

WEB CONFERENCE SUMMARY

Sexual and domestic violence affect all communities. Yet structural inequities from historic and present-day policies, practices, and norms generate inequities in rates of sexual and domestic violence by age, sex, race, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and other factors. Communities that face higher rates of sexual and domestic violence often also face inequities in other forms of violence and trauma. How can we ensure that sexual and domestic violence prevention practice address these realities? This topic explores how to infuse equity considerations and an understanding of individual and community trauma in prevention practice. It discusses the importance of an asset/strengths-based approach and the need to promote individual and community agency in community change efforts.

PRACTITIONERS & ADVOCATES FEATURED

- **Leslie Conway**, Youth Resilience Coordinator, [Virginia Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Action Alliance \(VSADVAA\)](#)
- **Adriana Myers**, Med, Sexual Assault Prevention Specialist and Victim Advocate, [Laurel Center](#)
- **Katie Moffitt, MSW**, Sexual Assault Prevention Coordinator, [Laurel Center](#)
- **Lauren Camphausen**, Empowerment Evaluator, [Delaware Coalition Against Domestic Violence \(DCADV\)](#)
- **Noël Sincere Duckworth**, Director of Training & Prevention, [Delaware Coalition Against Domestic Violence \(DCADV\)](#)

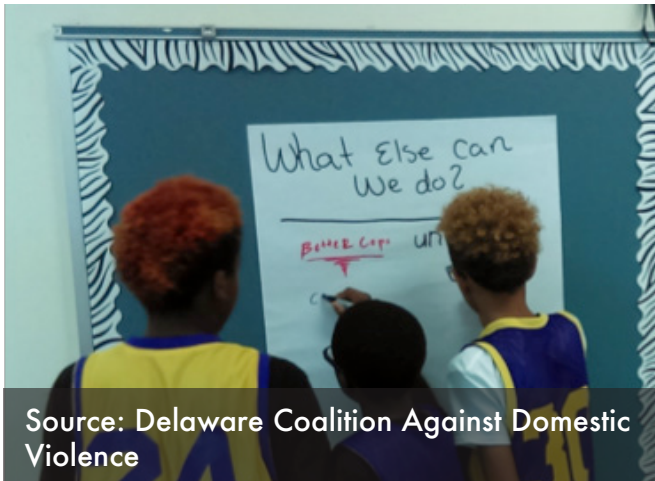
The Delaware Coalition Against Domestic Violence (DCADV) shared how they frame trauma not as “what’s wrong with this community,” but rather “what’s happened to this community.”

KEY FINDINGS

- A. Community trauma is relevant for sexual and domestic violence prevention because communities that face higher rates of sexual and domestic violence often also face inequities in other forms of violence and trauma. Multiple forms of violence and systemic inequities contribute to high levels of community trauma.** Community trauma is

EXPANDING PARTNERSHIPS & LINKAGES

more than just the aggregate of individuals who have experienced trauma from exposure to violence.



Source: Delaware Coalition Against Domestic Violence

DCADV uses participant-involved data collection that is also beneficial to the community. [Image of youth writing on flip chart paper about “what else can we do?”]

There are manifestations or symptoms that are experienced at the community level, such as long-term unemployment, deteriorated environments or damaged social relations. Prevention Institute’s Adverse Community Experiences and Resilience report defines community trauma as the cumulative and synergistic impact of regular incidents of interpersonal violence, historical and intergenerational violence and continual exposure to structural violence.

The Delaware Coalition Against Domestic Violence frames trauma not as “what’s wrong with this community?” but rather “what’s happened to this community?” Project staff are aware of historical disinvestment in the community and ongoing re-victimization by systems and services. They acknowledge and anticipate challenges and proactively accommodate for these in designing their strategy. Staff are well-trained in a trauma-informed approach, and the physical and social environment for the program provides a dedicated, welcoming, and safe space. The Delaware Coalition Against Domestic Violence also follows trauma-informed evaluation methods by emphasizing qualitative methods, such as participant-involved data collection (e.g., PhotoVoice), and utilizing data sources that are beneficial community activities and processes that generate usable evaluation data.

Tip: Recognize and validate trauma, and prioritize opportunities for community healing, resistance, and resilience.

- B. Focusing on communities that face multiple inequities will help to reduce sexual and domestic violence and related inequities.**

EQUITY, TRAUMA, AND SEXUAL AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Communities that face higher rates of sexual and domestic violence often also face inequities in other forms of violence and trauma due to structural inequities from historical and present-day policies, practices, and norms. The Virginia Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Action Alliance understands the impacts of intergenerational trauma and the harms of racism, and focuses efforts on specific populations that have been disproportionately affected by violence. For instance, Black women in Virginia have sexual and domestic violence victimization rates three times higher than white women, so the Action Alliance is working on prevention in more focused ways with Black communities.

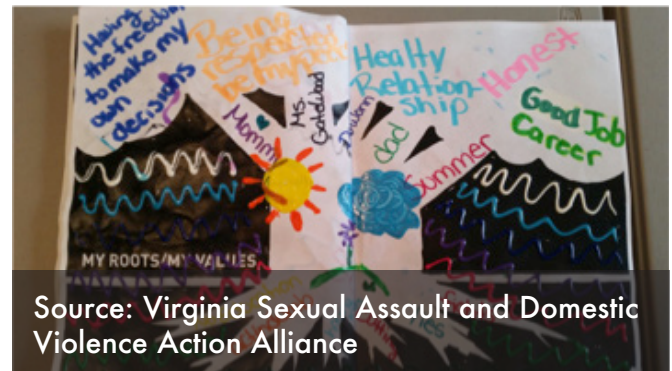
C. Strengths-based approaches and supporting individual and community agency are integral to countering community trauma, and therefore critical to sexual and domestic violence prevention work. The team in Virginia applied an asset-based lens based on Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets for Adolescents. Their Do You Campaign to prevent youth violence (dating and sexual violence, sexual harassment, and bullying) focuses on four specific assets they want to build:

- Interpersonal competence - Young person has

empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.

- Personal power - Young person feels he or she has control over "things that happen to me."
- Community values youth - Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth.
- Positive peer influence - Young person's best friends model responsible behavior.

In partnership with the community and with care not to push an agenda that can further exacerbate community trauma, the Laurel Center has facilitated activities with youth to strengthen individual and community agency. Students participate in a



Source: Virginia Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Action Alliance

Virginia uses an assets-based approach through their Do You Campaign. [Image of student drawing of "My Root/My Values" activity that shows how things like good jobs, healthy relationships and having the freedom to make their own decisions are valued.]

variety of Do You activities to get them thinking about identity, culture, gender socialization, values, and more. For instance, in the activity called My Roots/My Values, students stage a mock auction to determine which values are most important.

The Delaware Coalition Against Domestic Violence builds on community strengths and promotes agency through Safe + Respectful, a neighborhood-based program for middle school-aged youth. The goal of the program is to improve the physical assets within the neighborhood in order to increase community-wide support and connectedness and decrease the potential for community and domestic violence. The coalition has adopted an evidence-based curriculum on youth empowerment and leadership and adapted it based on the acknowledgement and understanding that community trauma is persistent and pervasive. Program adaptations include building on the original culturally-specific modules to integrate a more intersectional approach. This involves sharing stories and examples of women’s leadership and women-led social change movements and building on truth-telling by talking about oppression, racism,

sexism, power dynamics, abuse, love, and healing as mechanisms to build community resilience. At one community event, a storyteller performed a mix of African and African-American folklore and original works as a means of supporting community members in engaging in safe and healthy strategies for resistance and resilience.

RESOURCES

- [Web Conference Link](#)
- [Web Conference Slides](#)
- [Prevention Institute’s Adverse Community Experiences and Resilience report](#)
- [Prevention Institute’s Countering the Production of Health Inequities through Systems and Sectors](#)
- [Laurel Center’s website](#)
- [Virginia Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Action Alliance \(CSADVAA\) website](#)
- [The People’s Report: The link between structural violence and crime in Wilmington, Delaware](#)
- [Healing the hurt: Trauma-informed approaches to the health of boys and young men of color](#)
- [Trauma-informed community building: A model for strengthening community in trauma-affected neighborhoods.](#)