

Preventing Family Violence

LESSONS FROM THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVE



Produced by the
**Family Violence
Prevention Fund**

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Preventing Family Violence:

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INTRODUCTION

“Using a community organizing framework means that we’re always thinking about how to get the community to see domestic violence as their work, how to get them excited about it, and how to build the community capacity to address it. Community engagement challenges you to think of long-term strategies and how events and activities fit into those strategies. Community engagement pushes (the work) beyond community education into mobilization and organizing.”

—Mimi Kim, cofounder of the Shimtuh Project

Family violence is a national issue and a local problem. Child abuse and domestic violence—two facets of family violence—are intertwined: they may exist within the same families and can have a major impact on the well-being of children, their families, and their communities. The Family Violence Prevention Fund (FVPF) has learned from families and communities that reducing and preventing family violence requires engaging community leaders and members—particularly those most affected by the violence—and encouraging them to drive the search for solutions.

With support from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the FVPF set out to learn from programs and systems that are using community mobilization strategies to prevent and reduce family violence. The 2002 report, *Preventing Family Violence: Community Engagement Makes the Difference*, describes the vision and strategies of 18 pioneering groups and leaders known as the Community Engagement for Change Initiative. (See the report at <http://endabuse.org/program/children/files/Preventing/pdf>.)

This handbook distills what Community Engagement for Change groups have learned about organizing at the community level and provides advice culled from the experiences of site leaders and other seasoned organizers. It is intended for anyone who wants to initiate or expand family violence prevention work, including agencies addressing family and community health and well-being (such as domestic violence and child welfare advocacy organizations), community development groups, and grassroots leaders.

WHAT IS COMMUNITY?

Groups in the Community Engagement for Change Initiative typically defined community as a common ethnicity, language, geographic location, or experience. When seeking to mobilize communities against family violence, it may be helpful to define community as a group of people who, based on some affinity, act together toward a common goal.

WHY WORK TO ENGAGE COMMUNITY MEMBERS?

Engaging community members is fundamental to fostering the lasting social change needed to keep families and communities safe and strong. When it comes to preventing violence, families and communities are on the front line in many ways:

- **Women who are abused usually first seek help from extended family, friends, and neighbors, and studies show these people are willing to help.**

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- **Many families are isolated from traditional support services or have had negative experiences with them, so building the community's capacity to help is crucial.**
- **Neighbors and community leaders are often aware of the families that need assistance. Once community members know how to talk about the problem and what to do about it, they are more likely to help.**
- **Community members use local services and know how accessible and helpful they are—or aren't.**
- **Community members are likely to share or be familiar with the traditions and values of the families who need help, and are more likely than outside service groups to know how to approach families about sensitive issues.**
- **Many community leaders recognize that violence within families is connected to violence on the street, and thus has an impact that goes far beyond individual women and children.**
- **The work of domestic violence programs and child welfare agencies in marginalized communities can sometimes compound the problems of racism and poverty. People of color and poor people are grossly overrepresented in the two systems that primarily respond to family violence—criminal justice and child welfare—and studies show that these groups receive harsher treatment than others even when the circumstances are similar. The removal of an abusive partner often means economic crisis for women and children. And these systems have not encouraged community ownership of efforts to stop violence, an essential element of prevention. Community-level leadership and mobilization are needed to address family violence.**

When community members can define desired outcomes and strategies to achieve them, they are more likely to take ownership of the work—and this is key to sustaining social change. Finally, a community's members are wellsprings of knowledge about its values, traditions, and norms, and this knowledge is the cornerstone of effective outreach.

LESSONS FROM THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FOR CHANGE INITIATIVE

Groups in the Community Engagement for Change Initiative developed approaches to preventing and reducing family violence that foster community ownership of the problem and build the community's capacity to respond effectively. The groups' experiences demonstrate how to:

- **Make it safe for community members to talk about domestic violence and abuse of children**
- **Create informal networks that support families facing abuse**
- **Develop grassroots leaders—especially abuse survivors—who speak out against family violence**
- **Make services more accessible and accountable to community needs**
- **Integrate family violence into the work of agencies addressing health, public safety, and community development**
- **Change public policy**
- **Develop and promote a community belief that violence in the family is wrong**

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The Community Engagement groups identified five keys to preventing and reducing family violence:

1. **Raise awareness of the problem of family violence and establish social norms that make violence unacceptable.**
2. **Develop networks of leaders within the community.**
3. **Connect community members to services and informal supports when they need help.**
4. **Make services and institutions accountable to community needs.**
5. **Change the social and community conditions that contribute to violence.**

This handbook describes strategies for achieving these goals and lessons learned by the Community Engagement groups. There are no simple solutions or proven prevention practices: this handbook reflects work in progress, and the groups doing this work are still trying new methods and building their skills and knowledge. They are already succeeding, however, in making family violence prevention a community priority.

USING THIS HANDBOOK

Readers of this handbook are likely to be at different stages of community engagement and have different perspectives on the process. Some of you are “of” the community, others have strong ties, and still others are just beginning to build community relationships. Determine your group’s position on the community engagement continuum and use the information that’s most relevant to your situation.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following principles should guide all community engagement efforts:

- **Safety for survivors and their children is paramount.**
- **Perpetrators of abuse should be held responsible for stopping their violence and should have access to services that support their efforts to change.**
- **Collaboration among service providers is crucial because no one entity can keep families and communities safe and strong.**
- **Systems and services alone cannot stop family violence—community engagement is essential.**
- **Engagement work should focus on a community’s strengths, capacity, and leadership, not just on its needs.**
- **To avoid doing harm, systems set up to intervene in family violence must focus on community needs as defined by the community—particularly people of color, immigrants, and the poor.**
- **Lasting family violence prevention requires strategies that support broader struggles for social and economic justice and against discrimination based on race, sexual identity, gender, and other characteristics.**
- **Meaningful community engagement is a long-term process that requires long-term investment.**

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Community engagement efforts typically begin with the desire to correct a wrong, fill a void, or make improvements. Sometimes the tragedy of a woman's or child's death spurs a community to action. Sometimes the policies and practices of a system responding to family violence are inadequate or even harmful. Other times the failure of agencies to meet language and cultural needs prompts community members to mobilize. For example, when the Asian Women's Shelter in San Francisco, a Community Engagement group, realized that many Korean domestic violence survivors didn't access shelter or other services, it formed Shimtuh, a community mobilization effort, in collaboration with the Korean American Coalition to End Domestic Violence.

Motivations like these can spark great enthusiasm for engaging a community in preventing and reducing family violence, but success rests on careful planning. Your first steps should be to create a picture of the community you want to engage, assess your organizational capacity, develop community connections, and identify the community's needs.

CREATE A PICTURE OF THE COMMUNITY YOU WANT TO ENGAGE

You may want to zero in on a community that has great need but few resources or services. You may opt for a community in which you have established connections. Or you could reach out to a community defined by place (the East End), identity and experience (lesbian and gay youth), interest (people of faith), or some other characteristic. If you identify more than one potential community partner, explore the opportunities and challenges each presents to determine where you're likely to make the greatest impact.

Once you identify the community you want to partner with, gather data to create a snapshot of it. If you want to work with a specific locality, do you know which ethnicities are represented, which languages, which age groups? If you want to work with a specific ethnic group, do you know members' income levels, where they live and congregate, and where they get information? This knowledge will enable you to focus your efforts so you'll have the greatest chance of success. Ask yourself:

1. **What do we know about the community we want to partner with? What is our understanding of what shapes its members' lives, what matters to them, and their values and traditions?**
2. **What do we know about community members' perceptions of family violence, including their attitudes and experiences?**
3. **Where are the gaps in our knowledge? What is the best way to fill these gaps?**
4. **Who should we talk with to learn more about the community and begin establishing relationships? Whose buy-in is needed to bring others aboard?**

ASSESS YOUR CAPACITY AND READINESS

The following questions will help you assess your organizational capacity, strengths, resources, and knowledge, and lay a solid foundation for engagement work. Try not to become overwhelmed by the complexity of the answers or by what you don't know. In many instances, your answers will be

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preliminary and you'll expand on them over time. This is especially true if your organization is reaching out to a community for the first time.

1. **What is the outcome we want to achieve through this initiative?**
2. **How do we think this work will affect the community?**
3. **What assumptions do we have about the community that will affect the work? Are they valid?**
4. **What assumptions does the community have about us that will affect the work? Are they valid?**
5. **What opportunities exist for implementing this initiative (for example, ethnic media that could disseminate antiviolence messages)? What barriers could hinder the work (for example, a lack of relationships with community leaders)?**
6. **How can we include the voices of survivors, youth, and men committed to nonviolence? How can survivors who want to help lead the effort do so without jeopardizing their safety?**
7. **What resources—both human and financial—are available? What services and infrastructure might we need to add and what is the cost?**
8. **How much time might it take to accomplish our goals? Are we willing to dedicate the time required?**
9. **How can we measure the effectiveness of our effort? How can we make sure our evaluation methods help strengthen our program, engage constituents, and tell our story?**

DEVELOP COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Your self-assessment will most likely leave you both encouraged and daunted. You'll have a clear sense of the assets your agency can bring to this initiative, but you'll also have a clear sense of the enormity of your undertaking. You can avoid feeling overwhelmed if you keep in mind that none of the items on your "to do" list is more important than developing relationships based on trust, respect, and honesty with potential community partners—organizations as well as individuals. Here are some tips on how to begin:

- **Find out as much as you can about the community you want to work with and the organizations and leaders that make it tick. If the community has a neighborhood, get a feel for it by walking around the area. Read the community newspaper. Get in touch with groups and individuals you know who may have contacts there.**
- **Learn who has the ear of the community and influences people's opinions. Which individuals and organizations can help your agency better understand the community's experiences with and perceptions of family violence, its strengths and assets, and ways to involve its members? Contact informal leaders, who often are less visible, as well as formal ones.**
- **Look for the organizations and leaders that seem most compatible—those dealing with women's, children's, and family issues; community well-being and economic development; youth violence; or health care and other social services, for example.**
- **When meeting with groups, particularly those from communities concerned about stereotyping, be prepared to discuss why you chose them. Have you read about recent cases? Are women from the community calling**

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your hotline? Do you know that there are no culturally specific services available to them?

- **Your choice of language can either facilitate or impede relationship building with the community you want to engage. Use words that describe (“women who are mistreated by their partners”) rather than label (“victim”). Find language the community can “hear”—words that help you establish common ground and show an understanding of the community’s values and norms, as well as the social, political, economic, and cultural forces that shape their experience.**

In North Carolina’s Chatham County, the Coalition for Family Peace/Family Violence & Rape Crisis developed solid community connections when it began the Faith Partners for Family Peace Initiative to train domestic violence prevention specialists in 15 congregations. The task force that oversees the initiative is chaired by a pastor, outreach staff members were drawn from the faith communities, and the Coalition organized a group of clergy to advise the project.

“We have to recognize the limitations of what we know,” says Jo Ann Harris, the Coordinated Community Response Specialist for the North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence, which

TIPS FOR BUILDING STRONG RELATIONSHIPS

Cultivating connections with key individuals and organizations in the community you want to partner with can be challenging, but it is essential to success. To develop strong relationships, follow these guidelines:

- **Be genuine and respectful.**
- **Meet with people on their turf at times convenient for them.**
- **Listen more than you talk.**
- **Ask only the kinds of questions you would be willing to answer.**
- **Don’t rush things.**
- **Be consistent.**
- **Show interest in issues that matter to the community.**
- **Display sensitivity and start where the community is willing to confront family violence issues.**
- **Make your agency welcoming to the community (provide translated materials, have appropriate foods and personal products on hand at your residential program, and so on).**
- **Hire community members as agency staff at all levels of leadership and responsibility, not just as outreach workers whose jobs are often the first to go during a budget crunch.**
- **Recognize that the work to sustain productive and positive relationships is ongoing.**
- **Be willing to share power and resources.**

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provides technical assistance to the Coalition for Family Peace. “We might be experts on domestic violence but not on that congregation, so we have to be willing to listen. The [Coalition] was very smart because they didn’t go in with an attitude that says ‘we have the answers to *your* problems.’”

How you broach a subject as difficult as domestic violence is important when approaching any community, Harris says. Learn to speak the language of the community and recognize that terms such as “domestic violence” might not go over well. If you are trying to engage a faith community, become familiar with the faith’s religious texts. If the group is Christian, for instance, learn about Bible passages that say violence against women is wrong. And present the opportunity to prevent domestic violence as a “win-win” proposition, since clergy can see the benefit of having violence-free and healthy families in their congregations.

“The pastors we’re working with recognized that domestic violence is an issue to be dealt with and that they didn’t have all the answers,” says Theresa Isley, the African American Outreach Coordinator for the Faith Partners for Family Peace Initiative. “We presented the work as a resource to relieve some of the burden on pastors.”

Lessons from the Faith Partners for Family Peace Initiative on developing community connections include:

- **Go where members of the group are.** In the case of clergy, locate ministerial alliances or other networks and ask to be on the agenda of an upcoming meeting.
- **Respond to community members’ needs.** Pastors have stressful jobs, so instead of just asking things of them, provide spaces for them to talk and get support from their peers. Providing food goes a long way toward establishing positive relationships.
- **Don’t be afraid to start small.** Some congregations may be open to dedicating a Sunday school class to domestic violence or having the women’s ministry sponsor a seminar.
- **Seek out potential allies.** Wives of male pastors—sometimes known as “first ladies”—can use their influence to encourage congregations to address domestic violence. Leaders of women’s ministries may also be supportive.

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IDENTIFY COMMUNITY NEEDS

CHECKLIST FOR IDENTIFYING COMMUNITY NEEDS

- Engage community members and leaders in the assessment process
- Create a community asset map
- Find statistical baseline data
- Develop surveys and questionnaires
- Conduct focus groups
- Use assessment findings to identify outcomes

Once you've established relationships with your partners, begin working with them to uncover information that is crucial to your engagement effort. Learn about community members' and leaders' perceptions of and attitudes toward family violence, why they think it happens, what they believe will help those affected, what prevention and intervention strategies they think are viable, and how they're willing to get involved. Also try to create a statistical picture of the community and determine what resources serve it.

Key research goals include:

- **Finding out how community members have been affected by family violence, directly or indirectly, and whether anyone they know has been affected by it**
- **Identifying community values and norms that condemn or support family violence**
- **Assessing community members' level of concern about family violence and how they view it in relation to other social issues**
- **Discovering opportunities for and barriers to disclosing family violence, intervening on behalf of victims, and accessing needed services**
- **Identifying community members' ideas for preventing family violence and assessing their willingness to take action**

Engage community members and leaders in the assessment process. Community research is most productive when those gathering the information are viewed as peers or community representatives. This is especially true when addressing sensitive topics like family violence. Some of the most effective peer researchers are those who have direct experience with family violence, such as survivors and perpetrators who have renounced violence. PTA members, church congregants, and others who are invested in their community also can be good researchers.

A useful guide to conducting community-driven research and training community members as peer researchers is the *Education and Information Manual*, published by the Centre for Research on Violence

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Against Women and Children at the University of Western Ontario in Canada. (The manual is available at www.crvawc.ca/docs/pubs_edinfo/manual.pdf.)

While the Centre aims to make research an accessible tool for community activists, Community Director Barbara MacQuarrie recommends recruiting a professional researcher to help design the project and provide periodic assistance. She suggests contacting local colleges and universities to find professionals who understand the value of community-based research.

Some helpful tools and methods for learning about a community are described below. When using them, keep in mind that no community is monolithic—what works for one group may not work for others.

Create a community asset map. Draw or copy a community map and mark the locations of domestic violence shelters, child welfare agencies, mental health centers, faith-based institutions, community centers, police precincts, social services offices, and other places families can go for help. Mapping these assets will show you what's available and what's missing, and a large map can be a great conversation starter at a community meeting. (See the Resource Directory for a community mapping guide published by PolicyLink.)

Find statistical baseline data. A statistical picture of the community is particularly useful for grant applications. One source of statistics is the Urban Institute's National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership, which has created a software tool that uses census data to paint a social and economic portrait of communities of 2,500 to 8,000 people (see the Resource Directory). The indicators include population shifts, numbers of single-parent families, and unemployment rates. Census data can also reveal patterns of racial and ethnic segregation and income and education levels, and can help you identify the need for social, police, and other services.

Census data does not include statistics on family violence, and you may want to find out the number of child abuse reports to child protective services or the number of domestic violence calls to the police. Social service and law enforcement agencies may also have data on specific communities or zip codes. Such information can be helpful in monitoring the progress of your efforts.

Caution: Be careful that you don't draw erroneous conclusions from isolated sets of data. For example, if you look only at the number of domestic violence calls to police, you might falsely conclude that only low-income communities experience family violence. Similarly, a cursory look at family violence rates broken down by race may leave the impression that people of color are more violent. (See Appendix II: "Research Tips for Advocates" for more on interpreting data.)

Develop surveys and questionnaires. Surveys and questionnaires are an effective way to determine public awareness of family violence and community services. These tools can also help you and your community partner gather demographic information (age, primary language spoken at home, and so on), gauge levels of community involvement, and find out who or what influences community members' opinions.

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Surveys can be more than just an information-gathering tool, however—they can help bring family violence out of the shadows, convey to the community that it is an issue that should be taken seriously, and indirectly communicate concern for family violence victims. This is where community participation is essential. For example, the women who led Philadelphia’s Queen Lane Domestic Violence Community Mobilization Initiative, another Community Engagement group, were neighborhood residents who knew what questions to ask and how to ask them. The short, simple questionnaire they developed was designed to be administered verbally. Its open-ended questions allowed respondents to give their own definition of violence, which helped initiative leaders understand where family violence falls within the neighborhood’s overall concern about violence. The survey asked:

1. **When someone hits someone else, what do you call that?**
2. **What do you think about that?**
3. **What would you do if that happened to you?**
4. **What would you tell someone else to do if it happened to them?**

Trained community members can conduct one-on-one interviews in such locations as supermarkets, housing developments, health and community fairs, school functions, places of worship, beauty salons, barbershops, civic meetings—any place people congregate. You can also place questionnaires at schools, clinics, community centers, social clubs, and other facilities to be collected later or returned via mail. Some programs have found that this method produces more intimate information than face-to-face interviews.

Successful surveying requires flexibility. The Lane County Greenbook Initiative in Eugene, Oregon, initially tried surveying tenants of the Roosevelt Gardens apartment complex by leaving copies of its 10-question survey (in English and Spanish) on child safety around the complex. Few residents returned the survey, despite promised gift certificates, so members of the Roosevelt Gardens Neighbor to Neighbor Leaders Group went door to door, offering bottles of cider and asking for a few minutes of residents’ time. Project leaders think the “neighbor to neighbor” approach was key to reaching more residents (see Appendix III: Neighbor to Neighbor Greenbook Initiative Project survey).

A community newspaper is another channel for surveying residents. Ask the editors to publish a survey or a poll on family violence and then report on the results. A newspaper poll reaches a broad audience and provides an angle for a follow-up story on family violence (see “Raise Awareness of Family Violence and Change Norms,” page 14).

Conduct focus groups. In-depth and open-ended conversations with community members can provide more and deeper information than a survey or questionnaire, but they will not produce statistical information. With focus groups of eight to 12 people, you and your community partner can probe attitudes toward and understanding of the issues. In formal focus groups, a trained facilitator leads a one- or two-hour conversation; snacks and incentives valued at \$10 to \$25 are often provided. (You may be able to get local retailers to donate gift certificates or other incentives.) In informal focus groups, community members

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Victories and Challenges

LANE COUNTY, OREGON, GREENBOOK INITIATIVE NEIGHBOR TO NEIGHBOR PROJECT

Community: Roosevelt Gardens housing complex in Eugene, Oregon

Victories: Law enforcement officials reported a reduction in calls for police assistance in the first year of the Greenbook Initiative's work with residents. In addition, tenants reported knowing more neighbors and feeling more comfortable engaging in conversations with them.

How They Did It: First, Greenbook Initiative leaders worked with site managers to address the concerns surveyed residents raised about safety in the laundry room, garbage/recycling area, and parking lots. This made residents feel heard, earned credibility for the project, and built trust between the residents and the project staff. Second, project leaders made developing residents' leadership skills a priority. Members of the Leaders Group receive ongoing training and information and facilitate project meetings. Group members also administered the project's survey.

Challenges: The project's biggest challenges are the result of local economic difficulties. Greenbook partner agencies have lost staff, making consistent participation in community meetings difficult. Partner agency staff members now participate only when they are needed for specific projects or to provide training. Additionally, Roosevelt Gardens has experienced a significant increase in vacancies and turnover, which has affected residents' sense of community.

may lead the discussion. Either way, it's important to provide a safe environment for community members to discuss violence, particularly if the group includes survivors.

To gain the widest possible perspective, convene focus groups with different segments of the community. Organizations in the Community Engagement Initiative held focus groups with women, men, community leaders of both genders (separately), clergy, senior citizens, young women, and young men.

For Close to Home, a Community Engagement group in Boston's Dorchester neighborhood, focus groups became a core component of the work. "We pulled people together for those initial conversations to understand how community members were thinking about this issue and how they envisioned solutions," says Director Aimee Thompson. "We found that the small-group dialogue could be a catalyst for so much more, like leadership teams and relationship building." Similarly, the Asian Women's Shelter used focus groups to explore Korean community members' attitudes toward domestic violence and their ideas for solving the problem (see Appendix IV: "Asian Women's Shelter Focus Group Protocol").

Use assessment findings to identify outcomes. Once you and your community partner have mapped the community, gathered statistics, and conducted surveys or focus groups, you should have a better

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understanding of the community and its incidence of and attitudes toward family violence. You should have such information as:

- **The population breakdown, poverty and employment rates, and education levels**
- **What services are available**
- **How well community members understand the problem of family violence and how comfortable they are talking about it**
- **Who the community's formal and informal leaders are**

The next step is to use this knowledge to set priorities and goals.

Community members should be in the driver's seat when defining desired outcomes and choosing strategies to achieve them. However, priorities and goals must also reflect your organizational capacity. How does the community assessment stack up against the results of your organizational assessment? Do you have the resources to address all the needs identified? If not, how should you prioritize? Remember: insufficient resources can cause a project to fail, leading to dashed hopes and possibly damaging your credibility with the community you're striving to engage. A well-planned, sufficiently supported action that addresses a small need is better than a floundering action that attempts to address a major one. If you feel you must start by addressing a need your agency cannot yet meet, you will need to increase your capacity by bringing new partners to the table and seeking additional resources.

One method of setting goals and priorities that's proved effective is a community analysis. Organize a meeting for community members at which you and your community partner present the assessment findings in a concise, easy-to-understand format. Have meeting participants identify and rank the key themes or issues, giving each attendee two or three "votes." Next, have participants assess each issue based on potential benefits and drawbacks, required resources, and available capacity. The outcome of these discussions determines how the initiative takes shape.

Questions to consider when identifying priorities and formulating goals include:

1. **What does the information we've gathered tell us?**
2. **Which themes and issues emerge repeatedly?**
3. **What strategies will address these issues?**
4. **Do we have what we need (staff, cultural competency, meeting space, funding for materials, and so on) to implement the strategies? If not, how can we fill those needs?**
5. **What are the potential benefits and pitfalls (for example, reinforcing stereotypes about certain groups or communities) of the proposed initiative?**

STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The following sections outline specific strategies that you and your community partner can use to achieve the five keys to preventing family violence identified in the Introduction.

RAISE AWARENESS OF FAMILY VIOLENCE AND CHANGE NORMS

CHECKLIST FOR RAISING AWARENESS OF FAMILY VIOLENCE AND CHANGING NORMS

- Target local media
- Take advantage of news opportunities
- Participate in community events and meetings
- Exhibit at conferences and in public spaces
- Organize small-scale gatherings
- Integrate antiabuse messages into discussions of other issues
- Include men in making the case that family violence is a community issue
- Build bridges with faith communities
- Find speaking opportunities at local colleges

In some communities family violence is considered a taboo topic or a private issue, so community members may be hesitant to discuss it in public. Yet raising awareness of family violence and its cost to communities is essential for prevention. The Community Engagement organizations have used a number of strategies to raise awareness and influence community norms:

Target local media. Local news outlets can be effective channels for communicating with your community. Begin reaching out to them by sending an information packet on your program or project. It can include a fact sheet on family violence, a brochure or description of the program, a list of spokespersons with contact information, and other useful data. This packet may not generate news stories, but it will familiarize journalists with your work.

Follow up with phone calls to the outlets that are easiest for you to access; it is often a good idea to start with public-access cable channels, community or ethnic newspapers, and local radio. Talk about the ways they might cover your program, such as a public service announcement, placing one of your spokespersons as a guest on a cable show or radio talk show, or publishing an opinion column that you write.

In the San Francisco Bay Area, the Asian Women's Shelter's Shimtuh program, which works with the Korean community, sought and received coverage of domestic violence in the major Korean-language newspapers. The result was a significant increase in the number of community members who volunteered. "What we did was create a buzz," says Mimi Kim, a former Asian Women's Shelter staff member and cofounder of Shimtuh. "As a result, a significant number of people came out and committed to a 70-hour training."

STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Take advantage of news opportunities. Sadly, there is no shortage of news stories related to family violence, and these provide opportunities for you to get your message out. Call reporters and offer your opinion on what happened, give statistics on the prevalence of family violence in your community, and explain what your organization is doing to prevent it. You may also want to discuss your community assessment results. Be sure to mention that you're recruiting volunteers to help in the community engagement effort. Also consider writing a letter to the editor. Letters are well read in most communities and can respond to stories or editorials with a confirming or opposing point of view, often expanding on a point made in the original article. Look at your target newspaper's editorial page to find the length of most letters and information on submissions. Follow up with a telephone call to make sure the editor received your letter (see Appendix V: "Working with the Media" for more suggestions).

Participate in community events and meetings. Make an appearance at any and all community events. Staff an information booth and offer such handouts as refrigerator magnets with hotline numbers; stickers, T-shirts, or buttons with antiviolence messages; and information about where to go for help. (The Asian Women's Shelter attaches antiviolence messages to candy.) Offer to speak or exhibit at conferences, community forums, and city council or community board hearings. Bring handouts that spotlight your fight against family violence.

Close to Home in Boston's Dorchester neighborhood is a regular at civic association and block group meetings. Staff attend monthly association meetings where they get five to seven minutes to give the latest statistics, encourage community members to reach out to those living with abuse and give them tips for doing so, and educate attendees about such topics as the effects of domestic violence on children or dating violence among teens.

Getting on association meeting agendas required persistence and persuasion. Close to Home had to convince association leaders of the importance of domestic violence and link the problem to issues the associations address, such as civic participation, economic development, and loitering.

Not all association members think domestic violence has a place on the civic agenda. But Close to Home Director Aimee Thompson says the key to getting community members to take action against domestic violence is the leadership's commitment to having the dialogue. Close to Home's experience proves the point: despite opposition from some members, the associations are teaming up with Close to Home's leadership teams to organize informal "kitchen table" discussions about family violence.

That result highlights an additional benefit to this awareness-raising strategy: it provides learning opportunities for your organization as well as the community. Initiatives like Close to Home's can help you better understand the community, its values, and what members see as viable solutions to family violence.

Exhibit at conferences and in public spaces. If you have posters or art—especially art by children who have experienced violence—seek opportunities to exhibit at conferences, in the lobbies of large office

STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

buildings, or in hospital waiting rooms. You will attract the attention of a wide range of people in these public places. Accompany the display with brochures or flyers to help viewers understand what they see.

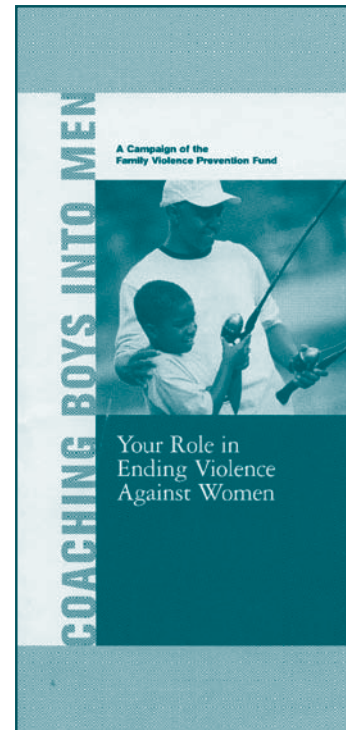
Organize small-scale gatherings. Sometimes the best way to discuss sensitive topics is at intimate gatherings. The Asian Women's Shelter's Queer Asian Women's Services project uses a potluck dinner meeting to discuss batterer accountability, survivor safety, and how the community can support victims who are lesbian, bisexual, or transgender. Similarly, the Young People's Liberation Project of the Seattle-based Communities Against Rape and Abuse organizes a monthly Scratching Post gathering where young people discuss topics including healthy relationships, dating violence, oppression, and community organizing. And Close to Home is beginning a knitting circle of 10 women to foster trust and create an environment safe enough for members to discuss family violence and what they can do individually and collectively stop it.

Integrate antiabuse messages into discussions of other issues. Family violence is relevant to almost everything that takes place in a community. You can talk about the connection of family violence to youth violence, poverty, or substance abuse, for example. The Organización en California de Líderes Campesinas (Farmworker Women's Leadership Project) in Pomona, California, another Community Engagement group, raises awareness among women farm workers by weaving messages on domestic violence and sexual assault into worker safety presentations at house meetings or work sites.

Include men in making the case that family violence is a community issue. Family violence is often viewed as a "women's issue." When family violence comes up, men often feel blamed, defensive, or excluded. It is important to create a language and context that includes and welcomes men, and that recognizes that they may be the most effective carriers of antiviolence messages to boys and other men. Framing all men as perpetrators or potential perpetrators makes it difficult to bring them into the conversation.

Consider organizing men-only discussion groups—and be prepared to do more listening than talking. In Philadelphia, the Queen Lane Domestic Violence Community Mobilization Initiative recruited men, along with women and youth, from the Queen Lane housing development to participate in its community assessment and planning activities. The Initiative for Violence-Free Families in Minneapolis also engaged men, training them as leaders to speak out about the cost of domestic violence to families and the community.

Get men involved by giving them concrete steps they can take to prevent family violence. The FVPF's latest public education campaign, *Coaching*



Coaching Boys Into Men brochure offers useful tips

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Boys Into Men, does that by asking men to convey to their sons and other boys that violence against women and girls is wrong. The campaign features television and radio public service announcements as well as a brochure with tips for men on how to bring up domestic and dating violence and what to say. (Get the brochure at www.endabuse.org/cbim/).

Build bridges with faith communities. Religious institutions can play a significant role in transforming thinking and behavior that enables family violence.

The Asian Women's Shelter's Shimtuh program, recognizing that religion is a major influence in the Korean community, works with faith communities through an online "virtual village." Participating churches and temples receive computers that allow congregation members to access information on domestic violence and seek assistance from trained volunteers.

Victories and Challenges

THE SHIMTUH PROJECT OF THE ASIAN WOMEN'S SHELTER

Community: San Francisco Bay Area Korean community

Victories: The Shimtuh project, cofounded by the Asian Women's Shelter and the Korean American Coalition to End Domestic Abuse to mobilize the Bay Area's Korean community against domestic violence, has formed a survivors group that educates the community, produced an educational video, and seeded a similar awareness initiative in a nearby county.

Being Home Should Not Hurt: Domestic Violence in the Korean Community, a video featuring members of the survivors group, helps increase awareness and galvanize community members. Following a screening and training on the dynamics of domestic violence, alumnae from a Korean women's university began raising funds to address unmet needs for services and supports in the area south of San Francisco. Women from the survivors group also are helping to raise awareness through a compelling puppet show depicting their experiences with violence. They hope that by sharing their stories they will give hope to other survivors and educate the community.

How They Did It: Shimtuh organizers initially were reluctant to ask survivors to appear in a video out of concern that the women would feel exploited or obligated. However, after one survivor offered to share her story, she convinced project leaders to ask the others, and most readily agreed. None of the women's faces appear in *Being Home Should Not Hurt*; instead, their stories are told through their voices, body language, and fictionalized representations of their experiences.

Challenges: Shimtuh's biggest challenge is securing adequate resources. The project relies primarily on funding from a single state and a single federal grant. Project leaders have managed to raise small sums from other donors.

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The Initiative for Violence-Free Families, another Community Engagement group, holds a Spiritual Speakout for Violence-Free Families, an ecumenical competition to promote preaching sermons on domestic violence in the Minneapolis area. Clergy participating in the Spiritual Speakout can learn about pastoral counseling to address family violence and how to make referrals to domestic violence and child abuse services.

Find speaking opportunities at local colleges. Contact your community college or state university and offer to speak in sociology, psychology, and women's studies courses, among others. You'll spread the word, attract volunteers, and reach out to students who may need help. You might even find student interns who can offer your organization additional labor and energy.

BUILD NETWORKS OF LEADERS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

CHECKLIST FOR BUILDING NETWORKS OF LEADERS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

- Look beyond traditional leaders
- Encourage youth leaders
- Identify leadership roles for men committed to ending violence
- Recruit at community and civic meetings
- Provide leadership training
- Develop teams of leaders
- Be ready to relinquish some power

Local leadership development is key to mobilizing your community and ensuring that work to prevent family violence will be sustained. Leaders reach out to community members, spread the message, recruit volunteers and supporters, connect families with services, and help generate dialogue on how to solve problems and change community norms that support violence. There are a number of ways you can encourage existing community leaders to take on the issue of family violence and support the development of new leaders drawn from the ranks of those who have been affected by abuse.

Look beyond traditional leaders. Some leaders are highly visible—you just need to establish connections and bring them on board. Others you need to seek out. Aimee Thompson of Close to Home advises, “In defining a leader, ask yourself who has influence within their social network and among their peers.” Look for people who share common ground with the constituency you're trying to engage. When reaching out to faith communities, for instance, turn not only to clergy but also to women's groups. Find peer educators among youth who can reach other young people. The questions posed and strategies discussed in “Getting Started” can help. If you opt to survey a community, consider including a question that asks respondents who they turn to when they have a problem or who they listen to when they need advice.

STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Encourage youth leaders. Young people are disproportionately affected by family violence. Developing the leadership skills of youth survivors and addressing their distinct needs can promote healing and prevent abuse in future generations.

Central City Lutheran Mission in San Bernardino, California, decided to reach out to young people of color and try to keep the initiative neighborhood identified, says Administrative Director Tom Dolan. The Mission uses the peer educator model, in which programs are youth focused and youth led. These programs give young people the tools to become leaders who work to change the social conditions that contribute to violence. Pastor David Kalke, Central City Lutheran Mission's executive director, notes that when young people come to the Mission for the first time, "they are greeted by another young person, someone to identify with. All the peer educators are trained in the rules of the space and it creates a sense of safety. The nonviolence is self-governed by the young people."

Identify leadership roles for men committed to ending abuse. Identify men who can be role models for other men and boys, and create appropriate roles for them in organizing work.

The FVPPF's *It's Your Business* project found that creating a space for men to "own" the issue can achieve powerful results. Men involved in the project wanted a way to take a public stand against domestic violence and the idea for the groundbreaking Men's March & Rally was born. Holding signs reading "Real Men Don't Hit" and "It Makes Kids Sad When Their Parents Fight," and chanting "It's your business, it's our business, stop domestic violence!" some 50 men and their families marched through San Francisco's Western Addition neighborhood to observe National Domestic Violence Awareness Month in October. When they arrived at a local park, the marchers were joined by 100 community members, survivors, and former batterers for an educational and inspiring program of testimonials, poetry, and singing. The event attracted coverage from three local television stations and a grassroots magazine.

Recruit at community and civic meetings. If you're not an integral part of the community you hope to engage and haven't yet found a community partner, get out in the field. Learn what is going on and listen to community members talk about their lives. This will educate you and help you identify natural leaders who have the trust of their community.

Provide leadership training. Once you have identified leaders, find out what they need to become effective advocates. Help them deepen their understanding of family violence and learn how to talk about its impact on the community. Create regular opportunities to get their feedback and work together to improve the messages and tools used to take the issue to the community.

Sisters Overcoming Abusive Relationships, or SOAR, provides intensive leadership training to help members increase their knowledge, develop new skills, and stay involved over the long haul. A project of the Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence, SOAR galvanizes domestic violence survivors from across the state to push for policy changes that improve system responses and promote prevention. The group's Project STRIVE (Survivors Training and Recruiting Individual Voices for Empowerment)

STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

is a yearlong program that trains 15 members at a time. Trainees put in 10 hours a month and receive help with child care, transportation, and food to make participation easier. Group members determine the training topics, ensuring that sessions are meaningful, and in the final three months of training, each STRIVE participant identifies a new trainee to take her place. This ensures that leadership development is ongoing.

Helping immigrant Latina women become leaders has always been a goal of *Mujeres Unidas y Activas* (United and Active Women), which works in San Francisco and Oakland, California. In 2001 the organization launched its first structured, intensive program, called Leadership and Unity for Community Empowerment. *Mujeres Unidas y Activas* works to develop members' skills and self-determination so they can organize and educate others in support of social justice and immigrant rights.

The eight-week Leadership and Unity for Community Empowerment sessions begin by building participants' self esteem, helping women who often suffer abuse in their families and marginalization in society see themselves as leaders. The curriculum then moves to other topics: analyses of power and oppression, histories of immigration and social movements, alliance building, campaign organizing, and public speaking. The program lets women know that “you do have a voice, you have a right to use it, and you have a right to speak about the injustices you endure,” says Codirector Lisa Moore.

Develop teams of leaders. A number of Community Engagement for Change groups use a team approach to develop community leaders. This allows leaders to support and encourage one another, increasing the likelihood that they will stay involved.

Communities Against Rape and Abuse, or CARA, in Seattle has assembled Community Action Teams (CATs) that organize workshops, discussion groups, and community events. The group's projects—the Black People's Project, the Disability Pride Project, and the Young People's Liberation Project—each operate a seven-person CAT whose members receive stipends for 12 hours of work a month.

“We decided that since we would be getting information from CAT members that would ultimately help develop CARA as an organization, it made sense to pay folks even a small stipend to let them know that we take their work and wisdom seriously,” says Program Coordinator Alisa Bierria. “Not to mention that our constituents are disproportionately poor and, because of that, their time is precious and could be spent making money instead of talking to us all day!”

At CARA, leadership development is an ongoing process, training is individualized, and the process of identifying potential CAT members, often through events, is organic. A flexible organizational structure means that individuals can assume different roles over time, moving from CAT member to staffer to board member. These possibilities for growth and development help keep people involved.

Be ready to relinquish some power. Developing leaders to combat family violence requires the right balance of stepping back and providing support, and that balance may shift as you work on different initiatives.

STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Review your involvement with your community partner on a regular basis to ensure that you're providing enough support to keep the work going and not retaining so much control that community members can't take ownership of the project. Remember, your ultimate goal is to build the capacity of your partner and the community so your support is no longer necessary.

Staff from Oregon's Lane County Greenbook Initiative found that once they "got out of the way," members of the Roosevelt Gardens Neighbor to Neighbor Leaders Group were able and willing to provide direction and assume responsibility. Group members now develop meeting agendas and facilitate the meetings, with staff providing administrative and logistical support. The result: more productive meetings, more frequent activities with better attendance, and greater involvement of Roosevelt tenant leaders in the larger Trainsong Neighbors Association.

The Greenbook staff's willingness to let community members define the agenda for preventing family violence has been an important factor in developing tenant leaders and sustaining their involvement. Leaders Group members wanted to broaden the discussion to incorporate environmental safety concerns and support for families. Staff members initially feared that the broader focus would lead to avoidance of hard issues, but that hasn't happened. In fact, the Leaders Group consistently makes sure referral and support information on domestic violence, sexual assault, and child abuse are readily available. Project staff members have learned that "for the neighbors here, environmental health and safety issues can't be separated from family safety," says Director Diana Avery.

CONNECT COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

CHECKLIST FOR CONNECTING COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

Strategies for systems and service providers:

- Establish meaningful relationships with community partners
- Integrate family violence assistance into existing services

Strategies for community groups:

- Provide community-based advocacy
- Connect families to informal supports

Systems and service providers and community groups can use community engagement strategies to help families affected by violence get assistance. Systems and service providers can use these strategies to reach out before crises emerge to families living with violence, who are often isolated and may be members of communities whose needs are unmet. Community groups can use engagement approaches to ensure that families experiencing abuse know there are people they can turn to for confidential, culturally appropriate support and help in accessing services.

STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

STRATEGIES FOR SYSTEMS AND SERVICE PROVIDERS

The following strategies will help systems and service providers connect community members to services and supports:

Establish meaningful relationships with community partners. Wanting to make its services more culturally attuned to the needs of Korean battered women, Tri Valley Haven, a domestic violence program in Livermore, California, sought assistance from the Asian Women’s Shelter’s Shimtuh project. Representatives of the two groups met to share information about their services, discuss Tri Valley Haven’s technical assistance needs, and develop an agreement on coordinating advocacy for Shimtuh clients who accessed shelter at Tri Valley Haven, according to Shimtuh cofounder Mimi Kim. Staff at Tri Valley Haven showed a commitment to cultural sensitivity by making appropriate foods available in the shelter, accessing language interpreters, enlisting former shelter residents as mentors for current residents, and joining with other domestic violence agencies to improve services to immigrant women from diverse communities.

The result, according to Kim: Tri Valley Haven and Shimtuh have “a respectful, equal, and effective working relationship that truly meets clients’ needs, with each agency responsibly carrying out its appropriate role.”

Integrate family violence assistance into existing services. Families living with abuse often confront multiple challenges and may receive services from employment programs, health clinics, housing agencies, mental health agencies, and substance abuse treatment programs, to name a few. Think creatively about the places family violence victims go, and seek opportunities to distribute information, provide training, or establish a physical presence at these locations. In addition to bringing your services to the community, this allows you to reach families who are deterred from seeking help through domestic violence agencies because of the shame associated with abuse.

In Louisville, Kentucky, the Community Partnership for Protecting Children, an initiative of the Center for Community Partnerships in Child Welfare and a Community Engagement group, develops partnerships between child protective services, community agencies, and community members to ensure the well-being of children and their families. To reach vulnerable families early, the Partnership set up shop at Ujima Neighborhood Place, which offers a range of coordinated services.

The Partnership’s Community Resource Teams (CRTs) bring together family members, child welfare workers, service providers, church volunteers, school personnel, neighborhood leaders, and others at Ujima to offer support to families at risk of child maltreatment. The CRTs connect families to resources, improve coordination across human service systems, and build partnerships between a family’s formal and informal supports to nurture healthy child development and improve family functioning.

STRATEGIES FOR COMMUNITY GROUPS

Community groups can also play a vital role in connecting families to services and ensuring that resources meet community needs. These strategies have proved effective:

STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Provide community-based advocacy. Recognizing that culturally specific supports would encourage more families to get help, Latinas Unidas Por Un Nuevo Amanecer (Latinas United for a New Dawn), or LUNA, in Des Moines, Iowa, trained immigrant women as community-based advocates to ensure that Latina survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault can get the help they need in a manner that feels culturally relevant.

Latina survivors were reluctant to contact mainstream domestic violence services because they didn't speak the language, were fearful of being criticized, and felt intimidated. "There just wasn't a place they could go," according to Sylvia Stron, executive director of LUNA.

The organization's domestic violence and sexual assault advocates provide one-on-one counseling and group support, help survivors get legal assistance, and connect women to a variety of agencies, including mainstream domestic violence programs that offer services LUNA doesn't, such as shelter. The group's reach extends far into the community. Volunteer peer educators, trained in domestic violence and sexual assault issues by the Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence, provide information and support to women in community settings. These peer educators also help raise awareness of abuse, staff the 24-hour crisis line, and take groceries and meals to the local shelter so Latinas and their families can eat familiar foods.

Connect families to informal supports. Families experiencing violence often are disconnected from extended family members, friends, neighbors, and other key individuals. Yet studies show that these are the very people families turn to first for help and support. That's why educating community members about the signs and effects of family violence, informing them about local resources, and giving them tips on supportive messages can go a long way toward reaching families that otherwise might not get help.

Mobilizing community members—family, friends, and neighbors—to take action against domestic violence is the hallmark of Close to Home, which uses the "strengths of social networks and values and trusts community members' ability to develop safe, meaningful, and effective responses to domestic violence in their own neighborhoods."

MAKE SERVICES AND INSTITUTIONS ACCOUNTABLE TO COMMUNITY NEEDS

CHECKLIST FOR MAKING SERVICES AND INSTITUTIONS ACCOUNTABLE TO COMMUNITY NEEDS

- Influence family violence legislation
- Use media advocacy to spotlight system gaps
- Press for practice changes that encourage community engagement

Improved public policies and system practices are essential to preventing family violence, and community engagement strategies can help make institutions charged with helping families and children, such as the police, courts, and social services agencies, more accountable to community needs.

STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Influence family violence legislation. Some Community Engagement groups are using their resources and community connections to call for policy change.

SOAR transformed itself from a support group for battered women to an advocacy group whose goal is to change Rhode Island's child welfare, family court, and other systems that deal with domestic violence. The group's current priority is gaining passage of a bill that would limit domestic violence offenders' access to guns. The next goal is ensuring that custody and visitation orders take domestic violence into account and hold abusers accountable.

The group uses a systematic approach in deciding which policy issues to address. Custody and visitation have been among the most challenging issues for group members, but they wanted to learn about others' experiences, so SOAR enlisted a local college intern to help develop a survey covering such issues as judges' consideration of domestic violence in deciding custody and visitation rights and safety concerns related to visitation arrangements. The group has disseminated the survey to family courts, restraining order clinics, domestic violence agencies, and other locations, and begun collecting responses. Staff from the Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence will help analyze the results, and Sisters members will then design a campaign to address the identified problems.

Use media advocacy to spotlight system gaps. In San Francisco, the FVPF responded to the murder of a mother of two at the hands of her abusive boyfriend by mobilizing community leaders and members to press for changes in the police department's handling of domestic violence cases.

The catalyst event occurred in October 2000, when Claire Joyce Tempongko was killed by her boyfriend, Tari Ramirez, in front of her two small children. She had repeatedly called the police for help and obtained protective orders. Ramirez had just been to court on an unrelated probation offense, but was set free because the court didn't know about the domestic violence reports.

Recognizing that San Francisco's domestic violence response system was tragically failing women and children, the FVPF launched the *Not in My Home, Not in My Town* campaign to raise awareness of domestic violence and enlist the support of community members in reforming the San Francisco justice system. The campaign employed a four-pronged strategy: intense media advocacy to keep the public spotlight on the tragedy and generate community outrage; meetings with city officials to press for reforms; ongoing support and advice to the victim's family; and mobilization of a network of volunteers who distributed pledge cards that asked city residents to take a stand against violence in their homes, families, and communities. Distributing the cards provided the opportunity for one-on-one education, stirred discussion, and contributed to the public outcry. In addition, the FVPF brought together a committee of women leaders—the Women's Roundtable to End Abuse—who used their influence to raise the profile of domestic violence intervention and push for judicial system changes.

In response to the campaign, the mayor allocated \$4 million to complete the JUSTIS computer system so that the courts, probation and police departments, and district attorney's office could share information

STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Victories and Challenges

COMMUNITIES AGAINST RAPE AND ABUSE

Community: Seattle, Washington

Victories: Founded and led by women of color who are fiercely committed to social justice, Communities Against Rape and Abuse, or CARA, is an innovator in the movement to stop rape and abuse. The organization has mobilized a diverse constituency of youth; people of color; lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people; people with disabilities; and poor people to engage in collective action, dialogue, and community organizing that pushes for social justice on a broad scale while giving priority to work against rape. CARA has developed popular educational tools that promote awareness of sexual violence and its connection to the economic, political, cultural, and social oppression of marginalized groups, as well as devised principles and strategies that foster community accountability for ending sexual violence. Among the organization's most recent victories is a successful fight against substantial cuts to its city funding.

How They Did It: CARA mobilized constituents and built alliances with other antiviolenence groups and sympathetic city leaders to protest the proposed cuts. After the group sent out a campaign message through its listserv, the city council was deluged with faxes and e-mails from the group's supporters.

Challenges: One of the organization's top challenges is integrating the diverse branches of its work as the organization works to build a social change movement.

about violent crime cases, including those involving domestic violence. The project stalled, but with a new mayor in office, the *Not in My Home, Not in My Town* activists are stepping up the pressure to make systemic changes that would prevent future tragedies. As a result of the campaign:

- **Tempongko's family won a lawsuit against the city and was awarded a monetary judgment**
- **Key demands from the community have been met**
- **Local media took notice**
- **Domestic violence became an issue in a mayoral election**
- **Leadership from the domestic violence community was centrally involved in the city's transition to a new administration**

Press for practice change that encourages community engagement. Influencing public agency practices is the flip side of changing policies and legislation—both types of work are necessary to achieve the system reforms that can help families facing abuse. Engagement strategies that obtain community input help systems create interventions and services that better respond to community strengths, needs, and priorities, and ultimately are more effective.

STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Close to Home works to influence criminal justice system practices through advocacy with the Boston Police Department. The partnership began when Director Aimee Thompson realized that community service officers who gave crime reports at civic meetings failed to include domestic violence. “They were talking about car break-ins, muggings, and breaking-and-entering in people’s homes. But they didn’t mention family violence—which I know accounts for about 30 percent of the calls they respond to,” says Thompson. She asked the police to share domestic violence statistics with the community and offered to partner with police on presentations. She eventually became a regular part of the crime prevention presentation.

CHANGE SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY CONDITIONS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO VIOLENCE

Changing the social and community conditions that contribute to violence is perhaps the most difficult, yet most essential, aspect of reducing and preventing family violence. Most Community Engagement groups work with communities in which violence is compounded by poverty and whose members are often marginalized. In these circumstances, family violence is but one of many pressing issues affecting the community’s well-being. Changing overall community conditions is a long-term undertaking, but organizations can pursue it while meeting immediate needs for services and education.

Integrating family violence prevention into campaigns addressing other community concerns is an effective way to get the issue on the social justice agenda. Cultivate relationships with groups working on such issues as health care access, school reform, voting rights, language access rights, economic development, affordable housing, and police brutality, and develop persuasive arguments that explain the links between family violence and other social concerns. For instance, you can make the case that family violence is a breeding ground for community violence, explain how police brutality makes some women unwilling to call the police for protection, or detail how a lack of affordable housing makes it difficult for survivors to get away from abusers. You might also point out that family violence isolates its victims, impeding community activism and mobilization on other issues.

Some groups, like *Mujeres Unidas y Activas*, address family violence as one of several issues on their social change agenda. Family violence prevention is central to *Mujeres Unidas y Activas*’s advocacy for immigrants in the legal, educational, health, and legislative arenas. This approach reflects the group’s analysis of violence against women as a manifestation of “broader systems of oppression and abuses of power, which include U.S. imperialism and use of force in Latin America and beyond,” says Codirector Lisa Moore. “We talk about women’s rights as human rights and denial of health care and other basic services as manifestations of a system of violence against women.”

This view makes sense on a practical level as well. “Women come here with such a huge range of issues that it would be impossible to break out one and ignore the rest,” Moore says.

A recent *Mujeres Unidas y Activas* effort shows how family violence prevention can be integrated into other efforts to improve quality of life. Through the Language Access Campaign, group members pushed to make interpretive services widely available to immigrants who sought care from public hospitals and

STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

clinics in Alameda County, where Oakland is located. Of particular concern was the practice of relying on bilingual family members to interpret for non-English-speaking patients, which could jeopardize a domestic violence survivor's safety or prevent her from talking openly about the abuse and getting help.

Another example: When California's governor tried to eliminate immigrant women's right to prenatal care, Mujeres Unidas y Activas members saw an opportunity. Limiting prenatal care has profound implications for domestic violence survivors, since pregnant women experience increased rates of abuse and the health care providers who see them have a unique opportunity to intervene. To make their case, group members and their children visited state legislators and performed a dramatic street theater piece in front of the governor's San Francisco office to dramatize how the proposed legislation would harm women and children.

Victories and Challenges

CLOSE TO HOME

Community: Boston's Dorchester neighborhood

Victories: Close to Home has engaged community members and leaders in exploring the dimensions of family violence and is working with them to generate solutions.

How They Did It: According to Director Aimee Thompson, the key to involving and cultivating informal community leaders is "sitting in living rooms, backyards, and local parks, trying to integrate this issue with the scope of what happens in people's lives every day, making the work about building dialogue and relationships, not about 'programming.'"

The organization employs creative strategies to reach people where they are. These include "kitchen table" discussions that have reached more than 200 community members and Close to Home's Second Annual Fall Family Festival, where 200 community members enjoyed hot dogs, arts and crafts, children's activities, and entertainment while building community. At the festival, Close to Home surveyed more than 30 community members and two-thirds of them said they would like to join the organization's efforts to address domestic violence.

Challenges: Despite the victories, Thompson believes the organization's biggest challenge remains the resistance, denial, and fear that are present when discussing family violence in public settings.

FUNDING YOUR PROJECT

FUNDING CHECKLIST

- Garner support from community members
- Stress community ownership and input
- Strike a balance among funding sources
- Cultivate relationships in the funding world
- Research the current priorities of foundations and public funders
- Be specific about what you want to do, why you want to do it, and who will benefit
- Join forces with other organizations
- Think and talk about your work in new ways
- Look beyond support for programs

As government funding for social services dwindles across the nation, organizations working to prevent family violence—especially independent, community-based organizations—are seeking more funding from other sources. Those pursuing innovative but largely unproven strategies such as community engagement face the greatest challenges to obtaining needed resources, so we sought advice from four fundraising experts on how organizations can make the strongest case for this work.

Here's what we learned from Pat Eng, program officer for safety at the Ms. Foundation for Women; Linda Bowen, executive director of the Institute for Community Peace; Gretchen Test, a program associate at the Annie E. Casey Foundation; and Charlene Allen, director of grantmaking at the Funding Exchange:

Garner support from community members. Getting antiviolence groups to develop local fundraising capacity has long been a priority of the Institute for Community Peace, which supports community-driven violence prevention collaboratives. Cultivating community support strengthens the long-term viability of your organization and helps you ensure that your efforts are anchored in and directed by the community, says Bowen.

Grassroots fundraising puts community members at the heart of setting priorities and sustaining the work. “We often think of communities we are working with as resourceless, but they are really the first place to start to generate support,” Eng observes. Start with community members and move on to local businesses, she advises. Efforts should expand outward, in circles like ripples in a pond. “The enthusiasm needs to be infectious and will pressure larger sources, like foundations, to step up,” according to Eng.

The Asian Women's Shelter in San Francisco, for example, held a silent auction and earned a few thousand dollars to support its programs. “Even though it looked small in terms of how much we earned, it was a new effort in terms of community involvement,” the agency's Hediana Utari explains. “Small businesses, including acupuncturists and massage therapists, donated gift certificates. This allowed us to

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invite more community members to take part in our fundraising events through various means besides cash donations.”

Stress community ownership and input. A community group’s ability to mobilize and reach out to individuals is among its most valuable fundraising resources. Building a base of support in the community will show funders that your work is important to community members and help your organization survive during hard times.

Letting funders hear from the community can help, says Test of the Casey Foundation. “In a pitch or letter, make sure you include information on how your constituents feel about these services,” she says. “You could use a video or have people write letters. Some people may be willing to come and meet a funder at your office, to speak about their experiences and about how they feel their community benefits from what you do.”

One caution: be sensitive to the potential for exploitation. “We don’t want to ... objectify survivors to make potential funders weep and break out the checkbook,” says Alisa Bierria, program coordinator for Communities Against Rape and Abuse or CARA. “We want to fundraise from a position of empowerment, not pity.”

Strike a balance among funding sources. Hedge your bets by seeking small and large contributions from a variety of sources. “Dependence on public funds is tenuous [and] we need to rely less and less on that,” says the Funding Exchange’s Allen. Cast a wide net when thinking about potential sources; possibilities include private foundations, corporations, local businesses, universities, community members, and individual donors.

Cultivate relationships in the funding world. Develop relationships with foundation staff members and try to get added to their e-mail distribution list, which can reveal opportunities unknown to those outside the inner circle. Do your research, subscribe to listservs, get on the phone, even be willing to fly to a different city for the chance to meet a potential funder and speak about your work, Allen advises. CARA recently raised about \$25,000 in grants through “aggressive grant writing, shoulder rubbing, and connection making,” says Bierria.

Research the priorities of foundations and public funders. You may find that national foundations and federal funders, in particular, are hesitant to support new initiatives. When applying to these funders, Test advises, avoid presenting your work as brand new. Instead, show how the work complements existing projects the funder supports.

Be specific about what you want to do, why you want to do it, and who will benefit. Data supporting the case for your project and a commitment to measuring results can be powerfully persuasive. “At Casey, it is at the core of the work,” Test says. “Most national foundations will not support the work unless you can show them data, or at least show you have a plan for collecting data, and show that you recognize the

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importance of tracking progress over time.” (See “Measuring the Effectiveness of Your Strategies” for more on this.)

Join forces with other organizations. Collaborate on fundraising with organizations that have philosophies, programs, and methodologies similar to yours. “Funders like to see groups of organizations or a coalition of folks propose something,” Test says. “It shows that you have support from many different levels of the community and a well-thought-out plan.”

Teaming up with a partner that is already supported by the funder you’re approaching can increase your chances of success, because your organization will be viewed as a link to existing work.

Think and talk about your work in new ways. Making links between family violence and other issues affecting the community may lead you to new allies. For instance, Allen notes that many progressive foundations that fund social justice work aren’t supporting family violence prevention projects, but could be open to them.

“The domestic violence movement, in particular, needs to learn how to present our work in terms of social justice,” she argues. “We do more than services. We do tons of organizing, but we need to use the right language in proposals. We aren’t tapping into these sources enough.”

Funders that support community building also could be persuaded to support community engagement initiatives to prevent family violence, according to the Ms. Foundation’s Eng. “Violence against women has impacted communities profoundly, and many more foundations need to understand this,” she says.

Look beyond support for programs. Allen points out that universities, particularly research departments, as well as several foundations, including the Open Society Institute and the Ford Foundation, offer fellowships for grassroots organizers. Aimee Thompson of Close to Home in Boston’s Dorchester neighborhood recently won a yearlong affiliate fellowship to support her role as director from Ashoka—Innovators for the Public (www.ashoka.org), an organization that supports social entrepreneurs with new ideas and the potential to create change in their field.

MEASURING YOUR EFFECTIVENESS

EVALUATION PREPARATION CHECKLIST

- What do we want to know?
- What are we good at doing?
- Who will lead the evaluation effort?
- What is our plan?
- How do we know we're making a difference?
- How will we gather information?
- How will we make sense of this?
- Who will we share this information with?

Evaluation is integral to community organizing, preventing family violence and promoting social change. The process itself—which includes reflection, critical analysis, measuring impact, and communicating accurate and effective messages—can engender community engagement. Getting everyone (staff, program participants, community members, evaluators) involved increases communication and fosters a sense of ownership and accountability. Evaluation prompts organizations to recognize and document victories, challenges, and issues that have yet to be addressed, so it can result in more effective programs. And the ability to demonstrate your initiative's effectiveness can lead to increased support from donors and policy makers.

There are several obstacles to meaningful evaluation: Community-based, antiviolence work is complex, and the factors that affect it often defy quantitative measurement. Organizations may feel overwhelmed by the prospect of evaluation when other aspects of the work seem more urgent or they lack funding and support for evaluation. Many practitioners have little experience in formal research and analysis. And community-based organizations may distrust outside evaluators if previous evaluations highlighted problems while ignoring strengths and successes. Compounding all this, funders may have unrealistic expectations that organizations can provide evidence of long-term effects within short time periods.

The benefits of evaluation, however, make the effort to overcome these obstacles worthwhile. Integrating evaluation into every aspect of your family violence prevention work can give you and your community partner the opportunity to:

- **Determine desired outcomes**
- **Stimulate dialogue among participants and staff**
- **Clarify the values, beliefs, and theory of change guiding your initiative**
- **Identify areas of strength as well as those that need improvement**

MEASURING YOUR EFFECTIVENESS

There is more than one approach to evaluating antiviolenence work. The Community Engagement for Change Initiative favors participatory evaluation, which stresses that those being evaluated should be actively involved in every aspect of the process. The Community Engagement groups are exploring ways of meshing participatory approaches to evaluation with outcome-based measurements that demonstrate the impact of program activities. Outcome-based evaluation helps groups define long-term goals and monitor short-term indicators of progress.

To learn more about evaluation methods, see the materials in the Resource Directory. The questions below are designed to help you plan your evaluation process and think carefully about how your principles, values, and resources will shape your efforts.

WHAT DO WE WANT TO KNOW?

Decide what information would be most helpful for the initiative's staff, participants, and stakeholders. If funders predetermine your evaluation question, convene a group of stakeholders to think critically about which aspects of the question might be useful to them. What do you hope to learn?

Communities Against Rape and Abuse, or CARA, is applying participatory evaluation principles to engage in an "organic process of inquiry," as Program Coordinator Alisa Bierria dubs it. The organization used focus groups to find out how participants benefited from its signature event, the Nat Turner Teach-In, and is considering interviewing community members not involved with the agency to learn how to engage them. CARA also interviewed Community Action Team (CAT) members to assess the CAT model's ability to develop leadership among the group's constituencies; the interviews revealed both strengths and weaknesses of the model.

WHAT ARE WE GOOD AT DOING?

Capitalize on the strengths and knowledge of staff, organizers, and community members when determining your capacity to gather and analyze data. Don't feel inadequate if no one has formal training in evaluation. Assess your budget and resources, and think strategically about how to make the most of them.

WHO WILL LEAD THE EVALUATION EFFORT?

Whoever leads your evaluation effort will need adequate time as well as access to resources and support. Many community initiatives do their own evaluation; others have funding and the desire to hire outside evaluators. It is important to consider the benefits and disadvantages of both options. Involving community members in collecting and analyzing information will broaden the evaluation's scope and increase the credibility, accuracy, and relevance of the findings.

WHAT IS OUR PLAN?

Building ongoing evaluation into the work can help you adjust your program or make improvements in a timely way. Ongoing evaluation can be a structured or semistructured process; the important thing is to collect information at specified intervals and immediately following major events. Repeat your focus groups or your initial survey to find out if knowledge and attitudes have changed.

MEASURING YOUR EFFECTIVENESS

HOW WILL WE GATHER INFORMATION?

Use varied methodologies. Evaluation can include gathering statistical information, content-oriented analysis of recurring themes in focus groups or other discussions, interviews with participants and stakeholders, focus groups exploring specific research questions, and video documentation. For instance, Close to Home has used discussion groups, surveys, ethnographic observations, and community surveys to gather data. The organization plans to incorporate oral histories, case studies, and digital storytelling into its evaluation process.

Monitor participation. Keep track of attendance at discussion groups, meetings, and community functions, and record participation in ongoing services. When the numbers are high, make note of what you're doing right. Conversely, if the numbers drop off, think about what you aren't doing as effectively.

Monitor telephone calls. Programs involving public awareness and educational campaigns should watch for an increase in phone calls following outreach efforts. For example, the Asian Women's Shelter in San Francisco noted a significant increase in Chinese callers after the agency exhibited at a Chinatown fair. Check to see if callers call back or come in. The Asian Women's Shelter tracks repeat callers and whether they request the same advocate if they call more than once.

Survey community members and program participants. Whether you provide shelter to a mother and her children or hold a workshop on family violence for the community, provide an evaluation form to be filled out when clients leave or the session is over. This will help you determine if you accomplished what you set out to do.

The Asian Women's Shelter measures the impact of its program through a questionnaire translated into five Asian languages and mailed to former residents with an invitation to a holiday party. The questionnaire has revealed that finding housing often takes women longer than the shelter-stay limit of three months.

Document your work. Documenting your work in writing at every stage—from raising public awareness to moving community members to action—will provide a record of what you did and what you learned. It will also serve as an important tool when seeking additional funding.

A solid record should include such items as your implementation plan, outreach and education methods, training modules, presentations, reports, evaluation and assessment tools, and materials used to engage the community. Be sure to capture the human stories at the heart of your work. Stories and anecdotes can help you spread the word and teach others about the importance of the work.

Track police calls and requests for social services. Watch for changes in the numbers of police calls or requests for social services. If your program is mobilizing community members to intervene, you should find an increase in calls and requests. This is good news, not bad, and it should come at an early point in your organizing work. If you have planned well, you should be prepared to respond to an initial increase in demand for services.

MEASURING YOUR EFFECTIVENESS

A decrease in calls is also good news. For example, San Bernardino's police department attributed a reduction in community violence in the neighborhoods surrounding Central City Lutheran Mission to the work being done there.

Monitor the numbers of volunteers. As your engagement efforts take shape, more people should want to get involved in helping to reduce incidences of family violence in their community. Keep a log of potential volunteers so you can match them with work that takes advantage of their skills and desire to contribute.

HOW WILL WE MAKE SENSE OF THIS?

A team approach is the most effective way to tackle the complex task of analyzing information. Your initial evaluation questions, the audience for your results, and the length of time you gathered data are just a few of the factors that will influence how you interpret the information. A program logic model may help frame results in the context of your initiative. (For more information, see the *W. K. Kellogg Foundation Logic Model Development Guide* in the Resource Directory.)

The *W. K. Kellogg Foundation Evaluation Handbook*, listed in the Resource Directory along with other useful materials, offers practical advice and in-depth information on evaluation analysis. The *Handbook* details some common pitfalls to avoid when analyzing evaluation information. These include:

- **Viewing the results in a vacuum. Don't assume that your program is the only factor influencing change.**
- **Ignoring the subjective nature of evaluation. For instance, people may respond differently to evaluation questions depending on who asks them and how.**
- **Claiming the results of a small, focused evaluation can be generalized to a larger group of people.**

Conducting quantitative analysis may seem daunting for those without a background in statistics, but good instructional resources are available. Qualitative data may seem easier to deal with, but it also requires systematic analysis to produce accurate information. You need to establish a consistent means of categorizing themes and the frequency of their occurrence, for example.

WHO WILL WE SHARE THIS INFORMATION WITH?

Identify the audience for your evaluation results at the start. You may have multiple audiences in mind—funders, program participants, community members, and initiative staff or partners, for example. Whoever composes your audience, remember to also report the findings to those who contributed. A chief concern among practitioners and community activists is that researchers conducting more traditional evaluations often fail to report the results once the process has ended. You can share evaluation findings to raise public awareness about your issues, recruit volunteers, and secure funding, but be sure to carefully guard the confidentiality of information.

RESOURCE DIRECTORY

These resources enriched this handbook and may be useful in your community engagement efforts.

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

PolicyLink, a national nonprofit research, communications, capacity-building, and advocacy organization based in Oakland, California, provides a helpful resource on community mapping. Download *Community Mapping: Using Geographic Data for Neighborhood Revitalization*, November 2002 from www.policylink.org/publications.html.

The **National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership** (www.urban.org/nnip/) is a collaborative effort by the Urban Institute and its partners to further the development and use of neighborhood information systems in local policy making and community building. To purchase software that can help you paint a picture of your community, go to www.geolytics.com.

FUNDRAISING

The **Center for Community Change** (www.communitychange.org) helps low-income people, especially people of color, create powerful, effective organizations to improve their communities and public policies. The organization can help with a variety of initiatives, including fundraising and coalition building. The organization's Web site includes *Private-Sector Funding Sources*, a primer on the function and types of private-sector funding. Download it at www.communitychange.org/buildcos/odtoolslist.htm#eval.

The **Council of Foundations** (www.cof.org) is a membership organization for grantmaking organizations and foundations that provides information, support, and networking opportunities for grantmakers. The organization's Web site includes a directory of community foundations in the United States.

The **Foundation Center** (www.fdncenter.org) is a leading resource on philanthropy, with a focus on helping people learn about grants and navigate the proposal process. Grant information is available on the Center's Web site; in libraries in Atlanta, Cleveland, New York City, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C.; and in partner libraries in each state. The Center also provides training.

Funding the Work—Community Efforts to End Domestic Violence and Child Abuse offers detailed information on gaining access to federal, state, and local funds, and provides tips and links to resources from private foundations. Download the guide at www.thegreenbook.info/documents/fundingstreams.pdf.

Grassroots Fundraising (www.grassrootsfundraising.org) compiles an array of publications on integrating fundraising into social justice work, including the journal *Grassroots Fundraising*. Among the publications you can order are *Fundraising for Social Change*, which provides realistic fundraising advice, pitfalls, and success stories, and *Fundraising in Times of Crisis*, which offers insights on fundraising during economic downturns and organizational crises.

The **Grassroots Institute for Fundraising Training** (www.grassrootsinstitute.org), based in Colorado, provides training and resources to help organizers, especially people of color, do grassroots fundraising while promoting community involvement in and ownership of social justice initiatives.

RESOURCE DIRECTORY

The National Network of Grantmakers (www.nng.org), a network of individual donors, foundation staff, and grantmakers, provides a directory of progressive grantmakers and is committed to increasing the resources of organizations working for social change.

EVALUATION

The **Aspen Institute Roundtable on Comprehensive Community Initiatives** (www.aspenmeasures.org) offers an extensive database of measures to evaluate outcomes developed by Comprehensive Community Initiatives, public policy makers, funders, and other experts. The database is available on the organization's Web site, which also provides links to numerous reports and other evaluation Web sites.

The **California Wellness Foundation's** Web-based series, *Evaluations and Lessons Learned from our Grantmaking*, is available at www.tcwf.org.

The Evaluation Exchange, a Harvard Family Research Project quarterly, was designed as an ongoing discussion among evaluators, program practitioners, funders, and policy makers. It highlights emerging trends in evaluation and practical applications of evaluation theory. The Fall 2003 issue, *Evaluating Community-Based Initiatives*, and the Fall 1995 issue, *Participatory Evaluation*, as well as other archived issues, are available free to subscribers and can be downloaded at <http://gseweb.harvard.edu/~hfrp/eval.html>.

The **Institute for Community Peace**, formerly the National Funding Collaborative on Violence Prevention, collaborated with the Association for the Study and Development of Community to produce *Principles for Evaluating Comprehensive Community Initiatives*, which is available as a free download at www.capablecommunity.com/asdc/pubs.html.

The **W.K. Kellogg Foundation** Web site (<http://www.wkkf.org>) provides links to several evaluation resources, including free downloads of the *W.K. Kellogg Foundation Evaluation Handbook* and *W.K. Kellogg Foundation Logic Model Development Guide*.

The **Ms. Foundation for Women** report on innovative participatory evaluation in youth programs, *The New Girls' Movement: New Assessment Tools for Youth Programs*, is available as a free download at www.ms.foundation.org.

The **Success Measures Guidebook** was created by the Development Leadership Network in partnership with the McAuley Institute to help community-based organizations develop effective evaluations of their work. Order the guidebook or view it free at www.developmentleadership.net/smp/manual/toc.htm.

United Way of America Outcome Measurement Resource Network (<http://national.unitedway.org/outcomes/>) provides information, downloadable documents, and links to other resources related to identifying and measuring outcomes. The Web site includes an online resource library, tips on designing evaluation frameworks, case studies, and references on evaluation concepts and theories.

APPENDIX I

FEATURED ORGANIZATIONS

The following organizations are featured in this handbook. Please contact them for additional information about their programs.

Asian Women's Shelter – Shimtuh Project

3543 18th Street, #19
San Francisco, CA 94110
Tel: 415.751.7110
www.sfaws.org

Central City Lutheran Mission

1354 North G Street
San Bernardino, CA 92405
Tel: 909.381.6921
www.cclm.org

Close to Home

42 Charles Street, Suite E
Dorchester, MA 02122
Tel: 617.929.5151
www.c2home.org

Coalition for Family Peace/Family Violence Rape Crisis

144 N. Chatham Avenue
P.O. Box 961
Siler City, NC 27344
Tel: 919.742.7320
www.fvrc.org

Communities Against Rape and Abuse

801 23rd Avenue S, Suite G-1
Seattle, WA 98144
Tel: 206.322.4856
www.cara-seattle.org

**Initiative for Violence-Free Families of
Family & Children's Service**

4123 E. Lake Street
Minneapolis, MN 55406
Tel: 612.728.2094
www.ivff.org

**Lane County, Oregon, Greenbook Initiative
– Neighbor to Neighbor Project**

125 E. 8th Avenue
Eugene, OR 97401
Tel: 541.682.6731
www.thegreenbook.info

Latinas Unidas Por Un Nuevo Amanecer

4815 University Ave., Suite 2
Des Moines, IA 50311
Tel: 515.271.5060

**Louisville Community Partnership for
Protecting Children**

Ujima Neighborhood Place
3610 Bohne Avenue
Louisville, KY 40211
Tel: 502.485.6717
www.cssp.org/center/index.html

Mujeres Unidas y Activas

3543 18th Street
San Francisco, CA 94103
Tel: 415.621.8140

**North Carolina Coalition Against
Domestic Violence**

115 Market Street, Suite 400
Durham, NC 27701
Tel: 919.956.9124
www.nccadv.org

Organización en California de Líderes Campesinas

611 S. Rebecca Street
Pomona, CA 91766
Tel: 909.865.7776

**Queen Lane Domestic Violence
Community Mobilization Initiative**

5538 Wayne Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19144
Tel: 215.991.6196

**Sisters Overcoming Abusive Relationships
Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence**

422 Post Road, Suite 102
Warwick, RI 02888
Tel: 401.467.9940
www.ricadv.org/soar.html

APPENDIX II

RESEARCH TIPS FOR FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION ADVOCATES

By Kiersten Stewart, Director of Public Policy, Family Violence Prevention Fund

As advocates working to prevent family violence and help those experiencing violence or abuse, we are often asked to interpret recent studies and are increasingly required to justify our funding requests with research demonstrating the success of our programs or the soundness of our ideas.

Research can seem like a hindrance to our work, but it can also be a great tool. Good research can be our friend. It can help us understand the size of a problem and its prevalence, which can help us advocate for our programs. And it can tell us whether what we're doing is working to solve the problems we are trying to address. Following are a few tips on understanding others' research and designing research for your own organization.

METHOD/RESEARCH DESIGN

It is important to understand that research comes in all shapes and sizes and there is no one right or wrong way to study a problem. The design of a study should depend on what you want to find out; the amount of time, money, and other resources you have to conduct the study; and the ethical implications of doing the research.

Quantitative research, which typically involves asking survey questions of a large group of people, is necessary when you want to generalize your findings to the larger population. If you use a large enough sample of people chosen randomly you can draw conclusions about what the public at large thinks. Qualitative research, which often involves personal interviews or small focus groups, tends to be more in-depth, providing rich information that often better captures the complexity of an individual's or a family's life. It is limited, however, in that you can't be sure that what you found offers insight into a larger group of people—it could reflect just the few people involved.

KEY QUESTIONS

Here are some key questions to consider when you are designing a research project or evaluating research done by others:

Is the sample representative? Do the people being asked questions represent the larger public or the group of people you are trying to get information about? For instance, a large amount of research on “battered women” is done by asking questions of women who are at a shelter. While these women's opinions might accurately reflect the views of battered women who go to shelters, we cannot say they reflect the views of all battered women because we don't know whether women who go to shelters are different from the broader group of women experiencing violence. Some good research suggests that women in shelters are, in fact, different from other battered women in sometimes significant ways.

This is important when you attempt to understand your role in the community. For example, if you want to study why immigrant women in your community don't use your shelter, you shouldn't survey women

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in the shelter. Instead, go to where the immigrant women who do not use your program are—this may be a community center, a temple, or another agency. Again, the key issue is ensuring that the people you are researching are the people who can give you the answers you need.

How was the survey conducted? Always ask whether the method of asking questions is likely to produce accurate answers. For instance, did the researchers use a phone survey administered by people who speak English to ask questions about domestic violence? This immediately skews the population to people who can afford regular phone service, are stable in their housing situation, speak English, and feel comfortable answering deeply personal questions about violence asked by a stranger on the phone. Did the interviewer ask women about their experiences with domestic violence in the presence of their husbands, boyfriends, or children? We know that women are much less likely to disclose abuse in front of others, particularly their abuser. How the survey was conducted could have an enormous impact on the results and could present a truly inaccurate picture if the method is a poor match for the research goals.

What happened during the study period that might have affected the results? If you are planning a public education campaign, for instance, you may want to design research that measures response to the campaign. You could do a “pretest” of what people know before you start the campaign, then a “post test” of what they know after the campaign. You probably will want to know whether people saw your ads and whether their knowledge of the issue or opinion changed based on the content. This ideally will tell you whether your campaign made a difference.

However, you need to be aware that other events could affect your results—and those of other researchers in similar situations. For instance, you might see no results. That could mean that your ads weren’t effective, but it also could mean that because there was an election going on at the same time, local TV stations weren’t running your PSAs during prime hours. You might get great results on awareness of the issue but poor results on attitudes about victims of violence; perhaps there was a high-profile trial taking place at the time your ads were running and the media portrayed the victim unsympathetically, causing the increased awareness but not an attitude change. Again, in this case the ads themselves aren’t necessarily the problem.

Do the results make sense? If you see research that concludes that women are as abusive as men, for example, you may think that doesn’t make a lot of sense. You need to ask some questions. How were the terms defined, and how were the questions asked? It turns out that if you ask women whether they have ever slapped, pinched, or hit their boyfriend or husband, in some studies they will report levels of violence approaching those of men. But if you ask men if they have ever been afraid of their wife or girlfriend, injured by her violence, prevented by her from seeing their family or friends, or forced to quit their job or flee with their children for safety, you will get a far different response. In the research finding that women are as violent as men, the problem may be the definition of domestic violence, not necessarily the accuracy of answers to the questions.

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It is important to always take research seriously and be willing to accept or challenge results based on the quality of the research and the questions asked. Well-designed research can tell us things we didn't know, and sometimes they will be things we don't want to hear. But we need to be willing to learn from research, to change how we do things, and to acknowledge that we may be wrong. We also must not be afraid to challenge research that we know is not accurately describing the problem.

As advocates for family violence prevention, it is our responsibility to understand as best as we can the lives and needs of victims and survivors of violence. This is often more difficult when we are victims or survivors ourselves. We know what we want or need, but we must accept that others may have different wants and needs. Research can help us find out what those are.

APPENDIX III

GREENBOOK INITIATIVE NEIGHBOR TO NEIGHBOR PROJECT SURVEY

Hello, how are you today? I'm _____ and I live in #____. I'm here today to offer you this bottle of holiday cheer and to offer you an opportunity to give your opinion on issues of concern to our community.

I'm working with a new group called Roosevelt Gardens Neighbor to Neighbor. We're a group of community residents who are interested in making our community a safe and comfortable place for adults, youth and children. Neighbor to Neighbor has been meeting for _____.

We have identified the following issues as being critical to the well being of the community:

- Supervision and safety of children
- Family violence
- Noise and nuisance issues
- Personal safety in common areas

We'd like your opinion on these issues and would like to ask you a few short questions. Would you be willing to do that?

If yes:

1. How would you describe life at Roosevelt Gardens?
2. How convenient do you think it is to access these services?
 - Child care
 - Transportation
 - Shopping/gas stations
 - Parks/playgrounds
 - Social services (including family violence services)
 - Medical services
3. How important do you think the following issues are to this community (rank as somewhat important/important/very important)?
 - Supervision and safety of children
 - Family violence
 - Noise and nuisance issues
 - Personal safety in common areas
4. What would you like to see done to address these issues?
5. Would you be interested in participating in Neighbor to Neighbor activities?

Our next meeting will be on Friday evening, January 17, at 6:30 at the _____. We would love to have you join us.

If no to answering questions:

Well, thank you so much for your time. Enjoy the sparkling cider, and have a wonderful and peaceful New Year.

APPENDIX IV

ASIAN WOMEN'S SHELTER FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL

We wanted to meet in this group to find out what you think about domestic violence in the Korean community and how to address this issue. This discussion is being tape recorded to ensure the accuracy of our discussion. All participants will be kept confidential. We'll be spending about two hours talking about these issues.

Let's start by giving your name and what you do to relax (introduction/ice breaker that equalizes folks or doesn't allow for someone to pose as expert or authority.)

Provide 30 minutes of domestic violence basics and then ask the following:

- 1) **When you hear about domestic violence, what do you think of?**
- 2) **What kinds of things do you remember hearing, specifically about domestic violence, when you were growing up?**
- 3) **Who did you hear it from?**
- 4) **What about the women in your life (mother, aunt, sister)?**
- 5) **What about the men (father, uncle, brother)?**
- 6) **What were the differences that you heard between the women and men? What was the same?**
- 7) **Did you personally know someone who was experiencing domestic violence?**
- 8) **Did other people know what was happening?**
- 9) **How did other people view the situation? What did they say?**
- 10) **Did anybody ever try to help? What happened?**
- 11) **How did you feel about the situation?**
- 12) **What did you wish would happen?**

Let's move to the present.

- 13) **If this situation were happening now, how would it be different?**

There are many kinds of Korean women who may face domestic violence. Their situations or experiences may be different.

- 14) **How would it be different if that person were elderly?**
- 15) **How would it be different if that person were not married, and living with a partner?**
- 16) **How would it be different if that person were in an interracial relationship?**
- 17) **How would it be different if that person were in a same-sex relationship?**

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- 18) How would it be different if that person were in a teen dating relationship?
- 19) How would it be different if that person were a 1st vs. 1.5 vs. 2nd generation?
- 20) How would the options be different in these situations?
- 21) What resources could a Korean person in a domestic violence situation turn to? Would they be helpful?
- 22) What do you think are the barriers that would keep a woman from changing her situation?
 - family?
 - in-laws?
 - church?
 - children?
- 23) What are the supports that help a woman change her situation?
 - job or other means of financial support?
 - ability to speak English?
 - immigration status?
 - family?
 - children?
 - friends?
 - church/spirituality?
- 24) How do you think domestic violence affects the children?
- 25) If you were that woman in a domestic violence situation, what kind of messages would you like to hear about domestic violence?
- 26) How would you like to be treated?
- 27) If we were to start a Korean program in the Bay Area, what are some things that would be important to include as part of the program?
- 28) What messages do you think the Korean community needs to hear regarding domestic violence?
- 29) What do you think are some of the specific domestic violence issues that affect (your peer group)?
- 30) Are there any types of outreach or programs that you think would be helpful for (people in your peer group)?

Recap some of the themes presented in discussion.

- 31) Is there anything else you would like to add?

APPENDIX V

WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

By Lisa Lederer, President, PR Solutions

There are many ways to use the media to disseminate messages about family violence and strategies for prevention. While it can be intimidating to approach journalists, the rewards can be tremendous. Media outreach can help you mobilize community members for action, alert them to available services, recruit volunteers, teach people about the scope and severity of family violence, promote prevention, and change the climate to make people less tolerant of abuse.

GETTING STARTED

Start this work by developing a list of local media outlets and journalists who should receive your press materials. Your media list should include: broadcast outlets (television, cable access, and radio); print outlets (newspapers, magazines, and wire services); and Internet outlets (friendly community Web sites and electronic newsletters).

You can find journalists to include on your list by calling the outlets and asking which reporters, editors, columnists, or producers cover issues relating to family violence, crime, community issues, health, and families.

REACHING OUT TO MEDIA

Begin by sending out an information packet on your program or project. It can include a fact sheet on family violence, a brochure or description of the program, a list of spokespeople with contact information, and other useful information. This packet may not generate news stories, but it will familiarize journalists with your work.

Follow up with phone calls to the outlets that are easiest for you to access; it is often a good idea to start with public-access cable stations, community or ethnic newspapers, and local radio. Talk about the possibilities for coverage for your program, such as public service announcements promoting available services or placing a spokesperson as a guest on a cable show or radio talk show.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Look for opportunities to place letters to the editor. These are well read in most communities and can be an effective way to respond to news. Sadly, there is no shortage of stories about homicides and other family violence in most outlets, and these provide opportunities for you to respond. Letters to the editor generally are no more than 300 to 400 words. They respond to stories or editorials that appeared in the publication with a confirming or opposing point of view, often expanding on a point made in the original article. Look at your target newspaper to see the length of the letters they publish, and whether they take submissions by e-mail. It is a good idea to include a daytime phone number with your letter; the newspaper will not publish this, but will use it to confirm that you wrote the letter. Follow up with a telephone call to be sure your letter was received.

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MEDIA OPPORTUNITIES

Once you have begun to establish a name for your program with media and the community, think about events or activities that can make news. If you have an event coming up, decide whether it is appropriate to invite journalists. This is called a media opportunity—an event not created for journalists, but which they can attend. This might be a community walkathon to draw attention to family violence, an initiative to develop young people as peer advocates for healthy relationships, or an outreach effort to place awareness materials in neighborhood businesses. If your activity involves abuse survivors, think carefully about ground rules and how you will protect their privacy. Ground rules may include that a journalist will not print or broadcast any names or the address of your domestic violence program. Invite only journalists you trust and make them agree verbally to honor your ground rules. Then let survivors and others who are attending the event know that journalists will be allowed in the room at a certain time, and give them ample time to leave beforehand if they choose to do so.

NEWS RELEASES

News releases are another effective way to pitch a story to a journalist. You might use a news release to report on an event your program is holding, the results of your community survey, or the recent achievements of your community engagement effort, for instance. A news release is a two- to three-page report of a newsworthy event that is written as an article. It must contain a contact to call for further information, a headline, a lead sentence that grabs the reader, a quote from one or two spokespeople, and background information. Distribute your news release to the journalists on your media list via fax or e-mail, so that it arrives the day before or the day of your event or announcement. Follow up with phone calls to make sure journalists received your news release and to see if they need additional information.

You can also use pitch letters—one-page letters suggesting columns, broadcast public affairs shows, or talk shows devoted to your topic. These are written for a particular columnist or producer. They provide background and explain why the topic is timely and will be interesting to their readers, viewers, or listeners. In addition, they suggest specific spokespeople to be interviewed and offer to provide further guidance as the column or program is developed. Send pitch letters to columnists or producers only when you are familiar with their work, and follow up with phone calls to discuss your pitch.

MORE INFORMATION

A number of organizations offer advice on how to engage the media effectively. Here are some of the most useful resources:

- μ **The Berkeley Media Studies Group (www.bmsg.org) provides information on media advocacy in its publications section—see in particular Issue 13 under Issues.**
- **The Communications Consortium Media Center publishes a *Guide to Strategic Communications for Nonprofits*. It is available through Amazon.com; get more information at www.ccmc.org.**
- **VAWNET offers *Media Outreach Made Easy: An Advocate's Guide to Working with the Press*, at www.vawnet.org/NRCDVPublications/TAPE/Papers/NRC_media.php.**

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- The Society of Professional Journalists provides links to ethnic and other media associations and a Diversity Toolbox at www.spj.org/diversity_toolbox_assoc.asp.
- The Family Violence Prevention Fund publishes a media advocacy newsletter, *Speaking Up*, about 24 times a year. The newsletter provides news and tips for the domestic violence and sexual assault prevention communities. For information on how to subscribe, e-mail speakingup@prsolutionsdc.com. Subscriptions cost \$35 per year, and the newsletter is distributed via e-mail and fax.

For more than two decades, the Family Violence Prevention Fund (FVPPF) has worked to end violence against women and children around the world, because everyone has the right to live free of violence. Instrumental in developing the landmark Violence Against Women Act passed by Congress in 1994, the FVPPF has continued to break new ground by reaching new audiences including men and youth, promoting leadership within communities to ensure that violence prevention efforts become self-sustaining, and transforming the way health care providers, police, judges, employers, and others respond to violence.

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