Multi-Disciplinary Collaboration to Increase Access to Criminal Justice and Legal Services for Deaf Survivors of Domestic and Sexual Violence

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Introduction and Roles

- Stephanie Smith Bowman, CHOICES
- Kim Kidd, Columbus City Attorney, Domestic Violence & Stalking Unit
- Micaela Deming, Esq.
Learning Objectives

- Strategies to use culturally empowering holistic screening process and unique elements of safety planning for Deaf survivors

- Unique legal issues that may emerge for Deaf survivors in civil and criminal court system

- Key elements for successful multi-disciplinary collaboration to empower Deaf survivors in accessing and navigating legal system
Deaf Demographics

- NIH Statistics: 8.9% overall hearing loss
- 10% of group being profoundly deaf
- 66,000 in Ohio
- 10,000 in Franklin County
- Columbus = 4th largest Deaf community
Between **50 % and 83 %** of Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals will experience domestic violence and/or sexual assault in their lifetime.

(Anderson, 2010; Francavillo, 2009)
Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals in their lifetimes are **1.3 times** more likely to be victims of:

- Relationship violence
- Psychological Abuse
- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Harassment
- Sexual Assault/Rape

(8 year survey at Rochester Institute of Technology by Laverne Mc Quiller Williams, et. al)
AUDISM

- N: an attitude based on pathological thinking which results in a negative stigma toward anyone who does not hear; like racism or sexism, audism judges, labels, and limits individuals on the basis of whether a person hears and speaks. (Tom Humphries, unpublished essay, 1977)
Deaf students get sexuality information more often from:

1). Friends (85 % vs. 67%)
2). Workshops (40% vs. 9%)
3). Posters (30 % vs. 18%)

7 times more likely to learn from one another than formal educational resources.

25% awareness of sexuality information comparable to hearing peers’ full knowledge. (Francavillo, 2009)
Deaf Power and Control Wheel

- Male Privilege
- Hearing Privilege
- Language Access
- Isolation/Community standing
- Intimidation
- Coercion/Threats
- Economic Abuse
- Using Children

Deaf Hope, 2007
Deaf Culture: Stalking tactics

What else do THEY use?
Protection order challenges

- What are the challenges for Deaf/Hoh survivors?
Law enforcement issues

- What are the challenges for Deaf/Hoh survivors?
Protection Order Considerations

- Phone Logs/Recorded calls as evidence
- Preserving texts and e-mails as evidence
- Safety Considerations for Deaf events
- Use of Expert to Explain Specific Evidence or Requests
Court Issues: Divorce and/or Custody

- Mental Health Assessments
- Police reports
- Children Services and Guardians Ad Litem
- Alimony/Spousal support, Child Support
Court Issues: Divorce and/or Custody

- Financial resources and housing
- Employment/Disability
- Parenting Arrangements
- Attorney/Interpreter and the community
Empowerment options

- Attorney and Experts
- Educating the Courts
- Systems Advocacy
- Advocate for the Client
- Preparation and Knowledge for the client
Cultural considerations: Safety planning

- Survivor’s Cultural affiliation/support system
- Family cultural dynamics
- Knowledge/Access to Resources
- Trauma Informed Support Team
National Resources

- **Accessing Safety Initiative** available at http://www.accessingsafety.org
- Deaf **National DV Hotline** (ADWAS)
  - 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)
  - 1-800-787-3224 (TTY)
  - Videophone: 1-855-812-1001
  - IM: DeafHotline
  - Email: deafhelp@thehotline.org
- **National Association of the Deaf**
  - Available at http://nad.org/
- **VIOLENCE IN THE LIVES OF THE DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING** available at http://www.vawnet.org/special-collections/?filterby=Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- **JDVNC Board of Directors**
  - Co-Presidents: Gabe Wright (gabe@adwas.org) and Stephanie Smith Bowman (ssmithbowman@yahoo.com)
Links for Materials and Regional Resources

- Jennifer Obinna article: Study Reveals Unique Issues Faced by Deaf Victims of Sexual Assault available at http://www.nij.gov/journals/257/deaf-victims.html


- VAWNET Special Collections: A to Z Interactions with Deaf available at http://new.vawnet.org/Assoc_Files_VAWnet/DeafAtoZ.pdf

- Abused Deaf Women’s Advocacy Services (ADWAS) available at http://www.adwas.org/

- Deaf advocacy agencies: ADWAS Community Links available at http://www.adwas.org/information/links/

- Contact JDVNC Co-Presidents and NDVH Deaf Hotline for updates
Action Steps

‣ What can **YOU** do?
Contact information

- **Micaela Deming**
  - Email: [MDemingEsq@gmail.com](mailto:MDemingEsq@gmail.com)

- **Kim Kidd**
  - Email: [KAKidd@columbus.gov](mailto:KAKidd@columbus.gov)

- **Stephanie Smith Bowman**
  - Email: [SBowman@choicescolumbus.org](mailto:SBowman@choicescolumbus.org)