

# Building Comprehensive Solutions to Domestic Violence

by  
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*Building Comprehensive Solutions to Domestic Violence*

**W**hen it began in the mid 1970s, the battered women’s movement focused on three urgent tasks: (1) securing shelter and support for abused women; (2) securing safety, often by improving laws and the police and court response to domestic violence; and (3) changing people’s consciousness about violence against women through education. To achieve this ambitious agenda, advocates for battered women had to design two new kinds of organizations—shelters and state domestic violence coalitions—and focus on legislative reforms in criminal justice and social service funding.

In the last twenty years, grassroots domestic violence organizations have mushroomed and met many of their initial institutional and legislative goals. As a result, the world has changed. Basic protections for women, although still inadequate, are in place in many locations.

The domestic violence movement has offered new and life-saving solutions to women, yet our strategies also have limitations. They primarily suggested two alternatives to abused women: either leave your partner and go to a shelter, or use the criminal justice system to stop the assaults. Unfortunately, we know that these options fail to meet the needs of many. They overlook, for example, the fact that women need economic support and housing to live independently and survive. We know that many women choose not to leave their partners and want to stay within their communities.

After twenty years of work, it is obvious that the domestic violence movement needs to create a broader and deeper set of options for abused women. This will require our working collaboratively with an ever-increasing number of agencies and communities to help women solve problems of violence, poverty, and chemical dependency. It also will require that we learn to encourage others, outside the domestic violence movement, to develop solutions to the problem.

A new vision – and set of skills and practices – needs to guide this work. This vision must view collaboration as an important strategy to improve the lives of the millions of abused women who rely on diverse community and governmental agencies for their protection, housing, job training, welfare benefits, and medical care.



Fortunately, as a result of the work of the battered women's movement, many governmental agencies, professionals and citizens group now believe that violence against women is unacceptable. Many want to be part of the solution to stop domestic violence and help abused women and their families. It is time to take further advantage of these openings and opportunities.

Until recently, domestic violence advocates played the role of critic of institutions and their response to battered women and their children. Now advocates also are asked to provide answers to the complicated policy questions of welfare administrators, mental health providers, chiefs of police, doctors and nurses, clergy, teachers, governors, and legislators. Historically, many domestic violence advocates have worked in small, relatively isolated shelter settings. Now advocates are asked to inform and organize community-wide collaborations to respond to the complicated and multiple needs of hundreds of thousands of poor women who are asking for help to end the violence.

This new role requires new skills, as well as a broader vision. In three new curricula – and in the larger Ford Foundation sponsored initiative, *Building Comprehensive Solutions to Domestic Violence*, that supports them – the National Resource Center is responding to this need. To bring additional skills to domestic violence advocates, we have designed curricula which cover public policy development, outreach to underserved communities, and skills for successful collaboration (including material on collaborative mindset, strategic thinking, negotiation, and meeting facilitation). The curriculum that follows this Introduction is “Outreach to Underserved Communities.”

### **How the Curricula Were Developed**

In 1996, funding from the Ford Foundation offered the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence the opportunity to develop training materials to support the collaborations and public policy work emerging from the grassroots. To determine priority needs, however, we decided to conduct interviews with local domestic violence organizations, state coalition directors, women of color active in the movement, the staff of federal and state agencies, and allied professionals from health, child welfare, criminal justice, and the religious community. The key question taken up in this needs assessment was: “How prepared are local, state, and national domestic violence organizations to play a broader collaborative role in the community, and what training tools are needed to support this role?”

Although many people whom we interviewed discussed positive aspects of collaborations and public policy work, many others reiterated a set of common, troubling themes: many domestic violence organizations lacked the time, resources, and training to build and sustain effective community and institutional collaborations; many programs failed to plan for public policy discussions; and some were intimidated and frightened by these new tasks.



This is not surprising, considering that, in any given month, domestic violence advocates are negotiating for improved responses with police; judges in criminal, civil, or juvenile court; the staff of housing agencies; medical personnel; and child protection workers.

In our interviews, we also found that domestic violence agency staff and allied professionals often have little understanding of each other's roles, organizational and statutory mandates, professional limitations, and ethical obligations. As a result, misunderstandings and missed opportunities abound. In addition, while most federal grants now insist on collaboration, many communities have few – if any – mechanisms to support professionals to work collaboratively. In the interviews, doctors, social workers, and lawyers often complained as much about their peers' lack of respect toward advocates as they did about advocates' behavior. While there is lip service paid to the importance of collaboration, there seems to be little time and few training opportunities to make these complicated processes work.

These findings led us to design a plan to develop policy and collaboration skills training for domestic violence organizations. Before we actually hired writers, however, our plans and priorities were reviewed by an advisory board of advocates assisting the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence.

Once the three major training curricula – Introduction to Policy Advocacy and Analysis, Outreach to Underserved Communities, and Skills for Successful Collaborations (including material on collaborative mindset, strategic thinking, negotiation, and meeting facilitation) – were developed, each was tested. Test sites included domestic violence coalitions in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Florida, Maine, Iowa, Nebraska, and West Virginia. After each test, authors substantially revised their material to incorporate feedback from the participants.

### **Target Audiences**

Each curriculum was designed for and tested with domestic violence advocates, program directors, community educators, and state-wide trainers from domestic violence coalitions. Although domestic violence advocates and program directors may have different organizational roles, each interacts daily with other systems and can benefit from the skills taught in this curriculum. We urge those who teach this material to offer it to a wide advocacy and administrative audience.

The curricula are designed specifically for staff of grassroots domestic violence organizations. If service providers from other systems are using the material, the facilitator should adapt the content, modifying case examples and roleplays.

These curricula are written as extensive guides for facilitators, with detailed instructions provided by the authors.



# Outreach to Underserved Communities: Introduction to the Curriculum

## Curriculum Overview

Outreach is a primary advocacy strategy of the battered women's movement. Reaching out and working with individuals, groups, and systems is how advocates have generated fundamental social change on the issue of domestic violence. However, over the past few years it has become clear that outreach to underserved communities has been given limited attention. Although the movement has known that both the issue of diversity and the limited access to quality services for battered women<sup>1</sup> from underserved communities need to be addressed, significant steps have not been taken. The task is difficult for many reasons: there is a lot of work to do; there are no clear guidelines on how to approach and work with members of the underserved communities; and most advocates lack basic knowledge about the issues. This curriculum attempts to fill this need.

In this curriculum, the term *underserved*<sup>2</sup> refers to individuals or communities which are subject to various barriers that deny or limit access to quality domestic violence advocacy and services. The barriers often arise out of complex historical intersections of various groups, political structures, and sources of power. These barriers include racism, classism, heterosexism, ageism, sexism, and ableism. When such barriers are present in domestic violence programs, it is difficult for women from underserved communities to seek and obtain the quality and culturally competent advocacy, services, technical assistance, and resources they need to be safe.

There are many reasons why advocates should commit to conducting outreach to underserved communities. This curriculum stresses the following three reasons:

- Outreach is morally the right thing to do.
- Outreach is absolutely necessary for community collaboration, so that a particular community can take responsibility for addressing domestic violence.
- Outreach helps battered women's advocates and programs design and provide quality advocacy, support, and services for battered women.

The methods for conducting outreach range from the fairly simple to the complex and must include both long-term and short-term strategies. When devising strategies, advocates must always respect the norms of privacy and dignity of the group, and the strategies must reflect an understanding of a particular group's frame of reference. In order to build links and trust with a particular community, the domestic violence program has to attempt to find common ground with the community and learn from it. When the program integrates that knowledge



with thoughtful self-awareness, the building blocks of a working relationship will be in place.

This curriculum teaches the following basic principles to guide outreach to underserved communities:

- Recognize the value of working together.
- Recognize that your organization will change as a result of outreach.
- Be open to criticism.
- Define your goals, and be clear about which goals can change and which cannot.
- Invite people in a meaningful way.
- Accept the transfer of leadership to the particular community.
- Enjoy the rewards.

## **Overview of the Modules**

The modules seek to meet the following objectives:

- The battered women's program/advocate understands the need for outreach to diverse communities on the issue of domestic violence.
- The program/advocate understands the basic principles of outreach and diversity.
- The program/advocate uses basic collaboration skills to conduct outreach.
- The program/advocate uses existing tools and skills to conduct outreach and educational efforts to diverse communities.
- Advocates begin to partner with community members on a regular basis in order to work towards each community's assuming ownership of the issue of domestic violence.
- Advocates understand the need for a collective search for solutions for ending domestic violence.
- Programs are better able to provide quality advocacy, support, and services to battered women from diverse communities.

**Module 1** includes an overview of the curriculum, a brainstorm activity about why do outreach, a lecture on the principles of outreach and introduction to key terms, and work in program teams on Worksheets #1 and #2, which help programs get started on outreach activities.

**Module 2** includes small group work on Worksheets #3, #4, and #5, which help programs select a community for outreach, determine how to get to know that community, and identify barriers to that outreach.



- Module 3** includes interactive exercises to help participants look at their own “personal issues,” a lecture/discussion on outreach skills and strategies, work in small groups on Worksheets #6 and #7 to help programs prepare for their first meeting with the community they’ve selected, and a lecture on creating sustainable communities.
- Module 4** includes a lecture on building bridges, a lecture/discussion on divisive reactions to diversity, and small group work on Worksheet #8 to help programs address problems that arise when conducting outreach.
- Module 5** includes small group work on Worksheet #9 to help programs plan for a response to difficult outreach issues.

## How to Use This Curriculum

The modules are designed to be used over two days. This approach works well for exploring new endeavors, as well as analyzing past outreach problems.

### Scheduling

On Day 1 of the training, start with Module 1 and go through the lecture and discussion on outreach skills and strategies in Module 3. Day 2 would then begin with the small group work on Worksheet #6. The module should be taught in an interactive mode, with enough time allowed for participants to work meaningfully on the worksheets. Give breaks when you want, but it is best to break for 10 to 15 minutes after each module. Be aware that sometimes breaks are needed because of the intensity of the work.

The times listed in each module are maximum times. The amount of time each module will actually take depends on group participation.

### Worksheets

The curriculum is designed to engage participants in a process that will help them to develop new outreach strategies and to troubleshoot existing problematic outreach efforts. The modules include a mix of presentations and time for each program to complete worksheets in small groups. The worksheets are meant to be guides for the planning and thinking which the program must do before starting any outreach activity.



The instructions in this curriculum often state that worksheets are to be completed by members of the program team in consultation with each other. During this training, each participant should have a blank copy of each worksheet. The responses to the questions on the worksheet, however, should be arrived at by consensus within the program team, and the consensus answer then recorded by each participant on her worksheet.

It is not possible for participants to complete all the worksheets during the formal training sessions. In the sections where the participants work on the worksheets, there is guidance on how much of each worksheet should be completed during training. As part of the planning process for the training, it is important to inform participant programs that the work will not be completed in the training and that the program should decide before the training how it will make time to complete the work after the training – for example, schedule time at staff meetings to complete the worksheets.

Programs should be informed of the following preferred procedure for worksheets processed by program employees in their home offices as a continuation of work in preparation for program outreach. Each team member should fill out her own worksheet before the designated staff meeting. At the meeting, the employees should discuss their various answers and arrive at a consensus, which should then be recorded on its own worksheet as the program's response.

## **Format**

Directions for trainers are listed in **bold face text**. Special instructions, notes for lectures, etc., are set off by headings in *italics*.

# **Planning and Trainer Preparation**

## **Approach**

The material in the curriculum might be difficult for some of the participants. Over the last few years many of us have felt that we have been “put up against the wall” because of the way in which we have expressed our biases, “isms,” and prejudices. These biases might have been exposed in anti-racism training that made some of us uncomfortable, or may have been raised in less constructive settings. The goal of this training is to provide an opportunity for programs and advocates to improve their outreach efforts. The goal can be reached only in a training environment that feels safe for all participants, encourages constructive exchanges, and facilitates meaningful self-analysis. It is the trainer's responsibility to establish and maintain that environment.



The following are some tips for trainers on how to set the stage for a productive training:

- Tell participants it is not possible to cover all the “isms” or underserved communities in this training. Encourage the programs to commit to additional training and opportunities to explore these issues.
- Remind participants that this is ongoing work, and there are no simple answers and solutions to these longstanding and complex problems.
- Allow participants time to work with others from their program and use the guided worksheets to help them through some of the issues.
- Remember that the training is interactive and that the individuals in each program will have to do the work.
- Remind participants that the training is designed to provide tools and principles to guide their work, not “the answers” to the difficult questions and issues that arise.
- Encourage participants to work together as a team.
- Be aware that participants may have had similar training around diversity, cultural sensitivity, and multicultural issues. Clarify that this training adds to existing material and skills that the participants might already have and that the material will enhance their abilities.
- Participants should interact with one another and with the trainer.

### **Selection of trainers**

This curriculum requires experienced trainers with excellent facilitation skills and a familiarity with the issues and dynamics surrounding outreach to underserved communities. Trainers must be comfortable with handling the potentially difficult exchanges that may arise out of discussions about such issues as racism, classism, and failed outreach efforts.

The race/ethnicity of the training team is also important. Ideally, the team will include one woman of color and one white woman. This models the importance of diverse leadership and provides more opportunity for the trainers to provide constructive guidance to participants.



It is also essential that the trainers be able to demonstrate the approach and goals of this curriculum when interacting with participants and responding to their comments and questions. Trainers must be able to model throughout the training the outreach skills listed in Overhead #12: listening, listening without judgment, awareness of how they respond to attacks, acceptance of all feelings, honesty, respect and humility, authenticity, and maintaining an open attitude. Trainers must have the skills and experience to be aware of the possible power dynamic between the trainers and between the trainers and the participants. For example, a trainer who is a white woman working with a trainer who is an African-American woman should not do all the talking or appear to “take over” the training. Also, trainers must have the demeanor and skill to avoid shaming or blaming participants for their comments. For example, if one of the trainers is openly lesbian, and a participant makes a stereotypical comment – such as, “gay people can’t have children” – it is essential that the lesbian trainer be able to respond to the participant constructively, encouraging dialogue and learning, and not “jumping all over her” for being heterosexual.

## **Audience**

**The training is designed for a program rather than for individuals.** The rationale is that outreach is a programmatic experience, and lessons learned will arise out of program successes and failures. Successful outreach efforts need institutional support from a program and cannot succeed when done only by an individual. Each program has to carefully consider various elements before embarking on an outreach program. A number of advocates (not just the outreach coordinator) should attend, so that outreach can be thought through as a team. This design is based on careful thought and on pilot tests.

The following audience configuration conditions are critical to the success of the training:

- Program advocates who are going to be involved in or actually doing the outreach efforts should attend the training.
- Each program should send a minimum of two advocates, and up to a maximum of five.
- Each program must send a director, administrator, or other staff with authority in the program.
- There should be no more than twenty-five people in the training.
- This training can be provided to all the staff of one program instead of five programs attending a single training.

***As part of the planning process, the trainer/s must make sure the program/s will commit to these conditions.***



## **Trainer preparation**

Each trainer should read the following paper as part of the preparation for presenting the curriculum: S. Warrier and V. Coffey. 1997. “Achieving Effective Domestic Violence Public Education in a Diverse Society: A Solutions-Oriented Approach.” National Resource Center On Domestic Violence. (See Appendix D.)

## **Preparation of case examples**

Ideally, the case examples should include underserved communities that the program knows about and that are in the program’s catchment area. In addition, trainers should find out if the program is considering conducting outreach to a particular community. If the program cannot provide examples, the trainer should ask which community the program thinks it might have difficulty reaching. If the program has already done outreach, it might be best to work with case examples that it had problems with so that the curriculum principles and tools can be applied to a difficult outreach experience and help participants figure out how to overcome such challenges.

When working with the program to decide on case examples, it is important to clarify that it must choose a case example from any underserved community. The following are the dimensions of diversity from which the underserved are generally derived:<sup>3</sup>

- **Age**  
including a recognition of the different realities, needs and issues facing girls/boys, adolescent girls/boys, adult women/men, and older women/men.
- **Ethnicity/Race**  
including different realities related to racial and ethnic group and sub-group identification, color, cultural practices, particularly those which facilitate/support or impede/undermine work to end violence against women.
- **Immigration/Citizenship Status**  
including individuals who are refugees, asylees, and immigrants.
- **Religious/Cultural**  
including religious/cultural practices and beliefs which facilitate/support or impede/undermine work to end violence against women.
- **Health Status**
- **Illnesses, Diseases and Risk Conditions**  
including people with a range of conditions from diabetes, high blood pressure, breast cancer, and HIV/AIDS to schizophrenia, depression and substance abuse. This may also include the un-insured and medically underserved.
- **Differently Abled**  
including a range of people – from those who are learning disabled and mentally challenged, to those who are deaf/hard of hearing, blind, mute, wheelchair bound, or victims of inaccurate perceptions of disability. In addition to the access-to-services issues which adult survivors with disabilities face, children’s disabilities may also significantly affect a battered mother’s options.



- **Sexual Orientation/Identity**

including lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered individuals, communities, and organizations.

- **Language**

including linguistic ability, cultural dialects and accents which facilitate/support or impede/undermine individual and community access to services and other resources. Other recognized forms of language used by individuals to communicate with others may include, for example, but are not limited to, sign language, and the use of pictorial images in art therapy, by children surviving or witnessing abuse.

- **Education/Literacy**

Literacy is an important subset of education and includes, but is not limited to, for example, being able to read a protective order and write notes about an incident shortly after it occurs. Education, the broader category, includes, but is not limited to, for example, development of skills that enable one to calculate how much emergency financial support is available, etc.

- **Economic Status**

including access to financial and other support, particularly a livable income, shelter/housing, food, clothing and other necessities.

- **Housing**

including homeless individuals and migrant farm workers.

- **Isolation**

including individuals with limited or no access to transportation, telephones, and/or other technological means of communication.

- **Geographic Isolation**

including individuals and communities in rural areas.

- **Semi-Closed Communities/ Ethnic Segregation**

including individuals residing in Indian country, ethnic neighborhoods, and immigrant communities with limited access to appropriate services, accurate information and resources.

*The census calls this category ethnic segregation.*

- **Closed Communities** including individuals residing in federal enclaves, military installations, communes, and self-governed areas.

- **Women Charged/Convicted of Crimes**

including battered women who are incarcerated, convicted of crimes, charged with crimes and/or fleeing criminal prosecution.

The case examples can be from any community from the above groups, or a combination, but they cannot be from groups such as, for example, the police or upper-middle-class white women. It is not that victims from these groups do not have their own difficulties, but that the goal is to work on outreach to those who are denied or have limited access to quality domestic violence advocacy, support, and services.

## **Training location, handouts, and overheads**

Consider the size of the audience and the room when choosing the method of audiovisuals to be used. Ideally, both overheads and newsprint should be used. Prepare overheads and handouts ahead of time. The Training Schedule is Handout #1 (3 pages) for the participants.



Overheads #1 and #2 have been combined into Handout #2 (2 pages). Afterthat, the text of each overhead is included in the matching handout so that the participants can easily follow the lectures and take notes. Distribute the appropriate handouts and worksheets as you begin each session or module. Make more than enough copies of the handouts and worksheets.

Consider the acoustics of the room.

Tables – preferably round – should be provided. This enables members of the programs to spread out their worksheets and better discuss the issues.

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<sup>1</sup> Because the overwhelming majority of domestic violence victims are women abused by their male partners, this curriculum uses “she” or “battered woman” when referring to a victim of domestic violence, and “he” when referring to a “batterer.” All victims of domestic violence deserve support and responsive advocacy, including victims in same sex relationships and male victims abused by female partners.

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from a working definition of “underserved” developed by the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence.

<sup>3</sup> Adapted from a working definition of “underserved” developed by the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence.



# Outreach to Underserved Communities

## Training Schedule DAY ONE

<u>Program</u>	<u>Time</u>
<b>Module One – “Unraveling What We Know”</b>	
✍ Introductions	20 minutes
✍ Overview of Project and Curriculum Modules	20 minutes
✍ Brainstorm Activity: Why Do Outreach to Underserved Communities?	20 minutes
✍ Lecture: Basic Principles of Outreach	30 minutes
<i>Optional Break</i>	<i>10 minutes</i>
✍ Before Beginning Outreach, Small Group Work by Program Teams – Worksheet #1: Experiences with Outreach	30 minutes
✍ Worksheet #2: Critical Self-Assessment of Program	30 minutes
<i>Break</i>	<i>15 minutes</i>
<b>Module Two – “The Threads”</b>	
✍ Introduction to Module Two	10 minutes
✍ Worksheet #3: Selecting a Community	20 minutes
✍ Worksheet #4: Getting to Know Your Selected Community	60 minutes
✍ Worksheet #5: Barriers to Outreach	30 minutes
<i>Break or Lunch Break</i>	<i>15 minutes 60 minutes</i>



# Outreach to Underserved Communities

## Training Schedule DAY ONE (continued)

<u>Program</u>	<u>Time</u>
<b>Module Three – “Begin to Weave”</b>	
✍ Interactive Exercises: Our Personal Issues	30 minutes
✍ Lecture/Discussion: Outreach Skills and Strategies	20 minutes

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## Outreach to Underserved Communities

### Training Schedule DAY TWO

<u>Program</u>	<u>Time</u>
<b>Module Three – “Begin to Weave” (continued)</b>	
 Worksheet #6: Preparation for the First Meeting	45 minutes
<i>Break</i>	<i>10 minutes</i>
 Worksheet #7: Practical Applications	35 minutes
 Lecture: Creating Sustainable Communities	30 minutes
<i>Optional Break</i>	<i>10 minutes</i>
<b>Module Four – “Kinks in the Weave”</b>	
 Lecture: Building Bridges	20 minutes
 Discussion/Lecture: Divisive Reaction to Diversity	45 minutes
 Worksheet #8: Problems That Arise	30 minutes
<i>Break</i>	<i>10 minutes</i>
<b>Module Five – “Those Difficult Issues”</b>	
 Worksheet #9: Those Difficult Issues	90 minutes

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