Gender and Violence Prevention

Participant Handbook

Name: _____

Citizen Security
and Justice Programme
B A H A M A S
TRANSFORMING LIVES AND COMMUNITIES

Gender and Violence Prevention

Table of Contents

Gender and Violence Prevention

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Gender and Violence Prevention

OVERVIEW

This handbook is designed as a quick reference to equip participants with the necessary understanding and the varying contexts of violence that exist in the Bahamas – from gender-based violence to gang violence and provide some ideas and tools to assist persons in leading more fulfilling and peaceful lives.

It is recognised globally that violence is multi-dimensional and as such needs to be treated within a social ecological model. Emphasis should be placed on the interdependence of the individual within the family, the family within the community, the community within the society and the society within the regional and global context.

There are YouTube video links and locally produced videos available to provide varying insightful perspectives on related sections. Thinking outside the box and engaging in innovative activities is key. Exercises are also available to aid in achieving the desired outcomes of cementing the knowledge and skills shared during the sessions.

Violence is a socialised process, which is learnt and reinforced within multiple social contexts and conversely can also be unlearnt or transformed through the process of gaining new perspectives, knowledge and skills that can replace existing negative and harmful social norms.

The handbook is divided into seven (7) thematic areas with eight (8) objectives, which are outlined below:

THEMATIC AREAS

(1) Learning from the Past to Address the Present
(2) Gender, Patriarchy, Power and Control
(3) Feminism, Masculinity and Violence
(4) Traits of a Real Man
(5) Gender-Based Violence
(6) Tools for Non-violence, Inclusion and Peace
(7) Sustaining Peaceful Coexistence

OBJECTIVES:

(1) To explore the historical context of violence in the Bahamas, from Colonialism and Slavery to Deportees, Drugs and Gangs.

(2) (i) To examine power and control dynamics that favour males in society, as well as the creation of unrealistic expectations for males and females.
(ii) To explore the role of Education, Employment and Religion.

(3) To analyse intimate partner violence in the context of the Wheel of Power.

(4) To learn the feminist movement as one based on human rights and equality for all movements.

(5) To assess the negative effects of patriarchy on the development of healthy male attitudes and to explore avenues for healing and healthy transformation.

(6) (i) To consider alternatives to crime, violence and gang culture as a right of passage for youth in underserved communities.
(ii) To explore approaches to community organizing and building to improve quality of life and intra community relationships.

(7) To examine the approaches to develop and support progressive local community leaders and the attributes of a progressive and positive role model.

(8) To examine community based institutional frameworks such as community mediation, healing circles and other means of dealing with conflicts while maintaining peace and harmony.
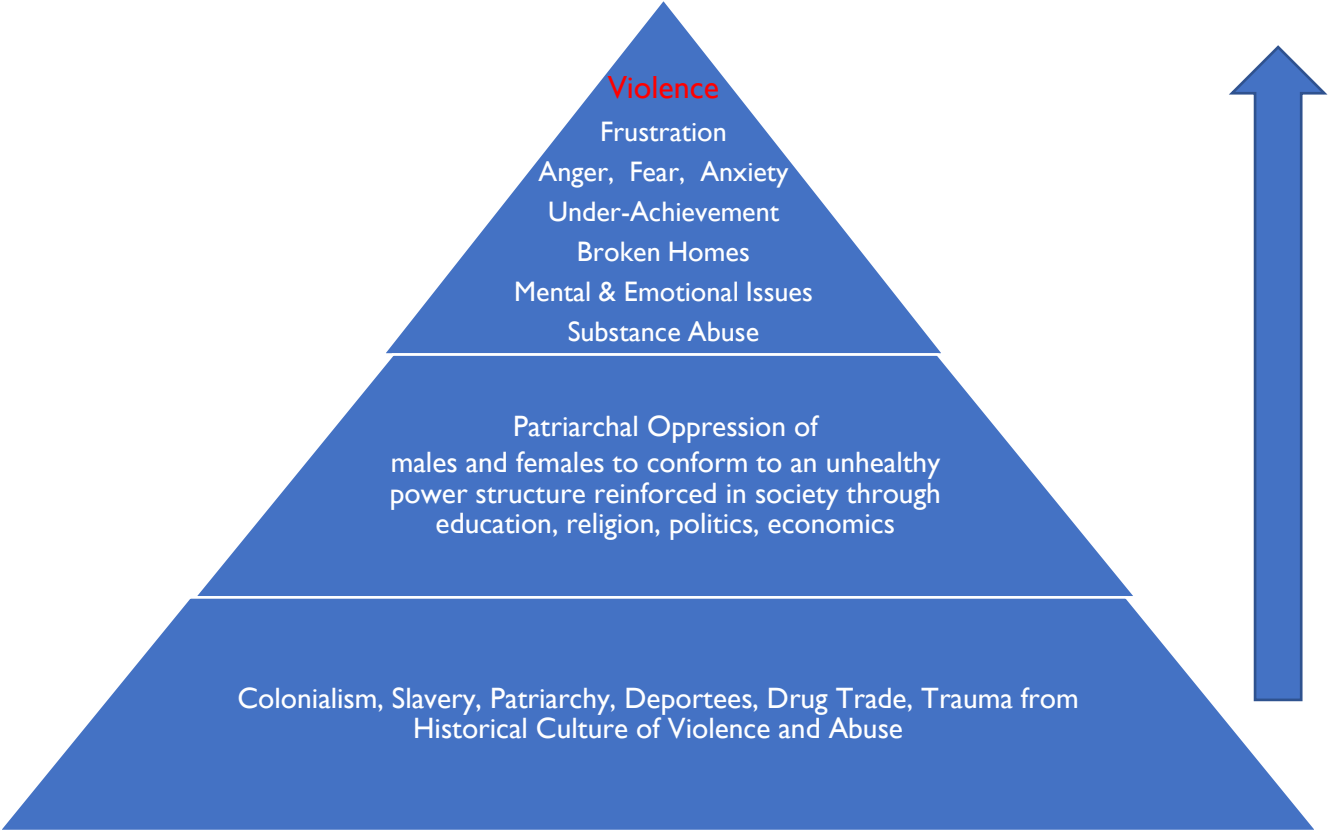
DEFINING VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

Violence and other forms of abuse are most commonly understood as a pattern of behaviours intended to establish and maintain control over family, household members, intimate partners, colleagues, individuals or groups. While violent offenders are most often, known to their victims (intimate or estranged partners and spouses, family members, relatives, peers, colleagues, etc.), acts of violence and abuse may also be committed by strangers.

Violence and abuse may occur only once. It can involve various tactics of subtle manipulation or may occur frequently while escalating over a period of months or years. In any form, violence and abuse profoundly affects an individual's health and well-being. The roots of many forms of violence are founded in the many types of inequality, which continue to exist and grow in society. This is, in addition, to emotionally challenged individuals lacking the necessary tools to communicate their feelings in peaceful ways.

Violence and abuse are used to establish and maintain power and control over another person, and often reflects an imbalance of power between the victim and the abuser.

Violence is a choice, and it is preventable.

"Progression to a Culture of Violence"

The following is an excerpt from the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador website:

There are Nine (9) distinct forms of Violence and Abuse:

(1) **Physical Violence** – This occurs when someone uses a part of their body or an object to control a person's actions.
(2) **Sexual Violence** - This occurs when a person is forced to unwillingly take part in sexual activity.
(3) **Emotional Violence** – This occurs when someone says or does something to make a person feel stupid or worthless.
(4) **Psychological Violence** - occurs when someone uses threats and causes fear in an individual to gain control.
(5) **Spiritual (or religious) Violence** – This occurs when someone uses an individual's spiritual beliefs to manipulate, dominate or control that person.
(6) **Cultural Violence** – This occurs when an individual is harmed as a result of practices that are part of her or his culture, religion or tradition.
(7) **Verbal Abuse** – This occurs when someone uses language, whether spoken or written, to cause harm to an individual.
(8) **Financial Abuse** – This occurs when someone controls an individual's financial resources without the person's consent or misuses those resources.
(9) **Neglect** – This occurs when someone has the responsibility to provide care or assistance for an individual but does not.

Source: Government of Newfoundland and Labrador https://www.gov.nl.ca/VPI/types/#4

Overview Exercise

After reading pages 3 - 4 and from your understanding, list the different types of Violence and Abuse in the Bahamas?

SESSION ONE:

Learning from the Past to Address the Present

Introduction

The Caribbean has a very specific history which is based on conquest, violence, forced labour, racism, destruction of family units and community spirit in general. From the moment the first Europeans landed on the shores of the Caribbean islands in the 1400s what followed was the systematic destruction of the indigenous inhabitants' way of life and the death of many through forced labour and disease.

Life in slavery was extremely dehumanizing. Persons were treated like animals and bought and sold as same. Families were broken apart. Two tribesmen and individuals who spoke the same language were not kept together. This method was used as a means of keeping them disorganized and distrusting of each other. Male slaves were routinely sexually assaulted within view of others by European males to break their spirit and control them, while female slaves were also regularly raped within the confines of the plantation house by slave owners and overseers. Slaves were separated by facial features and skin tone, thus creating hierarchies and further disunity.

This reality for the African slave in the Caribbean lasted for over 400 years and has left an indelible mark within the psychology of the islands' descendants. In his famous musical hit, titled Redemption Song, Robert Nesta Marley declared in song; "Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery, none but ourselves can free our minds…" But as we all should know by now, the legacy of 400 years of an indoctrination of inferiority, physical, mental and emotional torture and social decimation cannot be erased in a century or two particularly as colonialism itself only ended formally in some Caribbean islands within the past 5 to 6 decades.

Within this period however, many island states like the Bahamas have had to confront challenges of the international illegal drug trade, the scourge of violent street gangs and the reintegration of criminal deportees inter alia. These have all contributed in the increased violence that is being experienced today.

We face the 21st century gripped with high levels of intra family, intra community and inter community violence. Issues such as disenfranchised youth, racial tensions and uninspiring leadership continue to baffle societies. It is important to fully understand our historical context including the recent past, to help us recognize where we have come from; learning from our history to inform the future. The absence of this analysis, to ease the heavy psycho-emotional baggage of the past, makes it difficult to chart a way forward.

Therefore, as we interrogate violence in its many forms and develop interventions to address its root causes in the Bahamas, we must first accept our violent past and how it affects life today. When this is put into perspective and festering wounds are healed, we can then move forward with a renewed energy and vision to transform the present and future of our family islands. What has been learnt and socialised can be unlearnt and re-socialised accordingly.

Colonialism/Slavery

Play Video 1: Colonialism in the Caribbean

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U3RaJo7UUD4
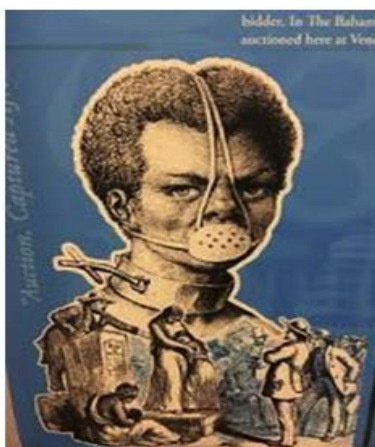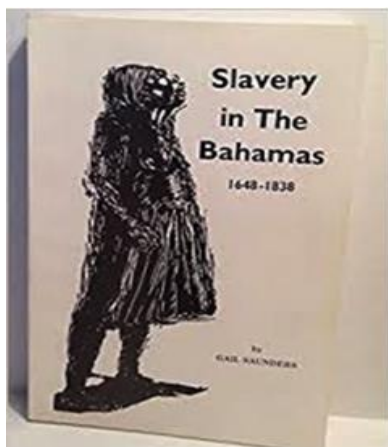
The Illegal Drug Trade

According to the Government of The Bahamas, the drug trade is one of the main causes of crime in the Bahamas. The Bahamas is particularly vulnerable to drug trafficking due to its convenient location between the supply and demand nations. The most common illegal drugs found in the Bahamas are marijuana and cocaine. The increase of crack cocaine abuse locally was found to have a negative effect on individuals and communities.

For more information it is recommended to visit the website below:

https://www.bahamas.gov.bs/wps/wcm/connect/156c8ff0-3c24-4c8e-86e2-8c053800ee66/Drug+Situation+Report+2015.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CONVERT_TO=url&CACHEID=156c8ff0-3c24-4c8e-86e2-8c053800ee66

Exercise 1.1

(1) How has the Drug Trade affected life in your community? Discuss.

(2) Do you see a link between the Drug Trade and Violence? Discuss.

Gangs in the Bahamas

Excerpts from Sutton (2016) in her report on gangs in the Bahamas stated the following:

Gangs began to develop in The Bahamas in the late 1970s as territorial groups of youths joined together for protection and a sense of group identity. The first violent youth gang in Nassau was named the "Syndicate" and grew out of the East Street area.

In the 1990s and early 2000s, gangs in The Bahamas became better structured and continued to expand their activities into suburban areas, resulting in increased territorial conflicts between rival gangs.

Estimates of the number of youths involved in gangs in the country range from 6,000 to 10,000 (OAS, 2010; Duba and Jencius, 2004). Around 18 different gangs have been identified as operating in The Bahamas, varying in size, structure, membership, and the extent of involvement with illegal activities. Currently, the largest and most prominent gangs are said to include "One Order," "Fire and Theft," and "Mad Ass."

Exercise 1.2

(1)   How do gangs affect your schools? Discuss.

(2)   How do gangs affect your community? Discuss.

(3)   Why do you think persons are attracted to gangs? Discuss.

(4)   How can you prevent someone from joining a gang? Discuss.

SESSION TWO:

Gender, Patriarchy, Power and Control

Introduction

"What you crying for; you are a girl or what?" "You let your woman talk to you like that?" "I am the man of the house so what I say goes!" "You doing dishes and laundry when you have a wife to do that?" "Your boss is a woman? I sorry for you bro!" "Now that you married, you have to let the husband feel he's in control and the boss or else you'll create unnecessary problems". Have you ever heard these types of comments?

The relatively strict assignment of roles for boys and men - as well as girls and women - within societies where "Men Rule" is being challenged everyday. Within the past six (6) decades women have been freeing themselves from the confines of socially inflicted boundaries reinforced over centuries while many men have also been questioning their own liberation from male stereotypes that many are struggling to cope with today in an ever-evolving social reality.

Exercise 2.1

Divide group into all male and all female groups then:

a) The male group should list female gender roles and the female group should list male gender roles.

b) List roles that overlap for both men and women and those which are exclusive to either males or females.

c) A representative from each group must present the group's list of roles, justifying their choices of roles in relation to gender.

d) What is the difference between gender and sex?

United Nations Definitions of Gender and Gender Equality

"Gender refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, as well as the relations between women and those between men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes. They are context/ time-specific and changeable. Gender determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or a man in a given context. In most societies there are differences and inequalities between women and men in responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, as well as decision-making opportunities. Gender is part of the broader socio-cultural context. Other important criteria for socio-cultural analysis include class, race, poverty level, ethnic group and age.

Equality between women and men (gender equality) refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not a women's issue but should concern and fully engage men as well as women. Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centered development."

What is Patriarchy?

Patriarchy is a social system in which men hold primary power and predominate in roles of political leadership, moral authority, social privilege and control of property. Some patriarchal societies are also patrilineal, meaning that property and title are inherited by the male lineage.

Macionis, (2012) and Henslin, (2001) propose that patriarchy is associated with a set of ideas, a patriarchal ideology that acts to explain and justify this dominance and attributes it to inherent natural differences between men and women. Sociologists tend to see patriarchy as a social product and not as an outcome of innate differences between the sexes and they focus attention on the way that gender roles in a society affect power differentials between men and women.

Malti-Douglas (2007) states that historically, patriarchy has manifested itself in the social, legal, political, religious, and economic organization of a range of different cultures. Lockard (2007) found that even if not explicitly defined to be by their own constitutions and laws, most contemporary societies are, in practice, patriarchal.

Warner (2015) writes that Patriarchy, although it views men as the more powerful sex, is also harmful to men themselves. The following is six (6) ways in which patriarchy harms men:

1. **Toxic Masculinity** – as impossible and damaging as societal standards for women are, the standards for men are just as poisonous.

2. **Sexual Assault** – although statistics show that men make up anywhere from 10 to 38 percent of sexual assault victims, sexual assault is often seen as something that happens to women, by men. Even when people do admit that male rape occurs, it's often played for laughs: Prison rape jokes, congratulating him on getting "laid," etc. The minimization and outright dismissal of male sexual assault doesn't exactly encourage men to come forward after an incident, and it can seriously impede recovery.

3. **Sexual Aggression** – while women are slut shamed at every opportunity, men are encouraged to have sex with everyone in sight, often whether that person is consenting or not. In fact, if men don't express voracious sexual appetites at all times, they're belittled for not being "manly" enough. The stereotype of male sexual aggressors is so entrenched that for decades, scientific research worked on the assumption that men are more sexual beings than women, and it's only recently that this narrative has come into question.

4. **Domestic Violence** – similarly to sexual assault, domestic violence is assumed to be a female concern. While women do make up the majority of domestic violence victims, domestic abuse can and does happen to men as well. However, the culture of toxic masculinity is so strong that some men may not even realize they are being abused, because they aren't used to violence being discussed in terms of female-on-male.

5. **Fatherhood** – women are seen as the natural caretakers in a household, and as a result, men are discouraged from spending too much time with their children. Even today, stay-at-home dads are seen as weak for "letting" their wives be the breadwinners. In fact, research has shown that men whose wives take home the primary income are more likely to be dissatisfied with their lives, all thanks to a culture that sees childcare as a feminine activity.

6. **Mental Health** – there is no denying that the patriarchy is set up to benefit men. However, gender norms are just as rigid for men as they are for women, and the consequences can be deadly. Some have argued that the high rate of completed suicide for men could be traced to the cult of masculinity, which causes men to be less likely to seek help for emotional problems. As much as men may benefit from patriarchal societies on the surface, it's clear that the disadvantages far outweigh the advantages.

Play Video 2.1: "5 Ways Patriarchy Affects Men and their Relationships"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZLHJGnS6ZjY

Watch Video

▶ YouTube

Exercise 2.2 - In the BOX exercise for both Males and Females

Draw a box and insert all the male/female stereotypes that exist in the Bahamas. List them as you wish in no particular order. The key here is to state honestly, in your view, what it means to be "a man" or "a woman" within the Bahamian context.

Now outside of this box write down all the things you honestly feel about yourself as a male or female in terms of mental, emotional, social, professional, political and other aspects that are not in the box but represent who you are as a person.

How difficult is it to stay in the box and how difficult is it to jump out?

Discuss as a group.

Exercise 2.3 (Optional)

Given the definition what do you think of the following:

1. How do men hold Political Power more than Women?

2. How do men hold Moral Authority more than Women?

3. How do men have more Social Privilege than Women?

4. How do men own more Property than Women?

5. What are three (3) of the negative impacts for men given all these responsibilities and expectations?

6. What are three (3) of the negative impacts for women who are living in a patriarchal society?

> **Exercise 2.4** – After reading the definition of **Patriarchy**, break up into 4 mixed groups with 4-5 persons and develop a 2-3 minute skit on what patriarchy looks like in:
>
> (a) your home
>
> (b) your school
>
> (c) your community
>
> (d) at work
>
> Discuss each subject area for 15-20 minutes within the Bahamian context.

Power and Control

Power imbalances can lead to controlling behaviour over the weaker person in such a way that a person gains and maintains power in order to control them and have them do whatever they want. The person wielding the power may subject another to psychological, physical, sexual or financial abuse. The motivations of someone who abuses power to gain control over another are varied and can include devaluation, envy, personal gain, personal gratification, psychological projection, or just for the sake of the enjoyment of exercising power and control.

Cory, McAndless-Davis (2000) state that the goal of the abuser is to control and intimidate the victim or to influence them to feel that they do not have an equal voice in the relationship.

Braiker (2004) found the manipulators and abusers control their victims with a range of tactics, including positive reinforcement (such as praise, superficial charm, flattery, ingratiation, smiling, gifts, attention), negative reinforcement, intermittent or partial reinforcement, psychological punishment (such as nagging, silent treatment, swearing, threats, intimidation, emotional blackmail, guilt trips, inattention) and traumatic tactics (such as verbal abuse or explosive anger).

The vulnerabilities of the victim are exploited with those who are particularly vulnerable being most often selected as targets.

Bonior, A (2015) lists below **20 Signs Your Partner Is Controlling:**

1) Isolating you from friends and family.

2) Chronic criticism—even if it's 'small' things.

3) Veiled or overt threats, against you or them.

4) Making acceptance/ caring/ attraction conditional.

5) An overactive scorecard.

6) Using guilt as a tool.

7) Creating a debt you're beholden to.

8) Spying, snooping, or requiring constant disclosure.

9) Overactive jealousy, accusations, or paranoia.

10) Not respecting your need for time alone.

11) Making you "earn" trust or other good treatment.

12) Presuming you're guilty until proven innocent.

13) Getting you so tired of arguing that you'll relent.

14) Making you feel belittled for long-held beliefs.

15) Making you feel you don't "measure up" or are unworthy of them.

16) Teasing or ridicule that has an uncomfortable undercurrent.

17) Sexual interactions that feel upsetting afterwards.

18) Inability or unwillingness to ever hear your point of view.

19) Pressuring you toward unhealthy behaviours, like substance abuse.

20) Thwarting your professional or educational goals by making you doubt yourself.

For more information on signs of an abusive partner you can visit:

https://www.psychologytoday.com/intl/blog/friendship-20/201506/20-signs-your-partner-is-controlling

Exercise 2.5 (Optional)

Break up into mixed groups on 4-5 and each group examines one of the case studies below then answer the following:
   a) Who is exerting their control?
   b) What type of control are they using?
   c) How would you suggest handling a situation like that?

Each group to present discussion question in 2 minutes.

Case Study (1):
V has been married for 2 years and 1 year ago her husband persuaded her to leave her job as he would provide for her. Every time V wants to go out with her friends or even to the grocery she has to ask her husband for money. He would usually give her but wants to know who she's going out with and depending on who it is he may say, he has no cash on him and persuades her to stay home. If she goes to the grocery or shopping for personal items he will give her money and demand that she provides him with a receipt and show him what she bought.

Case Study (2):
K transfers into a new school and is constantly bullied by the "popular" crowd for being different. Every day she is humiliated in front of the entire school and it starts to affect her mental health. One day, one of her bullies' corners her and tells her that if she does their homework then they would let her hang out with them. She decides to oblige because she is desperate to fit in, whatever way possible. She ends up not only doing 5 times the homework that she is supposed to be doing but she also lets them copy off of her tests. In exchange, she is not embarrassed in front of the rest of the school and she gets the perks of being with the "in" crowd.

Case Study (3):
H works a 9-5 office job for barely over minimum wage. She is a single mom and is up to her ears in debt. Her boss, aware of her situation, offers her a pay raise in exchange for sexual favours. H does not want to oblige so her boss threatens to fire her. H knows that she cannot afford to be fired and has to provide for her children. Not feeling as though she has any other choice and badly needing to get herself financially stable, H agrees to do what her boss wants her to in exchange for extra cash.

J and M are childhood friends who live in the same community. As they get older, M becomes involved in a community gang. Over time J witnesses M carry out illegal tasks for the gang. M's gang friends find out and say that J knows too much. M does not want the gang to hurt J, so he bargains for J to become a gang member as well to prove his loyalty. However, J does not want to join the gang. M, frustrated that J does not understand what will happen to him if he doesn't, decides to hold J up at gun point and threaten him that if he does not join the gang, he would have to kill him. With his life on the line, J agrees to join the gang.

Exercise 2.6 (Optional)

Reflect on the discussions and list three things you can do in your personal life to promote gender equality, respect and foster empowering relationships in your handbook and on post-its. Be prepared to share their reflections with the class.

Exercise 2.7 (Optional)

A Power Game - Why Do We Obey?

Purpose: To develop an understanding of power relationships, where power comes from and different sources of power.

- Form pairs and consider the following scenario:
- When a teacher tells a class to open their books at page 7 and do exercise 3, why do the pupils do it?
- List all the reasons in 5 minutes.

Debrief: How do you relate this understanding of power to your own experiences?

SESSION THREE:

Feminism, Masculinity and Violence

Introduction

As women in the Caribbean continue to challenge patriarchy and strive for equality of the sexes, men have been faced with a changing social environment that society has not prepared them for. Thus, instead of walking alongside feminists in their quest for equality and celebrating their achievements in the academic, professional, economic and political arenas, many men have interpreted the women's movement for equality as a frontal attack on men and masculinity. With this lack of a revised and updated masculine context that can accept women as equals and free males from the limited expression of masculinity, frustration, anxiety, anger and a sense of confusion would naturally follow. Some attribute this misunderstanding to be part of what has led to the underachievement of boys in school, the lure to gang culture, under productivity in the workplace, gender based violence and family disintegration. Males speak of emasculation and of being made to feel like lesser beings.

But when one examines who still controls the political, economic and social power throughout the Caribbean and beyond, one would recognize quite quickly that men are still very much in charge. Thus one could view the problem residing with the majority of males in our society who lack the political, economic and social privilege that is controlled by a minority as they are

easily coerced into believing that women are the enemy who have encroached in their domain and as such must be "put back in their place."

It must be noted that it is the women's movement, in its quest for equality, which has opened the doors for many men to enter traditionally female roles i.e. homemakers, nursing, social work, and get paternity leave etc. thus balancing the pendulum for both sexes.

What is Feminism?

Brunell & Burkett (n.d.) describe feminism as the belief in social, economic, and political equality of the sexes, which is manifested worldwide and is represented by various institutions committed to activity on behalf of women's rights and interests.

What Do We Mean When Talking about Masculinities and Femininities?

Kimmel (2001) states that masculinities and femininities refer to the social roles, behaviours, and meanings prescribed for men and women in any society at any time. Such normative gender ideologies must be distinguished from biological 'sex,' and must be understood to be plural as there is no single definition for all men and all women. Masculinities and femininities are structured and expressed through other axes of identity such as class, race, ethnicity, age, and sexuality. Thus, some definitions are held up as the hegemonic versions, against which others are measured. Gender ideologies are more than properties of individuals; masculinities and femininities are also institutionally organized and elaborated and experienced through interactions.

Video 3.1: "Malala: Feminism Is Not Complicated"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wfxLLyM8iGI

Exercise 3.1a

After reviewing viewing video and related information on feminism, break up into mixed groups on 4-5 and in your groups list how feminist rights are related to human rights. Each group presents in 2-3 minutes.

Exercise 3.1b

List the areas in the Bahamas where women are treated as equals and list areas in need of improvement where equality is needed.

Have each group to present in 2-3 minutes.

Toxic Masculinity

Hess & Kaplan (2016) state that in psychology, *toxic masculinity* refers to traditional cultural masculine norms that can be harmful to men, women, and society overall; this concept of toxic masculinity is not intended to demonize men or male attributes, but rather to emphasize the harmful effects of conformity to certain traditional masculine ideals and behaviors, such as dominance, self-reliance, and competition. Additionally, Liu (2016) defines toxic masculinity as an adherence to traditional male gender roles that restrict the kinds of emotions allowable for boys and men to express, including social expectations that men seek to be dominant (the "alpha male") and limit their emotional range primarily to expressions of anger. Levant (1996) states that some traditionally prescribed masculine behaviors can produce such harmful effects as violence (including sexual assault and domestic), promiscuity, risky and/or socially irresponsible behaviors, including substance abuse and dysfunction in relationships.

Watch Video

Video 3.2: "A Call To Men"

https://www.ted.com/talks/tony_porter_a_call_to_men

YouTube

Exercise 3.2

a) After viewing the video break up into mixed groups and list toxic behaviours experienced in your own lives.

b) Identify popular artists, songs or popular culture areas that promote toxic masculinity through their lyrics, music video or lifestyle in a presentation. Each group presents in 4-5 minutes.

Masculinity and Gangs in Latin America and the Caribbean

Play Video 3.3: "How Masculinity Becomes A Weapon"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gidi_HkppMI

by Amílcar Sanatan

Baird (2016) states that although masculinities alone cannot account for gang membership, it is clear that processes of male socialisation are central to understanding why gangs persist. However, empirically grounded research into 'gang masculinities' in the region is rare.

Boys' and men's expression of masculinity is situationally specific, as such we can speak of a ghetto masculinity, but one that remains connected to broader societal norms. The gang is a conduit for social relations, and a gendered way for disenfranchised youths to inhabit the city, which is why it is vital to understand violence at the intersection between class and masculinity.

Baird (2006) further suggested, that many of the answers we are looking for in terms of reducing gang violence actually lie with the under-studied majority of non-gang and non-violent youth. We may even find some answers if we research why some gang members are not violent whilst others are? Certainly we should ask, if the gang is such a compelling site for manhood in these contexts why do the majority of youths not join up?

In the Caribbean, where the widespread perception is that opportunities are limited, many young males seek affirmation of their maleness through gang affiliation as it fills the many voids within their lives.

Exercise 3.3

(1) List the correlations to masculinity in the Bahamas and why youth get involved in gangs?

(2) List the reasons why many youths in Bahamas do not join gangs?

(3) Would you agree that young males join gangs to affirm their masculinity? If yes, Why?

(4) Give examples of what can be done in schools and communities to reduce gang recruitment?

Watch Video

▶ YouTube

Video 3.4: "Bahamian Ex-Gang Members"

Exercise 3.4

(i) Discuss within your group your thoughts and perception of the video

(ii) Does any of the content relate to you, if yes explain

Exercise 3.5

After reviewing related information have participants make up a song or poem that promotes healthy masculinity and encourages empowerment, equality and positivity. Each group presents in 2-3 minutes each.

SESSION FOUR:

Traits of a Real Man

Introduction

In this section we'll take a look at breaking down the social barriers of what men have been programmed to be and explore some different perspectives and ideas. It would be instrumental for you to open your mind to different perspectives and ideas and recognize your own biases and socialisation engaging in group discussions. Keep in mind that your biases are yours and although they may be shared by many in the Bahamas, it is important to maintain a critical and interrogating attitude into Bahamian culture in the present and ask why are we where we are today in terms of violence, gender based violence and male underachievement in certain segments of the society.

Exercise 4.1 – View any or all of these YouTube Ted Talk videos for varying perspectives. Review **Exercise 4.2** prior to viewing the videos:

(i)   View Eldra Jackson as he discusses "How To Break The Cycle Of Toxic Masculinity"
(ii) View Justin Baldoni as he discusses "Why I'm Done Trying To Be Man Enough"
(iii) View Malcolm London as he discusses the "High School Training Ground"

Play Video 4.1: "How To Break The Cycle of Toxic Masculinity"

https://www.ted.com/talks/eldra_jackson_how_to_break_the_cycle_of_toxic_masculinity

Play Video 4.2: "Why I'm Done Trying To Be Man Enough"

https://www.ted.com/talks/justin_baldoni_why_i_m_done_trying_to_be_man_enough

Play Video 4.3: "High School Training Ground"

https://www.ted.com/talks/malcolm_london_high_school_training_ground

Exercise 4.2

After viewing videos break up into mixed groups and identify what you can do in your own life to promote healthier attitudes and behaviours. How can males support other males and how can females support males in challenging traditional masculinity.

The following are useful suggestions by O'Malley (2018) in the Good Men Project which challenges the idea that toxic masculine traits are inherent and outlines steps in which men could work to reclaim their manhood and "detoxify" toxic masculinity.

Reclaiming Manhood: Detoxifying Toxic Masculinity

Self-improvement is one of the keys for men who want to have greater mental, emotional and social success – whether it be sexual, romantic or otherwise. Unfortunately, the idea of "what it means to be a man" tends to get in the way. But these "ideal, manly" traits actively harm men and women – a form of toxic masculinity.

The Fight to Leave the Performance of Masculinity Behind

Toxic masculinity is an inherently narrow and restrictive band of behavior, belief and appearance. It reduces the idea of "what is a man" to someone who's emotionally repressed, thuggishly violent, sexually aggressive almost to the point of mindlessness and inherently self-centred, whose status as a man is based almost entirely on the size of his penis. It's the natural endpoint of "I've got mine, screw you", where everything is about the performance rather than the reality. Even expressions of theoretical selflessness – the idea of "a real man provides", for example – are at their core aimed at maintaining their masculine credentials rather than caring for the wellbeing of one's spouse and family. If their true concern is providing for their family's well-being, it shouldn't matter whether the man or the woman is the primary breadwinner; yet should a man concede that his wife contributes more to the family, he's emasculated… often literally. That's not a joke; a Washington University study found that in marriages where women earn more money than their husbands, the husbands were more likely to experience insomnia, depression and erectile dysfunction.

But the structures of toxic masculinity isolate and alienate those who don't live up to those restrictive standards and makes them fair game for others. Not following the narrative of traditional masculinity marks you as being the odd man out… if you're a "man" at all. Someone who doesn't meticulously conform to the stereotypical masculine gender expression is someone to be pitied at best, to be "corrected" at worst.

Stop Treating Women like The Enemy

The first step towards rejecting toxic masculinity is simply to quit treating women as though they were our mortal enemies. A key component of toxic masculinity is defining "man" in opposition to "woman". When women are the literal antithesis of men, everything that diverges from "manly" becomes suspicious at best and dangerous at worst. It takes the idea of a man who has traits that aren't coded as "male" – not being sexually aggressive, being passive rather than violent, expressing his emotions or even simply not following the cultural narrative of what a "man" does with his life – and turns them into signs that he's been corrupted, emasculated. Acting like "a girl". Being "a sissy".

In other words: acting like a woman.

Many men will blame hard-line feminists for instilling a fear of women, rather than processing the ownership of their own fears and desires.

Moreover, toxic masculinity only allows men to interact with women in one of two ways: the mother or the whore. Women are the nurturers – the ones who are able to feel and express the emotions men cannot – or the providers of sex. Any relationship outside of these can't exist because of these definitional issues.

One of the most perversely fascinating aspects of toxic masculinity is how often women get blamed for systems, standards and beliefs that men put into place. The idea that only certain men – the six-foot tall alpha male with high social status, high-testosterone, a perfect body and a massive bank account – get women is a blatant fallacy of composition created by men.

Challenging these beliefs is the first step in detoxifying what it means to be a man. Refusing to accept the idea that women are men's natural opposites and opponents helps free men.

Stop Believing the Worst about Men

One of the more bewildering aspects of toxic masculinity is that while it demonizes women and supposed feminine traits, it is equally as dismissive and insulting to men. Traditional, toxic masculinity holds a deep and abiding disrespect for men, assuming that we are, at our core, animals at best. We are beholden to our most damaging traits, our insatiable sexuality, our poor impulse control and need for violence. Intellect, passivity, emotional comprehension, compassion

and sensitivity are all feminine coded traits and thus suspect. In the ideals of toxic masculinity, men are emotionally stunted brutes who can't control themselves… and this is a good thing. You see this repeated over and over again in the many myths – what some call "dude social fallacies" – about men:

Boys will be boys	*Men can't handle their emotions, so women must do it for them*
All men want sex at all costs	*Men are slobs who'd live in squalor if women didn't force them not to*
Men can't resist sex	*Sex inevitably gets in the way of male/female relationships*
Men who don't get sex are failures	*The most violent are the most manly*
Men only do things for women in order to get sex	*Someone who loses a fight is a lesser man*
Men only get into relationships for sex; if they could get elsewhere for free, they would	*Aggression is a virtue*
"What did you think would happen?"	*The appropriate reaction to a challenge is violence*
Men can't read signals	*Men are impulsive oafs who don't think long term*

Keep in mind: these are supposed to be virtues. They're those "biotruths" and thus not only immune from criticism but impossible to change.

This fragility of masculinity, the ease with which it can be taken from you, forms the core of so much pain and hatred. Once again: its men trapping themselves within such a narrow and flimsy definition of masculinity that any transgression must be corrected through ridicule or violence.

If we want to be better than that, then we need to stop believing the worst of ourselves.

Don't Let "Disrespectful" Be the Default State

The challenge of growing past toxic masculinity is the overwhelming belief that unacceptable behavior is not only acceptable, it's to be expected. The first answer to women complaining about harassment online is inevitably "Grow a thicker skin," with the false implication that men and women suffer harassment and trolling equally. People who challenge unacceptable behaviour are told they're being whiney professional victims, perpetuators of "outrage culture" and to shut up and accept things the way they are. The message is all too clear: "this is how things are and you should accept it."

Even people who understand this, feel the pressure to believe that improvement isn't possible given how entrenched and pervasive these attitudes are and harbour thoughts of "how arrogant am I to assume I have the solution to a problem that's plagued men for generations can be solved by me?"

But that's why it's so damn important for people to push back, to challenge the status quo and to reclaim what it means to be a man from the grips of toxic masculinity. As mentioned earlier: the system can only continue as long as everyone agrees to the rules. Every voice raised in protest against toxic masculinity contributes to some shift on the ground. Every person who refuses to accept the worst in ourselves moves us forward.

It's not about problems with being sexually forward. It's not about whether or not a man is aggressive or passive, muscular or not; it's about the belief that being a man means being poisonous to themselves and to others. It's about being more than other people's limitations. Its about challenging society's pre-ordained roles and attitudes that keep men in a box with little room to expand their mental and emotional potential to think, feel and experience liberation that exists outside of this box.

Men – gay and straight, nerdy and athletic, macho and femme – need to push back against the insulting definitions of what it means to be a man. We need to welcome that diversity, that wild and wondrous variety that masculinity encompasses.

By doing so, we free ourselves to be men who are real as opposed to the "real men" we are meant to be.

Exercise 4.3

In groups, make up a song, spoken word or poem that promotes healthy masculinity and encourages empowerment, equality and positivity. Each group presents in 2-3 minutes.

The socialization of
and healing from oppression

SOCIALIZATION

SILENCE

STIGMA

SHAME

RECLAIMING
WHO WE ARE

SPEAKING
UP

UNCONDITIONAL
ACCEPTANCE
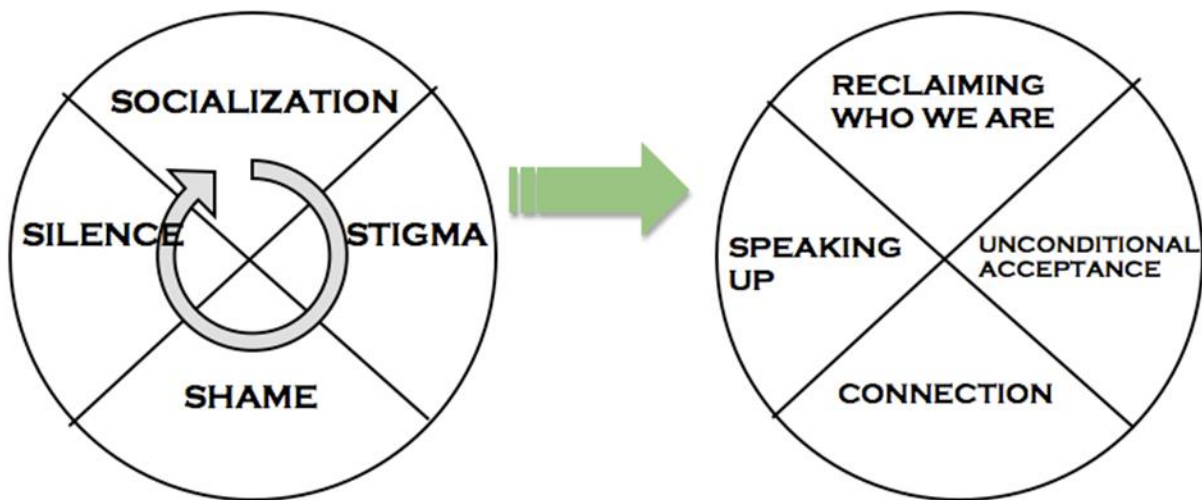
CONNECTION

SESSION FIVE:

Gender-Based Violence

Introduction

Bloom (2008) described gender violence, also known as gender-based violence or gendered violence, as the term used to denote harm inflicted upon individuals and groups that are connected to normative understandings of their gender. This connection can be in the form of cultural understandings of gender roles, both institutional and structural forces that endorse violence based on gender and societal influences that shape violent events along gender lines. While the term is often used synonymously with 'violence against women', gendered violence can and does occur for people of all genders including men, women, male and female children

Gender violence occurs in both the 'public' and 'private' spheres. Such violence not only occurs in the family and in the general community but is sometimes also perpetuated by the state through policies or the actions of agents of the state such as the police, military or immigration authorities. Gender-based violence happens in all societies, across all social classes, with women particularly at risk from men they know and strangers.

Exercise 5.1A (Optional)

Brainstorm with peers and create a list of words that describe gender and violence. The questions for brainstorming are:

(i) What does the phrase 'gender and violence' mean to you?

(ii) What acts do you qualify as 'violence'?

Share ideas randomly or in turn.

Exercise 5.1B

In pairs taking about 10-15 minutes discuss the major types of violence which occurs in the family, community/society, and the ones perpetrated or condoned by the state.

Types of Gender-Based Violence

- *Overt Physical Abuse (includes battering, sexual assault, at home or in the workplace)*
- *Psychological Abuse (includes deprivation of liberty, forced marriage, sexual harassment, at home or in the workplace)*
- *Deprivation of Resources Needed for physical and psychological well-being (including health care, nutrition, education, means of livelihood)*
- *Treatment of Women as Commodities (includes trafficking in women and girls for sexual exploitation)*

Sites of Gender-Based Violence

Family

- *is one of the primary sites of gender violence.*
- *prepares its members for social life, forms gender stereotypes and perceptions of division of labour between the sexes.*
- *is the arena where physical abuses (spousal battering, sexual assault, sexual abuse) and/or psychological abuses occur. (Domestic violence can also take such forms as confinement, threats, insults and neglect; overt control of a woman's sexuality through either forced pregnancy or forced abortion.)*
- *because violence within the family and household takes place in the home, it is often seen as a 'private' issue and information about it is lacking*

Community/Society

- *as a group sharing common social, economic, cultural, religious or ethnic belonging, it perpetuates existing family structure and power inequalities in family and society.*
- *justifies the behavior of male abusers aimed at establishing control over women in the family, and supports harmful traditional practices such as battering and corporal punishment*
- *Workplace can also be a site of violence. Either in governmental service or in a business company, women are vulnerable to sexual aggression (harassment, intimidation) and commercialized violence (trafficking for sexual exploitation).*
- *In public spaces women are vulnerable to sexual aggression (harassment, intimidation) that is normalised as compliments to the woman.*

State

- *legitimizes power inequalities in family and society and perpetuates gender based violence through enactment of discriminatory laws and policies or through the discriminatory application of the law.*
- *is responsible for tolerance of gender violence on an unofficial level (i.e. in the family and in the community).*

- *To the extent that it is the State's recognized role to sanction certain norms that protect individual life and dignity and maintain collective peace, it is the State's obligation to develop and implement measures that redress gender violence.*

Gender-Based Violence: A Human Rights Violation

The conceptualization of violence against women and girls as a violation of human rights was one of the achievements of the women's movement during the Second World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1993. In March of the following year, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights set forth a resolution that integrated women's rights within the mechanisms assuring protection of human rights. In answer to the request of women's organizations at the Vienna conference, this Commission also named a Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women. The Special Rapporteur's mission is to receive and investigate information on situations of gender-based violence throughout the world.

Also, in 1993, the UN General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (DEVAW), which is currently the main international document addressing the problem of gender-based violence. In DEVAW, the UN offered the first official definition of gender-based violence. In the remaining time, we will explore the definition of gender-based violence found in the DEVAW.

Note: Recommended reading is the *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women*, available at http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/48/a48r104.htm

The following is an excerpt from <u>Advocates for Human Rights</u> website:

Ideas about the changing approaches to gender-based violence:

- *There are multiple approaches to gender-based violence (i.e. human rights, health, and development) and they are being integrated to address the problem.*
- *The topic is no longer merely about the survivors, the women who have been and are abused, but also about those who abuse.*
- *The topic now focuses not just on the individual man but also on the concept of masculinity and male culture.*
- *The notion of the impact of gender-based violence is expanding from considering the immediate effects on the women to examining the effects on the larger community, family, and society.*
- *Gender-based violence is not just a 'women's issue', but an issue that concerns all men and not just individual perpetrators.*
- *Cultural institutions, beliefs, norms and practices that are often used as an excuse to justify gender-based violence are not static. Women's rights activists are exploring the ways in which culture can serve as a creative resource for intervention.*

The Power Wheel or Duluth Wheel

The following series of YouTube videos below on the Duluth Wheel is recommend for viewing:

Watch Video ▶ YouTube	**Video 5.1: "Duluth Wheel"** https://www.youtube.com/watch?list=PLOxLVEKmV5blQ31nQ87LOsnjLXlAeYhBZ&v=5OrAdC6ySiY

Think of the wheel as a diagram of the tactics your abusive partner uses to keep you in the relationship. While the inside of the wheel is comprised of subtle, continual behaviours, the outer ring represents physical, visible violence. These are the abusive acts that are more overt and forceful, and often the intense acts that reinforce the regular use of other subtler methods of abuse. **Review Section Two (2) on Power and Control.**

How and why do we use the Power and Control wheel?

Advocates use the wheel to help teach persons about the dynamics of an abusive relationship. It shows a victim that they are not alone in what they are experiencing, and that these tactics of maintaining power and control are common to abusers.

We also use the wheel to help friends, family members or even someone who may identify as abusive to better understand the complicated components of abuse and the many forms it can take. This can be really helpful in explaining the difficulties and dangers of leaving an abusive relationship."

Although the Duluth wheel is based on unequal power relationships that encompasses threats of violence and coercion that uses economic, physical, emotional, psychological, or sexual abuse as its tools, there are also other reasons why persons abuse. Twohey (2009), state that domestic violence can also be triggered by substance abuse and psychological problems, such as attachment disorders, traced to childhood abuse or neglect, or the absence of a history of adequate socialization and training.
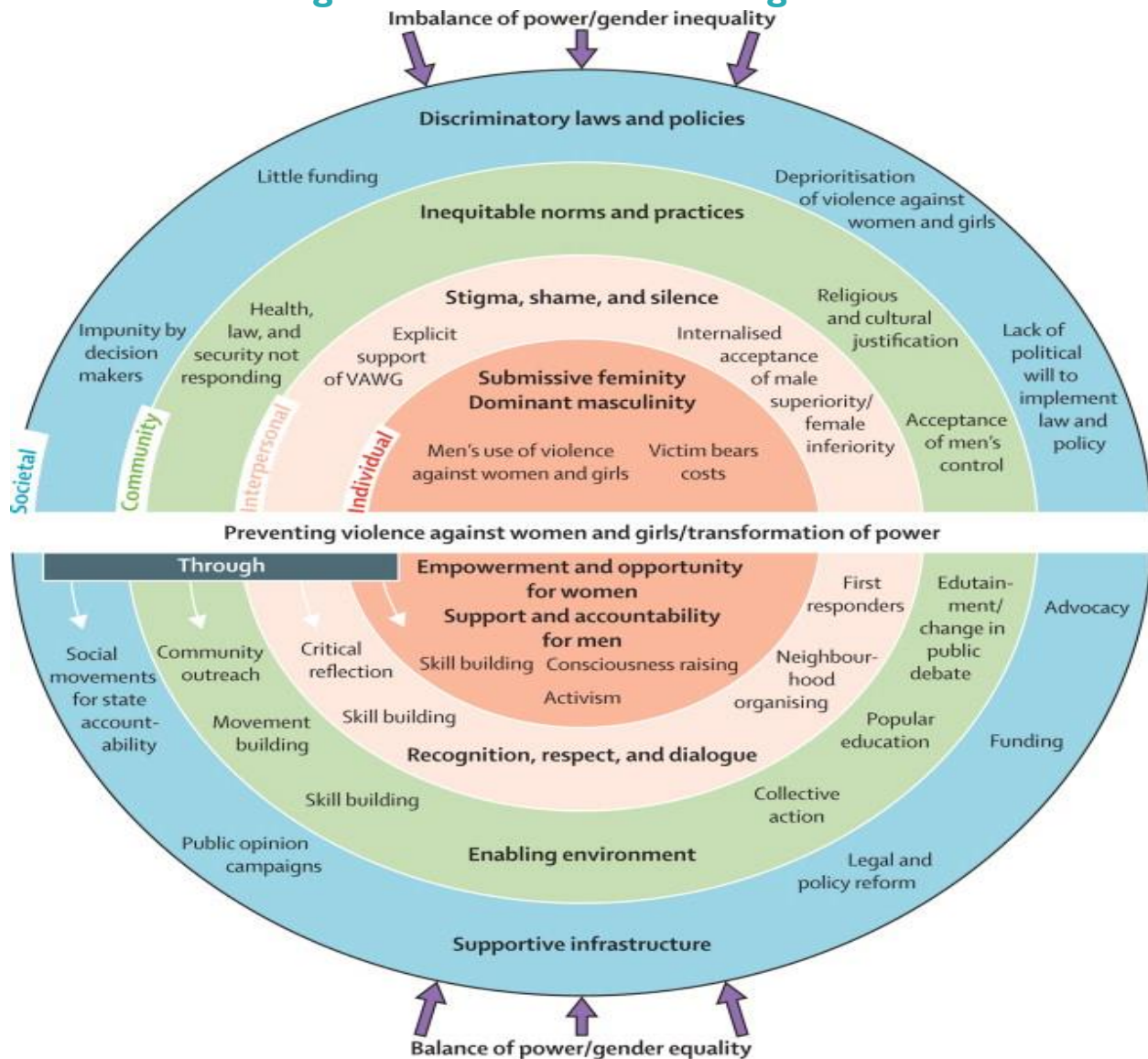
Exercise 5.2: VIDEO

Watch local Gender-Based Violence Video and identify aspects of the power and control wheel that can be seen in the video

Watch Video
▶ YouTube

Play Video 5.2: Gender-Based Violence

The Social Ecological Model of Violence Against Women

Michau et al.'s socio-ecological model (2014).

Michau et al (2014) state that effective prevention policy and programming is founded on five core principles: first, analysis and actions to prevent violence across the social ecology (individual, interpersonal, community, and societal); second, intervention designs based on an intersectional gender-power analysis; third, theory-informed models developed on the basis of evidence; fourth, sustained investment in multi-sector interventions; and finally, aspirational programming that promotes personal and collective thought, and enables activism on women's and girls' rights to violence-free lives. Prevention programming of the future will depend on all of us having a vision of, and a commitment to, gender equality to make violence-free lives for women and girls a reality.

Equality Wheel

The *Equality Wheel* describes the qualities involved in healthy relationships. The *Equality Wheel* shows the changes needed for men who batter to move from being abusive to non-violent partnership.

Exercise 5.3

What actions can we take to make the points raised in the video a reality in the Bahamas?

Exercise 5.4 (Optional)

Make up a song or poem that promotes gender equality, encourages empowerment and respectful relationships.

Each group presents in 2-3 minutes.

SESSION SIX:

Tools for Non-Violence, Inclusion and Peace

Introduction

Non-violence should not be seen as only the absence of violence or conflict but also as an ongoing process to attain inner peace, self-confidence and a recognition that as individuals we all have a role to play in nurturing and encouraging peace and unity within all the spaces we engage in. A simple "good morning" to the passing stranger or allowing a vehicle to pass in the traffic gridlock, being cordial to that rude service provider or befriending that troublesome child in your family or community can all go a long way in promoting peace. These gestures, as little and insignificant as they may seem are constant reminders to people, that "good" still exists in the world and that there is hope. Especially for young persons who are going through difficulties and feel alienated, it is very important for adults and peers to always maintain cordial respectful relationships with them, never excluding them from our circle of influence. While it is the norm for many to ostracise the troublemaker and isolate them least they disrupt and negatively influence the "others", from experience it is always best to empower the larger group to positively influence the troublemakers and to put support systems in place to treat with improving the group dynamics. This can be accomplished by the following:

(1) Have the youth determine an overall goal for their group and this can be a class at school, youth club, community youth group or sporting group etc.

(2) Have the youth develop their group rules and sanctions for breaking them. Sanctions should not expel members unless of course the act or behaviour is threatening to members of the group.

(3) Appoint natural leaders to be in charge of certain aspects of the group. Natural leaders can be negative influencers too but keeping in mind that the aim is to channel their energy into more positive and self-affirming activity.

(4) Have the youth develop and implement small doable projects that can be accomplished with minimal resources but encourage participation and teamwork. At school it could be painting the walls of their classroom or cleaning and polishing their desk to take ownership of their space. In the community, it could be a clean-up campaign or cake sale or other fundraiser to enhance some community space of buy items for the group itself. The ideas are limitless once the ideas start to be generated

(5) Always encourage and praise socially acceptable attitudes and behaviours and allow everyone over time to have leadership responsibilities within the group. Positive reinforcement is critical even when a participant is caught doing something wrong as lying can be turned into "you have such a great imagination so why not use it for writing stories, songs or poems" while fighting can be turned into "you have such passion and energy so why don't you channel that into sports, dancing, drama or poetry" etc.

When you offer alternatives to negative behaviours by demonstrating what can replace them to achieve better outcomes, the person, once supported in this manner would generally choose the positive option.

Often times the troublemakers are seeking attention and crying out for help which usually manifests itself in negative ways. This is why it is so important to create youth friendly spaces within communities where trained youth workers can facilitate programmes and projects that can support all youth within a non-judgemental and enabling environment. It must always be kept in mind, that if we wish to influence another, then they must be within our reach in order to facilitate a learning and transformation process.

What is Non-Violence?

Sharp (2012) describes "non-violence" as a personal practice of being harmless to self and others under every condition. It comes from the belief that hurting people, animals or the environment is unnecessary to achieve an outcome and refers to a general philosophy of abstention from violence. This may be based on moral, religious or spiritual principles, or it may be for purely strategic or pragmatic reasons.

20 Ways to Promote Peace in Our World

1. Make a personal commitment to nonviolence.	11. If you are a member of a religious community, ask how you can get more involved in promoting peace through its programs and ministries.
2. When you see someone in trouble, whether he or she is lost, confused, upset, or has fallen, don't act like you don't see the person – provide some help.	12. If you are not a member of a religious community, find a not-for-profit community organization that works toward peaceful communities and volunteer.
3. Show a child how to achieve calmness through deep breathing.	13. Share with children Bullying Tips for Students
4. Show a child how to be kind to animals.	14. Choose a career that yields only good things for our families, our communities, and our planet.
5. Show a child how to be kind to vulnerable people – the homeless, those with physical or cognitive disabilities, older people, and anyone else that appears different to the child.	15. Look people in the eye and smile when you pass them on the street. Better yet, actually say, "Hello."
6. Speak out against prejudice and discrimination when you see it.	16. Become trained in mental health first aid so you can respond to people in mental distress.
7. When you feel angry count to ten before saying anything. Then, ask yourself what response will be best for the greater good.	17. Serve on committees and task forces that work to make your neighborhood, school, and workplace safer.
8. When you feel slighted, ask yourself if what happened was really about you or if it was about the other person.	18. Celebrate successes in the quest for peace and nonviolence.
9. When you realize that it was about the other person, find in your heart some compassion for that person, realizing that he or she is most surely struggling.	19. Don't hide from life. Have faith that there is still an abundance of good in this world.
10. Regard people who hurt your feelings as your personal teachers of how to maintain a peaceful nature.	20. Please share this list with others.

Inclusion:

Individuals who struggle to be accepted by the wider society or existing socially acceptable groups will often seek out alternative groups where they feel a sense of belonging and self-worth. Criminal and violent gangs have become an option for many young people in the Bahamas and there is an urgent need to channel that youthful energy into more productive ways. When we look at the reasons for young persons who join gangs then we can develop strategies to fill those same needs through more positive and acceptable avenues.

The decision to join gangs often includes multiple reasons, reflecting the many influences faced by youth, which include but not limited to:

(1) Relationships with family and peers, which can have a push and pull effect
(2) Income generation
(3) Safety and protection
(4) Comradery, acceptance and belonging
(5) Elevate social status amongst peers
(6) A "rebellious" mentality

During adolescence, it is well documented that persons would engage in risky behaviours as they test boundaries and experiment with the world around them.

It is then of utmost importance to reduce the attractiveness of gangs and risk taking by increasing the attractiveness of other organizations such as youth groups, service clubs, sporting clubs etc. within communities. Promotion of these entities must be created in collaboration with the youth you wish to reach so that they will have ownership of the process and develop something that would be considered "cool" and accepting to them thus countering the pull factors of gang life. These programs should provide life and social skills that translate into employability and personal growth potential. The establishment of safe places for youth to find refuge and be able to interact in a healthy, positive manner, where the admissions and membership policies demand nonviolent, harmonious behavior and attitudes is an imperative to

combat the normalization of ignorance and violence that is so pervasive amongst many of today's youth.

Organised activities, such sports, drama, dance, art, poetry, spoken word, music and whatever else the youth are interested in, must be used to attract youth and inculcate the necessary life and social skills for them to lead peaceful and purposeful lives.

Play Video 6.1: "Connected Communities"

https://www.thersa.org/action-and-research/rsa-projects/public-services-and-communities-folder/connected-communities-social-inclusion-and-mental-wellbeing

Exercise 6.2

While watching the video think of the following questions:
   (1)   How important are relationships between neighbours in your community?

   (2)   Name three (3) things that make your community a good place to live.

   (3)   What public services are accessible in your community?

   (4)   Are people in your community involved in the governance of the community?

   (5)   How do young people get involved in community leadership?

   (6)   List three (3) things you can do to create a better community.

The Bahamas has a number of Youth Oriented Centres within some communities which coupled with a very comprehensive *National Youth Leaders Certification Program* both of which can act as vehicles to harness the energy of idle young people and inculcate the relevant life and social skills into their thinking and behaviours that can transform the present crime and violence situation.

Group Exercise 6.3

Activity:

In groups, develop a simple project that would encourage inclusion within your community and present in in 3-5 minutes.

WHO (2016), defines life and social skills as abilities developed for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to navigate effectively through the demands and challenges of life. The skills vary greatly depending on social norms and community expectations. Nonetheless, the skills that promote well-being and aid individuals to develop into active and productive members of their communities are considered as life and social skills.

The Ten Core Life Skills as laid down by WHO are:

1. Self-Awareness
2. Empathy
3. Critical Thinking
4. Creative Thinking
5. Decision Making
6. Problem Solving
7. Effective Communication
8. Interpersonal Relationship
9. Coping with Stress
10. Coping with Emotion

Exercise 6.4 - Activity:

Write down a list of life and social skills necessary to live a life of non-violence and explain why it is important to you.

Discuss how you can put these life and social skills into practice in your day-to-day life.

Some Ideas to Promote Peace

- ❖ Organise Regular Sporting Events in your Community i.e. Football, basketball etc.
- ❖ Organise performing arts programs i.e. drumming, singing, drama, dancing etc
- ❖ Start Art programs i.e. painting, sculpting, photography, carving etc.
- ❖ Work with Civic Clubs to facilitate Community Clean ups
- ❖ Organise fundraisers to facilitate programs i.e. car washing, food sales, parties & social events etc.
- ❖ Form purpose driven youth groups to work with elderly, environment, leadership development, visiting sick persons in hospitals and train as peer support facilitators etc…

SESSION SEVEN:

Sustaining Peaceful Coexistence

Introduction

Creating a peaceful community is not an end goal but a daily commitment and process of how we interact with each other, manage conflicts as they arise and support each other through difficult times. It is creating common goals and working towards them to benefit the community as a whole, never forgetting that each and every one of us have a role to play in nurturing and maintaining positive and peaceful relationships as agents of peace. As Gandhi said; "Be that change which we wish to see in the World".

The following are some tools and ideas gathered from various sources of how communities can build and sustain peaceful coexistence within their spaces.

Community Mediation

Community Mediation facilitates a conversation between two or more people that disagree, led by a trained, neutral mediator. Mediation is a less expensive, time-saving alternative to court. In mediation the disputing parties have the chance to settle their differences in a safe, confidential and efficient manner. Mediation helps people get what they need, whether it's peace and quiet, family unity, a financial settlement, or just a chance to be heard. Community mediation centre

mediators include staff members and community volunteers who are professionally trained and committed to promoting peace in our communities.

There are six (6) steps to a formal mediation:

(1) Introductory remarks,
(2) Statement of the problem by the parties,
(3) Information gathering time,
(4) Identification of the problems,
(5) Bargaining and generating options, and
(6) Reaching an agreement.

Group Exercise 7.1

Activity:

In groups, develop a list of conflicts in your lives that might be solved through mediation.

Choose one of the conflicts identified and come up with options that you are willing to make to resolve the problem.

Healing Circles

Healing Circles help us step out of ordinary time into a safe and accepting environment in which we can explore our healing. Together, we explore ways of deepening our capacity to heal, alleviating our suffering, and finding meaning in both challenge and joy. We access our own inner guidance to understand where the greatest healing—in body, emotions, and spirit—can occur.

Healing Circles is a growing learning community of people bound together by a shared purpose, shared values, and an intuitive sense that we belong together.

Healing circles are safe havens

- *They help us step out of ordinary time into a safe and accepting environment in which we can explore our healing.*
- *With open minds, we work together to discover the best ways to remove obstacles to healing, alleviate suffering, and deepen our capacity to heal.*
- *With open hearts, we access our own inner guidance to understand where the greatest healing—in body, emotions, mind and spirit—can occur.*

They're built on a foundation of kindness and respect

Circle participants agree to:

- *Treat each other with kindness and respect.*
- *Listen with compassion and curiosity.*
- *Honour each other's unique ways to healing and don't presume to advise or fix or try to save each other*
- *Hold all stories shared in the circle in confidence.*
- *Trust that each of us has the guidance we need within us.*
- *Rely on the power of silence to access that guidance.*

Participants behave in nurturing ways

When they're in circle, participants commit themselves to:

- *Listen with attention.*
- *Speak with intention.*
- *Tend to the well-being of the whole healing circle.*

Participants play specific roles

Members of a circle have an equal voice and are responsible for the leadership of their own healing. In circles of more than two people, there are three additional roles that help a circle flow smoothly:

o The **host** convenes and pays attention to the flow of a circle.
o The **guardian** keeps an eye on the time, monitors the energy of the group, and protects the agreements.
o A **scribe** can keep notes if the circle chooses.

Group Exercise 7.2

Discussion:

Create a circle, agree to circle rules and from the basics you have read about healing circles have each person talk for 1 minute about a challenge/fear in their life and how they plan to address it.

Share with your peers how you plan to address the challenge/fear.

Source: https://www.thersa.org/discover/publications-and-articles/reports/community-capital-the-value-of-connected-communities

Exercise 7.3

Indicate one way in which you can promote community connectedness and cohesion where you live. What resources will your community require to make safer and more fun?

Excerpt from COCO-Net:

10 Approaches to Preventing & Resolving Conflicts in Community Groups

The following are brief descriptions of ten different tools or approaches to preventing and resolving conflicts in community groups, non-profit organizations, and charities. These tools and approaches specifically go beyond individual conflict resolution to address group conflict resolution. Not all of these approaches will be equally useful, so think carefully about what your group needs!

- *Vision, Mission, Principles, or Basis of Unity: Clearly defining the purpose and common ground for your group is a huge step towards preventing and resolving conflict. This can help to increase clarity and understanding and can also serve as an important reference point and grounding point to put a conflict in perspective. Identify personal goals and principles you wish to follow that will help you in your everyday interactions.*

- *Procedural Documents: Familiarize yourself with the laws of the Bahamas and the penalties when one is engaged in a conflict or is in the possession of a weapon.*

- *Safer Space Guidelines: Clearly defining a list of the qualities and behaviours that will keep your home, school, playground and community safe as well as a list of qualities and behaviours that are considered unsafe is a critical tool for conflict prevention.*

- *Self-Check: Developing and encouraging a culture and practice of critical self-reflection is one of the most fundamental tools for preventing conflict. Literally pausing for a few seconds and checking yourself before reacting to something can prevent a majority of conflicts from ever occurring.*

- *Daily Direct: This refers to the importance of constantly encouraging a culture of direct communication with someone you may have a problem with. If you hear somebody triangulating - talking to one person about their issues with another person - try talking to them to see if they have any options for taking those issues directly to that person instead of discussing it with someone else. If possible, you can seek a more direct interaction through mediation.*

- *Buddy Check: If your buddy pulls you aside and explains a conflict situation that they are upset about, then you need to think carefully and critically about your role. Focus on listening to and acknowledging their experience, while at the same time critically engaging with them about the process of how the conflict is unfolding and options for how it could be resolved. Always search for a peaceful resolution.*

- *Iceberg Check: In a group meetings or activities we frequently have the sense that the tip of a much larger emotional issue has entered into the group space and is not being recognized. Developing the practice of recognizing these iceberg issues and proactively dealing with them either in the group or one on one is an effective way of bringing a latent conflict to the surface or keeping conflict from escalating. Don't let negative feelings fester in the group.*

- *Calling People In: This is an approach in contrast to the practice of 'calling people out' in which oppressive or inappropriate behaviour is called out in a group setting and often in an accusatory manner. 'Calling people in' involves holding that critical awareness until a moment when you can invite the person with the behaviour into a careful conversation in a one-on-one setting. Avoid embarrassing the individual and give them space to express their feelings outide of the group where possible.*

- *Conflict Point People/Mediators: Try identifying people in your community that are respected and trusted by your community as 'conflict point people.' People in this role invite others to approach them about conflict at any time and make a commitment to support the person and resolve the conflict.*

- *Non-Escalation Agreement/Guidelines: This involves proactively developing a set of guidelines or points of agreement that can help to diffuse or de-escalate a conflict. This agreement can help to contain a conflict in a way that minimizes the potential of trauma for the individuals and groups involved*

Group Exercise 7.4

Activity:

In groups, develop a simple project that would encourage peace and unity within your community and present in 3-5 minutes.

Mentorship/Leadership Development

Mentoring is universal: it is an influential vehicle for individual and community empowerment. The power of mentoring helps people navigate the intersections, interconnectedness, and indivisibility of humanity.

Given the power of mentoring, what can those cherished relationships do beyond providing personal benefits to individual mentors and protégés? Can mentoring inspire peace in communities experiencing conflict or contribute to tranquillity, harmony and unity among people? In addition to its value for helping people succeed in their jobs and lives, perhaps mentoring is also an underutilized tool for creating a more just and peaceful world. So how do mentoring, peace building, and peace keeping connect?

The United Nations, governments, and international civil society organizations work to promote peace, development, and human rights. Within this realm, the power of mentoring can be utilized as a catalyst for advancing and supporting important initiatives and programs around the world. The power of mentoring can help to sustain, grow, and enhance current, emerging, and future leaders in this space. How can mentoring become a core pillar within your community?

Qualities of a Good Mentor for Youth

Characteristics young persons have expressed to be more likely to influence their life path when it comes to choosing a mentor include:

- **Supportive and Non-Judgemental:** The most important role of a mentor is to support and encourage young people in a non-judgemental manner, especially as they are facing challenges in their lives. When young people are down, are experiencing family issues, or just not experiencing the joys of life, mentors are there with them, giving them that shoulder to lean on and reminding them of their worth. Being there when they are at their lowest without judgement can be a life altering experience.

- **Active Listeners:** Mentors listen a great deal because young people have a lot on their minds. Many youths have expressed how little most adults in their lives really listen to them so when they meet someone who does, it is very reassuring and makes them feel valued. It also gives them an opportunity to clear their thoughts as they verbalise their issues. This can lead them to a better place of understanding as they explain their challenges and issues.

- **Encourage:** Anyone who lives and works with young people would agree that most of them don't respond well to being pushed out of their comfort zones or have too high of expectations set for them. Youth appreciate when mentors push them beyond what they may have thought they could accomplish and are there supporting them in their moments of self-doubt. Many youths have succeeded in their academic and/or

vocational pursuits because of this type of support. Once again, non-judgement and not comparing them to others is key and everyone has their unique interpretation of the world around them and how it affects them so stay focused on their individual circumstances.

- **Keeping it "real" and have a genuine interest in the Youth as an Individual:** Youth can tell the difference between adults who are "real" and those who are just playing a role. Mentors engage youth to understand all aspects of their lives and interests. They value young people's ideas and respect their emotions. It's not about being everything all the time to a mentee but being honest about what you can and can't do with the best interest of the young person at the fore.

- **Encourages Personal Responsibility and Decision-Making:** Good mentors don't judge young people or impose their own beliefs on them. Instead they remind young people who they are and help them believe they have the insights to make good decisions. Not being judged helps young people think through decisions critically, sifting through the deeper values that will be the foundation blocks of the adults they will become. Guiding mentees to self-reflect is key.

- **Lending Perspectives:** Mentors provide varying viewpoints to young people from their additional years of life experience. When challenges appear to be debilitating, mentors help put them into perspective. Mentors also help young people see the multiple sides of a situation that broadens understanding and provides opportunities for multiple approaches to tackle an issue.

Group Exercise 7.5

Discussion:

In groups brainstorm and answer the following as it relates to mentors:

(1) List why we need positive mentors in our lives.

(2) List the characteristics of a positive mentor you had in the past, one you admire or would like to have.

(3) Who are the positive mentors in your life?

(4) If you could design a mentorship program how would you go about that?

Key Elements for a Successful Mentoring Program are:

- **Recruitment**: Recruitment focuses on recruiting appropriate mentors and mentees, by realistically describing the program's objectives and expected outcomes. Recruitment strategies should build positive attitudes and emotions about mentoring, and target mentors and mentees whose skills, backgrounds, and needs best match the goals and structure of the program.

- **Screening:** Screening focuses on screening prospective mentors to determine whether they have the time, commitment, and personal qualities to be a safe and effective mentor; and screening prospective mentees to determine if they have the time, commitment, and desire to be effectively mentored. Screening emphasizes keeping participants, especially young people, safe in mentoring relationships.

- **Training:** Training is essential to the success of a mentoring program. Training focuses on ensuring that prospective mentors, mentees, and their parents or guardians have the basic knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to build a safe and effective relationship. Training of mentors, particularly, has documented implications for the length of match relationship as well as both parties' perceptions of the quality of the relationship.

- **Matching and Initiating:** Matching helps create appropriate mentoring relationships by using strategies most likely to increase the odds that the relationship will be safe and effective. Matching should consider individual characteristics about the mentor and mentee in order to foster an enduring relationship. Initiating is the step that formally establishes the mentoring relationship.

- **Monitoring and Support:** Monitoring and support is critical to mentoring not only to create satisfying and successful relationships, but also to adjust to changing needs of the mentee and mentor, and to ensure safety. Support ensures ongoing advice, problem-solving, training, and access to resources for the duration of a mentoring relationship.

- **Closure:** Bringing a mentoring relationship to closure in a way that affirms the contributions of both the mentor and the mentee is essential to ensuring the relationship ends with positive consequences for the mentee. Closure is a normal stage in a mentoring relationship and mentors and mentees should be able to prepare for closure and assess their experience with the relationship.

Building Networks for Continued Support and Personal Development

Prevention programs aimed to stop both violence against women and violence before it starts and violence in general, challenges and change attitudes, behaviours and practices that allow violence to occur in the first place. Initiatives to prevent violence should be carefully tailored to ensure they are appropriate and meaningful for the group of people they aim to engage. The ultimate aim of all programs should be to achieve gender equality through the empowerment of women and by challenging and changing the attitudes, behaviours and practices that create and sustain inequality.

All programs need to be underpinned by the drivers of violence against women and violence prevention and provide links to the integrated family violence system.

List of ideas:

(1) Hold training sessions with community members that focus on using their expertise to influence others to promote healthy and respectful relationships and increase understanding of family violence and its impact on women and children.

(2) Engage and train non-violent men to work as ambassadors in their communities.

(3) Work with boys to support development of social and emotional skills required to participate in equal and respectful relationships.

(4) Run programs to empower women to participate in civil society and to facilitate change through training in advocacy and human rights.

(5) Run programs to reduce women's isolation and increase skills and economic participation.

(6) Hold bystander training programs to equip community members to take action to prevent violence against women.

(7) Run media campaigns with key messages developed through community consultation that promote a zero tolerance attitude to violence against women and promote gender equality, promoted via a coordinated and sustained campaign through multiple media outlets.

(8) Hold training programs that empower young women, promote healthy gender identities of young women and men, and facilitate development of respectful relationships.

(9) Work with young women and men to be creative leaders and champions of gender equity and prevention of violence against women through the arts, such as video production, music, theatre and arts events.

(10) Work with young women and men to be leaders and champions of gender equality and equity, as well as prevention of violence against women through sports, such as bystander training.

(11) Empower women through leadership development and increased participation in decision-making in the home and in the workplace.

Gender-based Violence Prevention Program checklist:

Use this quick checklist to ensure your program is using a prevention approach to prevent violence against women.

- ☐ Does your program aim to challenge and change attitudes, behaviours and practices that allow violence against women to occur?
- ☐ Does your program challenge and change the cultural and social conditions that allow violence against women to occur?
- ☐ Does your program address the underlying causes of violence against women, such as gender inequality and rigid gender roles?
- ☐ Does your program focus on the best of the community and its beliefs, and encourage equality, respect and human rights?
- ☐ Does your program consult and engage a range of groups in the design of the program and use a participatory approach?

Group Exercise 7.6 - Discussion/Activity

A Tool for Change Within Your Community - Pillars of Power

Purpose: To practice using a campaign planning tool that identifies goals and breaks an issue down to a level where the group can be effective.

Materials: Flipchart, various coloured pens

Preparation: Prepare a flip chart with the pillars of power (below).

The problem

oppression

injustice
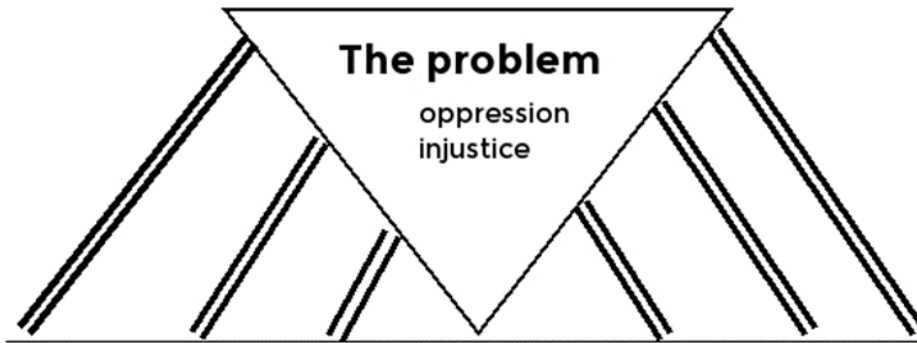
How to Use Pillars of Power

1. Identify the problem or power situation you are trying to change. Be as specific as possible. It could be a government policy, a violation of human rights, climate chaos, etc.

2. Think about what forces, beliefs or other factors sustain this situation. These could be ideological or needs for security, etc. Write one sustaining factor on each pillar. Be specific, e.g. "fear of…", "belief in…", "compliance with…"

3. Ask: how might these pillars be weakened or removed? List your ideas for each pillar. If you have trouble identifying ideas, then the problem is still too big, so choose a different pillar to work on.

4. Ask: On which of the pillars can you be most effective? Consider your own resources, strengths and capacity.

5. Draw another diagram, this time with the chosen pillar as the problem in the triangle.

6. Repeat the process, drawing more pillars to identify what forces or factors sustain the problem. Break the problem down at least three times, until you reach a level that you know you can affect. Keep going through the levels, each time taking an individual pillar and naming it as the problem.

Note: When repeating the process, avoid naming the bigger things you have already named: the idea is to break it down to a manageable size where your actions can be effective.

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