



The GREATER NEW BEDFORD HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES COALITION
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SUBCOMMITTEE
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE NEW BEDFORD POLICE DEPARTMENT



Panel Presentation for All Greater New Bedford Area Service Providers

QUESTION:

**The roots of Domestic/Sexual Violence are
Sexism, Racism, Classism etc...**

ANSWER:

What are forms of OPPRESSION

Moderator: Freddi Carbone, New Bedford Police Department Civilian Advocate

Speakers:

- ✓ **Maria Alves, Seven Hills Behavioral Health Inc.**
- ✓ **Gail Fortes, YWCA**
- ✓ **Dan Gilbarg, Coalition For Social Justice**
- ✓ **Pamela MacLeod-Lima, The Women's Center**

June 21, 2006, 9:00-12:30

The Buttonwood Park Zoo Wildlife Education Center

425 Hawthorn St., New Bedford, MA.

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This report is also posted at www.geociteis.com/gnbhsc

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Welcome



Greater New Bedford area service providers attended a special panel presentation on oppression on Friday, June 21, 2006. Freddi Carbone, Civilian Advocate of the New Bedford Police Department, welcomed area providers to begin a dialog and thinking about ways to address various issues of oppression, and the effects on their clients.

This year's focus on the interconnectedness of domestic and sexual violence enables providers to actively raise issues of oppression faced by victims of domestic and sexual violence in our communities and agencies providing services to or otherwise involved with victims. The work to end domestic and sexual violence must include the fight against all forms of oppression, which unduly affect women, children and other marginalized people. Oppression has harmful affects on individuals, families and societies as a whole. The Committee opposes the use of violence as a means of oppression, and will use a diverse and collective voice to inspire others to join and support values of respect and equality in working to eliminate domestic and sexual violence within our communities.

Oppression is the impact of assumed and unjust superiority that entitles persons, institutions or governments to dominate, exclude, discriminate against, abuse, etc., a group that is perceived to be inferior.

A series of panelists spoke about the interconnectedness of domestic and sexual violence to actively raise issues of oppression faced by victims of domestic and sexual violence.

The Panelists

Pamela MacLeod-Lima, The Women's Center, shared definitions of oppression, intersectionality, and principles of anti-oppression. Besides the various external forms of oppression is internalized oppression. Area residents come with ideas and experiences from other cultures, and may not realize that things are different here. A domestic violence victim who is also undocumented may fear that calling the police will lead to deportation. They may fear losing their children because their child rearing techniques are not the same as American ideas.

The Women's Center provides free and confidential 24-hour, easily accessible services to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and child trauma. They provide counseling, education, outreach, referrals and resources. Their mission is to empower and support positive choices for all and to educate and take action in the community for the prevention of oppression and violence.

Gail Fortes, YWCA knows that many individuals who utilize services represented by the day's attendees benefit from the YWCA mission to empower women and girls, and eliminate racism. Programs include the Economic Empowerment Program's childcare programs for women and youth, programs for youth, breast and cervical cancer program, insurance services to undocumented and other aliens, and residential programs. YWCA serves men and boys, when appropriate. Areas of program services include advocacy, adult services, youth services, Women's Collaborative Project and Wellness for Women and Girls.

The Racial Justice Program, an 8 hour training session, works with community organizations to look at the role of racism in everyday life, cultural competency and not feeding into racist attitudes. The training includes the “Color of Fear” video on how racism effects lives, the use of the “Brown-Eyed, Blue-Eyed” demonstration and 3 hours of cultural competency on the diverse populations in New Bedford.

Attendees were encouraged to eliminate stereotypes, provide a warm reception area, provide language diversity in publications, train staff in cultural competency and eliminating racism, work with the legal system and police, and continue to work together and speak up against racist comments.

Maria Alves, Seven Hills Behavioral Health, Inc. and staff “meet people where they’re at” to



ask them how they can best be served. Their street outreach is an important link between clients and services, as well as relationship building, listening and filling basic needs, rather than waiting for reluctant individuals to access services on their own. Some women will not come forward when raped. Some endure violence because they think they are “no good”. Some were denied knowledge of sexual health, or feel little control or decision making power over their bodies.

The Outreach Center fills a big gap in services to women. A focus group conducted with incarcerated women and women on the street provided information on what their needs were. The center provides services previously not provided to a subpopulation of women. Renamed the Home of Hope Outreach Center for Women, the group continues to work closely with the New Bedford Women’s Center and Treatment on Demand.

Some services include Project Care case management services for HIV+ individuals, Home of Hope Outreach Center for Women (street outreach and a drop in center with structured services for women at risk for HIV/AIDS), Luis E. Martinez House (HIV/AIDS residence provides subsidized, independent living services for HIV+ and homeless individuals), HIV counseling & testing (anonymous services in office, mobile unit and on the street), Gifford Street (Opioid treatment and maintenance), Twist Program (for men having sex with men), Women’s Risk (bilingual Portuguese and Spanish) and S.T.E.P Program (mobile street outreach to educate and prevent HIV/AIDS). Seven Hills is also closely connected to other service organizations in the greater New Bedford area.

Dan Gilbarg, Coalition for Social Justice stressed the need for equality and respect.



Oppression underlies the causes of violence and perceived and/or real insults effect self-esteem. Inequality and lack of treating individuals with respect is behind much of the violence in society. The education system often consists of under funded schools, teachers who feel that student’s can’t learn, overcrowded classrooms, and bad physical conditions. Students feel inferior, fail academically, feel “stupid”, and compensate by showing that they’re tough.

Two broad issues need to be addressed: 1.) Our society is a factory for social problems that can’t be solved by in services alone, and 2.) What can we do about this? We can do our own best

according to the guidelines given at this conference and impact public policy issues, such as the minimum wage bill.

The Coalition for Social Justice invites interested ones to become part of their roster by calling Dan at **508-982-8157**. Members receive email alerts on various issues. They may also attend rallies at special events to speak out on these issues.

Conclusion



Feedback from today's event will lay the ground work for a future conference. Attendees were invited to join the Domestic Violence Committee. Commended for their work were Freddi Carbone, Maria Alves, Pamela Bourgault, Carolina Africano, Bob Heskett, Pam Melo and Jean DeCoffe. The group recommended Lorraine Rosa's title be changed from staff to Administrative Director. After a raffle of centerpieces, a final thought was shared:

Evaluations

Evaluations for panelists and content were rated according to the following scale:

Panelist:

- 3 Very Informative
- 2 Somewhat Informative
- 1 Not Informative

Content:

- 3 Interesting
- 2 Somewhat Interesting
- 1 Not Very Interesting

All panelists and content rated well, and between 2 and 3.

Pamela MacLeod-Lima, Executive Director, The Women's Center		
<i>Question: Did this presentation help you identify various forms of oppression faced by victims of domestic/sexual violence?</i>		
Panelist Average	Content Average	Comments:
2.68	2.68	➤ Yes (9 responses) ➤ I would like a handout to follow the slide presentation and speaker, provided a nice broad background, excellent overview ➤ Yes I didn't realize that there were so many isms ➤ I think if the presentation was done more personally than on the screen of the computer it would have been more interesting
Gail Fortes, Executive Director, YWCA of SE MA		
<i>Did this presentation help you to identify issues of racism in our community?</i>		
Panelist Average	Content Average	Comments:
2.47	2.42	➤ Yes (7 responses) ➤ I was unaware of how common this issue took place, ➤ Learned about different services that can be offered. ➤ Also didn't realize that the YWCA had all these services available ➤ Yes, and I will encourage my director on how important a training session is necessary since our dept will be increasing ➤ Great presentation excellent information (Much needed)! ➤ Helpful to point out the exercise of brown eyes/blue eyes, barriers identified ➤ Very informative I was ..(illegible)..overview of tone. Excellent delivery "down to earth" speaker ➤ Yes education and training is important

		➤ No
Maria Alves, Program Manager, Seven Hills Behavioral Health Inc.		
<i>Did this presentation help you identify various forms of oppression within the Health and Human Services Community?</i>		
Panelist Average	Content Average	Comments:
2.54	2.36	➤ Yes (8 responses) ➤ Maria has done a tremendous job keeping these issues in the minds of other agencies ➤ Good job ➤ Helpful to point out the prejudice toward and within those they service ➤ I liked this presentation because Maria spoke on a down to earth level, using language that everyone could understand ➤ I feel she spoke more about services from her agency ➤ No
Dan Gilbarg, Coalition for Social Justice		
<i>Did this presentation help you identify various forms of oppression and the link to domestic/sexual violence?</i>		
Panelist Average	Content Average	Comments:
2.74	2.71	➤ Yes (7 responses) ➤ Yes, very much ➤ Excellent speaker very informative ➤ Made me take a second look how oppression affects everyone from elementary level to grown ups ➤ Societies that are more equal are less violent. We need to change society by making public policy more equal for all citizens ➤ Excellent information ... (illegible)...kept my interest great job! ➤ Being poor is not a direct link for DV/SA but is an issue for oppression ➤ He was talking more about things other than what I felt he should be discussing (my opinion)

Additional Questions

Did this presentation increase your awareness regarding oppression?

- Yes (15 responses)
- Yes, very much so
- Absolutely
- Yes, however would like some type of handout
- Yes, knowing and learning cultures and bi-lingual people
- Visibly comprehensive
- I will take some things with me
- Not really

Did this presentation help you to make new connections between oppression and domestic/sexual violence?

- Yes (19 responses)
- Absolutely
- I think we will use the resources more now that we have info on them
- A little bit. I just need “more” education for myself “new” to actually learning about it
- No

Would you attend a conference regarding these issues? What topics would you like to see covered?

- Yes (16 responses)
- Definitely
- Include bullying and violence in schools
- The issue of lack of equality causing a more violent environment
- DV/SA mental health and medical issues
- How substance abuse plays a role
- Recommend exercises like brown eye/blue eye to involve participants
- Relationship between political awareness and domestic violence
- I would like to hear a discussion on the effects of DV on children
- Bi-racial-ethnic groups-immigration issues
- How oppression begins and the impact from it in the future

Please identify one thing you will take away with you from this event today?

- Be aware of clients backgrounds which may be barriers to services
- Effects of culture and self-oppression
- We need to eradicate oppression starting with ourselves
- Oppression = DV DV-individual relief
- Issue of the link of inequality and violence
- Need for additional education in all these issues
- There is help resources especially Gail's presentation
- Important to be aware of own prejudices
- Awareness of other oppressions
- Social Justice
- How people stereotype other people
- People need to get together (agencies) and work as a team
- Connection between oppression and violence
- Self esteem in the school system
- Concrete solution oriented presentation programs from other places that work in making the change necessary
- This subject needs to be addressed in schools before high school (bullying and violence)

Biographies

Pamela MacLeod-Lima has been Executive Director of The Women's Center in New Bedford for four years, and has been working both locally and internationally to improve the lives of victims of sexual assault and domestic violence for over thirty-five years.

She began her work with victims in her home town of Cambridge, Massachusetts and brought the advocacy and counseling skills she acquired there to programs in Italy and France where she attended graduate programs at the Universities of Rome, Bologna and the Sorbonne in Paris.

She has a thirty year history in business management and non-profit administration and has been a South Coast resident for over twenty-five years.

Gail Fortes is the Interim Executive Director at the YWCA Southeastern Massachusetts. In this capacity she has overall responsibility for all programs, financial and administrative functions including Adult Services, Wellness for Women and Girls, Women's Collaborative Project and Youth Services. Gail is also a nationally certified trainer for the YWCA of the U.S.A.'s ENCORE plus Program. Program components include breast and cervical cancer outreach, education, screening, support group facilitation and land/water exercise training.

Gail is the Chair of the YWCA ENCORE plus Massachusetts/Rhode Island Collaborative and the immediate past chair of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health's Women's Health Network Southeast Regional Advisory Board for the Southeast Region. She also served as a member of the Volunteer Leadership Council of the American Cancer Society for the Greater New Bedford/Fall River Unit.

Gail has both a Masters in Public Administration with a concentration in Nonprofit Management and a Bachelor of Science in Physical Education, from Bridgewater State College. She is also a certified Dance Teacher and is a member of the Dance Teachers Club of Boston.

Gail lives in New Bedford, is married to a police officer and is the mother of two daughters: 10 year old Gabriela and 2 year old Genesis.

Maria F. Alves, B.S., LADC-a has been employed for 12 years in the field HIV/AIDS Prevention and Education by Seven Hills Behavioral Health, formerly known as the Center for Health and Human Services, Program Director of Home of Hope for Women Outreach Center, 1287 Acushnet Ave., New Bedford, MA.

My job began as an HIV/AIDS Educator and Street Outreach Worker in 1994. As an HIV Educator, I would provide HIV/AIDS education to agencies, programs, court referred individuals, community based organizations, businesses, Home Health Care agencies, and the community at large, etc. As a street outreach worker, I would go out on the streets reaching out to Substance Abusing men and women at high risk, with a focus on commercial sex workers with substance abuse issues providing harm reduction materials (condoms & bleach kits), HIV/AIDS information, referrals, treatment information, etc.

In 1996, the program focused on opening an Outreach Center for Women's services. This was 10 years ago. The Home of Hope began its work with women at increased risk of HIV, other STDs, Hepatitis A, B & C, substance Abuse, and Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault. We have also expanded into the Fall River area. The S.T.E.P. Outreach program was started 3 years ago. Outreach Services are provided to active intravenous drug users, men and women. Home of Hope has also acquired two other programs in the Fall River area: "TWIST" (an MSM Program) and "Women at Risk" (Bilingual – Portuguese speaking women at risk)

Dan Gilibarg, Coalition for Social Justice – Dan Gilbarg is an organizer with the Coalition for Social Justice in New Bedford. He has been a professor in sociology and physiology at Bristol Community College for 37 years with a specialty in race and poverty. He has been active for 30 years in New Bedford grass roots organizing for social and economic justice.