

**CULTURALLY-SPECIFIC
APPROACHES TO TRAUMA &
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

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TRAUMA-INFORMED ANALYSIS

Our trauma-informed approach analyzes the contexts of:

- ▶ Victimization
- ▶ Perpetration
- ▶ Oppression
- ▶ Help-seeking
- ▶ Healing

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CULTURE x 3

Our culturally-specific approach analyzes trauma caused by the:

1. Culture of Gender-Based Violence
2. Culture of Ethnic and Identity-specific Communities
3. Culture of Systems

Culturally-specific, trauma-informed care means identifying & addressing how these intersecting contexts contribute to trauma histories and guide our understanding of well-being.

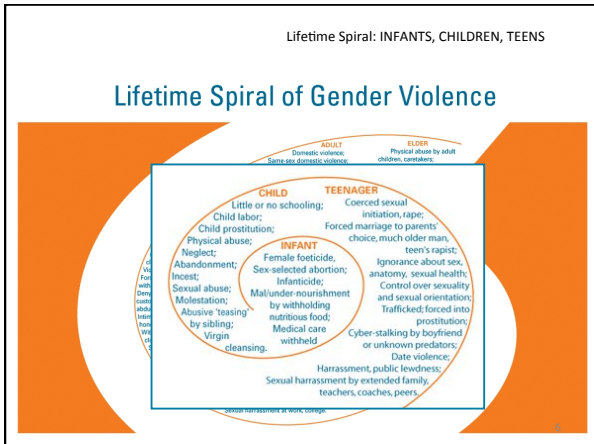
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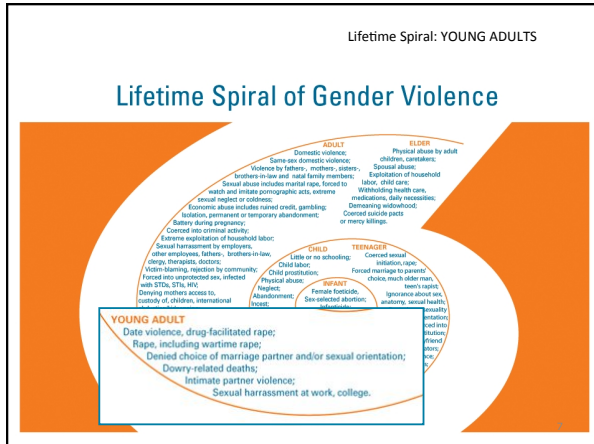
TRAUMA & CULTURAL CONTEXTS

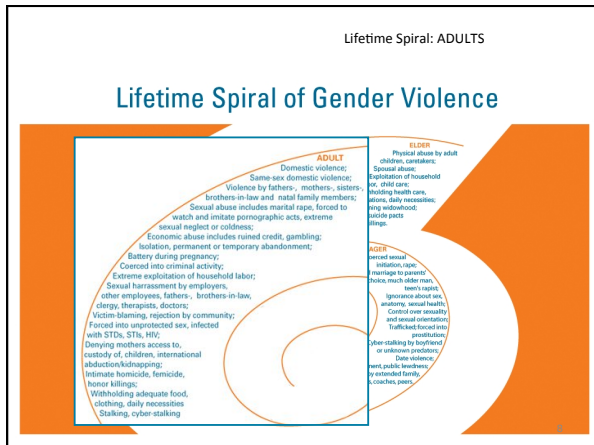
1. Culture of gender-based violence & sexism:
 Devalues women, girls, LGBTQ individuals, normalizes or minimizes abuse, blames victims, excuses abusers, ignores sexism, promotes aggressive masculinity

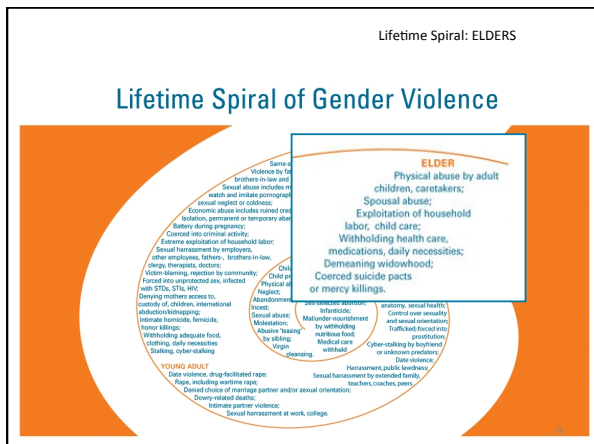
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Culture of GBV

Lifetime Spiral of Gender Violence

IMPLICATION: Culture of VAW Locates Trauma across Lifecourse

- 1. Violence is historical in nature:** not accidental, not bad luck, not bad judgment, not a single event
- 2. There are many types of abuses** girls and women are vulnerable to, or may experience at different lifecourse stages

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Culture of GBV

Lifetime Spiral of Gender Violence

IMPLICATION: Culture of VAW Locates Trauma across Lifecourse

- 3. Various perpetrators are located across lifecourse:** E.g., incest by father in childhood; cyber-stalking by boyfriend in school; sexual harassment by coach in college; clergy in church; forced to disavow sexual orientation by homophobic parents; DV by intimates; elder abuse by care-givers and/or adult children.

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TRAUMA & CULTURAL CONTEXTS

- 2. Culture of ethnic & identity-specific communities:**
 - ▶ All ethnic groups have cultural identities
 - ▶ **Strengths:** Cultural-identities contain the histories of a people that include traditions, struggles, achievements, triumphs. Cultures nourish pride, resilience, belonging, intersectional identities, connection to community.
 - ▶ **Harms:** Cultures prescribe and maintain traditional, patriarchal gender norms and roles; define 'transgressions' from these norms; and patrol the boundaries of what is and isn't culturally acceptable, enforcing compliance by violence, rejection, "death by a thousand paper cuts".

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Culture of ethnic communities

Culture of Ethnic Communities & Trauma: E.g., Leaving

- ▶ **Refugees** have experienced triple trauma during
 - Conflict in home country
 - Transit on dangerous routes and in camps
 - Resettlement in new country
- ▶ **Community attitudes to DV survivors leaving** include victim-blaming, rejection for betraying gendered cultural norms, visiting dishonor and shame on the family
- ▶ **Implications for trauma-informed advocacy:** Understanding that for Asian refugee DV survivors the meaning of leaving home is connected to:
 - Individual, family and community histories
 - Collective, not individual, life /death assessments of danger
 - Deep, irrevocable losses connected to triple trauma
 - Focusing primarily on resettlement trauma
 - Being exiled from connection to community.

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Culture of systems

TRAUMA & CULTURAL CONTEXTS

3. Culture of systems
Systems designed to protect can fail victims, create barriers, withhold resources, and be punitive

System failures generate trauma when they:

- ▶ Increase batterer impunity *"even they didn't believe/help you"*
- ▶ Increase levels of endangerment e.g., not using interpreters for victims with limited English proficiency
- ▶ Institutionalize racism and anti-immigrant policies, leading to mistrust and reluctance to use services
- ▶ Decrease survivor autonomy
- ▶ Decrease efficacy of service providers advocating for their clients
- ▶ Jeopardize battered mothers' access to their children

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To Conclude

TRAUMA IMPLICATIONS ON HELP-SEEKING :
Past Experiences Influence Current Attempts

Histories of abuse are accompanied by histories of help-seeking

Exposure to multiple forms of familial abuses and abusers	→ Shrinks the pool of potential helpers
Victim-blaming and support for abusers by community and family;	→ Diminishes autonomy; increases impunity; deepens internalized devaluation
Negative actions and attitudes of helpers	→ Colors the ability to trust others and/or one's own judgment; increases danger
Societal oppressions e.g., anti-immigrant sentiments	→ Diminishes access, increases barriers to services

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CULTURE x 3 : MITIGATING TRAUMA

1. Culture of gender-based violence & sexism
We change understanding, awareness, definitions, laws and build movements

2. Culture of ethnic communities
We change cultural norms, resist patriarchy, organize communities, and strengthen culturally-specific, trauma-informed advocacy

3. Culture of systems
We collaborate so systems become gateways to services & justice

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