, advocates, and cultural leaders.
- Start small but start. You won't be able to meet with everyone or make all the changes suggested right away.



Be authentic and transparent, and listen to what people share with you. Building trust is vital to being successful.

Now that you've learned some ways to start engage with communities, consider the following questions about the type of data and collection methods as you move on to the next Tip Sheet:

- What are survivors of color experiences seeking services in mainstream organizations?
- What motivates survivors of color to seek help?
- How can I as a STOP Administrator answer these questions?

Tip Sheet #3 explores how to gather and use qualitative data to learn about the experiences of survivors who are members of culturally specific communities.