

Improving the impact of women's voices regarding delivery and design of public services – an example of DA services



One in three women is affected by domestic abuse and intimate partner violence globally



Intimate partner violence and domestic abuse are serious public health concerns which affect most commonly women and girls



Women from minority groups face the same obstacles in leaving violent relationships as white or cultural majority women – these obstacles are exacerbated by experiences of racism, a low socioeconomic status and immigration legislations

Domestic and intimate partner violence services:

- Services, regulations and organizations aim to end and prevent violence and abuse against women and girls
- Female survivors often face obstacles leaving a violent relationship and accessing support systems
- These include money, childcare, housing, transportation and much more and are exacerbated by experiences of racism, a low socioeconomic status and immigration legislations

“Even providers who describe their services as victim-centered may exert subtle coercion to accept services that match the agency’s mission, such as leaving the abuser or reporting abuse to law enforcement, but mismatch victims’ self-perceived needs” (Koss et al. 2017: 1023; cited from Davies and Lyon 2014).

Women's voices:

- While services became more professional over the years, they were **not permanently responsive** to the **diverse needs and voices of women**
- Barriers for women to access and seek support services include a **lack of representation** of women's identities, voices and biographies
- It is therefore crucial, to **improve the impact of women's voices** in intimate partner and domestic violence services

Improving the impact of women's voices through:

- **Meeting women where they are:** building connections with community groups allows to meet women and survivors where they are → in their neighbourhoods, communities and familiar spaces



- **Establishing participatory actions:** building common causes with communities, dialoguing with women, building bridges and establishing trust → encouraging conversations in homes around violence, empowering communities and community-based organisations



- **Radical listening:** accepting and respecting women's answers without any form of judgement and being truly attentive to what women are expressing



- **Cultural humility:** practicing self-reflection, breaking down power dynamics as well as biases and committing to mutual and ongoing learning experiences between service providers and survivors



- **Considering structural inequalities and intersectionality:** re-evaluating top-down approaches restricting women's voices, questioning dominant knowledge patterns and understanding how systems of oppression affect different identities and communities



- **Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR):** cooperation, power-sharing and shared decision-making between researchers and communities throughout the entire research process to enhance reaching women, listening to their voices, implementing their needs and experiences into service practices and enhance interdisciplinarity in the field for different communities with diverse needs and voices

For Birmingham concretely, it is recommended to implement and use **CBPR** in various areas and approaches to reach and gather women's voices

To **co-locate** services

To **educate** (men) + to eliminate harmful attitudes

To develop service design and delivery accounting for **different cultures and communities**

To account for different identities and their intersections

To **provide cultural humility**

To **practice radical listening**

To enhance, continue and expand **community-based practice**

To **establish bicultural and bilingual (research) staff members**

To **build trust and transparency** with communities → e.g. collecting data in the languages of women's choices

To establish **equal-decision making** → including communities in the conceptualization of studies

To be **responsive** to the needs of all stakeholders

To create, support and secure **women's only groups** to facilitate building social networks and hinder isolation