

National Prevention Town Hall Summary & Recommendations

On September 14, 2020, the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence and the National IPV Prevention Council, in partnership with the Indiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence, the Michigan Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence, and the Ohio Domestic Violence Network, hosted our first ever National Prevention Town Hall, highlighting innovative social change efforts in the East North Central Region of the United States.



The event brought together storytellers, advocates, and activists to pivot our intimate partner violence prevention work in response to the racial inequities that COVID has laid bare, especially for Black individuals and communities across the country.

*“Every organization represented on this call should take a hard look at how we are contributing to the problem, and this webinar is a great step, but **we can’t end here.**”* –
Town Hall Participant, White Board Reflections after Session 1

This document offers a summary, including highlights, takeaways, and action steps for each of the eight Town Hall sessions:

1. Opening panel: **Advancing Our Collective Liberation**
2. Strategy session 1A: **Building Trust with Communities: Revisioning our work**
3. Strategy session 1B: **Centering our Work on Survivors’ and Communities’ Needs & Leadership by Listening to the Needs of Black Women**
4. Strategy session 1C: **Engaging Men in the Movement to End Gender-Based Violence**
5. Strategy session 2A: **Intersecting Pandemics**
6. Strategy session 2B: **Youth Defined Prevention Strategies**
7. Strategy session 2C: **Addressing Wage Equity and Economic Justice at All Levels of our Movement**
8. Plenary: **Integration of Anti-Racism Work, Intervention, and Prevention into One Mission**

Access session recordings, presentation slides, related resources, and other materials at PreventIPV.org.

Opening panel: Advancing Our Collective Liberation

Hosted by Arlene Vassell and Casey Keene from the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence, panelists included [Timike Boyd Jones](#), Program Specialist and Preventionist at the Indiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence, [Colleen Yeakle](#), Coordinator of Prevention Initiatives for the Indiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence, [Chéree Thomas](#), Associate Director of the Michigan Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence, [Layla Elabed](#), Program Specialist with the Michigan Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence, [Glenn A. Harris](#), Engaging Men Program Coordinator at the Ohio Domestic Violence Network, and [Kalitha Williams](#), Director of Asset Building at Policy Matters Ohio.

Question 1: **How can we decolonize the DV movement and re-ignite grassroots community efforts outside of the confines of federal funding?**

Chéree Thomas: When we are seeking funding outside of federal dollars, we can work to have our funders invest in ending oppression, which will lead to the end of violence. Accountability for giving and philanthropy should be the norm. Grant-making has to become anti-racist. Fundraising as a collective, within communities, can be a beginning to less reliance on federal dollars.

Question 2: **How can we address the intersection of race and gender identity in serving Black and other POC transgender victims of intimate partner violence?**

Timike Jones: We have to prioritize differently. We have to create shelters and spaces that are welcoming for all identities. We have to be mindful not to recreate people's trauma. We have to make sure our leadership in or organizations represent multiple identities. We must value life experience as much as we value education. We have to be intentional about who we partner with, who we listen to, and create strategies that actually move power, not just information.

Question 3: **Delaware is striving for equality through policy enactment and amendments. What can individuals do to impact change?**

Kalitha Williams: This is this is a time for recentering policymaking back to the public and taking it beyond the realm of traditional elected officials, special interests, and corporate business communities. This moment has held policy makers accountable to make sure that our systems are equitable in how they serve all of us at the local, state, and national level. This moment has shown us what our individual voices can collectively do when we organize and come together.

Question 4: **Can you talk about the intersections of intimate partner and state violence, and how to address one you must address the other?**

Layla Elabed: You cannot do intimate partner violence or sexual assault prevention work without doing work around anti-oppression and anti-racism, and talking about how white supremacy culture shows up in our systems, and within our movement to end gender-based violence.

Chéree Thomas: All forms of violence, including gender-based violence, are state sanctioned. If we look at the foundation of our nation and the privileges we are benefitting from, we must remember that these are built on the oppression of others. Each of these communities has unique needs to be met. We have to address all of these things as a collective and with individualized attention in order to uproot those types of violence.

Question 5: How do we change and correct the oppressive actions that have occurred and continue to occur within our movement and centers?

Colleen Yeakle: The progression that is making sense to us is: listen, acknowledge, commit to change, embrace transparency/vulnerability. We must do our homework and begin to listen differently – to hear, to feel, to own the impacts of our legacy, and to be led. From there, we must use what we learn to inform both our intervention and prevention efforts, in a way that is accountable to those most impacted.

Question 6: Knowing how important it is to engage men in the movement, how do we deal with men who do this work but are predators?

Glenn Harris: Glenn responded that in addition to men in the movement who may be perpetrators of gender-based violence, there are also perpetrators of both white supremacy and gender bias in this movement. We have to be careful and mindful about how we approach calling out harm without public shaming or vilifying. We have to call out with kindness and compassion, offering space to grow.

For fuller responses to these and all questions submitted by participants, visit our [Q&A document](#) where panelists, NRC DV staff, and organizational partners offer their ideas and resources.

Strategy session 1A: Building Trust with Communities: Revisioning our work

Presented by [Phalguna Siddapureddy](#), Community Organizer in the City of Detroit, [Amanda McLain Barratt](#), Senior Program Manager at the Michigan Coalition to End Domestic & Sexual Violence, and [Amanda Ajrouche](#), Program Coordinator of the Domestic Violence Prevention Program at ACCESS

Understanding intersecting identities and the ways they play out is really critical because it directly impacts the work you are doing and the way you will approach that work.

There are wide gaps in services and access to resources and opportunities. Community organizing and relationship building can help identify and address these gaps.

We need to reconsider the ways we value people, as these are guided by white supremacy culture. We must regard those in community as experts in their community – the needs, strengths, and strategies that will best resonate and advance change.

Dismantling white supremacy culture requires empathy, showing up, vulnerability, transparency, authenticity, and consistency.

“We’ve put people over deliverables, because that’s what prevention is.” – Amanda B.

Resources shared:

- [The Characteristics of White Supremacy Culture](#)

Calls to Action:

- Decenter urgency!
- Prevention is listening.
- Trust building is necessary.
- Community should drive initiatives.
- Prevention is intervention; they should not compete.
- Empathy, vulnerability, consistency, showing up, transparency, and authenticity are all CRUCIAL in doing prevention work right.

Strategy session 1B: Centering our Work on Survivors’ and Communities’ Needs & Leadership by Listening to the Needs of Black Women

Presented by [Timike Boyd Jones](#), Program Specialist and Preventionist at the Indiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence & [Cecily Johnson](#), Director of Strategic Initiatives at Domestic Violence Network

Black and African American Women are 2.5 times more likely to experience DV than White women. Studies show that Black Girls are perceived as more independent, more knowledgeable about sex, and less in need of protection than White girls. A person of color who is transgender is 2.6 more likely to become a victim of DV than a non-LGBTQ+ person.

Our existing tables are not necessarily inclusive. **Representation matters!**

“We need to build an entirely new table with all the communities we want to serve.”

In order to build an effective strategy to address social conditions affecting black women and girls, we have to ask them what they need. Simplex is a problem-solving tool that allows a team to develop a creative solution together that is informed by content experts and key stakeholders through group listening sessions. Then, we must create an action plan based on the identified priorities, along with sufficient resources to support new directions.

Resources Shared:

- [The Plan – Equity: Listening to the Truth, Amplifying Voices, Changing Systems](#)
- [Ujima: The National Center on Violence Against Women in the Black Community](#)

Calls to Action:

- Community should drive the work! The groups in the community that we want to serve are the ones who should be coming up with the strategies, telling us what they specifically need.
- Put your money where your mouth is! Put line items in every single grant you write – making sure people who do not have the resources get paid for their time, that our spaces are more equitable and accessible, and that transportation is available.
- Listen first. Have a plan for action second.
- Experience is expertise.

Strategy session 1C: Engaging Men in the Movement to End Gender-Based Violence

Presented by [Glenn A. Harris](#), Engaging Men Program Coordinator for the Ohio Domestic Violence Network

Violence against women is a man's issue. The language and marketing of the message is important when engaging men.

Seek to understand and address norms of masculinity – especially those for men of color – that are embedded from childhood in order to bring men into the work. Engaging men is about building their readiness and capacity for active allyship.

Resources Shared:

- [The New Playbook](#)

Calls to Action:

- Messaging should be designed to reach a wide range of men (fathers, coaches, teachers, mentors) and be culturally relevant to the community you are working with.
- Programs must actively work to dismantle the unique barriers that may prevent men from disclosing experiences of abuse or seeking services to heal from these experiences.
- Listen to the communities we serve and show up for them.
- Centering marginalized voices requires vulnerability.

Strategy session 2A: Intersecting Pandemics

Presented by [Kalitha Williams](#), Director of Asset Building at Policy Matters Ohio & [Diego Espino](#), Vice President of Community Engagement at Planned Parenthood of Greater Ohio

We do our best to make the case for good jobs, strong neighborhoods and smart solutions to complex problems, that support communities and help working families.

In our pre-pandemic reality, Black and Brown people faced challenges of disproportionately lower wages, higher unemployment, discrimination in education and employment, higher rent burden, barriers to homeownership, and earlier onset of health challenges.

“The worst public policy making is people sitting in a room talking about the thems and the theys.” – Kalitha

COVID didn’t create inequality, it magnified existing inequalities. At the intersection of the pandemics of institutional racism and COVID-19, families are facing even higher rates of unemployment, exceptional health risks in frontline jobs, increased risk of eviction, and high rates of infection, spread, and mortality.

Access to contraceptives is an economic and racial justice issue connected to higher education, labor force participation, and livable wages.

“To ignore racism’s effects on our patients’ everyday lives, including their reproductive health, is to miss an opportunity to join the fight for racial equality.” – Diego

We have a unique opportunity in this movement to build back an economy and systems that are anti-racist and inclusive with measures like paid sick and family leave, strong workplace safety guidelines, rental and eviction assistance, investments to increase affordable housing, and incentivizing mixed-income neighborhoods.

Resources Shared:

- [COVID-19 Ohio Minority Health Strike Force Blueprint](#)

Calls to Action:

- We must approach service delivery through a health equity lens.
- In the past, we’ve been addressing different areas of oppression separately. Now is the opportunity for us to start cross-collaborating to get to the heart of all oppression.
- We must engage stakeholders and policymakers to help advance anti-racist policies, inviting those most impacted to share their stories and following their lead to impact change.
- To ignore racism’s effects on our patients’ everyday lives, including their reproductive health, is to miss an opportunity to join the fight for racial equality.
- Advocates and those we serve must hold policymakers accountable. Special interests and corporations do this!

Strategy session 2B: Youth Defined Prevention Strategies

Presented by [Colleen Yeakle](#), Coordinator of Prevention Initiatives for the Indiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence & [Shay Upadhyay](#), former ICADV Youth Council Coordinator and Junior at Indiana University

Traditionally adults have talked *at* young people, holding all the power. If youth feel safe, stable, and nurtured, it will allow them to have confidence to have safe, stable, and nurturing relationships. Fostering community strengths creates resilience and ultimately prevents violence.

ICADV's Treasure Map explores the following youth-defined prevention strategies:

- Social, family, and organizational connectedness
- Support for personal growth
- Stable basics
- Safe, non-violent communities
- Acceptance and inclusion

Resources Shared:

- [Indiana Youth are In Search of a Hidden Treasure](#)

Calls to Action:

- Give youth the opportunity. Give them the space and a voice, the ability to travel, to choose their own interests and where they think they would make an impact. Respect the expertise that youth bring to the table.
- Over the years we've learned the hard way that good intentions aren't enough – we have to take action ensuring that we're truly listening to those we're trying to serve.
- Flip the script and ask youth what we need to do to create safe communities with and for them.

Strategy session 2C: Addressing Wage Equity and Economic Justice at All Levels of our Movement

Presented by [Merkeb Yohannes](#), Michigan Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence & [Layla Elabed](#), Program Specialist with the Michigan Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence

It's critical not to silo prevention and intervention work, and to integrate anti-oppression into all that we do. We must see survivors' whole selves, including all layers of identity and oppression/privilege. In order to engage in anti-oppression work, it's critical that we have a level of vulnerability and authenticity about our own identities and lived experiences.

“What's important about intersectionality is lifting it off the paper and making it our practice.” – Merkeb

Actualizing economic justice/wage equity in our organizations starts with promoting a living wage for advocates, offering paid leave, valuing lived experience, etc. This work will look

different across communities. MCEDSV looked at community experiences with paid family leave/supports for working families and found that BIPOC advocates 1) tend to enter the field in positions that do not offer a living wage, 2) do not have equal access to volunteer positions that lead to paid positions, 3) experience burnout and tokenism in our agencies, and 4) have longevity in the field with little career advancement. Based on these findings, MCEDSV 1) made policy changes around hiring and compensation rubrics, 2) had open and honest conversations about compensation and economic justice in the organization, and 3) made changes to the coalition's DV recovery loan program.

Economic justice supports that are culturally relevant can include paid leave, professional development, working family supports, wages, and more.

Calls to Action:

- Anti-oppression work and work to promote economic justice/pay equity has to start internally (we have to “walk the walk” in our own organizations before telling others what to do).
- It's critical that we center the voices of those most marginalized and root our economic justice work in intersectionality.
- Be patient with the process. Conversations about economic justice/pay equity are difficult and often uncomfortable, but NECESSARY.

Plenary: Integration of Anti-Racism Work, Intervention, and Prevention into One Mission

Presented by [Chéree Thomas](#), Associate Director of the Michigan Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence, [Averett Robey](#), Prevention Education Program Director for HAVEN, and [Lisa Winchell-Caldwell](#), Deputy Director of the Michigan Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence

Protecting Black bodies is prevention work.

Oppression is what links everything together – anti-racism, IPV intervention, and IPV prevention. Since they are inextricably linked, we cannot separate them out in the lives of survivors, nor in the way our programs are designed to address them.

“Acknowledging the harm is necessary in order to move forward as a collective.” – Chéree

Exploring points of alignment between intervention and prevention missions/goals. Risk and protective factors that impact violence in communities are the very things that impact survivor autonomy, perpetrator choices, etc. It shifts our work to addressing the underlying root causes and norms we want to shift.

“At what point in my history of survivorship did I become irrelevant to the process of prevention?” – Lisa

Resources Shared:

- [UMOJA: Uniting and Mobilizing Opportunities for Justice and Access](#)

Calls to Action:

- We must talk about the history of our organization and our movement, and who we have harmed, which is women of color and trans Black women at the core. We must use this knowledge to create more intentional intervention and prevention work.
- We must do our internal work first, so that each of us can bring our whole self to the table, before we engage in external/community-based work.
- We need to engage in work that is transparent, vulnerable, and accountable to survivors and to our communities, but also to each other.
- When you build skills, tools, and frameworks without BIPOC and people at the margins, you will build them wrong.
- Build your programming around your mission, not your mission around your funding.

For free technical assistance and training to support your prevention efforts, contact nrcdvTA@nrcdv.org.

For more information, visit PreventIPV.org and [subscribe](#) to our Newsletter.