

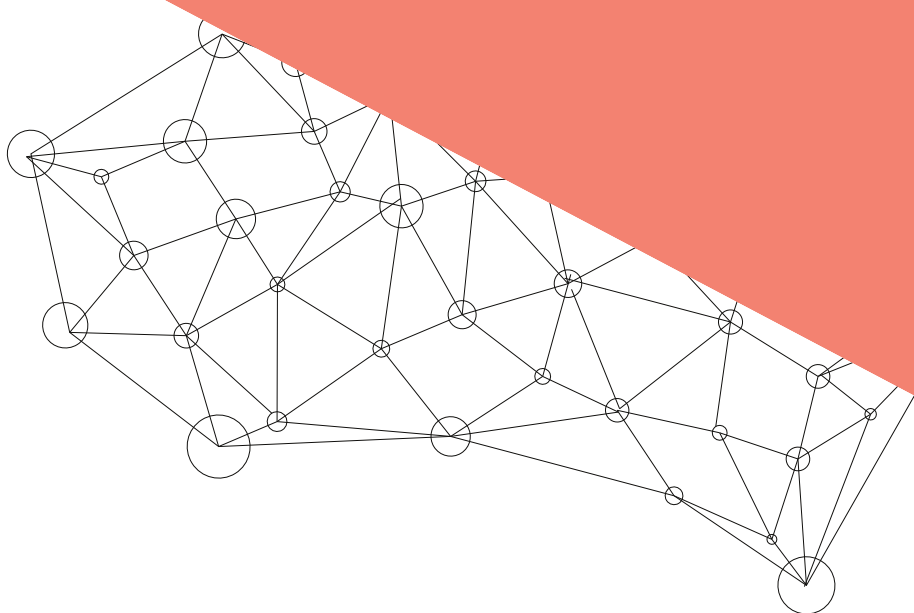
LIFTING UP TRANSFORMATIVE APPROACHES TO DOMESTIC & SEXUAL VIOLENCE PREVENTION

A PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH REPORT
FROM MAPPING PREVENTION

AUTHORED BY
DEANN ALCANTARA-THOMPSON
& SID JORDAN

WITH
DAKOTA CAMACHO
PARIS CHAPMAN
T CIAK
DARIN DORSEY
MO LEWIS
AZURE SAVAGE
FATIMA SHIEKH
JACKIE VAUGHN
& PREVCO

COALITION ENDING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE
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LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This project was largely conducted on the ancestral land of the Duwamish people, who have lived here since time immemorial. The Duwamish people have made a request for acknowledgement whenever people gather here, and this document would otherwise be incomplete. This land is also ancestrally significant to the Muckleshoot, Snoqualmie, Puyallup, and Tulalip Nations. We honor the many ways that Indigenous people and knowledges have informed our understandings of violence prevention, and how Indigenous resistance has shaped our understandings of anti-racist and decolonial practices.

We do not stop here. As members of the core team of Mapping Prevention, we acknowledge histories of dispossession and attempted genocide and commit to advocating for Indigenous sovereignty and a society that fully acknowledges and honors Indigenous people here and everywhere.

No one is free when any of us are oppressed.



MAPPING PREVENTION KING COUNTY, WA

Mapping Prevention 2020 (hereafter MP2020) was a short-term participatory action research initiative in King County, Washington. Our purpose was to identify frameworks of domestic and sexual violence prevention for strategic expansion through public funding. MP2020 was designed and led by community-based anti-violence organizers committed to squarely centering the perspectives and experiences of Black and Indigenous people, and other People of Color. In this report, we lift up *transformative* approaches to domestic and sexual violence prevention that explicitly address racism and its intersections with sexism and other forms of oppression as root causes.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report was made possible by the contributions and thinking of the Mapping Prevention core team: Azure Savage, Dakota Camacho, Darin J. Dorsey, DeAnn Alcantara-Thompson, Fatima Shiekh, Jackie Vaughn, Kiyomi Fujikawa, Mo Lewis, Paris Chapman, Sid Jordan, and T Ciak, as well as CEGV staff members, Lea Aromin, Merril Cousin, and Trenchesia Wilson. We also thank Mar Drouhard, Jasmine Fernandez, Malia Makahanaloa, Ray Sanchez, and Lourdez Velasco for their support along the way.

We thank and acknowledge the more than 600 participants who shared their ideas, goals, and visions with us. We are continuously inspired by the ways that people in King County are coming together in struggle and joy to create the conditions necessary to prevent violence. This project would not have been possible without the work of Black women in our communities and Black, Indigenous, and women of color feminist leaders that have been educating and advocating for transformative responses to violence and the liberation of all people.

THE CONVENERS

The Coalition Ending Gender-Based Violence (CEGV) is a member-based coalition founded in the early 1980s to organize responses to domestic and sexual violence in King County. CEGV's mission is to end gender-based violence and promote equitable relationships through collective action for social change, through policy advocacy, training and education, collaboration and service coordination, and mobilizing members and the community to work for lasting change. Since 2017, CEGV has dedicated a part-time staff position for its violence prevention and transformative justice efforts.

Prevention Coalition (PrevCo)

PrevCo formed in 2010 to bring together prevention professionals and people interested in violence prevention working across sexual assault, domestic violence, sexual health, HIV/AIDS prevention, crime victims' services, criminal justice, homeless youth services, public health, and government in King County for networking and peer education. Currently, PrevCo organizes as a learning cohort that comes together every summer to build connections, learn and grow, and deepen practice in building more liberated communities. PrevCo uses anti-oppression frameworks and other best practices in the field to create spaces to learn from each other and share thoughts, ideas, and projects within the group. PrevCo provides a physical (and in 2020 virtual) space to practice cultivating joy, trying things out with an eye toward moving closer to a collective vision of liberation for all.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

04	SUMMARY
08	INTRODUCTION
12	OUR PROCESS
19	PARTICIPANTS
20	SURVEY FINDINGS
30	FRAMEWORKS FOR PREVENTION
52	RECOMMENDATIONS
55	LIMITATIONS

MAPPING PREVENTION

Mapping Prevention 2020 (MP2020) was a short-term participatory action research initiative led by the Coalition Ending Gender-Based Violence. MP2020 was proposed to King County to serve as the planning phase for the Countywide Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence and Commercial Sexual Exploitation Prevention Pilot (hereinafter “Prevention Pilot”). The initiative was designed to support collaborative learning and democratic participation to inform the distribution of public funding for the Prevention Pilot and beyond.

MP2020 was developed and guided by core team of eleven community-based anti-violence organizers between April 2020 and June 2021. In the summer of 2020, we conducted an online survey with 600+ participants and interviews with 46 local practitioners working across King County. We emphasized the perspectives of Black and Indigenous people and other People of Color (BIPOC) and focused on approaches to domestic and sexual violence prevention that directly address racism and its intersections with sexism and other forms of oppression. The report includes a brief introduction to publicly funded frameworks for domestic and sexual violence prevention, then turns to our analysis of public survey data and in-depth interviews, and concludes with our recommendations for public funding.

Our survey findings indicated that people across King County want to be more involved in collective efforts to prevent domestic and sexual violence in their own lives and in the lives of their friends, families, and broader communities. Young adults are particularly well-positioned to do violence prevention work with their peers and the resources they need include mental health supports, safe spaces, trustworthy relationships, and skills to enact change. Domestic and sexual violence prevention advocates strongly agree that anti-racism and anti-oppression are essential to preventing violence, and many would like to do more to centralize these frameworks in their efforts. Many culturally specific organizations and racial justice groups are engaged in domestic and sexual violence prevention work and would like to do more, but most do not have public funding to support their existing violence prevention efforts.

Our analysis of in-depth interviews focused on identifying and lifting up transformative anti-racist approaches to domestic and sexual violence prevention. We highlight four distinct, but overlapping frameworks: *liberation/agency*, *healing/accountability*, *abolition/transformation*, and *community/belonging*. For each framework, we include a few of the many strategies currently in practice in King County. Taken together, these strategies emphasize: building deep relationships; working collectively to shift power and heal trauma; challenging systems that create harm; and sharing skills and resources. We discuss the significance of by- and- for approaches in which practitioners share some lived experience with those they work with, as well as an investment in both personal healing and reflecting on their own relationship to power.

Our funding recommendations focus on these transformative frameworks and investments in Black-led, Indigenous-led, and People of Color-led initiatives that are conceived by, and intended for, BIPOC communities. We emphasize the need to fund community-level approaches that aim to change the underlying social conditions in which domestic and sexual violence happen. Community-level approaches include cultural change efforts as well as policy leadership to reduce or eliminate structural barriers faced by practitioners including barriers to accessing public funding.

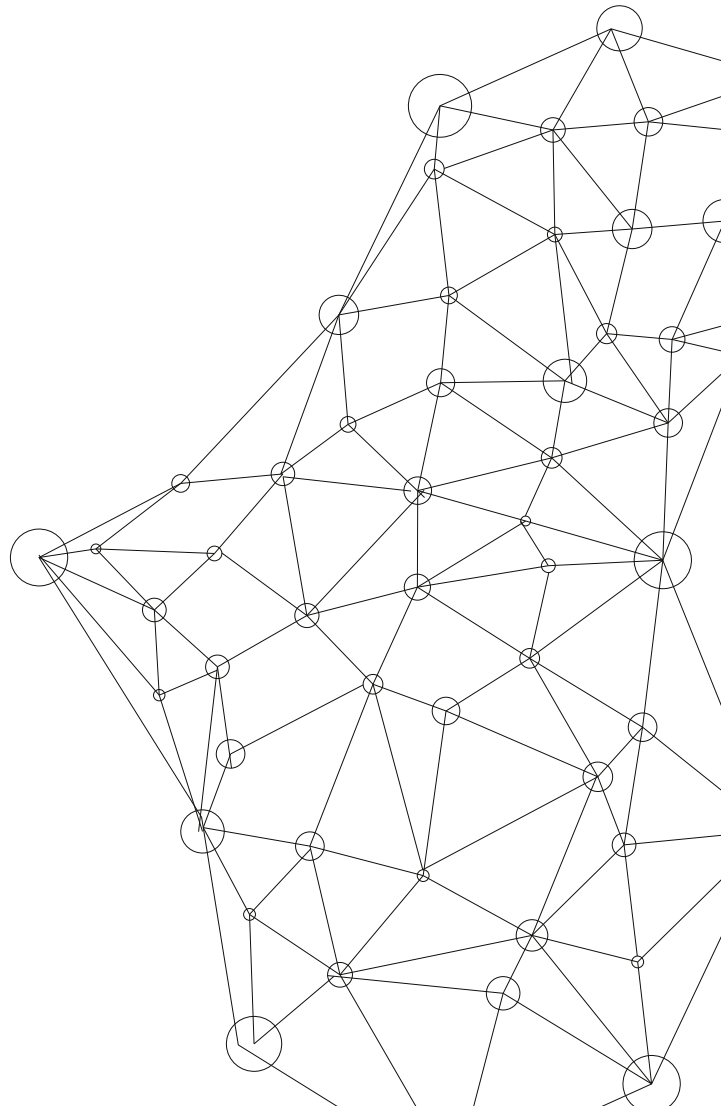
We hope this report will contribute to the growth of transformative domestic and sexual violence prevention efforts that deepen community ties and responsive networks of care in King County and beyond.

“

All oppression is entwined. So when we're talking about gender-based violence, we are inherently talking about racism.

”

MAPPING PREVENTION 2020 PARTICIPANT



ANTI-RACIST COMMITMENTS

We acknowledge the history and impacts of racism in anti-violence work, and the much longer entanglements of racial and sexual violence. We honor the history and work of anti-racist anti-violence activists by lifting up those who have led the work.

We intend to interrupt patterns where communities are asked what they need with no plan to shift the status quo. We are mindful that community-led work has been taken and misused. We attempt to hold a different kind of process where we support the work already happening. We plan to learn from what people share and we plan to share what we learn.

Our hope is to create stronger connections and more resources for existing work and for the world we want to live in.

INTRODUCTION

MP2020 was designed as a participatory action research initiative in King County, Washington. Local organizers working with the Coalition Ending Gender-Based Violence (CEGV) proposed the initiative as part of the first phase of the "Countywide Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence and Commercial Sexual Exploitation Prevention Pilot" (Prevention Pilot) with funding from the King County Veterans, Seniors and Human Services Levy. The first phase was intended to engage community stakeholders in a collaborative planning and design process that could inform the distribution of Prevention Pilot funding. As described by the King County Resilient Communities team who managed the funding, the intention of the Prevention Pilot was "not to simply fund services, but to support frameworks that help create the conditions to support loving equitable relationships and communities."¹ We started this project by situating our current understanding of publicly funded domestic and sexual violence² prevention frameworks.

The largest share of public funding for violence prevention supports the deterrence approach through policing and law enforcement. These methods fail to adequately address the problem of domestic and sexual violence, and for many communities has been actively harmful. The working theory of deterrence is that we can stop violence through the threat of punishment. This idea is deeply ingrained into the cultural fabric, policies, and practices of our society. Deterrence is a primary rationale for policing in general, and has contributed to the crisis of mass incarceration. The deterrence approach is costly and there is limited evidence it is effective at preventing domestic and sexual violence before it starts.³ The expansion of criminal justice infrastructure over the past four decades has instead exacerbated vulnerabilities for Black, Indigenous, and other marginalized domestic and sexual violence survivors, and decreased access to social safety nets.⁴ Domestic and sexual violence remain pervasive social problems here in King County, and globally.

Social services funding for domestic and sexual violence survivors has increased significantly in recent decades, including in King County, but investment in prevention efforts has lagged far behind. Many organizational leaders of local domestic violence and sexual assault (DV/SA) programs say that they would like to spend more of their agency's time and resources on prevention, but most available public funding is directed towards crisis response.

While funding for crisis services has increased, there has never been an adequate level of capacity to meet the need. Increasing income inequality, the homelessness and housing affordability crisis in King County, and most recently, the effects of the global pandemic on existing economic and health inequities, has only deepened the gap. Without adequate funding to address the immediate basic needs of survivors, work on prevention efforts can be deprioritized or sidelined. To the extent that local DV/SA programs have built and sustained prevention efforts, this has primarily been through private and public funding dedicated to public health approaches to violence prevention.

Public health approaches to domestic and sexual violence prevention have primarily focused on individual-level behavioral change that are too often disconnected from community-level efforts to change the underlying social conditions.

These approaches have predominantly taken the form of school-based programs that teach young people about healthy relationships and how to identify, avoid, and intervene in violence among peers. When done well, these programs importantly equip young people with communication skills and connect them to support and advocacy around family, dating, and sexual violence as well as self-harm.

Public health frameworks have increasingly turned toward community-level prevention models.⁵ This turn generally reflects the embrace of a *social determinants of health* framework that directs attention to broader conditions social and structural inequalities.⁶ Yet there is a considerable gap in research on community-generated domestic and sexual violence prevention approaches, especially those that directly intend to address racism and intersecting forms of oppression.⁷

Antiracism and intersectionality must be at the center of domestic and sexual violence prevention but are rarely the focus of public funding. While anyone can experience domestic or sexual violence, it is abundantly clear that those most vulnerable are people living in communities that experience structural barriers to resources (e.g., disparate access to health care, education, political power) and people who face institutional barriers to exercising self-determination.⁸ This especially includes BIPOC who are poor, immigrants and refugees, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) people, people with disabilities, people engaged in the sex trade and other criminalized work, people without housing, or living in state institutions. For decades, women of color feminists and queer and trans antiviolence organizers have called attention to oppression within feminist antiviolence organizations and to the contradictions of criminalization approaches.⁹ Community-based organizations have fractured over issues of racism and criminalization, with many BIPOC organizers forming culturally-specific organizations or leaving the field altogether.

10

Communities that have been ignored, failed, and further harmed by existing approaches to violence prevention have maintained, devised, and practiced alternative approaches. Seattle has been a site for some of thground-breaking practices. The Seattle-based grassroots antiracist organization Communities Against Rape and Abuse first organized in 1998 and gained a national profile for their explicitly anti-criminalization stance on domestic and sexual violence and alternative community accountability strategies. The Asian and Pacific Islander Women and Family Safety Center (now API Chaya) has led field-defining work in its long-standing Natural Helper Program, which equips community members with skills to respond and intervene in violence. The Northwest Network of Bisexual, Trans, Lesbian & Gay Survivors of Abuse's community-building violence prevention programs, including Relationships Skill Class and Friends Are Reaching OUT, are utilized by organizations across the county. Efforts such as these, as well as the practices of many aunties and everyday people, have generated a culture of collective care and shared responsibility for violence prevention in our region.

Community-based anti-violence organizers working outside policing and punishment models have increasingly coalesced around calls for transformative justice (TJ), a philosophy that we can stop violence without causing more harm and while working to change the underlying conditions of social injustice.¹² TJ is fundamentally about violence prevention, however most available practice strategies have focused on intervening when violence occurs. There is limited literature about how people and organizations are engaging in transformative approaches to prevention.

MP2020 was forged in a moment of converging crises and emergent opportunity to change the distribution of public funding for violence prevention. This project builds on CEGV's recent efforts to invest in, and think together about, violence prevention and transformative justice with member programs and across King County. We first envisioned the work in late 2019 before the global pandemic of the corona-virus disease 2019 (COVID-19). We aimed to bring people together and learn more about how different local groups are defining and practicing

domestic and sexual violence prevention from an anti-racist and intersectional perspective. Although the COVID-19 pandemic foreclosed some of our initial plans, namely in-person community events, new opportunities unfolded as social movements for racial justice gained momentum across the United States, and work to divest in policing gained political traction in Seattle. Local grassroots efforts to transfer public resources from law enforcement to life-affirming social institutions heightened the urgency of our efforts to build knowledge about community-based alternatives to policing- and punishment-based approaches that can specifically address domestic and sexual violence. It also increased the public interest in MP2020 and possibilities for stakeholder engagement.

In leading this work, we valued a participatory, transparent, and accountable process. In the remaining pages of this report, we share more about how we organized the project and some of the things we learned in the process. We conclude with recommendations for public funding.

OUR PROCESS

Mapping Prevention 2020 was organized as a participatory action research initiative led by community-based anti-violence organizers. Our goal was to build relationships and new knowledge and take action based on what we learned. This included providing guidance to King County for phase two of the Prevention Pilot.

Planning phase

Project planning commenced in January 2020 and was extended into April 2020 as CEGV project staff adjusted to the COVID-19 quarantine. During this period, we met with the leadership of PrevCo to think through initial concepts and how to adapt to a virtual environment. In April, we assembled a cross-section of 12 experienced anti-violence organizers for a virtual "think tank" to support with planning. We presented and got feedback on initial project concepts. A strong consensus emerged that the project should prioritize the engagement of Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) and focus on anti-racist and anti-oppressive practices.

Core Team

We assembled a core team at the end of April 2020. The original team consisted of the two staff and six consulting members. All team members had a strong background in domestic and/or sexual violence prevention; ties to groups that are highly impacted by domestic or sexual violence; and experience connecting anti-racism efforts and work to end gender-based violence. To avoid potential conflicts of interest, core team members were not paid staff members of a organization that might apply for Prevention Pilot funding in phase two.

The core team met twice monthly for between April - October 2020 and once monthly between November 2020 and June 2021. Three additional consulting members were added over the course of the project as the team's capacities and needs evolved.

Project Design & Timeline

The core team developed the research design, recruited participants, conducted interviews, analyzed data, and reported back findings to participants, the convener organizations, other stakeholders, and King County. One of the first steps of the core team was to develop an anti-racist strategy plan and commitments that would then direct future stages of the work and group processes.



Survey

Our survey was conducted to garner a broader base of stakeholder input that could inform funding recommendations. Survey participation was anonymous and conducted through an online secure platform using Qualtrics. The survey was open to anyone aged 18 or older who lived or worked in King County (people under age 18 were not included due to age of consent laws). The survey launched in August 2020 and was open for a five-week period.

We focused our outreach for participation on three key stakeholders groups:

- Young adults, defined as people ages 18-24 years old;
- Providers, defined as people working or regularly volunteering in organizations that focus on domestic, family and/or sexual violence prevention, including CEGV member programs;
- People working or regularly volunteering in organizations or groups that are culturally specific or do racial justice work.

Outreach efforts included emails to CEGV member organizations and advertising on the CEGV website, emails to PrevCo members and promotion during PrevCo meetings, and emails to organizations focused on young adults. We also set up an independent website and social media accounts, and conducted social media outreach through organizational partners with established networks and through paid promotions (Facebook, Instagram) focused on young people living in King County. We created two short-term social media consultant positions for community organizers under age 25 to support our online outreach to young adults.

The survey questions were determined by the core team. In addition to the main survey, we created optional supplementary surveys for each of the three stakeholder groups. The survey questions for young adults were designed with support from members of Sexual Assault Awareness Club at Garfield High School.

Interviews

We created an open call for interview participants and circulated it by email through networks of the core team, CEGV staff, and CEGV and PrevCo mailing lists. The open call emphasized our interest in learning more about culturally-specific approaches to violence prevention and strategies that explicitly address racism and its intersections with sexism and other forms of oppression. Prospective participants were invited to complete a questionnaire with contact information as well demographic and work information. We also conducted special outreach to organizers that work with groups highly impacted by domestic and sexual violence (e.g., Black and Indigenous women, sex workers, trans people of color, LGBTQ youth, undocumented people). Once we began interviewing, we also asked participants for any recommendations for people we might reach out to.

Participants were matched with an interviewer from our core team or a CEGV staff member. The core team developed an interviewers facilitators' guide that focused on the following areas of inquiry:

- how domestic and sexual violence prevention is defined and practiced;
- how "community" is defined and the role of culture, community building, and community connectedness in violence prevention efforts;
- interest in and existing barriers to violence prevention funding;
- ideas for using public funding for domestic and sexual violence prevention efforts in King County right now.

Interviews were intended to serve a dual role of generating data and strengthening relationships. Interviews were about one hour and conducted through video conferencing. Participants signed an advanced consent form and were provided \$75 to offset the costs of their time. All interviews were audio-recorded and professionally transcribed. Unless otherwise agreed to by the participants, interviewees are anonymous.

Data analysis

The core team conducted a preliminary analysis of interview and survey data in September and October 2020 to develop a set of recommendations for the Prevention Pilot. This report reflects these initial findings and additional analysis conducted by members of the core team between November 2020 and June 2021.

The public survey helped us garner a broad base of stakeholder perspectives, especially young adults, people working in local DV/SA programs, and people working in culturally-specific settings and racial justice organizations. Our survey analysis focused on: 1) general awareness, involvement, and interest in organized domestic and sexual prevention efforts; 2) resources that young adults say that they use and need to prevent violence; 3) anti-racism and anti-oppression practices in the context of DV/SA programs, and 4) domestic and sexual prevention efforts in the context of cultural and racial justice organizations. The survey analysis prepared for this report is descriptive. In a few cases, we performed two-group comparisons to test theorized differences in response rates between groups.

The interviews were designed to provide a in-depth look at anti-racist and anti-oppressive frameworks for domestic and sexual violence prevention. To analyze our interview data, core team members read and re-read transcripts and dialogued about emerging themes. Based on these discussions, we developed a deductive framework to code and analyze interviews. We used Dedoose, an analytic software, to code transcripts as well as analytic matrices as a collaborative tool to examine cross-cutting, salient, and contrasting themes. Our findings are presented in the frameworks section in this report.

Community Engagement

Over the course of the project, we used several engagement strategies to build awareness about and participation in MP2020 and to increase the transparency and accountability of our efforts.

Partnering with PrevCo

We collaborated with PrevCo's annual learning cohort in 2020. Traditionally held as a summer intensive, the 2020 cohort was adapted to a virtual environment and extended from July-December. This year's cohort themes focused on interrupting and taking a stance against anti-Blackness in the anti-violence field. Approximately 50 preventionists in King County attended one or more sessions over the course of the cohort. Members of the MP2020 core team provided updates and invited comments and participation at each meeting, and a special presentation was held in August.

Engaging CEGV staff and membership

CEGV staff were key stakeholders of MP2020 and were kept regularly informed about the project. Three staff members participated in the interviewer training and conducting participant interviews. MP2020 team members presented at the CEGV 2021 Annual Meeting in Jan 2021 where we shared initial findings and lessons learned from our process.

Community report back event

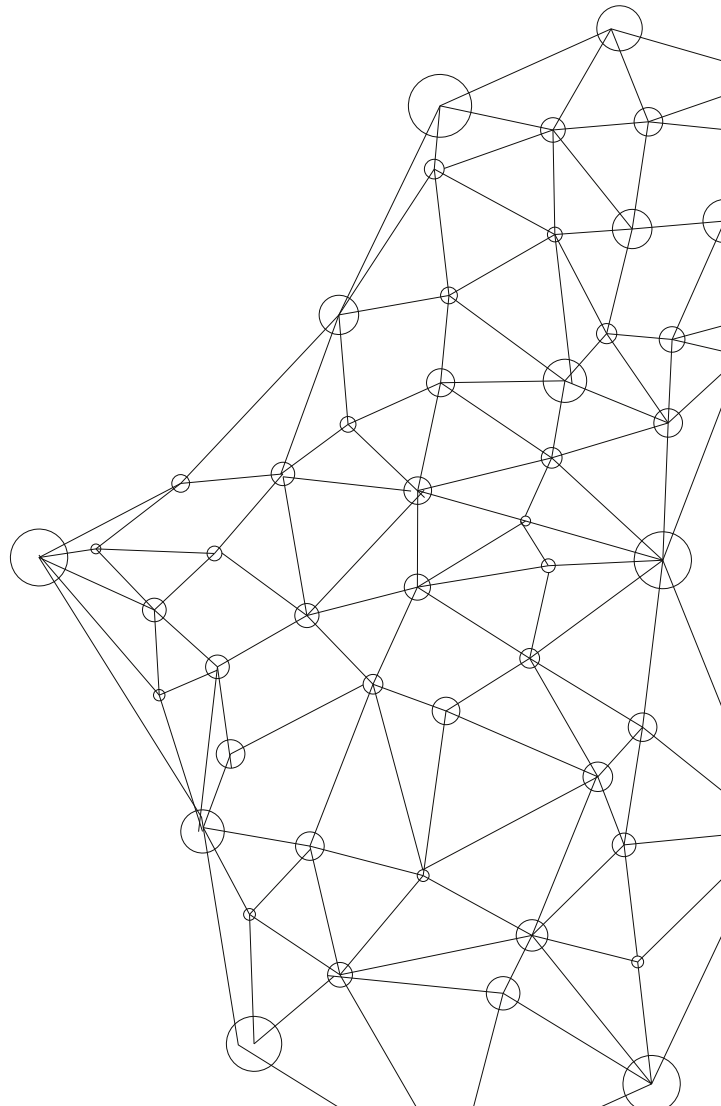
A "block party" themed community report back event and celebration was held virtually on May 6, 2021. The purpose of the event was to honor the contributions of community members, highlight some of the most joyful parts of the process, and to share the recommendations we made to King County. It was also an opportunity to showcase organizations and groups that received funding for the second phase of the Prevention Pilot. Leading up to the event, we released a set of graphic images with inspirational quotes from participant interviews. During the event, core team members presented information and findings from the project. It also included a DJ playing local music, a virtual exhibit, raffle prizes, and guest speakers.

“

*So much of effective prevention has been at the grassroots. It has been coming from people saying **this is what we need.***

”

MAPPING PREVENTION 2020 PARTICIPANT



PARTICIPANTS

The **606 survey participants** nearly all lived in King County (99%) while a few worked in King County but lived in nearby Snohomish or Pierce counties. At least 12 people participated from every King County Council District, with the most represented districts being Central Seattle (32%), Northeast Seattle (18%), North King County (13%), Southwest Seattle (12%), and Southwest King County (6%). About 42% of survey participants were Black people (10%), Indigenous people (4%), and other People of Color (BIPOC). More than half said they were Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, or Queer (LGBTQ) (52%) including 18% who were transgender or non-binary (TNB). One-third of participants said they had a chronic condition or a disability (33%), and 18 were deaf or hard of hearing.

There were 86 survey participants between the ages of 18 to 24 (hereinafter "young adults"). Young adults participated from every county council district, with the most represented district being Central Seattle (24%). More than half of young adult participants were BIPOC (58%) (19% identified as Black, 6% as Indigenous). More than half were LGBTQ (54%), including 24% who identified as TNB (and another 10% said they were unsure). One-quarter said they had a chronic condition or disability.

The **46 interview participants** lived in cities and neighborhoods across King County. The majority (43 of 46) were BIPOC including at least 17 who identified as Black and/or African-American and 7 as Native or Indigenous. Participants also self-described their racial and/or ethnic identities as: biracial, Chicana, Ethiopian, European, French, Filipina, Filipino, Flipinix, German, Indian, Japanese, Jewish, Korean, Latinx, Mexican, Native American, Pacific Islander, Pakistani, Palestinian, Xicanx, and white, and several used multiple terms. Many participants were LGBTQ, and at least 9 identified as trans or nonbinary. Thirteen participants were under age 30, and three were under age 25.

SURVEY FINDINGS

The Mapping Prevention 2020 survey confirmed what those working in the local anti-violence field already know from experience: domestic and sexual violence are prevalent and persistent problems in King County.



1 in 4 had been threatened with violence by somebody that they cared about or lived with within the past three years.

The survey further confirmed that exposures to violence are heightened among groups that are targeted by adultism, transphobia, ableism, racism, xenophobia, homophobia, and those living at the intersections of multiple forms of oppression. The percentage of those who had been threatened by violence in the past three years was higher among participants who were:

- Young adults (46%, compared to 23% of participants ages 25+)
- Transgender and non-binary people (TNB) (44%, compared to 22% of participants who were not TNB)
- People with disabilities or chronic health conditions (36%, compared to 18% of participants without disabilities or chronic health conditions)
- BIPOC (35%, compared to 20% of participants who were not BIPOC)
- LGBTQ people (19%, compared to participants who were not LGBTQ)

The figure was even higher for groups living at the intersections of multiple targeted identities, for example, 52% of BIPOC who were TNB and 48% of BIPOC who had disabilities or were living with chronic health conditions said they had experienced threats of violence by someone they cared about or living with in the past three years.

The survey further confirmed that friends and family members are preferred first responders. Every participant who had been recently threatened with violence said that they wanted to tell a friend or family member, and **89% reached out to a friend or a family member for support.**

1

Across King County, people want to be more involved in collective efforts to prevent domestic and sexual violence in their own lives and in the lives of their friends, families, and broader communities.



3 in 4 participants knew or suspected a friend or family member was experiencing abuse or violence by someone they cared about within the past three years.

Among participants who knew or suspected that a friend or family member was experiencing violence or abuse, **less than half said they had felt prepared to help**. Only 16% said they were "very prepared" and less than 13% felt they were definitely able to help. We asked participants what factors prepared them to help and the most frequent answers included being a survivor of violence and working in DV/SA programs or anti-violence advocacy organizations.

One-third of the survey participants were providers (people who already worked or regularly volunteers with an anti-violence organization). Most providers said that they were "very interested" in prevention work (83%) and 37% were already "very involved" with prevention work with their organization.

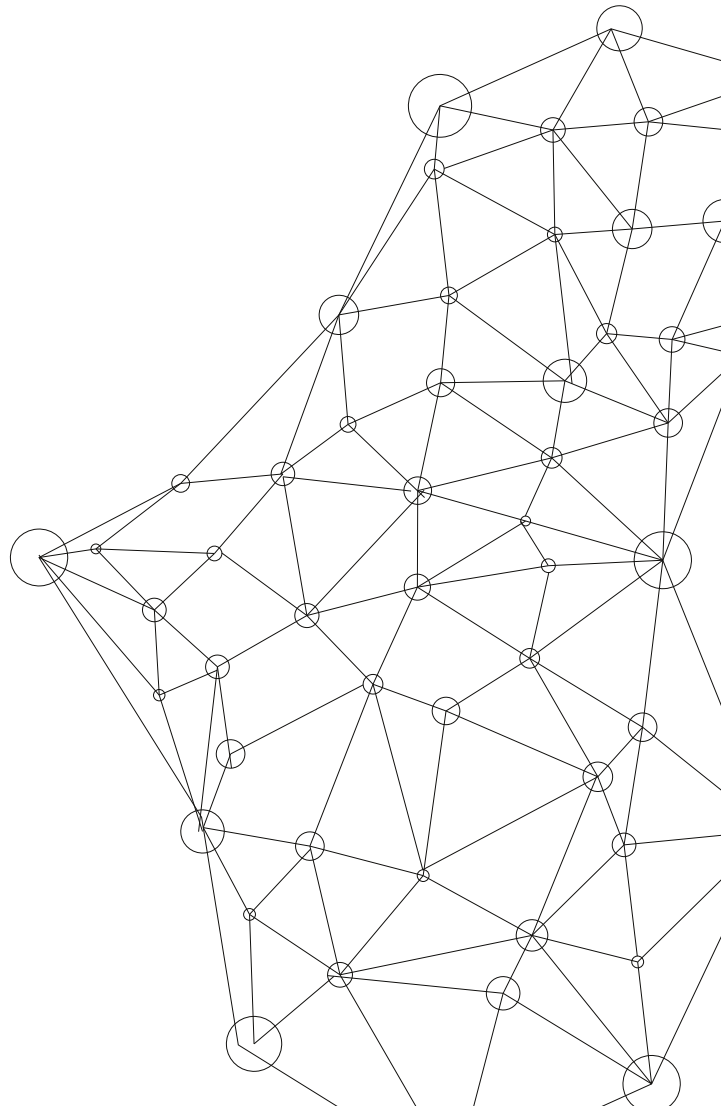
Among survey participants who were not providers, 73% said that they would like to be more involved with organized efforts to prevent domestic and sexual violence. Young people were especially interested, with 84% saying they would like to get more involved.

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*I knew what to expect,
and how to navigate from
years of practice, and a
well-established network
of support.*

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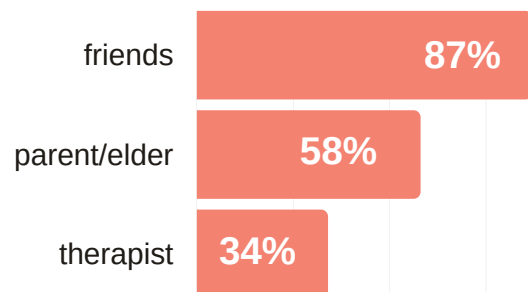
MAPPING PREVENTION 2020 PARTICIPANT



2

Young adults are well positioned to prevent violence, as many turn to each other for support. The resources they need include: mental health supports, safe spaces, trustworthy relationships, and skills to make change.

Most young adults said they trusted their friends and families when they needed support, while only a few trusted a teacher, school counselor, social worker, or the police.



Other responses included: other family members (30%), coworkers or supervisors at work (26%), teachers (15%), school counselors (8%), social workers (3%) or police (3%).

The survey asked young adults: “what resources could help prevent violence among you and your friends?” The top responses were: mental health support (83%), followed by and a safe space to spend time (67%), conflict resolution skills (63%), trustworthy peer relationships (62%), trustworthy adult relationships (62%), and education about what violence is and how to recognize it (62%).

“

Most of the violence I see in my peer group is the non-obvious type, but it’s just as harmful. Excessively controlling significant others, emotional abuse, coercive sex, etc.

When asked to select the number one resource they needed to prevent violence, 26% selected mental health supports and 24% selected education about what violence is and how to recognize it.

A few young adult participants offered further explanation about their responses:

I was torn between shelter and a safe place to spend time, because I want them to mean the same thing. The biggest issue for my peers right now is having a home that includes a safe space that they can be alone in if they so choose.



More young adults had participated in organized prevention programming, such as classes or workshops about consent, dating violence, or sexual violence (55%) and safer sex and STI prevention (51%), violence interventions (e.g., bystander training, de-escalation) (32%), and physical self-defense (28%). More than half had engaged in empowerment or leadership programs (54%), including those for youth of color (32%), girls/young women (31%), and LGBTQ youth (26%).



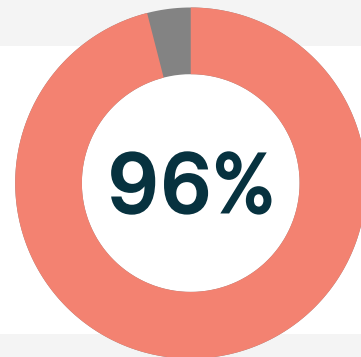
Youth can't often put into words what they're feeling, why they're feeling it, and what to do about it. It's not just about recognizing [violence], it's teaching skills to overcome it.

These programs were almost all rated as very helpful or somewhat helpful by participants who engaged in them. The only exceptions were religious-based programs and safer sex and STI prevention classes in which a few young people indicated that they felt these programs had been harmful or “neither harmful nor helpful.” Empowerment or leadership groups were the most consistently rated as *very* helpful. Participants' comments indicated that groups led by people with shared backgrounds and “identity-based groups to talk about shared experience” were the most important aspects of these programs.

3

Anti-violence advocates strongly agree that anti-racism and anti-oppression are essential to preventing domestic and sexual violence. Many would like to see organizations do more to take action.

Nearly every provider we surveyed agreed that anti-racism is “very important” to the work of preventing domestic and sexual violence.



About 131 participants took a supplementary survey for providers. They worked in every King County Council District. More than half were BIPOC (53%), including 19 who were Black and/or Indigenous.

Three-quarters of providers felt that their organization was taking action against racism and 42% "strongly agreed." More BIPOC participants "strongly agreed" that their organization took action against racism (53%) compared to participants that were not BIPOC (28%).

We have pushed for and passed bills to fund antiviolence orgs and violence prevention. We've provided grant-writing support to orgs who have antiracist and antiviolence mission.



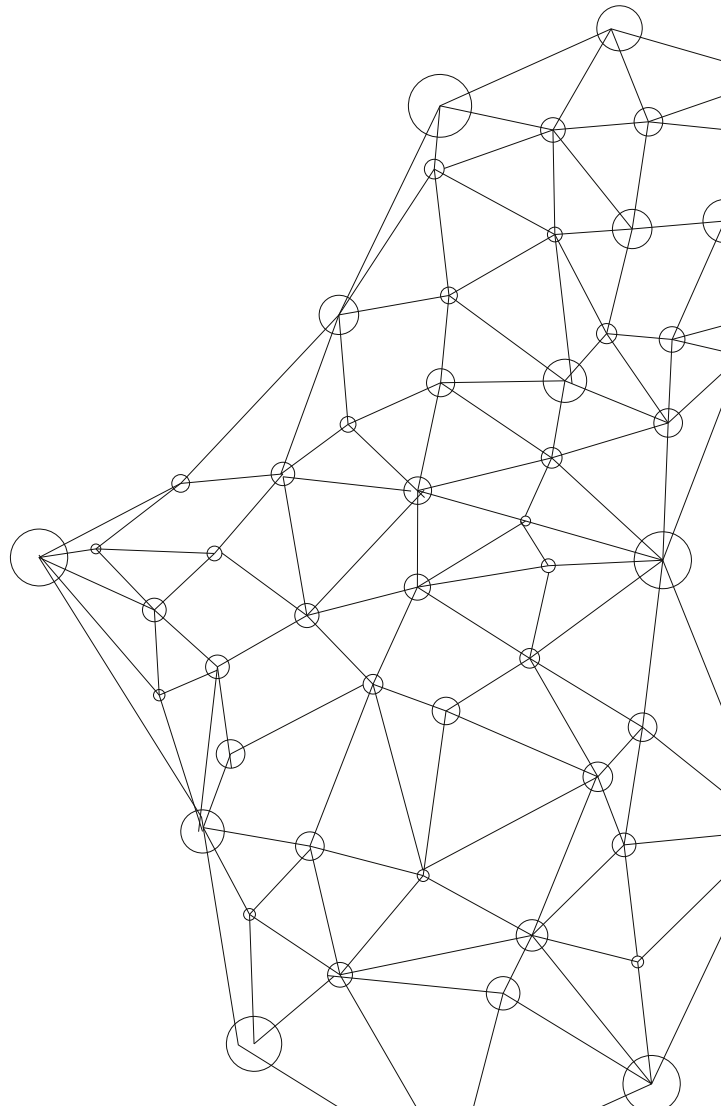
However, many BIPOC participants said they had personally experienced racism and other forms of oppression in the workplace. More than 57% of BIPOC providers had experienced oppression and 48% said they experienced racism within the organization. Black and Indigenous participants were especially impacted with 13 of 17 saying they had experienced racism within their organization.

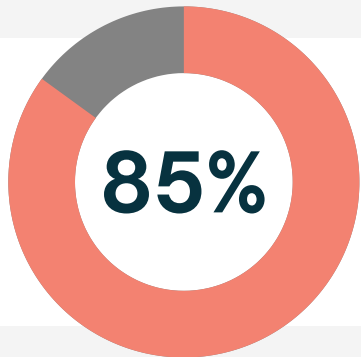
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We write grant applications that reflect our actual work, educating funders about by and for Native work.

”

MAPPING PREVENTION 2020 PARTICIPANT





Most providers would like their organizations to do more to address racism and other forms of oppression.

When prompted to say more, several participants wrote in responses that reflected that there was “*more learning to do,*” “*more work to do,*” and “*a gap between where we are and where we want to be.*” Some participants further clarified a tension between the personal values they brought to their work as part of the organization and perceived organizational values. A few participants wrote in comments that further revealed a feeling of disconnect or contraction between being accountable to both the communities they intend to serve and the priorities of funders and resulting contract requirements.

“

The organization is large and makes too many blanket statements about how the org is doing anti-oppression work [...] Non-profits often find themselves at a crossroad and feel forced to provide the narrative that gets the money and in the process disregard and further marginalize some issues.

There's an important distinction here between what my organization does/is committed to and what I am personally committed to/maneuver with my team.

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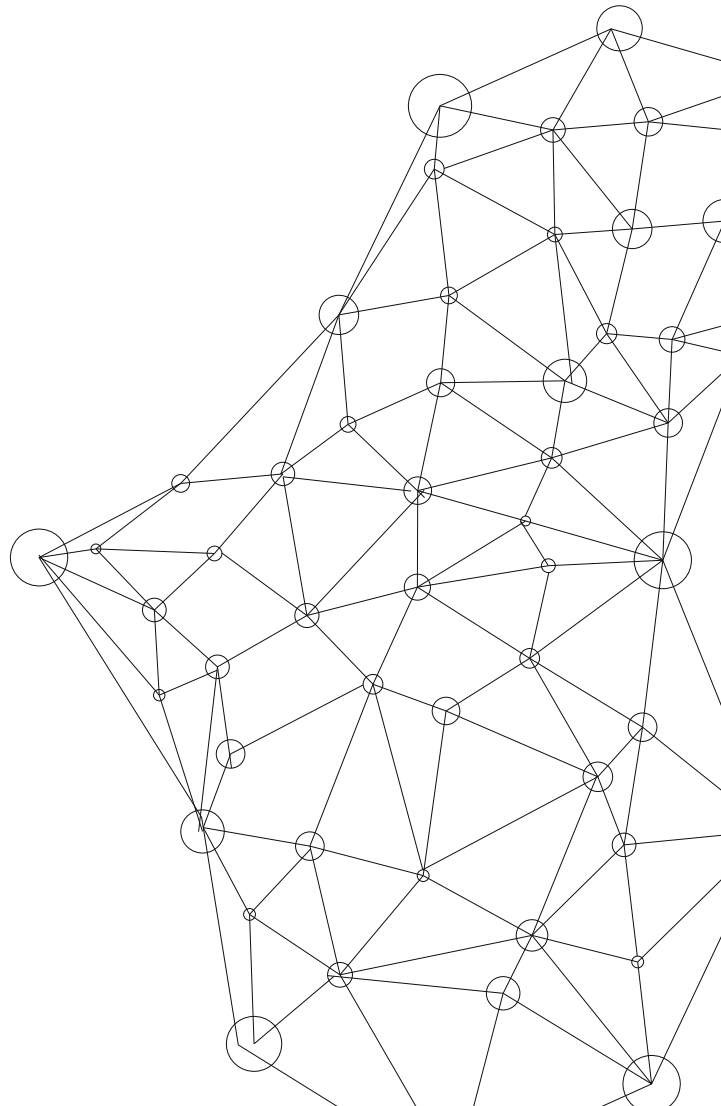
I have seen excellent improvement in pushing past that fear to take a stand and issue statements in support of stopping all forms of violence; including systemic racism and police violence against Black and Brown communities. There is still more room for growth, but I am glad we have made that shift.

“

I think the area where the agency sometimes holds back on more openly opposing racism is out of fear of retaliation from funders and private donors.

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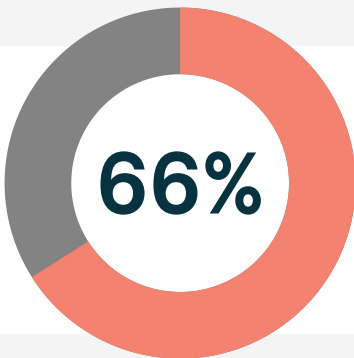
MAPPING PREVENTION 2020 PARTICIPANT



4

Culturally-specific organizations and racial justice groups are already engaged in and would like to do more to prevent domestic and sexual violence, but most do not yet receive public funding to support this work.

There were 101 participants who said they worked or regularly volunteered in culturally specific and/or anti-racism organizations (that are not DV/SA programs) and took our additional survey. Nearly three-quarters of these participants agreed that the organization took action to address sexism, homophobia, and transphobia and **48% saw their organization as working to address domestic and sexual violence specifically.**



Cultural and racial justice organizers said that they would like the organizations they worked with to get more involved in domestic and sexual violence prevention.

About half of these participants said the organizations they worked with were already engaged in anti-violence work broadly (56%). Participants described anti-violence work as addressing: “police violence,” “institutional violence,” “hate violence,” “medical violence,” “racial violence,” “state violence,” “human trafficking,” “disability justice,” and “access to affordable housing.”

About 58% of these participants responded to questions related to organizational funding. Of these, only 40% said that to their knowledge the organization or group had received funding explicitly directed to its violence prevention efforts.



**WE INTERVIEWED 46
PEOPLE IN KING COUNTY
WHO PRACTICE
TRANSFORMATIVE
VIOLENCE PREVENTION
STRATEGIES THAT ARE
BASED IN ANTI-RACIST
AND ANTI-OPPRESSION
VALUES.**

**WE ASKED: WHAT'S
INSPIRING YOU?
WHAT STRATEGIES ARE
WORKING? WHAT GETS IN
THE WAY? AND WHERE
SHOULD WE FOCUS
ENERGY NOW TO MAKE
THE BIGGEST IMPACT?**

FRAMEWORKS OF PREVENTION

The 46 practitioners we interviewed were incredibly diverse in terms of the breadth and depth of their experience, their role in the organizations and communities they worked with, and their approaches to violence prevention. Most people we spoke to had either helped create groups or organizations or developed new approaches within established organizations or institutions (e.g., schools, social services, prisons).

Many practitioners had previously or currently worked with DV/SA programs, including culturally-specific organizations. Some had come to domestic and sexual violence prevention work through other pathways, including youth-serving organizations and schools, social services, and grassroots organizing for Indigenous rights, prison abolition, racial and/or immigration justice, and LGBTQ/transgender justice. Several participants talked about how their personal experience as a survivor of violence was a factor and motivation for their interest in violence prevention.

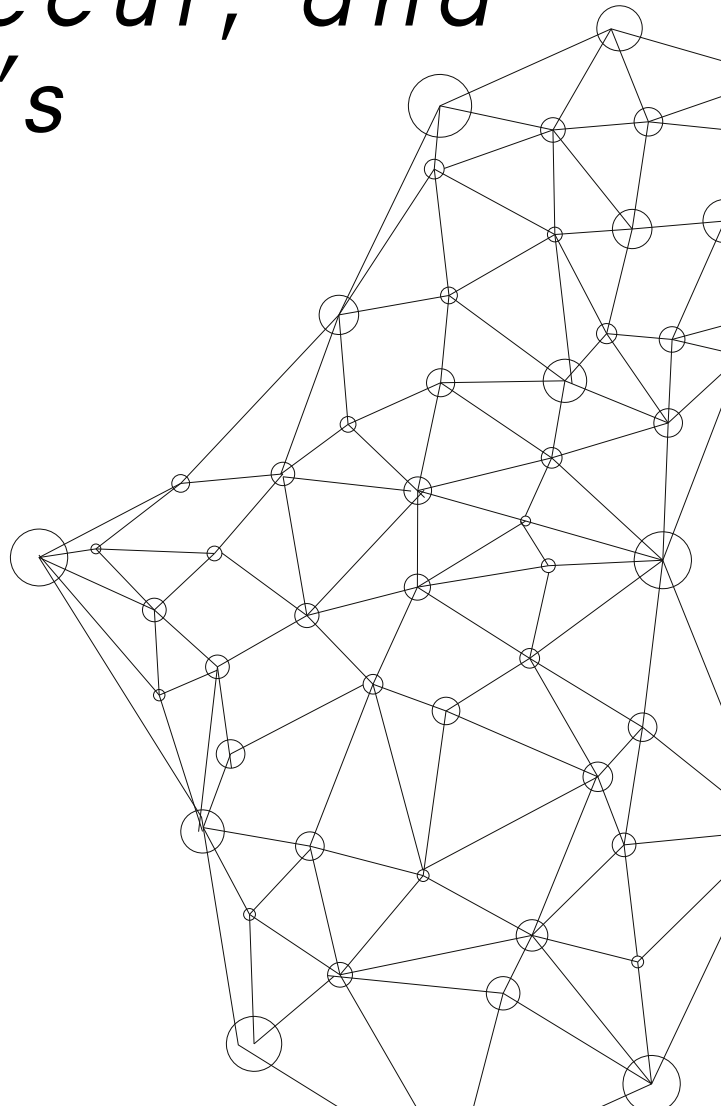
In their own words, practitioners described their work as focused on: people in the sex trades, survivors of domestic and sexual violence, homeless women, American Indian/Alaska Native, Indigenous, Spanish– and Portuguese–speaking people, LGBTQI2+, QTPOC (queer and trans people of color), Queer and Trans BIPOC, Queer and Trans Pacific Islanders, immigrants, Asian Pacific Islander, working-class, lower-income, African-centered, marginalized youth of color, the university community, IDD communities (intellectual and developmentally disabled), folks that have caused harm, Muslim communities, middle schoolers, students, youth of color, and homeless youth, among others.

“

We've built upon so many movements and so much energy, that we're inevitably in a time when a dynamic shift can occur, and I think that's exciting.

”

MAPPING PREVENTION 2020 PARTICIPANT



Framing the Problem

Many practitioners spoke about interpersonal violence as an expression and consequence of historical and present-day racial and gender domination and the exploitation of people, labor, land, water, and all of nature. Across the interviews, practitioners linked domestic and sexual violence to forms of oppression operating both at structural and interpersonal levels of society. Many explicitly named histories of slavery, genocide, human trafficking and forced migration, and ongoing forms of white supremacy, imperialism, patriarchy, sexism, and capitalism as root causes of domestic and sexual violence. Some explained oppression as a form of dehumanization that is felt, embodied, and experienced as trauma at the level of the individual and the collective.



I know there's disproportionate amounts of violence in our communities of color. And a lot of it is stemming from racial violence and historical trauma and just trickling down and coming into generations and generations without having that space or that place for healing.

Several Indigenous practitioners spoke of the problem of domestic and sexual violence as tied to the cultural disregard for Native ways of life and the land, water, and nature. They linked the mistreatment and exploitation of vulnerable people as culturally and materially tied to the broad-scale exploitation of natural resources and harm to the earth.

Look at where a lot of these mining projects take place [and] fracking sites, every single one of them where mass exploitation of the Earth is happening, you also have mass exploitation – and it's not just the women, because there's a lot of our young boys trafficked into these camps as well, but it is largely – women and girls being exploited.



At the same time, practitioners also spoke about how a lack of an understanding about historical and intersecting systems of oppression were relevant to the root causes of domestic and sexual violence. From this perspective, the cultural erasure of histories of oppression obscures the root causes of inequities. This contributes to the internalization of oppression and curbs the ability of communities to organize responses, increasing the potential for interpersonal violence.

Practitioners also linked domestic and sexual violence to the erosion of community connections that provide a sense of belonging and responsibility to each other and to the whole. They spoke of land dispossession and displacement, including global diaspora due to imperialism and climate change, neighborhood gentrification, and the removal of community members into prisons and child welfare systems, as patterns that dismantle community infrastructure and hasten vulnerabilities to harm. For many practitioners, this problem was further linked to prevailing cultural values of individualism, which contribute to the isolation of survivors, secrecy and shame, and limited access to safety nets.

Many further grounded their analysis of root causes in the maldistribution of resources, the failure to meet basic needs, and “systems that are failing us.” They spoke about vast economic inequalities in our region, the lack of access to adequate housing, and the exploitation of labor as degrading individual's sense of self-worth with direct consequences on health and well-being. This was paired with the problem of endemic racism in public institutions (e.g., education, health care, and social services) as forces of exclusion and paternalism (or “savior complexes”).

Patriarchy, sexism, homophobia and transphobia were discussed as fundamental and interlocking root causes of domestic and sexual violence. Practitioners spoke about the impacts of patriarchal power in creating the conditions in which violence against women and girls (and LGBTQ people) is normalized and valorized. They also spoke in terms of the cultural privileging of men and masculinity, intergenerational toxic masculinity, and rigid gender roles, including cultural expectations that men can and should exercise power over others.

Theories in Practice

Preventing domestic and sexual violence was a goal for every practitioner we spoke to, however many contextualized this work within a broader vision or framework for change. We asked participants to talk about their work in terms of preventing domestic and sexual violence and in terms of anti-racism and anti-oppression. There was a cyclical relationship between the theories of violence prevention and anti-racism/anti-oppression, and the strategies that practitioners used. Thus, identifying strategies helped us identify the underlying theories or frameworks, and categorizing frameworks helped us better understand the strategies. We characterized four distinct and overlapping frameworks: *liberation and agency*, *healing and accountability*, *abolition and transformation*, and *community and belonging*.

In many cases, practitioners were engaging more than one framework and multiple strategies at a time. Recognizing how deeply interwoven theory and practice is, we describe these together in the following pages; however, it is important to note that even when practitioners share a general theory of practice, the strategies might look entirely different depending on many factors including the cultural context, the basis of knowledge, generational differences, and access to materials resources. We heard about many, many amazing strategies and share only some of the examples in the next pages. We aimed to focus on what practitioners told us they were particularly inspired about in their work and efforts they recommended for strategic expansion through local public funding.

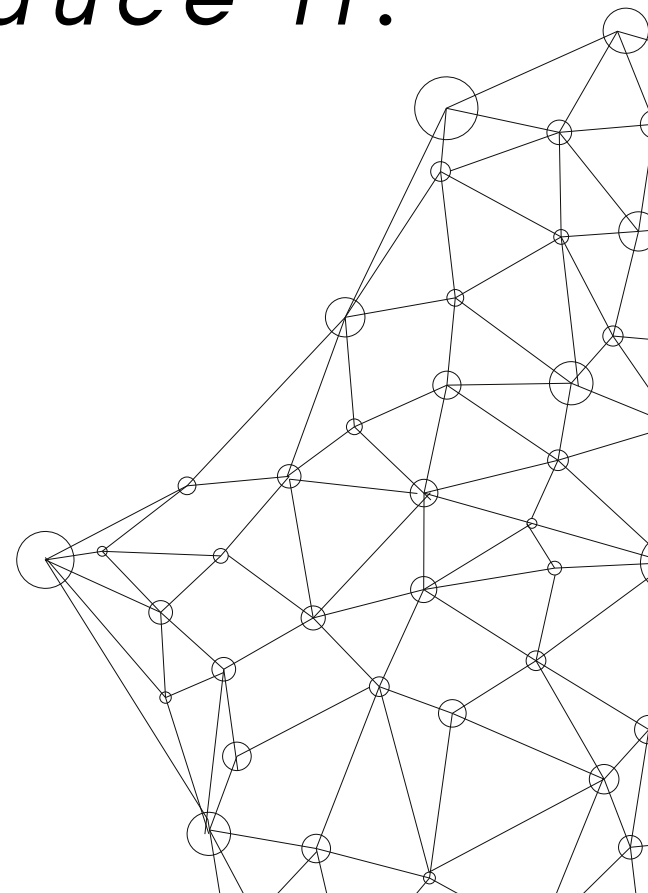


“

*Everyone is
internalizing
information from a
white supremacist
and imperialist
patriarchal world,
and you have to
actively unlearn it
to not reproduce it.*

”

MAPPING PREVENTION 2020 PARTICIPANT



LIBERATION & AGENCY

Liberation approaches were discussed in terms of freedom from oppression, envisioning and enacting a world after oppression has ended, and the result of transforming existing conditions of domination. Many participants spoke of their work explicitly in terms of liberation with the word itself appearing in 29 of 46 interviews. Liberation was discussed as an aspirational concept, but the language and histories of liberation-based social movements were embraced in everyday practice. As a theory of violence prevention, liberation was characterized by people and groups gaining knowledge about systems of domination and working toward freedom by overpowering them. Liberation was linked to the concepts of collective agency and solidarity, including building power among and between oppressed groups. Practitioners working centrally within liberation approaches spoke of engaging an intersectional analysis that can support the elimination of gender oppression through a sense of shared purpose to end oppression in all its forms. In practice, liberation approaches also included ensuring community-supported self-determination, bodily autonomy, dignity, and choice. Practitioners spoke about direct advocacy to increase the self-determination of individuals, especially people currently experiencing patterns of interpersonal abuse or exploitation, young people who are particularly vulnerable to violence, and survivors; however, self-determination was understood as inherent to and requiring collective action.

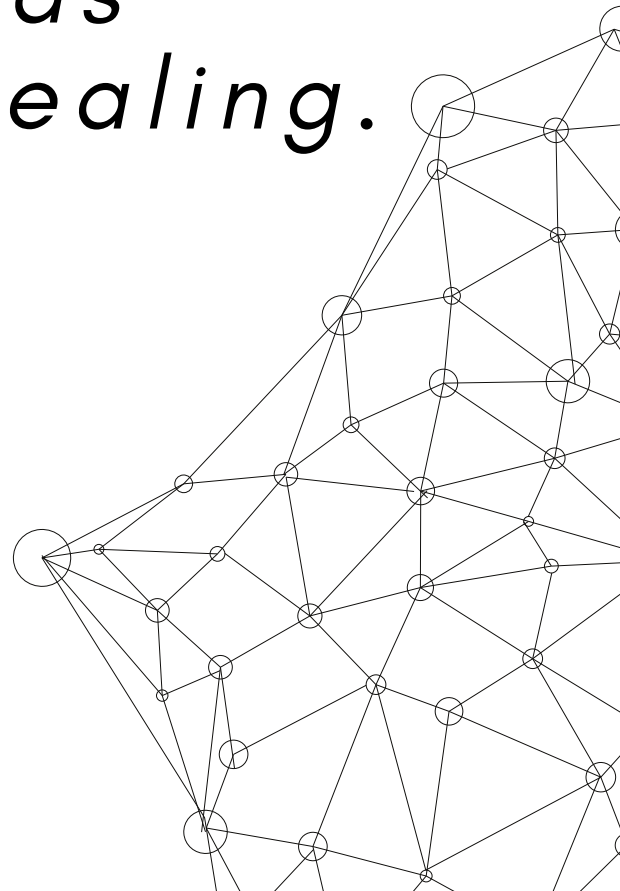
Strategies in practice centrally included political education efforts, especially in schools and with young people, and also within cultural centers and neighborhood organizations. Political education included learning about liberation movements and social justice issues. Practices also included collective organizing that was both issue-specific (e.g., food justice, climate justice) and identity-based (e.g., queer and transgender Pacific Islanders, sex workers of color, Black moms, Muslim girls and women, people of African descent). We also heard about strategies for shifting power in the context of organizational formations, such as youth getting a weighted vote in hiring decisions to counteract adultism and employee unionizing to gain worker power in a social service organization. Structural strategies linked to the liberation framework broadly overlapped with those described in depth in the abolition and transformation framework.

“

The traditional way of healing in western culture didn't really help me, but having access to indigenous medicine and ceremonies has been really healing.

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MAPPING PREVENTION 2020 PARTICIPANT



HEALING & ACCOUNTABILITY

Healing was generally described as a process that included (and often began with) the acknowledgment of the embodied impacts of oppression and violence. Healing was invoked as a broad social goal, such as working toward generational repair and reparations. It was also discussed as a group practice and an individual process or outcome. For some, healing frameworks were closely tied to cultural and ancestral healing traditions (e.g. Black healing, Indigenous, and traditional medicine). Accountability was similarly focused on the acknowledgment of harm, and we grouped this with healing for this reason. As a theory of change, accountability was discussed mostly at the individual-level (e.g., accounting for participation in harm, community intervention), but also practiced at the collective-level (e.g., establishing a men's accountability group to talk about complicity in patriarchy) and institutional-level (e.g., unionizing social service workers to hold leadership more accountable). It was also tied to concepts of accountability of the state (e.g., government reparations). The healing and accountability approach responds to and resists systems of domination by seeking to restore relationships and trust. The theory includes the perspective that we can prevent domestic and sexual violence by addressing historical and institutional harms; acknowledging that all of us can cause harm and everybody can learn to be accountable and change; recognizing that everyone has experienced harm and everybody can benefit from learning about how to address trauma; and working to meaningfully repair relationships.

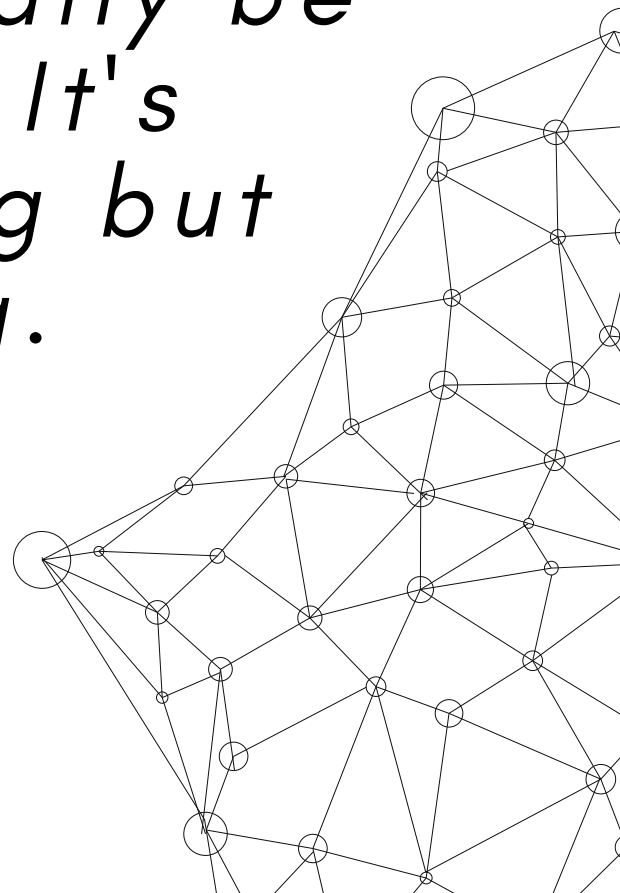
Strategies in practice focused on trauma and repair. We heard about learning and teaching indigenous languages and practices and traditional ceremony; a range of practices that used “circles,” such as healing circles, community accountability practices, restorative practices. We also heard about embodiment practices focused on addressing trauma within a community context (rather than, or in addition to, individual psychotherapy), such as creative art and performance and somatics. We heard about efforts to create a neighborhood space for embodied healing; storytelling projects based in ongoing healing circles; and bringing healing approaches into existing institutions, such as healing circles in schools and a dedicated healing space in a youth drop-in center.

“

A lot of the times it's felt like our generational charge is just to be the dismantlers, not the builders. I didn't know that we would have a chance to really be the builders. It's both daunting but also inspiring.

”

MAPPING PREVENTION 2020 PARTICIPANT



ABOLITION & TRANSFORMATION

Abolition was characterized as the goal of eradicating and limiting the reach of harmful institutions and systems where people are made more vulnerable to violence and exploitation. As a vision or theory for violence prevention, practitioners spoke of eliminating institutions where risks for violence are incubated, produced, and sanctioned (such as prisons, immigration systems, juvenile justice and child welfare systems). Practitioners also spoke about changing their own patterns of thinking about how to respond to violence away from punishment approaches. Abolition was deeply linked to building alternatives and transformative concepts of community safety or care, or as one practitioner put it, "networks of safety and care and responses that are organic, that are from individuals in the community." Many practitioners engaged in efforts to popularize, and deprofessionalize, tools for violence prevention and intervention. This framework was also tied to transformative modes of resource distribution, such as building up practices for mutual aid. In this sense, the abolitionist and transformation framework proposes that we can prevent violence through cultivating a more caring and interdependent society.

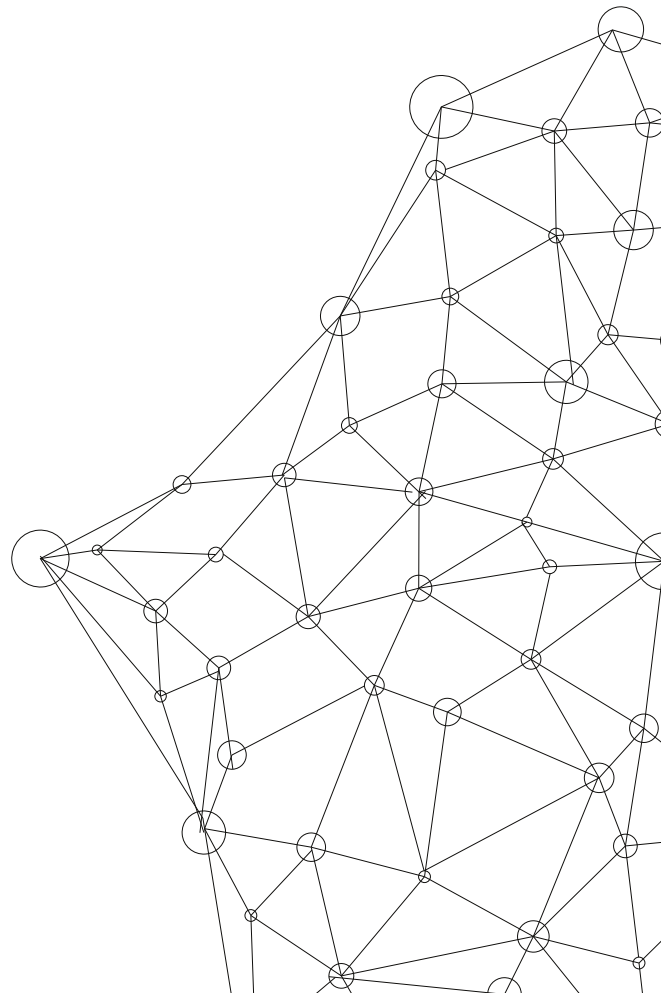
Strategies in practice focused on policy and direct action advocacy, such as efforts to stop new prison construction, close immigration detention centers, and block deportations, as well as police divestment and decriminalization campaigns. Practitioners spoke about being, and working in solidarity with, formerly and currently incarcerated people as primary sources of knowledge about the harms caused by these systems. We also heard about policy efforts to address the criminalization of survivors and policies that can limit the self-determination of survivors (e.g., mandatory reporting laws). Practitioners also spoke of creating tools, and building networks and support structures for community members to intervene and respond to harm outside of state systems.

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I cannot imagine a way out of oppression, violence, domestic violence, without a collectivist communal approach.

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MAPPING PREVENTION 2020 PARTICIPANT



COMMUNITY & BELONGING

Community and belonging is the most all-encompassing framework for violence prevention. Practitioners described this approach as forming a sense of deep connection, interdependence, and responsibility to a group or family. Definitions of "community" were often linked to shared lived experience linked to culture and faith (e.g., Pacific Islander, Muslim), political identities (e.g., Black and brown people, queer and trans people), geography (e.g. neighborhood, school), professional groups, activist networks, and/or shared interests (e.g., arts scene). As a framework for domestic and sexual violence prevention, community was described as an "antidote" to the forms of isolation and separation that patterns of abuse often rely on. Central to this theory is that we can prevent violence through a deep sense of belonging that fosters a sense of empathy, a safety net, and positive obligations to take care of each other. Community connectedness was also considered a prerequisite to building skills and capacity for people to effectively respond to threats of harm and to engage with transformative justice approaches when harm happens.

Strategies in practice focused on creating relationships and networks provide a sense of belonging. The broadest of the four frameworks, many of the strategies of community-building overlapped with strategies described in the other frameworks. However, community-building strategies also stood alone. Practitioners talked about being a connector within their communities, and across multiple communities. Some spoke about the importance of being physically present and "showing up," communing in times of grief and celebration, and creating opportunities for connection. They also spoke of creating roles for other community members to contribute, or as one person said, "tapping into the talents and brilliance and vibrancy that already exists." For example, one practitioner talked about organizing a vigil for a community member and calling up individuals beforehand to ask them to play a specific role (e.g., sing, bring blankets). Practices of community building and belonging included, and were sometimes aided by, an organizational identity and/or physical gathering space, but did not necessarily rely on formal structure.

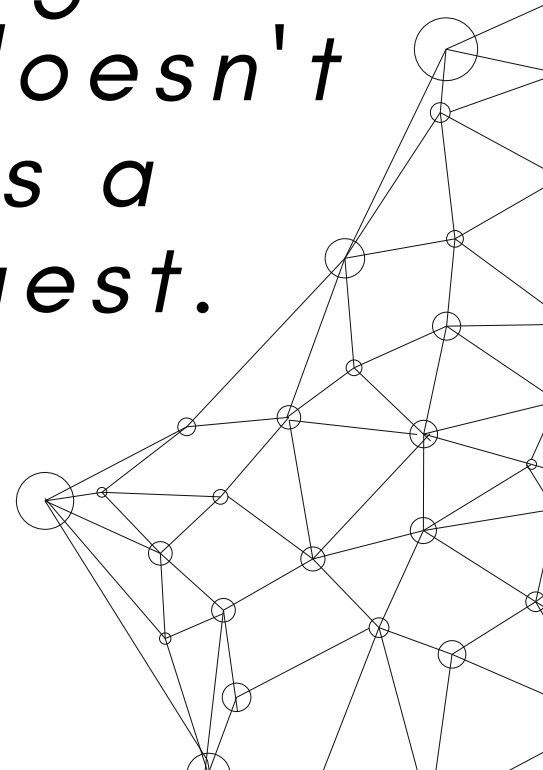
FRAMEWORKS	THEORY OF PRACTICE
LIBERATION & AGENCY	We can resist racism, sexism, and other systems of domination by: building collective knowledge, agency, and power. We can prevent domestic and sexual violence through: political commitments to undermine gender-based violence; collective agency of and solidarity between oppressed groups; and community-supported self-determination, bodily autonomy, and choice.
HEALING & ACCOUNTABILITY	We can resist racism, sexism, and other systems of domination by: acknowledging harm and transforming relationships. We can prevent domestic and sexual violence through: recognizing the impacts of violence; (re)connecting with Indigenous and ancestrally grounded concepts of medicine and repair; practicing collective healing; unlearning patterns of abuse and control; and acknowledging that all of us can cause harm and everyone is capable of growth and change.
ABOLITION & TRANSFORMATION	We can resist racism, sexism, and other systems of domination by: dismantling and transforming institutions. We can prevent sexual and domestic violence through: eliminating institutions that make people more vulnerable to violence; creating systems for resource distribution (e.g., education, health care) that do not reproduce patterns of abuse and control; and making the skills and resources needed to respond and address harm available to all.
COMMUNITY & BELONGING	We can resist racism, sexism, and other systems of domination by: resisting individualism and fostering interdependence. We can prevent domestic and sexual violence through: breaking isolation; cultivating belonging, kinship, and responsibility to the whole; and ensuring basic needs are met.

“

The work is more effective when you belong to those communities that are so marginalized. You look, sound, talk like them. You're more welcomed in. And especially when you're centering liberation, it doesn't come across as a colonial conquest.

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MAPPING PREVENTION 2020 PARTICIPANT



The role of practitioners

Practitioners we spoke to shared some lived experience with the communities that they work in, were engaged in personal healing, and worked to address their own relationships to power. Many also shared that they were survivors of violence, including of domestic, sexual, or family violence, and other interrelated forms of violence including police violence, incarceration, and gun violence. Practitioners described their commitments to anti-racism and anti-oppression in relation to their personal and their families' multi-generational experiences of oppression. Many spoke about their work in relation to be with and for other people who were also Black, Native, People of Color, immigrants, Muslim, queer, transgender, sex workers, youth, disabled, elders, and/or part of a global diaspora, and other oppressed, and multiply-marginalized groups

Practitioners spoke with passion and depth about their work. Whether it was young people creating a liberation organization designed around playing frisbee or a Lakota elder bringing Indigenous Coast Salish people to their communities' sacred sites, what seemed to matter the most were the relationships. Meaningful connections were the most common thread in how people organized, and why practitioners thought it was effective. This included deepening connections to self, peers, neighborhoods, lineage, heritage, creativity, and older and younger generations. Inherent to practitioners' efforts to build connections and relationships was to instill a sense of self-value and the possibility to make a positive impact and address injustice.

Many practitioners felt that their most effective efforts had evolved organically in places and contexts where people were already connected (as opposed to a program that was developed for another setting and brought in). Even when participants were hired to lead existing prevention programs, many felt that the work was most effective with shared context and co-creation rather than imposing ideas from outside.

There were differences among practitioners in terms of how they situated their work and role. Some spoke primarily in terms of a paid work in a position they held at an organization. Many held multiple roles in their communities which sometimes included a paid position, but may also include collective community organizing projects or formations that they created or participate in voluntarily. Some practitioners spoke about their commitments to violence prevention as linked to their political perspectives and/or as work as inherently tied to their own personal healing and growth. In sharing his thoughts on becoming an 'elder' following decades of healing and accountability work, one practitioner shared:



The only way we can really change the world to make it a better place is to address ourselves. And that's what the peacemaking circle is really all about. And it's been transformative for me.

While many practitioners conceived and spoke of their work as being “by and for” members of their own communities, many practitioners worked in hierarchical settings or across intersecting power dynamics. Practitioners spoke of various forms of power and privileges at play in relation to their work. For example, some practitioners who were adults in paid positions working with youth spoke about organizational strategies they practiced to try to shift power and support young people in taking the lead. A few practitioners who identified as cisgender straight men spoke of their personal work to unlearn sexism and transphobia, embrace intersectionality, talk with other men about accountability, and step back to learn. A few participants who were not Black reflected on their efforts to address complicity in anti-Black racism and white supremacy.

Some practitioners who worked in social service settings spoke of the contradictions in their personal values, ideas, strategies and those of the organization or its leaderships. A few recognized their workplaces as not the ideal context for advancing “liberation” work; their organizations were not created by the people they were serving. Some pondered if the money their organizations received might actually be better spent in the hands of grassroots organizations.

Some participants spoke about the tensions of being an intermediary or brokering relationships between the organizations they work for and the communities that the organization works with but was not necessarily set up to serve. One bi-lingual/cultural practitioner described becoming the primary person in her organization to forge relationships with an immigrant community in the area the organization aimed to serve. This included attempting to start a support group and advocating for the translation of documents and a web presence while earning the same salary as other advocates who were not expected to do this kind of labor. When this practitioner asked for additional resources in order to meet the needs of the community, it became clear that the organization did not understand these relationships as a priority and instead shifted her focus.

This stood in contrast to a practitioner who described herself as a Black mom working with other Black moms to promote healing in their own context. Although this participant had worked in multiracial spaces, she quickly realized that “there's space that's needed for Black moms without white moms, ” with the reason being “because whenever white moms are in the room, they take over the space.” Creating a space only for Black moms became part of her own healing. She went on to share:

I was looking for a space that I could be free and unique as myself without explanation or worrying that someone didn't understand me and get offended. And so for me, it was, what if I created the space that I needed?



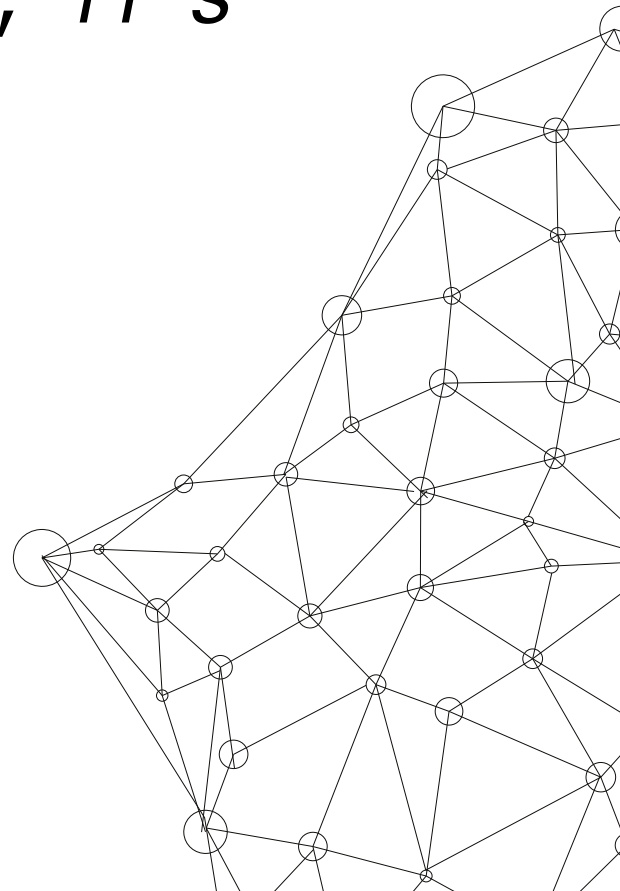
The concepts of creating “spaces” or having “space” was frequently raised in the interviews. The final piece of our analytic framework built on our conceptual theme of “Mapping Prevention,” by looking at the role of space and place in transformative approaches to violence prevention.

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The way of healing with Indigenous communities is really different. It's having an elder bring you medicine, native medicines, for you to make your own tea, it's sitting in a ceremony.

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MAPPING PREVENTION 2020 PARTICIPANT



The role of place

Practice can happen anywhere, at parks and parties and kitchen tables, and especially through the creation of spaces where people feel like they belong, are responsible to others, and have a connection to the earth/land/universe. When we analyzed “where” violence prevention was happening in the worlds of practitioners, we could see the imprint and opportunities of this work everywhere. Transformative violence prevention work happens in places or spaces that often lie outside of the boundaries of what’s often “fundable” as a program or service and may therefore go unrecognized as prevention. We heard about practitioners de-escalating a group when someone brought a gun to a house party, holding a ceremony at an important sacred site, and talking informally about relationship violence at the Mosque. We learned that violence prevention was not only possible in a range of settings, but also seemed more effective when there was less organization or formality. Compared to evidence-based, classroom-based programs, a good portion of the work we discussed with practitioners took shape in these informal interactions, such as learning cultural traditions over tea with an Indigenous elder or Black mothers walking in a park and talking about raising Black boys. For some, structured programming felt antithetical to the cultural context or the goals of authentic connection and healing.

At the same time, gathering spaces were undoubtedly critical and many practitioners spoke of the need for, and challenges to creating and maintaining physical spaces for community building in a region that is becoming rapidly unaffordable. Practitioners made it clear that violence prevention requires physical space to build lasting connections, and the spaciousness to be creative about practice.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Invest in Black-led, Indigenous-led, and People of Color-led prevention initiatives that are conceived by and intended for Black and Indigenous, People and other People of Color (BIPOC). This especially includes organizations or groups with a history of leadership of Black and Indigenous people, and other People of Color. It might also include new organizations or formations where the majority of the people who have devised and currently lead the work are BIPOC. This might include groups that do not explicitly focus on domestic and sexual violence, but organize around anti-racism and demonstrate an interest in domestic and sexual violence prevention.

Invest in youth-led or youth-centered adult-supported violence prevention strategies. This means models where young people are resourced to design, pilot, implement, and improve creative violence prevention initiatives or strategies. This might include: cultural and community spaces; curriculum development, including for self-and collective-mental health care and liberation political education; peer-to-peer response networks and accountability teams; know your rights and legal advocacy programs that incorporate information for young people experiencing violence; and cooperative housing models for establishing cultural relations and kinship ties for young people displaced from families and communities of origin due to state intervention, or histories of redlining, colonization, and imperialism.

Focus on groups that are organized around anti-racism and intersectionality, especially “by and for” groups that are disproportionately impacted by domestic and sexual violence. This might include initiatives designed by people living at multiple intersecting forms of oppression; young people; formerly or currently incarcerated people; people who are homeless or unhoused people; immigrants and refugees, especially undocumented people; people who have caused harm in the past; people who use drugs; people with disabilities; sex workers; LGBTQ people; veterans; and women.

Focus on community-level strategies that address and change social conditions in which domestic and sexual violence happen and in a context that is relevant, effective, and meaningful for Black communities, Indigenous communities, and communities of color, as well as other marginalized communities. This might build on or engage transformative frameworks for violence prevention, which may include (but is not limited to): liberation and agency; healing and accountability; abolition and transformation; and community and belonging.

Strengthen programs that are specifically designed to build bridges and strengthen people's ties to their ancestral cultures, communities (geographic, cultural, political, spiritual), and responsive care networks. This might include, for example: solidarity projects that build relationships and alignment between diverse cultural groups, political formations, and communities; family programs and parenting support networks, including those to support families in preventing violence against LGBTQ children or youth or children and youth with disabilities; and neighborhood or block-based trust-building and mutual aid networks.

Strengthen access to culturally-specific and collective healing practices and physical spaces, including for young people. This might include: wellness centers with holistic approaches to mental health and well-being; intergenerational gatherings and programs designed for passing on ancestral knowledge and cultural practices of healing; and culturally-specific and/or trauma-informed cooperative shelter or housing models.

Support policy and practice leadership to eliminate structural barriers to community-led violence prevention and reduce the reach of policing and punishment models. This might include: political education forums or programs aimed at increasing the participation of people most impacted by domestic and sexual violence in policy decision-making and public resource distribution (e.g., participatory budgeting); educating communities on histories and negative impacts of policing and punishment models; coalition building with individuals, groups, and organizations working towards policy alignment and policy change goals; crafting legislation to reduce structural barriers to community-based violence prevention work (e.g., mandatory reporting laws, Title IX reform); and community assessment

and participatory research intended to evaluate and prioritize violence prevention funding based on the perspectives of people who are impacted by multiple systems of oppression.

Foster collaboration, relationships, trust, and skills for communities to work together to prevent and intervene in interpersonal forms of violence. This might include: community-based crisis response models for de-escalation, conflict resolution, and wellness checks; peer-led, culturally-based, or block-based networks for prevention, accountability, and intervention; a resource hub or other support for transformative justice efforts, such as community accountability team building practices and protocols; and self-defense education.

Support broad-based public education efforts to undermine social practices through which domestic and sexual violence are minimized. This might include: narrative and storytelling projects; media campaigns; public events and forums aimed at engaging more people in committing to end domestic and sexual violence.

Fund flexibly and encourage praxis. Make funding available to the broadest range of organizational forms as possible; allow spending for food and water for meetings and program events, as they are essential and culturally-significant; include flexibility in the reporting mechanisms to allow for confidential program participation; and ensure programs are not required to report any information that could jeopardize the anonymity or safety of participants.

MP2020 was a short-term project. This report offers only one snapshot of perspectives, offered in a specific time, place, and political context. All of our activities were conducted online due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which limited our outreach and engagement strategies. While CEGV and PrevCo have strong local relationships, and while we made every effort to extend our reach beyond these networks, we undoubtedly missed important voices and knowledge.

A significant limitation was that we were not able to engage young people under age 18 due to challenges to secure parental or guardian consent in a virtual environment. Another major limitation of our design relates to language access. Participant recruitment materials were created in English only, and while we budgeted for and were prepared to use interpretation services we did not recruit participants who requested them. We did interview several bilingual practitioners, including many who work with monolingual non-English speaking people and communities in King County. However, a more robust language justice approach would be recommended in the future

It is important to note that there was initial and ongoing skepticism about whether community input would have a real impact and about the potential misuse of community knowledge. Some people told us they had been previously been asked for opinions by King County but had not felt heard or did not believe that it made a difference in how funding was spent. Although many participants agreed that they would like to see public funding investments in the kinds of violence prevention strategies that we describe here, some also warned against cooptation. This was described in terms of government agencies as well as community-based organizations with more power attempting to “repackage” ideas created by and for marginalized groups. In taking this concern seriously as we took care in data collection and analysis, as well as this report, to focus on general, unifying, and cross-cutting themes rather than go into great detail about any specific, unique, or novel practice or approach.

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