

PRESENTED BY | AMANI COMMUNITY SERVICES

HELPING *BLACK* SURVIORS OF ABUSE



THANK YOU

This project was supported by Grant No. 15JOVW-23-GG-04458-CAMP awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication/program/exhibition are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women.



AGENDA

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AMANI COMMUNITY SERVICES

Amani Community Services is the only African American domestic violence and sexual assault advocacy center in Iowa.

In 2013 a group colleagues saw the need for a culturally specific service agency for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault within the black community.

Within a year, Amani Community Services was founded on July 1st, 2014 in Waterloo, IA.

Since then, Amani Community Services has expanded with offices now in Cedar Rapids, Davenport and Des Moines, IA.



FEATURED IN

The Gazette



THE COURIER

OUR MISSION

"TO *END* ALL FORMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT IN THE AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY."

... and we want to help you support those survivors.



"It can feel like being frozen in time."

HISTORIC TRAUMA

You must learn about past traumas to understand the present



INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA

Intergenerational trauma is often rooted in historical events of oppression and violence, such as slavery, Jim Crow laws, and any discriminatory practices by law enforcement. These events have created a lineage of trauma that continues impact today.

Intergenerational trauma in black survivors can look like:

- **Distrust and Fear:** A fear and distrust in law enforcement, which leads to reluctance in cooperating or obtaining the help from authorities.
- **Increased Anxiety:** Anxiety and fear during interactions with police, leading to more defensive behaviors.
- **Psychological Impact:** PTSD, depression, and other mental health issues impacting the individuals' overall well-being.
- **Impact on Family Dynamics:** This trauma can affect family dynamics, leading to behavioral patterns, substance abuse, and relationship difficulties such as domestic violence.





It is crucial for the understanding of these intergenerational traumas to improve police and community relations.

Examples:

- **Police Brutality and Racial Profiling:** History of police brutality and racial profiling, particularly against Black and minority communities, can trigger intergenerational trauma and fuel distrust.
- **Systemic Racism:** Systemic racism in law enforcement, is biased policing practices and discriminatory enforcement of laws, also continues the perpetuation of intergenerational trauma.

Having a trauma informed policing approach is important because it recognizes and addresses the impact of trauma to build trust and security.



UNDO IMPLICIT BIAS

Implicit bias refers to unconscious attitudes, prejudices, and judgments about people or groups.

- Racial bias can lead to misidentifying victims as aggressors—especially for Black or Indigenous victims
- Departments must train all personnel to recognize and counteract their biases, especially during high-stress or complex domestic calls
- Prioritize their safety without criminalizing the victim



BUILDING CONFIDENCE

... through

CULTURAL COMPETENCE

Cultural competence is a set of congruent behaviours, attitudes, and policies that partners together in a system, agency, or professionals and enable that system, agency or professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural activities. Agencies must factor in the complex life experiences of African American victims when designing their program responses and policies to successfully provide supportive interventions.

- For Black women and their families, they experience higher rates of poverty and fewer options for safety exist when escaping an abusive relationship. A victim often has the inability to find safe housing within their community. In some cultures, divorce is not acceptable with cultural consequences such as alienation from should their marriage/relationship end.
- Domestic violence is often not the most pressing issue they're experiencing. Programs must account for these life experiences Black victims bring with them, such as poverty, generational cycles of abuse, mental illness, or current criminal justice system involvement.

CULTURALLY RELEVANT PRACTICES

The experiences of black women going through family violence are often intertwined with experiences of racism, language barriers, access to healthcare, poor living condition, education, and employment opportunities.

- Black survivors experience stereotypes that discourage them from seeking help after experiencing domestic and/or sexual violence. Black women are often stereotyped as being “strong enough” to handle violent situation. This stereotype leads Black women emotional defenseless in stressful situations that triggers aggressive responses, but in actuality it is her self-defence responses.
- Black women have greater risks of arrests due to domestic violence compared to all other race of women. They are more likely to be prosecuted as a result of domestic violence related calls. This type of discriminatory treatment leads to Black women being unwilling to reach out to police, despite their need for assistance.

<https://youtu.be/wQji9zMv1U?feature=shared>

CULTURALLY RELEVANT PRACTICES

Black survivors desire familial over former support, so partnering or employing a diverse workforce is imperative in connecting with the survivor to promote trust and combat the issues that may prevent disclosure. Do not consider a lack of participation or answering of questions as noncompliance. Having consistent communication and empathy offers more transparency and trust. Listen and respond with true intention, it reduces their anxiety and fear, and shows your commitment to provide safety measures for them and hold their offenders accountable.

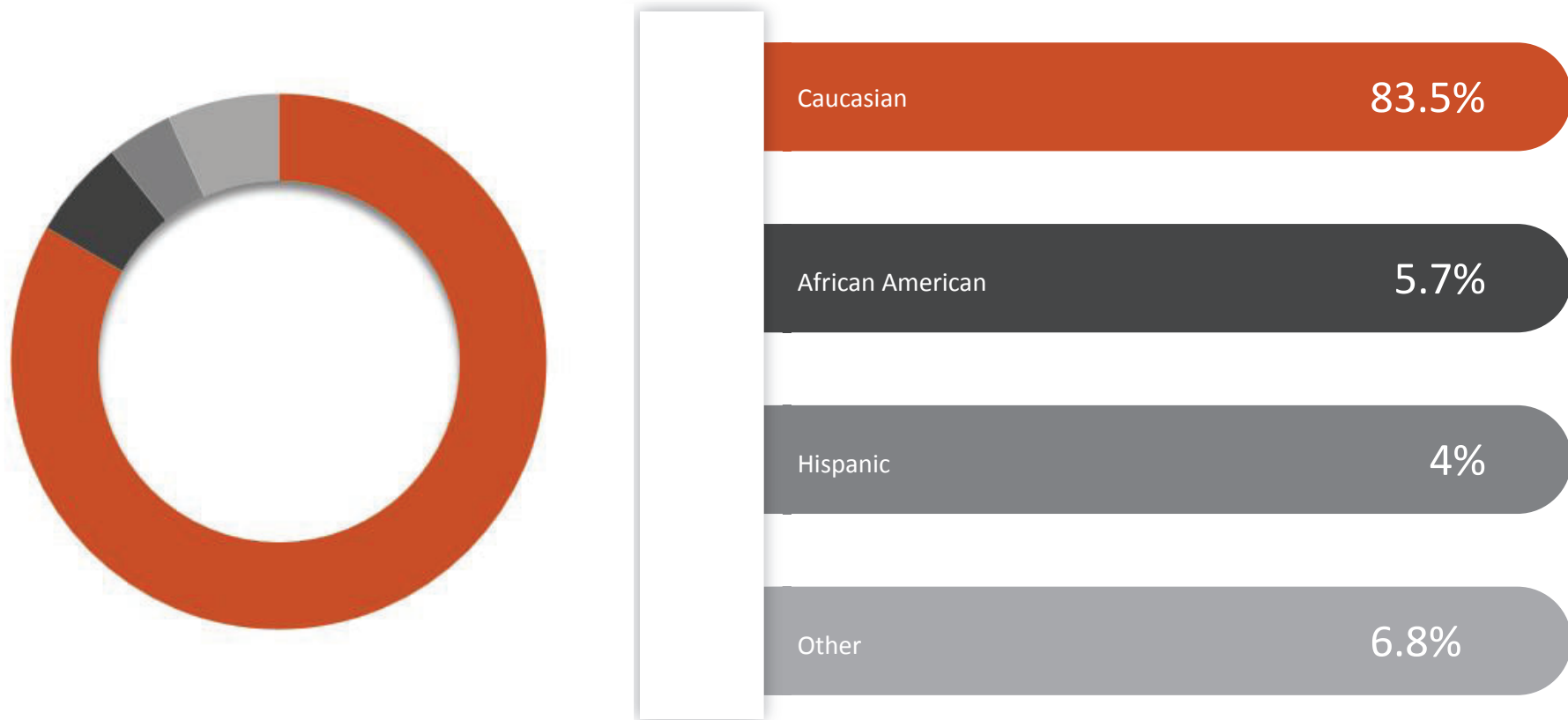
Always strive to create a welcoming environment. Culturally responsive organizations can convey a clear message that their agency is welcoming and supportive by displaying materials that reflect Black women, through magazines, etc., in their office or personal care items available for Black survivors.

"See from their POV."

A young woman with dark, curly hair is holding a black smartphone up to her face. The phone's screen is positioned in front of her eyes, reflecting her face. The background is a solid, dark brown color. The text "THE POWER OF UNDERSTANDING" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters across the center of the image.

THE POWER OF UNDERSTANDING

BURLINGTON, IA POPULATION 23,637



PARTNERING WITH CULTURALLY SPECIFIC ENTITIES

- Law enforcement should collaborate with culturally specific advocacy groups that understand the lived experiences of marginalized communities.
- These partnerships help survivors feel safer and ensure access to ongoing support.

Nisaa African Family Services

Works with African immigrant and refugee survivors of DV & SA

LUNA

Works with the Latina/o survivors of DV & SA

Monsoon United Asian Women of Iowa

Works with Asian & Pacific Islander survivors of DV & SA

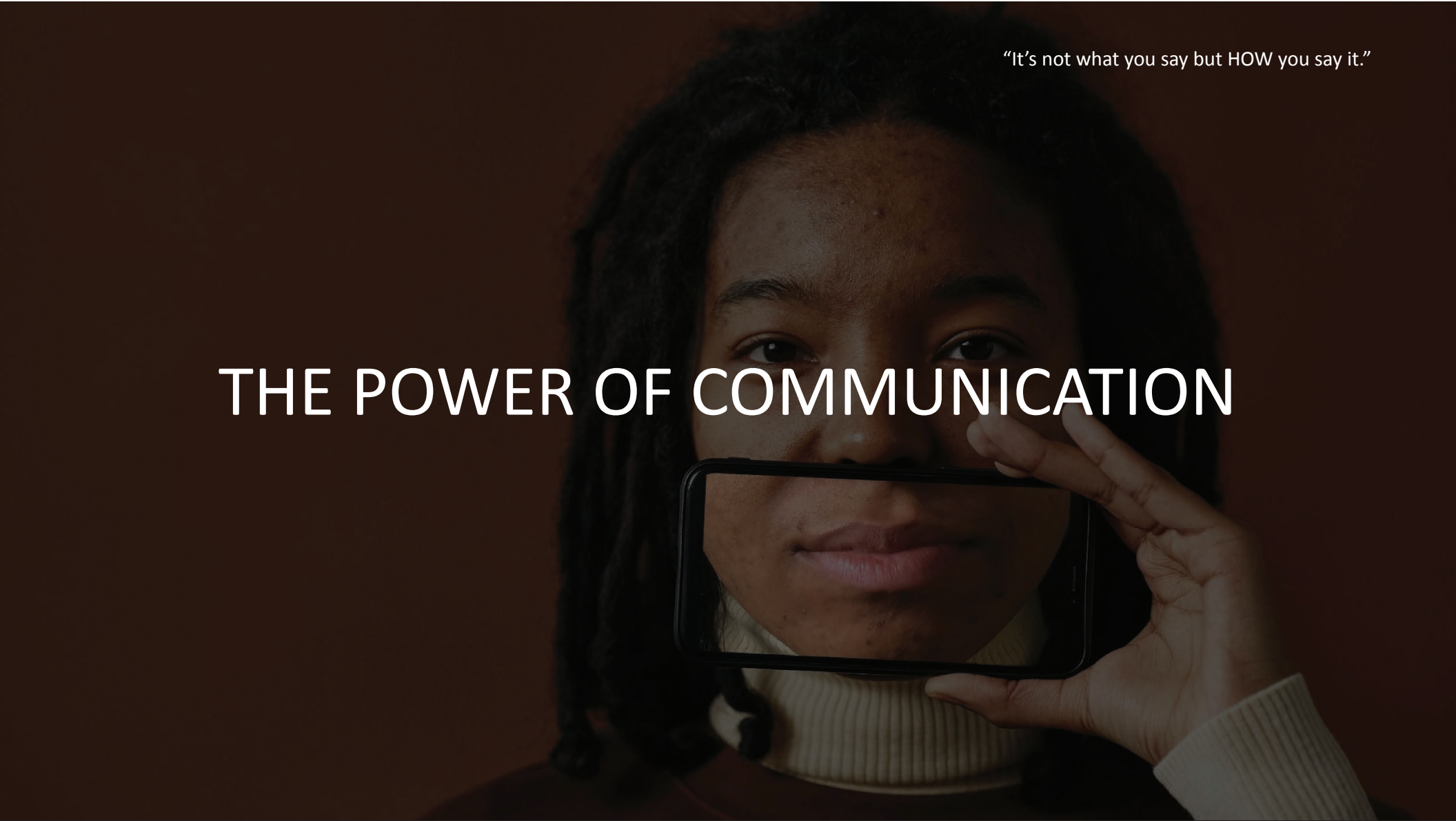


ENGAGING WITH THE SURVIVOR

... through

"It's not what you say but HOW you say it."

THE POWER OF COMMUNICATION



SPEAKING IMPACT

Your ability to communicate effectively will leave a lasting impact on those you serve!

Effectively communicating involves not only delivering your message but also resonating with the experiences, values, and emotions of those that are listening.

There is power in your words to either **build** or destroy.





OVERCOMING NERVOUSNESS

CONFIDENCE-BUILDING STRATEGIES



EFFECTIVE DELIVERY TECHNIQUES

These are powerful tool in working with black survivors.

It involves varying pitch, tone, and volume to convey emotion, emphasize points, but to not be offensive:

- Pitch variation
- Tone inflection
- Volume control

Effective body language enhances your message, making it more impactful and memorable:

- Meaningful eye contact
- Purposeful gestures
- Maintain good posture
- Control your expressions



ENGAGING THE SURVIVOR

- Make eye contact with your survivor to provide them undivided respect
- Ask for their permission before touching them (hands, shoulder, etc.)
- Minimize relevance and maximize your presence. Use narratives that make YOUR message memorable and impactful while meeting them where they are. You will NEVER understand their seat, but you can take a seat next to them to understand their story.
- Encourage questions and provide thoughtful responses to enhance an open conversation between them. So that they feel valued and heard.
- Use affirmations that assist them throughout the development of their healing journey. It is a big step for black survivors in taking the step towards trusting you with their most vulnerable moment(s).



LET'S REVIEW SOME EXAMPLES

Housing instability is what black survivors fear most, such as in the unaffordability to move or in nuisance property laws that fine or evict survivors for calling the police and fear of having an arrest.

Instead Of: “You can just leave. Don’t you have another place to go?”

Say: “ You must feel so alone in this moment. How can I help you feel supported in feeling safer or able to get you to a safer environment?”

Instead Of: “This is our third time coming out here, one of you are going to jail if you don’t calm down.”

Say: “Let’s talk over here. Take a breathe. Tell me what you are feeling in this moment that has made you feel defeated?”

<https://youtu.be/aLhEXofz3e0?feature=shared>

WE LISTEN AND WE DON'T JUDGE

COMMON STEREOTYPES OF BLACK PEOPLE

1. Uneducated and unemployed.
2. Loud, aggressive and disruptive.
3. Black women/men grew up without their fathers and are the by-products of single parent households.
4. Unmarried
5. On either food stamps, section 8 and/or welfare.
6. Do not respect law enforcement.

What did you determine before you opened your mouth to retrieve true data? The **belief** that you may have decided upon, builds more barriers.

“How can you listen and don’t judge?”

- Remove everything you think you know*
- Talk with them and not at them*
- Actively listen without interruption*
- Maintain eye contact with them always*
- Pause and reflect before responding*



YOUR WORDS ARE POWERFUL IT'S ***WRITING*** THEIR STORY

It is often the internal belief over certain demographics and their credibility that can prevent proper mediation, potentially saving the lives of black survivors.

<https://youtu.be/OYj3jdIwdLw?feature=shared>

Be sympathetic, black survivors are fighting multiple battles that are seldomly spoken about.



FINAL TIPS & TAKEAWAYS

Tip One:

To truly support victims of color, law enforcement must shift from a control-focused approach to a survivor-centered one

Tip Two:

Their safety is first priority

Tip Three:

Be grounded in Equity

Tip Four:

Operate with a moral compass

WHAT ARE YOUR QUESTIONS? LET'S DISCUSS



THANK YOU



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