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From Campus To Congregation:
Secular And Sacred Collaboration
To End Campus Violence Against Women

1st Edition

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Written and Edited By:

The Reverend Aubra Love

Patricia White

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Introduction and Context

“From Campus to Congregation: Secular and Sacred Collaboration to End Campus Violence Against Women” is a joint project of the California Coalition Against Sexual Assault an organization that provides leadership, vision and resources to rape crisis centers, individuals and other entities committed to ending sexual violence and The Black Church and Domestic Violence Institute, a national, non-profit organization that provides education and training to address domestic and sexual violence in communities of faith, with particular emphasis on African heritage communities and congregations.

The Black Church and Domestic Violence Institute (BCDVI) produced this resource to support the development of collaborations between college and university campus programs, faith-based community organizations and where appropriate, community crisis intervention programs. This packet provides a foundation for planning and includes contextual guidelines for building relationships between faith communities, violence against women agencies, and the campus programs that respond to violence against female students and staff.

Because campus and community cultures vary widely, a monolithic document on how to build collaboration with faith-based organizations would prove to be useless. Moreover, the approach would, by necessity, need altering for private and public schools as well as those founded on religious principles.

Campuses already collaborating with community programs may find the initiation of a faith-based project a natural extension of existing efforts. Whatever your institution’s posture in the community, “From Campus to Congregation: Secular and Sacred Collaboration to End Campus Violence Against Women” orients the planning process for optimum success. The points described in this resource will inform a larger process of strategic planning with the goal, ultimately, of compassionate, appropriate responses to all forms of violence against women on campus.

Building Collaboration Between Campus and Faith Communities

Victim safety is the first priority when responding to violence against women. This priority must be clear throughout the entire process of planning, implementation and evaluation. Direct service program staff members are integral but not sufficient to keep your plans responsive. Ultimately, the voices of survivors must inform the planning, implementation and evaluation process from beginning to end.

The components to effective collaboration begin with relationships that allow for a shared vision, genuine communication, a process of conflict resolution and ongoing evaluation. Productive relationships develop when individuals who initiate the collaboration embrace cultural or ideological differences among the partnering organizations. Skilled group facilitation is essential during each phase of the project.

A well-trained facilitator can hold a standard of respect among the participants, particularly being aware of and responsive to dynamics of power and control when representatives from academic institutions, faith-based community programs, and off-campus agencies meld as a group and begin the collective work. Each representative’s area of expertise must be consistently affirmed and invited.

Below are 10 practical steps for initiating collaboration followed by brief explanations of each step. This introduction includes information on cross-cultural collaboration that ensures cultural and linguistic appropriateness. This preliminary work together is the foundation for the long-range strategic planning necessary to build or enhance a comprehensive response for reducing violence against women on campus.

10 PRACTICAL STEPS FOR INITIATING COLLABORATION

- 1) **Meet with campus prevention and intervention program representatives.**
- 2) **Create an initial plan for building the collaboration.**
- 3) **Identify potential community partners for the collaboration.**
- 4) **Send correspondence to set appointments with community partners.**
- 5) **Meet with community partners to explore mutual interests.**
- 6) **Host a forum selecting a time, place and date conducive to diversity.**
- 7) **Create an agenda that encourages the active participation of representatives.**
- 8) **Create a task force of interested individuals.**
- 9) **Develop an action plan defining goals, objectives, timeline and outcomes.**
- 10) **Meet regularly in accordance with your action plan.**

10 PRACTICAL STEPS FOR INITIATING COLLABORATION

1. Meet with campus prevention and intervention program representatives.

Conduct a needs assessment of existing campus programs that address violence against women. These initial meetings with programs should establish the foundation for building collaboration with community partners. If a campus-based women's program operates out of the student health center it may be important to include the appropriate personnel responsible for administrative oversight from the health center, as well. **Include survivors of abuse or assault from the beginning to keep the process responsive.**

2. Create an initial plan for building the collaboration.

Once you have begun meeting with your essential campus representatives, create an initial plan for approaching the community. This plan should include a proposed timeline for the key goals. Each decision made by your “ad hoc” committee needs to be temporary or “draft” so that community members who are invited to participate can also shape and direct the outcomes. **Ongoing education concerning pertinent issues surrounding violence should be woven into each group activity.**

3. Identify potential community partners for the collaboration.

Most mainline denominations have existing polity against domestic violence. However, many congregations have not developed protocol for addressing this specific violence or sexual assault, incest and child molestation or stalking. While some religious leaders are unaware of the prevalence of violence, others have a designated leader who ministers to survivors and families in distress. This leader may be an ideal representative. Choosing faith communities that have had some working relationship with your campus or community agencies may be a good place to start. There also may be a member of the “ad hoc” committee affiliated with a local congregation. Off-campus agencies, that address violence against women, may also have relationships with congregations. **Consider the diversity of your campus (students and staff) when selecting your partners such as the demographics of the congregation for linguistic and cultural appropriateness.**

For a campus founded on religious principles, the governing body may have a substantial stake in the campus’ direction and purpose. You may want to work with the denominational office to designate the best faith community representative.

4. Send correspondence to set appointments with community partners.

Once prospective partners have been identified, draft a simple letter describing no more than one or two goals. The correspondence on your letterhead should state: Who you are; what you would like to accomplish in your face-to-face meeting; why you are inviting their participation; and how long the meeting is expected to last. If possible, provide a meal at your gathering. This aspect of dining together can be conducive to dialogue and relationship-building. Direct your correspondence to the Pastor, Rabbi, Imam, Archbishop and/or Priest. If there is a secretary for this congregation, he or she will likely be your primary contact; keep in touch and be patient. Make a follow-up phone call within several days to set an appointment. Do not be surprised if it takes repeat phone calls to schedule your meeting.

5. Meet with community partners to explore mutual interests.

The primary goal in your first face-to-face meeting is to cultivate a rapport. If you have little or no exposure to faith-based programs, including a committee member who is connected to a faith community may help bridge relations. Take time to introduce yourself sharing why it is important to you to have the input of this leader. Encourage a religious leader to share his or her faith journey as it relates to their specific path to spiritual leadership. In your conversation explore his or her interest level in becoming involved in the proposed project.

This is an opportunity for the religious leader to consider their congregation's assets and needs. At the conclusion of this meeting, you want to be clear about their willingness to come or send the most appropriate delegate to the open forum about the collaboration. You may also want to inquire as to what time of day or day of the week best accommodates their schedule. Try to make sure that this initial visit does not exceed an hour.

6. Host a forum selecting a time, place and date conducive to diversity.

In order to choose an accessible venue for the first meeting, consider the demographics of your campus and organizational participants, i.e. their gender, race, class, ability, education, and area of the town and city where their program operates. Whether your campus population is diverse and the surrounding community is homogenous or vice-versa, your first meeting can begin to create access for everyone. Whatever location you choose, be sure that it is accessible to people with disabilities. Your awareness and your resulting intentionality can mitigate tensions, stereotypes, and long-standing biases.

7. Create an agenda that encourages the active participation of all representatives.

With your facilitator's assistance, develop an agenda*. The careful selection of community persons to welcome the gathering will set the tone for your meeting. A diverse leadership at the beginning communicates true collaboration. The welcome should include a brief overview of the project and how everyone came to be invited. Participants may be encouraged to know that they were each individually sought and desired for this gathering. The facilitator should assist in introducing the group with an opening exercise that helps people feel at ease. Share the initial goals developed by your campus committee. Invite feedback from those present. Ask each person to explore how they see the problem within their arena. Ask how their congregation or organization might benefit from collaboration. (This information is best gleaned by asking the questions directly and recording each participant's answer on a flip chart). Include an evaluation form for the day, including one that rates both process and facilitation.

***Include educational components about violence against women at every gathering. Survivors, from every demographic and life experience, who are comfortable with sharing their stories can help illustrate the issues. Throughout your process, include team building activities that build relationships (especially cross-cultural and interfaith) to keep communication open.**

8. Create a task force of interested individuals.

Create a task force of interested individuals from the following areas: campus administration, campus prevention/intervention programs, faith community representatives, community agency representatives—making sure that at least two survivors are present. You also may want to solicit from them others who they believe would want to participate.

9. Develop an action plan defining goals, objectives, timeline and outcomes.

At the next meeting, use the flip chart paper from the previous gathering to develop practical goals. Engage a facilitator with experience in building collaboration or in organizational strategic planning. There are many consultants specializing in building collaborations between secular and faith-based programs, including academic institutions. (See the list of technical assistance resources at the end of this Guide).

10. Meet regularly in accordance with your action plan.

Your meeting times should be purposeful and sensitive to the general state of overwork that has become customary among personnel of human service organizations. Whether meeting monthly, bi-monthly, or quarterly, monitor for an excessive meeting schedule precipitated by the enthusiasm of participants but unrealistic to the collaborative partners' availability. If the group is working toward a larger event for the campus and community, more meeting times may be essential closer to that event. Revisit your plans each meeting.

Women's Organizing

“For over 30 years, [women] activists in the...violence arena have been able to increase their sphere of influence that began with a woman's immediate safety and her transitional needs. Through public education and increased awareness, the movement impacted the criminal justice system and the public policy arena.” Rev Aubra Love. BCDVI Newsletter Spring 2002, Volume 2/Issue 1

Early activists of the 60's and 70's fought for women's safety because of their life experiences. In *Gender Talk: The Struggle for Women's Equality in African American Communities*, Founding Executive Director of the Black Church and Domestic Violence Institute, the Reverend Aubra Love says, “These early pioneers were able to define their personal struggles within a system that perpetuates violence against women. As more and more courageous women broke the silence of their physically and sexually violent intimate relationships, language developed that named the pandemic that finally generated a response.”

These efforts were not considered “**collaboration**.” These actions to address violence against women were called “**organizing**” and out of that organizing came a “**movement**.” Collaboration became a commonly used term in the 80's when non-profit organizations were challenged by diminishing resources and urged by foundations to find mutually beneficial ways to work together. To understand the culture of the violence against women's movement, the principles of organizing and mobilizing are important to consider.

Thirty years later, violence intervention and prevention programs that serve women are still meagerly funded and advocates are constantly contending with public pressure to make the problem go away and to minimize the true severity of the issues in each community. However, revisiting the history of organizing as a social change mechanism will help in working with women's programs in the community.

Monika Johnson Hostler, Executive Director of the North Carolina Coalition Against Sexual Assault, Johnson Hostler points out, “When you’re mobilizing a community, you get the community excited and involved in an issue—we often see mobilization immediately after a horrific sexual assault or rape takes place.” She asks, “How do we organize and unite our communities to work towards preventing violence? Whenever there is an incidence of rape or sexual assault, we typically respond by holding vigils, writing letters to the editor, and conducting interviews with the media. These are all necessary components to organizing our society around...violence, but what actions and activities can we engage in that are more sustainable and will create a community-wide effort to prevent...violence?”

Hostler references The Shelia Wellstone Institute that has adapted materials from Marshall Ganz of Harvard University that explain eight components of “organizing”:

1. **Organizers identify, recruit, and develop leadership.**
2. **Organizers interweave relationships, understanding, and action so that each contributes to the other.**
3. **Organizers work with people to interpret why they should act to change their world.**
4. **Organizers motivate action.**
5. **Organizers help people understand how they can act.**
6. **Organizers challenge people to take the responsibility to act.**
7. **Organizers work through campaigns.**
8. **Organizers build community by developing leadership.**

These eight components all contribute to the success, effectiveness, and sustainability of organizing. In order to carry out these eight components, there are several necessary skills that we as advocates must develop. These skills are:

- Developing a Message
- Creating an Action Plan
- Increasing Allies and Building Coalitions
- Influencing Decision Makers
- Developing Leadership from the Bottom up*

*These skills are discussed in detail in the *Camp Shelia Wellstone Field Manual*.

Cultural and Linguistic Appropriateness

For effective cross-cultural collaboration, an organizing committee must begin with diverse representation. This fact must never be overlooked throughout the project. **If the goals and leadership for the project are decided prior to the input of all collaborating partners, the project will begin with difficulties in place that cannot be overcome.**

Select a facilitator who has experience working with diverse populations. Skilled facilitation is central to maintaining clear channels of communication among group identities, i.e., gender, race, ability, sexuality, class, culture, religious, academic differences, etc. If your community is culturally homogenous, select an individual with exposure to the violence against women movement and the faith community. She or he should be aware of unspoken tensions that can impact communications such that the most vital and valuable ideas never make it to the table, and everyone’s best is inadvertently omitted.

The facilitator should create a place where everyone can speak up and engage. This requires an awareness of the dynamics that can occur when a participant is communicating in a language that is second or third to their native language; or when a partner has had limited formal education; or when an organization has meager financial resources; or if a participant uses assistive technology or American Sign Language. A skilled facilitator will be able to discern the quality of sharing in the room and encourage all voices. Affirming every voice will enhance the process. Group dialogue may not move as quickly when the participants embrace different values and modes of communication. However, patience for everyone's method of understanding and engagement is critical.

As an HBCU, addressing gender-related crimes on your campus will enhance the experience of your student body because prevention and intervention services are key to healing the entire community. College can be a time to provide in-depth education about building healthy relationships, intimacy and community. Young men and women exposed to violence education, prevention and intervention will benefit if these services are built into the college or university infrastructure. Conversely, violence left unaddressed creates pain, burden, trauma, waste, financial loss, attrition, and barriers to learning and personal development. Recovery from a violent event, particularly domestic and sexual violence, takes years and impacts a survivor's spiritual, psychological, emotional, and sometimes physical health. The actions of perpetrators, who are not held accountable, can damage generations of families and communities. Perpetrators of interpersonal violence also suffer within their own turmoil.

The long term survival of HBCU's is dependent on a continual flow of new students who are emotionally intact and able to complete their academic requirements. Capacity building for your institution must include building internal and external capacity. This includes engaging appropriate departments, community agencies and faith communities. Collaborative efforts with community organizations that do not share a similar cultural experience as your student body will also require training in cultural competence.

Throughout the process of building collaboration will be the need to monitor the human resources, funding; community support; training; and evaluation resources available. Taking inventory of your assets on-campus and within community will provide you a foundation for your needs assessment.

Working with Clergy

Religious leaders are not only engaged in ministry during weekly services, they are responsible for running the business of their institution. In addition, their pastoral duties make them accountable to their congregations for weddings, funerals, counseling, crisis, hospitalizations, incarcerations, births, christenings, Bar and Bas Mitzvahs, baptisms, and faith-based classes, courses, and out of town engagements. Ministry leadership can be demanding and is often met with scrutiny, attacks, compassion fatigue, and divisive political conflicts. Religious leaders are a group from which everyone expects an endless flow of grace, mercy, patience and understanding.

Seven Steps for Clergy and University Chaplains

Most campuses have religious leadership readily available to students and staff, for example, Hillel or Newman Centers or Seventh Day Adventists colleges such as Oakwood College in Huntsville, AL. In the article, "If It Had Not Been for the Lord on Our Side", Rev. Aubra Love says, "A conscious religious community would exhort society to share compassion and comfort with [women and children] who were afflicted by the tragedy of violence. The leaders of communities of faith would be identifying some actions to create a unified response to violence against women. Among these actions would be:

1. Display family-violence brochures in the entrance of all churches and all women's rest rooms.
2. Education of the congregation through all monthly newsletters and weekly announcements in church bulletins and in all marriage preparation classes.
3. Speak-outs against violence from every pulpit. People's attitudes and beliefs would be profoundly and powerfully impacted by their faith leaders.
4. Leadership by example. All clergy would be serving on the board of directors of their local...agencies or receiving training to become acquainted with community resources.
5. Every church would be offering space for meetings or weekly...support groups; and serving as supervised visitation sites when parents needed to visit safely with their children.
6. Clergy and lay leaders would be actively doing the theological and scriptural homework necessary in order to understand and respond better to family violence, and they would be receiving training from professionals in the field.
7. Intervention would be occurring whenever anyone suspected violence in a relationship. We would be speaking to each member of the couple separately; and helping victims to plan for safety. We would know, without a doubt, that couples-counseling is unsafe for victims and can result in death from an abuser's retaliation for the victim's disclosure to any outsider.

Despite the fact that women populate the majority of seats in services on any given Sabbath, most clergy still feel unprepared to address violence against women in their congregations. Ordination for most denominations still does not include prerequisite coursework about violence against women in their normal course of study. Some pastoral counseling courses include the topic of violence within intimate relationships. Those congregations that have managed to develop appropriate responses within their ministries, have often cultivated these responses amidst initial resistance from factions of the congregation itself.

Culturally Specific Services for Historic Black Colleges and Universities

Most historic Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU's) are founded on religious principles by Historic Black church initiatives. Currently, over 100 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU's) operate across the United States. HBCU's, with the exception of a few campuses, still serve a majority Black student population. On average the student body at most HBCU's is approximately 60% women, unless a campus is gender specific such as Spelman College or Morehouse College.

A growing female student population has brought women's studies courses to some campuses while others have founded departments. These courses of study for Black women have helped open the door for dialogue about the needs of Black women, nationally and in the global community. Despite the increase in the voices of female student, the vast majority of HBCU's do not have women's centers that are prepared to appropriately respond to students who are victimized by physical or sexual assault. In the absence of services, many students may choose not to report an incident or may have to access off-campus services. Those who seek emergency assistance on campus may only have security and health services to choose from. Often, these personnel are not adequately trained to address abuse and assault with the necessary sensitivity for a student to freely decide what her course of action might be, up to and including criminal prosecution. Sometimes female students, in the face of an unresponsive campus will turn to their religious community for support. They may also turn to community agencies and mental health services, not only for expertise but for anonymity and safety. More often than not most do not seek assistance.

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- Black Church and Domestic Violence Institute is a national educational ministry that trains clergy and laity in the appropriate response to domestic and sexual violence and trains advocates and activists in cultural competence. www.bcdvi.org
- California Coalition Against Sexual Assault is a California based non-profit that provide leadership, vision and resources to rape crisis centers, individuals and other entities committed to ending sexual violence. www.calcasa.org
- A Call to Men is a leading national men's organization addressing men's violence against women, and the eradication of sexism, while maintaining strong coalitions with women's organizations already doing this important work. www.acalltomen.com
- Faith Trust Institute is a national non-profit providing training for congregations about domestic and sexual violence, and clergy misconduct. Catalogs are available for training materials. www.faithtrustinstitute.org
- Family Violence Prevention Fund works to prevent violence within the home, and in the community, to help those whose lives are devastated by violence because everyone has the right to live free of violence. www.endabuse.org
- Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community provides an interdisciplinary vehicle and forum by which scholars, practitioners, and observers of family violence in the African American community will have the continual opportunity to articulate their perspectives on family violence to prevent/reduce family violence in the African American community. www.dvinstitute.org
- National Network to End Violence Against Immigrant Women is a coalition of survivors, immigrant women, advocates, activists, attorneys, educators and other professionals committed to ending violence against immigrant women. www.immigrantwomennetwork.org
- Praxis International is a non-profit research and training organization that works toward the elimination of violence in the lives of women and children. They work with local, statewide and national initiatives to bridge the gap between what people need and what institutions provide. www.praxisinternational.org/organizing_frame.html
- Sisters of Color Ending Sexual Assault is a non-profit committed to ensuring that systems-wide policies and social change initiatives related to sexual assault are informed by critical input and direction of Women of Color. www.sisterslead.org
- Sacred Circle, National Resource Center to End Violence Against Native Women, a project of Cangleska, provides training, technical assistance, and educational resources to support efforts to end violence against Native Women. www.sacred-circle.com.
- Women of Color Network is an organization that provides and enhances the leadership capacity and resources that promote activities of Women of Color advocates and activists within the U.S. and territories to address the elimination of violence against women and families. <http://womenofcolornetwork.org/>

Books for Clergy

Chaney, Sandra Mizell., *Give It to Her*, Enumelaw, WA: WinePress Publishing, 2005

Cole, Johnetta B., Guy-Sheftall, Beverly. *Gender Talk* New York, NY: The Ballantine Publishing Group, 2004

Coleman, Monica A. *The Dinah Project*, Cleveland OH: Pilgrim Press, 2004

Hunt, Helen LaKelly., *Faith and Feminism: A Holy Alliance*, New York, NY: Simon & Schuster 2004

McClure, John S. and Ramsay, Nancy, ***Telling the Truth, Preaching About Sexual and Domestic Violence***, Cleveland, OH United Church Press 1999

Mead, Frank revised by Samuel S. Hill , *Handbook of Denominations in the United States*, Nashville, TN Abingdon Press, 1990.

Robinson, Lori. ***I Will Survive: The African American Guide to Healing from Sexual Assault and Abuse***, New York, NY: Seal Press 2003

Internet Resources

VAWnet is a national online resource center on violence against women, established to harness and use electronic communication technology to end violence against women. VAWnet resources include campus grant programs to address violence against women. <http://www.vawnet.org/>

National Sexual Violence Resource Center The National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC) is a comprehensive collection and distribution center for information, research and emerging policy on sexual violence intervention and prevention. <http://www.nsvrc.org/>

The National Center for Victims of Crime, Stalking Resource Center is a program to raise national awareness of stalking and to encourage the development and implementation of multidisciplinary responses to stalking in local communities across the country. <http://www.ncvc.org/src>

¹Cole, Johnetta B., Guy-Sheftall, Beverly. *Gender Talk* New York, NY: The Ballantine Publishing Group, 2004

²McClure, John S. and Ramsay, Nancy, ***Telling the Truth, Preaching About Sexual and Domestic Violence***, Cleveland, OH United Church Press 1999