Domestic Violence in the Deaf Community

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Keep in Mind

• Intersectionality
  – who has the power in the situation?
  – hierarchal systems interact with and reinforce each other

• Multiple Deaf Communities

• Language Needs
Norm vs Other

- Male
- Rich
- White
- Heterosexual
- Hearing
- Able-bodied

- Female
- Poor
- People of Color
- LGBTIQ
- Deaf
- Disabled
Dynamics of Deaf Communities

- Hierarchy based on language and social status
- Everyone knows everyone
- Value communication access
- Rely on each other for information
- Fear of being ostracized
- Shaming the community
Deaf Language Needs

- American Sign Language
- Other sign languages (ASL is not international)
- LEP
- Lipreading (clozure skills)
- Home signs
- Tactile signing
Impact/Resistance

Compounding Impact...

Abuser

Societal Bias

System Discrimination

Power & Control Tactics

Acts of Resistance

Survivor

Network & Community Support

Autonomy

Safety Planning

Access
POWER AND CONTROL
Power and Control Wheels

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SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY
Questions to Consider

• How does intersecting identities influence abuse tactics?
• Cultural norms and language use
Deaf-specific abuse tactics

•Mocks language abilities
  – you talk funny, I can’t understand you
  – criticizes English or ASL

•Takes away assistive devices
  – cell phones, hearing aids/CIs, videophones
  – hearing or seeing-eye dog
Deaf-specific abuse tactics (2)

- Denies access to ASL and Deaf communities
- Controls access to information
  - interprets for survivor
- Uses Deaf grapevine to gain access to survivor
Deaf-specific abuse tactics (3)

• Uses “Deaf culture” to explain abuse
• Says “no one will help you”
  – survivor finds this is true with lack of access
  – deaf survivors rarely stay in shelters due to isolation
Deaf-specific abuse tactics (4)

• Did you notice anything else from the stories we shared today?
THE BOTTOM LINE
The Bottom Line (2)

- What does “SAFETY” mean to you? Does it look the same for everyone?
The Bottom Line (3)

• For many Deaf Survivors, access to communication is safety.
• This may mean staying with abusive partners over accessing “hearing” services.
The Bottom Line (4)

• Batterers convince their Deaf partners that hearing agencies won’t (or can’t) serve them. This ends up being true when survivors confront barriers. The batterer appears to be right, reinforcing his power and control.
The Bottom Line (5)

• How does our system end up reinforcing the abusive cycle for Deaf survivors?

• How can we stop this cycle?
Thank you!

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Deaf Hope available at www.deaf-hope.org