

Welcome!

Thank you for your feedback on the first issue of the Sexual Assault Resource Sharing Project newsletter. We appreciate your input and look forward to incorporating your ideas to make this newsletter relevant to your coalition's development.

As most of you know, the Sexual Assault Resource Sharing Project is focused on building the capacity of coalitions. A critical piece of organizational development and capacity building is diversifying the agency's leadership, staff, and volunteers. With an agency commitment to increasing the leadership and employment opportunities for women of color and diverse communities, an organization begins to put in place a foundation that will allow for overall inclusivity.

We hope that this issue, focusing its lead articles on building an organizational commitment to diversity, is helpful to you and your organization.



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The Effects of Tokenism on Women of Color

By Laura Zarate, Co-Founder, Arte Sana (Art Heals) and Steering Committee Member, the National Sexual Assault Women of Color Leadership Project

I clearly remember my expectations of a particular conference that I was given the opportunity to attend. Training opportunities were limited at the Hayes-Caldwell Women's Center, where I had been hired as the only Spanish speaking staff with the sexual assault program, so this opportunity was especially cherished for it offered a special institute just for women like me. The last NCASA conference that was held in Atlanta and included a Women of Color Institute was my first experience at a national gathering of women of color sexual assault advocates. I was very excited about the prospect of meeting and sharing with others who may have similar concerns regarding limited institutional outreach commitment, over extension and very limited resources to address survivors of color. The Institute workshops were very informative and allowed for women of color to connect without feeling isolated or tokenized. For many of us as women of color, we feel the constant stress of not only having to do it all (with and on behalf of the particular group that we represent), but also having to be an "expert" at it as well.

Subsequent to this gathering, I found myself compelled to try and connect with other women of color advocates in Texas first in collaboration with, and later from within the Texas Association Against Sexual Assault (TAASA). An informal survey was developed to promote the formation of a women of color task force in Texas and was administered to sexual assault advocates attending the 1999 TAASA statewide conference. The survey tool reflected the following realities of women of color sexual assault and domestic violence advocates:

- Women of color experienced lower levels of job satisfaction especially when they were the only women of color at their center,

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- Many women of color felt singled out, overworked and isolated. Pressures of not only having to work twice as hard to dispel negative racial and/or ethnic stereotypes, or the possible assumption that they were hired because of their racial or ethnic identity was exacerbated if they were the only staff of color in the office.
- Often introduced as “our new ‘Hispanic’ or ‘African-American’ advocate,” these women already had their area of contribution clearly defined and limited.

Those women of color advocates who manage to make it to the coalition level may also feel much of this stress and frustration to a greater degree.

TOKENISM

According to Brad ‘J’ Hall, Assistant Professor from the University of New Mexico, tokenism involves “the giving of a token or relatively unimportant, but positive item while withholding more substantial or significant assistance or involvement. The giving of the token is argued to be proof that the person is not prejudiced and allows the person to avoid engaging in more meaningful acts of equality.” Tokenism might be evidenced by the hiring of women of color, more out of a sense of compliance rather than commitment, hence the often heard “We NEED to hire a (fill in the blank) to help us reach the (fill in the blank) community.”

The consequences of overt and covert tokenism for women of color may include any or all of the following:

- Feelings of guilt over not being able to represent and be an expert on one’s own particular group,
- Impotence over not being able to impact the provision of services to communities that continue to be underserved,
- Inadequacy over, having to assume the role of office authority on diversity issues,
- Over-extension and demoralization after realizing that as the only bilingual staff, there is an expectation that they will provide all trainings and /or translations to a particular population. Further, that this expectation in itself represents a lack of institutional commitment to multi-cultural accountability.

“Change means growth, and growth can be painful. But we sharpen self-definition by exposing the self in work and struggle together with those whom we define as different from ourselves, although sharing the same goals. For Black and white, old and young, lesbian and heterosexual women alike, this can mean new paths to our survival.”

- Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider*, 1984

While some women of color are able to survive the initial toxic effects of tokenism and last long enough to impact the office culture’s evolution towards a healthier level of true advocacy and accountability, the unfortunate exit of others represents a loss to the movement that it cannot afford.

Some thoughts in regard to tokenism:

1. The organization has to have a willingness to change and to implement change, based on input from women of color. Start with a firm multi-level commitment to diversity. Facilitate the participation of women of color to help your organization develop a strong diversity statement that reaches beyond the EEOC non-discrimination mandate. Put the diversity statement in writing and announce it.
2. Remember that no one wants to fill a quota; a single individual should not be expected to and cannot represent an entire population group. Develop avenues and find ways to incorporate the input of several members from particular groups in the planning, goal setting, work plan development, and administration levels of the organization. Focus on the organization as a diverse mixture, not on individual representation.
3. Promote a sense of ownership by women of color in the organization by facilitating meaningful participation opportunities at all levels. Advocates of color should not be defined by their skin color, last name, or ethnic origin. Many talents, skills and possible areas of contribution may be overlooked by directors who hire women of color solely to fulfill specific (previously neglected) outreach goals for which everyone should be accountable. Assign tasks independently of cultural or ethnic background.
4. Avoid assumptions associated with race/ethnicity and politics. Women of color experience different levels of acculturation and assimilation and cannot be expected to share the same political positions. Women of color should be encouraged to contribute to the philosophy and ideology of the organization and have their own definitions of feminism validated and respected. While the very history and nature of sexual assault advocacy work includes activism, factors such as the developmental stage

and geographic location of an organization may also affect how welcome some women of color activists may feel.

5. Implement and learn from the exit interviews of both those who have chosen to leave and those who may have been asked to leave. An inevitable part of our work includes ongoing staff turnover. Unlike other professions that offer a variety of opportunities to stay in the field, the exit from a sexual assault agency may also signify the abandonment of this area of work. Offer a non-threatening opportunity for the exiting staff to honestly share either why the decision was made to leave, or how they perceive the conflict that led to the dismissal. This simple, yet crucial act of honoring individual perspectives may not only contribute to the growth of the organization, but also to the development of a truly synergistic work environment that is able to include and honor the gifts of all. ■▲

Laura Zarate is a former training specialist for the Texas Association Against Sexual Assault (TAASA); Laura is co-founder of the newly formed Arte Sana (Art Heals) an agency for underserved survivors of gender violence that promotes healing, risk reduction, and cultural empowerment through the arts, and Spanish language training development. You can reach Arte Sana at artesanando@yahoo.com.

The purpose of the **National Sexual Assault Women of Color Leadership Project (WOC Project)** is to identify, train and support women of color leaders at statewide sexual assault coalitions. For further information about the WOC Project please call Condencia Brade at the Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services (860) 282-9881 (cbrade@connasacs.org) or Luz Marquez-Benbow at the NYS Coalition Against Sexual Assault (518) 482-4222.

References:

"Why are some minority faculty unhappy?" By Bridget Murray, APA (American Psychological Association) Monitor staff.

"Prejudice" By Brad 'J' Hall, Assistant Professor from the University of New Mexico, Leading from Within: "Transforming Identity in Organizational Life", As presented for Leadership at 20, Porter and Green, the Academy of Leadership, University of Maryland, College Park National Center for Non-profit Boards question archive www.ncnb.org.

Coalition Highlight: Maryland

MCASA, along with the Maryland Police and Correctional Training Commissions, has created a handy First Response to Sexual Assault pocket guide for each certified law enforcement officer in Maryland. It is a summarized checklist of tasks basic to the responding officer's responsibilities. This ready-reference also includes tailored responses to general and specific survivor populations, a listing of approved SAFE programs and rape crisis centers, Md. sex offense laws and more. Best of all, there is a convenient pocket inside the back cover for the officers to store the information-packed Victim Resource Cards they hand to survivors. ■▲

Karen Hartz, Executive Director
Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault

Coalition Highlight: Illinois

The Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault will join the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in hosting the National Sexual Violence Prevention Conference during Spring 2002 in Chicago. The conference is entitled: Research and Practices in Sexual Assault Prevention: Enhancing the Dialogue. More information will be available at a later date.

The conference is a follow up to the four-day event held during May 2000 in Dallas. There were 792 participants in the first conference that featured three plenary sessions, 120 presentations, 18 poster presentations and 15 round-tables. Thirty-eight organizations provided information in exhibition booths. ■▲

Sean Black
Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault

Web Address Corrections:

South Dakota
www.southdakotacoalition.org

Iowa
www.iowacasa.org

Assessing Organizational Racism

The following excerpt is from the Winter 2001 issue of Views, the newsletter of the Western States Center. "This assessment tool was developed by the Dismantling Racism Project at Western States Center; drawing heavily from Dismantling Racism curriculum designed by changework, 1705 Wallace Street, Durham NC 27707, (919) 490-4448."

For more information, or to view the entire article, please visit the Western States Center website at www.westernstatescenter.org or contact Moira Bowman at (503) 228-8866.

"...The Dismantling Racism Project at Western States Center believes that racism is everybody's problem...The fact is, racism is reflected in every institution and organization in the U.S.: social change groups are not exempt. The structures and cultures of community-based, grass-roots groups reproduce the white privilege and racial oppression of the wider society. Whatever your social change mission, it's bound to fall short as long as racism continues to flourish and maintain the status-quo.

"Fortunately, organizations, like individuals, can evolve to become anti-racist. The transformation begins with developing a comprehensive understanding of how racism and oppression operate within an organization's own walls. From that analysis comes a commitment and concrete plans for dismantling racism within the organization and in the larger society.

"This Organizational Assessment - an excerpt of a longer self-evaluation tool used by the Dismantling Racism Project - offers a place to start. This sampling of questions is designed to help you examine and change the ways your organization replicates larger racist patterns.

"...Decision-Making & Leadership Development

- Does your organization have a goal to dismantle racism? Is this goal reflected in your decision-making process?
- Is there a shared analysis of who has decision-making power and who does not? Does everyone

know how decisions are made?

- Is there a deliberate plan to develop the leadership of people of color staff members and to share decision-making authority?
- Is your organization accountable to people of color organizations and communities who are affected by but not part of the organization?

"[R]acism is reflected in every institution and organization in the U.S.: social change groups are not exempt. The structures and cultures of community-based, grass-roots groups reproduce the white privilege and racial oppression of the wider society. Whatever your social change mission, it's bound to fall short as long as racism continues to flourish and maintain the status-quo."

"...Financial Resources

- Who develops the budget? Who does the fundraising?
- When the budget or fundraising plan reflects work to be done in support of people of color communities, do these communities have input on where the money comes from and how it is going to be spent?
- Does your organization advocate with funders to support the work of people of color organizations directly?

"...Available Education

- Are people of color supported in seeking information around issue of internalized racist oppression and self-empowerment either within the organization or from outside the organization?
- Are white people supported in seeking information around issues of white privilege and supremacy either within the organization or from outside the organization?
- Are there regular trainings and discussions at the member, staff and board level about dismantling racism and accountability?

“...Organizational Culture

- What are the values and norms, stated or unstated?
- Are people of color welcomed in the organization only so far as they assimilate into the existing organizational culture?
- Is white culture treated as the norm? Do the art, holiday activities, and food reflect people of color cultures?
- Is discussion of racism and oppression normal and encouraged or seen to distract from “the real work”? Do people in leadership positions participate in and support discussion of power and oppression issues?
- Are there people of color who consistently do not participate in meetings and discussions? If so, is there active reflection on why, and how to encourage more balanced participation?

“Fortunately, organizations, like individuals, can evolve to become anti-racist. The transformation begins with developing a comprehensive understanding of how racism and oppression operate within an organization’s own walls. From that analysis comes a commitment and concrete plans for dismantling racism within the organization and in the larger society.”

Editors’ Note: *It is critical that sexual assault programs, as social change organizations, consistently examine and address the ways in which power is shared with staff, members, organizations and communities of color. The work of serving survivors and eliminating sexual violence is inseparable from the work of dismantling racism. As the authors states (in reference to sharing decision-making power, but it applies broadly), “this task is essential, complicated and requires constant attention.”*

This work must take into account the history and continued presence of racism in social change organizations at many levels- decision-making, alliances, budgeting and fundraising, training and organizational culture. The work of dismantling racism in our organizations requires partnership with and accountability to people of color. We must address and dismantle all forms of

oppression in our society and in our organizations in order to eliminate sexual violence. ■

“...Working in Alliance with People of Color Organizations

- Does your organization provide support and resources for members, staff, and board members of color to develop leadership through working with organizations or campaigns led by people of color?
- Does your organization seek input and guidance from people of color organizations and community leaders of color organizations and community leaders of color in its strategic planning and decision making?
- Does your organization advocate for the participation of people of color organizations when working in coalition with other groups?
- Does your organization provide support and resources for white members, staff, and board to develop as anti-racist white allies through working with organizations or campaigns led by people of color?”

Upcoming Events

June 21 & 22, 2001 in Kansas City, MO

Central States Regional Meeting

Quartermage Hotel Westport

Contact: Christie (319) 338-9319 or cmunson@zeus.ia.net

December 4-6, 2001 in Lexington, KY

3rd Annual Ending Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Conference: The Missing Peace

Registration \$125 (includes breakfast and lunch each day); Room rate \$89 double

Featured Speakers are Raquel Kennedy Bergen, PhD speaking on marital rape and Julia Perilla, PhD speaking on violence and trauma: working in diverse communities.

Contact: For more information call (502) 226-2704 or checkout our website at www.kasap.org

Southern Regional Meeting Update

by Beverly Brakeman-Colbath, Connecticut

The southern regional meeting was held in Orlando, FL in February. Every state was in attendance with the exception of one due to unavoidable circumstances. It was a two day conference that involved a number of different aspects. The first day was spent addressing some specific issues that the group had identified as salient and wanted to be able to discuss with their colleagues in the region. The issues included Personnel and Staffing changes whereby the biggest concern in this category was clearly staff retention and ability to pay enough. The second issue they had identified was organizational growth challenges with long range planning and how to utilize new monies identified as the biggest issues with which they deal. The group spent time brainstorming solutions as well and came up with a number of unique strategies that they were able to share with each other. In the afternoon of the first day, we spent time brainstorming ideas for the civil legal assistance grants coming up and the new coalition monies. The discussion was very lively and interesting.

The second day was devoted primarily to caucusing as women of color and white women with Condencia Brade and Levette Kelly working with the women of color to identify their challenges in the movement, characteristics of allies, and needs from others in the movement. They also spent a lot of time explaining the Women of Color Leadership Project which collaborates with RSP regionally. That afternoon, the group talked extensively about some of the challenges they have because of their region. Issues like male attitudes towards women, antiquated views of "women's place," conservative values and morals, and the very religious right component. They were able to support each other and talk about how they have addressed these challenges.

The evenings were spent enjoying the really cool spot in Orlando. The accommodations were fabulous. The feedback was very positive. Each of our meetings has been unique in that the first one was very instructional and formal, the second was very information gathering and discussion oriented with lots of reporting to the group from CEPP violence against women folks and others, this meeting was much more informal and allowed for lots of opportunity to dialogue and share and support each other. This format was chosen based on feedback from the last meeting.

National STOP Grant Meeting

by Suzanne Brown, Washington

Last month in Washington DC, the STOP TA Office (a project of PCADV) held the first ever national meeting of STOP Grant administrators, Sexual Assault Coalitions and Domestic Violence Coalitions. This meeting was a wonderful opportunity for coalitions and administrators to talk within their state, and across the nation about implementation of VAWA 2000, and the STOP state grants.

Sexual assault coalitions made a wonderful showing, talking about how to include sexual assault in state plans and how to begin to meet the needs of survivors. Coalitions participated in plenary sessions that discussed grant administration, un/underserved populations, sexual assault and stalking, including the courts, and collaboration.

The Resource Sharing Project was proud to be a co-planner of the meeting along with the National Network to End Domestic Violence.

Coalition Highlight: Oregon

The Oregon Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence (OCADSV) was founded in 1978. From the beginning the coalition has been a strong advocate for the rights of women and children to be free from violence in their lives. The Coalition was instrumental in securing legislation which made arrest mandatory for men who batter, and also played a key role in passing the first law in the United States making rape in marriage illegal.

Throughout the years the Coalition has continued to advocate on behalf of survivors in many arenas, including the legislature, child protective services, welfare, criminal justice, law enforcement and prosecution. The Coalition provides funding to the Women of Color Caucus to support their activities on behalf of women of color throughout the state. The Coalition consists of 20 programs. They are located in much of the state, and include shelters, crisis lines and programs that provide case management, advocacy and support to women not in shelter. Coalition programs also provide many hours of outreach and education to their communities.

Denise Washington, Interim Director
Oregon Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual
Violence

Diversity & Capacity-Building Discussed at Western Regional Meeting

by Toby Cremer, Washington

On March 19th and 20th, representatives of ten western states' sexual assault coalitions met together in Las Vegas. Participants from Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawai'i, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon and Washington discussed strategies to increase diversity in the leadership of the sexual assault movement, and ways to strengthen the infrastructure of state coalitions.

The first day began with updates from each of the states. Three of the ten states are considering or are in the process of becoming their own 501(c) 3 nonprofit organizations. **California** recently moved its offices from Oakland to Sacramento, and has consequently had a near total staff turnover. Additionally, they are working on doubling their resource library to include approximately 10,000 items. **Montana** is planning a Native American Women's Conference next year. **Utah** changed their name from CAUSE to the Utah Coalition Against Sexual Assault, and is working on programs in regards the sexual exploitation of children, and is also working with survivors in the prison system. **Oregon** has a new interim director, Denise Washington, and has a statewide crisis line including translation services.

Arizona has been doing extensive work with local communities to assist them in the development of sexual assault services. **Hawai'i** is currently examining the age of consent laws in their state. **Alaska** recently developed a sexual assault strategic plan and began implementation in January. They also currently have 3 staff attorneys who fly across the state to do pro bono DV & SA legal work. **Idaho** will be hosting both Desiree Allen Cruz from the Oregon coalition and Sema Zeya from the National Stalking Center as speakers at statewide meetings this year. **Nevada** is a multi-disciplinary coalition that is developing a mobile response unit to be sent out to rural areas across the state. They also have a resource library that is housed at two local programs in the state.

Desiree Allen-Cruz, Director of the Women of Color Caucus for the Oregon coalition offered training on understanding cultural differences. She emphasized the need not just for policies on diversity, but mechanisms for accountability to hold organizations to their policies and commitments to enhance diversity.

Condencia Brade from the National Sexual Assault Women of Color Leadership Project presented information, including plans for the release of a blueprint at the end of the current phase of the Project. Following Condencia's presentation, participants joined either a women of color or a white women's group to discuss diversity issues.

On the second day, Suzanne Brown from Washington offered an update about various forms of federal funding that will be available to sexual assault coalitions. The rest of the morning and some of the afternoon was spent discussing ideas and strategies for the use of the new Violence Against Women Act money for sexual assault coalitions.

The meeting ended with discussion about the states would like to see from the Resource Sharing Project for the remainder of the current phase, and ideas for the future of the Project. ■▲

Coalition Highlight: Connecticut

a. Applied for a Civil Legal Assistance grant to enhance our coalition's response to the confidentiality needs of victims of sexual assault. The proposal is a collaboration between CONNSACS and two attorneys who specialize in the area of privilege communication for victims and involves a training component, legal representation component, ongoing technical assistance, and resource development for all of our centers in this area.

b. We again applied for a continuation technical assistance grant for the women of color leadership project. The feedback on this project has been phenomenal and, if re-funded, CONNSACS and NYSCASA will work together to utilize the information and feedback gleaned from the first grant to develop a leadership institute and some other important projects to ensure women of color a voice important policy and practice decision making that happens at coalitions.

c. CONNSACS, in collaboration with our state university has re-applied for funding under the Campus sexual assault grant program. We look forward, if re-funded, to utilizing our College Consortium program to further

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National Presence Discussion

by Christiane Hurt, Washington

Many sexual assault coalitions from across the country were able to participate in an important meeting on April 9, 2001 in Washington, DC. The STOP National Meeting provided the opportunity for coalition representatives to gather together to discuss the development of a national presence for sexual assault issues.

Alex Walker, the former director of the Indiana Coalition Against Sexual Assault and recent staff member at the Center for Effective Public Policy, facilitated a 4-hour conversation that covered many important topics, including current national work in the sexual assault field, potential structures to support future national work, and what the next steps to further these ideas might be.

The coalitions present recognized that many stakeholders in the sexual assault movement were not currently involved in this discussion. The group as a whole made a commitment to identify other potential stakeholders to involve in this process. At the conclusion of the meeting, volunteers formed a steering committee that will identify communities and agencies who were not represented at this meeting.

Thank you to the coalitions who were able to come to the STOP National Meeting early and participate in this important conversation. To those of you who were not able to attend, we look forward to hearing your perspective. ■●

Job Openings

The Nebraska Domestic Violence Sexual Assault Coalition is searching for a **Domestic Violence Program Coordinator**. Direct applications to:

Executive Director
NDVSAC
825 M Street, Suite 404
Lincoln, NE 68508

On The Rise, Inc., a Cambridge-based nonprofit that assists homeless women is seeking an **Outreach Worker**. Send résumé & cover letter to:

On The Rise
PO Box 391801
Cambridge, MA 02139,
attn.: Selina Wright, Operations Manager

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CT's campuses ability to better respond to violence against women on campus.

d. As the result of the current college grant, CONNSACS is holding a statewide conference for advocates and college/university faculty/staff/students. there will be over 100 people from around New England and the guest speakers include Susan Brownmiller and others.

e. CONNSACS is holding today a Brunch with Brownmiller which will highlight Susan Brownmiller as the discussion leader. We hope to broaden our membership's understanding of the politics of rape and who better to help us do that!!!

f. On the legislative front, CONNSACS along with our DV coalition, Mothers against drunk driving and Survivors of homicide (our 4 statewide victim agencies) has been pushing our legislature to pass a bill that would implement Through Any Door. Through Any Door is a collaborative crime victim package that would raise awareness bout victim's rights, provide for immediate victim notification of their rights, mandate criminal justice personnel training on victims rights, and enhance community victim advocacy services. The idea is that every community member in every community is a "door" for victims and those "doors" must be educated, informed and available to refer appropriately when a victim comes to them. We know the majority of sexual assault victims will go first to someone close to them.

g. CONNSACS just released initial findings from a statewide survey on sexual assault attitudes. Results mirror national rape statistics and attitudes. We held a very successful press briefing in April to release some of the initial findings. We highlighted our responses to "the silent epidemic" as enhancing our prevention efforts, our collaboration with sex offender management professionals, and our through any door campaign. ■●

Beverly Brakeman-Colbath
Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services

Next Issue:

Technology

Comments? email toby@wcsap.org