



Mobilizing Family, Friends & Neighbors to Prevent Domestic Violence

Online Conference

July 24-30, 2003

Final Report

Close to Home

Domestic Violence Prevention Initiative

42 Charles Street, Suite E

Dorchester, MA 02122

617.929.5151

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- I. Executive Summary** 3-4
- II. Conference Overview** 5-6
- III. Summary of Conference Proceedings/Discussion**
 - Day 1: Why is it important to mobilize family, friends
And neighbors to prevent domestic violence? 7-8
 - Day 2: Strategies for building grassroots approaches
to domestic violence prevention 9-13
 - Day 3: The impact of engaging community in domestic
violence prevention 14-17
 - Day 4: Building a vision for change 18-21
- IV. Next Steps** 22-23
 - Importance of developing, sustaining and supporting
a Community of Practice
 - Ideas for further development of Community of Practice
 - Potential themes suggested for future discussions
- V. Conclusion** 24-25

Appendices:

- A. Conference Participants Contact List 26-27
- B. Resource Library 28-30
- C. Lessons Learned About Online Conferencing 31-33
- D. About Close to Home Domestic Violence Prevention Initiative 34-36
- E. Conference Format 37-38

I. Executive Summary

The “Mobilizing Family, Friends & Neighbors to Prevent Domestic Violence” Online Conference was organized by Close to Home Domestic Violence Prevention Initiative, a Boston-based nonprofit organization working to engage community members in domestic violence prevention work and develop local leadership to bring this issue into the foreground of community life. The conference was designed as a five-day facilitated online discussion hosted on a web-based messaging platform that enabled 33 participants from 14 countries to share strategies, pose questions and think about the challenges of organizing and managing community-driven domestic violence prevention initiatives. Over the course of the 5-day conference, participants shared their thoughts on the following themes:

(1) *Why is it important to mobilize family, friends and neighbors to prevent domestic violence?*

Family, friends and neighbors are already playing an important role in responding to incidents of domestic violence and can be important catalysts for bringing about cultural change necessary for primary domestic violence prevention. A more active involvement of informal social networks in domestic violence prevention and response work through more open dialogue should be considered a priority, particularly in light of the limitations and potential harm brought about by the institutional response (i.e. – discrimination, fear of involving criminal justice system and child welfare services).

(2) *Strategies for building a grassroots approach to domestic violence prevention.*

There is a greater need for community members and more diverse stakeholders to begin playing a leadership role in domestic violence prevention initiatives to encourage greater community ownership of this work. Presently, a variety of strategies are being pursued by organizations, which can be generally categorized into the following areas: Education, Critical Thinking, Building Social Capital, Capacity Building, Community Assessment, Intervention Services, and Engaging Men.

(3) *Impact of Engaging Community Members: What is the impact of beginning a dialogue / mobilization process to prevent domestic violence in communities? What strategies are we using to evaluate our work?*

There are both challenges and opportunities in engaging community members in this kind of work. Some of the challenges relate to the difficulty for both community members and practitioners in creating dialogue around domestic violence. Practitioners are often concerned about taking the wrong approach or creating new problems, while residents often feel anxiety about opening up discussions on an issue that has traditionally been considered to be highly stigmatized and personal. Other frustrations may stem from not knowing how to best intervene on a problem that is seen as highly complex and with no easy answers.

However, it appears as if the opportunities outweigh the challenges. Some of the positive outcomes that participants have observed in their work include: cultural change as domestic violence moves from the private to public arena, greater community involvement from diverse stakeholders (women, men, children, volunteers, religious leaders, etc.), service providers showing increased sensitivity towards clients and a better more coordinated response system on university campuses and in communities.

There is a need to identify more strategies to effectively evaluate both program outcomes as well as the impact on community members and practitioners, institutions and culture. Participants expressed an interest in integrating more community participatory approaches to study the issue of domestic violence and the appropriateness of various prevention and intervention initiatives.

(4) Building a Vision for Change: What is your vision for the relationship between formal services and engaging family, friends and neighbors around domestic violence prevention work? How can we integrate domestic violence prevention work into community development and community building initiatives?

While participants noted that there is currently a climate of resistance in the formal service institutions concerning engaging informal social networks in domestic violence prevention and intervention work, both formal institutions and informal social networks are seen to be potential vehicles for social change if they can collaborate more effectively. There needs to be greater recognition of the important contributions that family, friends and neighbors can make in complimenting the work already being performed by formal institutions and systems.

At the conclusion of the conference, many participants expressed an interest in continuing the dialogue through month long online discussions, which confirmed the need to support and sustain a community of practice that would allow for community leaders and practitioners to meet and share ideas on an ongoing basis. The conference highlighted that this is an emerging field, which is still open to exploration, particularly in countries where highly developed institutional systems have been at the forefront of the domestic violence movement. However, there is a growing interest in integrating a community-driven approach into current systems in order to develop community leadership around domestic violence prevention work, create strategies that are culturally appropriate and applicable to diverse communities, and transform the social norms that perpetuate domestic violence. Close to Home is committed to developing, sustaining and supporting a community of practice amongst professionals working to develop grassroots domestic violence prevention initiatives both in the U.S. and internationally through ongoing monthly thematic discussions.

In addition to providing detailed summaries and excerpts from the conference itself, the report includes a participant contact list, resource list generated by conference participants and a synthesis of the conference evaluations, which provides insight into best practices and strategies for convening similar online events.

II. Conference Overview

The “Mobilizing Family, Friends & Neighbors to Prevent Domestic Violence” Online Conference was organized by Close to Home Domestic Violence Prevention Initiative, a Boston-based nonprofit organization working to engage community members in domestic violence prevention work and develop local leadership to bring this issue into the foreground of community life.¹

Conference Goals

The online conference was intended to be the first step in building an international community of learning. By bringing together a diverse group of practitioners for a five-day facilitated online conference, Close to Home intended to achieve the following goals:

- Discuss why engaging informal social networks is an important aspect of domestic violence prevention work.
- Share experiences, strategies and best practices related to mobilizing family, friends and neighbors for the purpose of organizing around domestic violence issues.
- Develop an understanding of how grassroots work in domestic violence prevention impacts individuals and larger community involved and the challenges to taking this kind of approach.
- Examine opportunities for incorporating a grassroots approach to domestic violence prevention initiatives into the existing response system and how to advocate for the support of initiatives that build the leadership of local residents to respond to domestic violence.
- Foster international dialogue around the theme of working with communities to pursue domestic violence prevention work through a social change advocacy approach.
- Share resources, tools, and approaches and begin to develop a community of practitioners committed to developing a grassroots approach to domestic violence prevention.

Conference Participants

Participation in the online conference was based on a competitive application process. Close to Home publicized and circulated conference registration materials through professional contacts, online listservs related to international development, gender issues and domestic violence, and through online resources specifically dedicated to domestic violence work (i.e. – CAVNET, www.cavnet.org).

Close to Home was pleased to receive a large response to the conference invitation, however, due to resource limitations and the challenges of facilitating the conference, Close to Home restricted conference participation to a group of 33 participants. Professional affiliation, demonstrated interest in doing grassroots community organizing around domestic violence and participant diversity were some of the criteria Close to Home applied in making selections.

¹ For more information about Close to Home and its work in advocating for community engagement in domestic violence prevention initiatives, please see Appendix D.

Overview of Conference Participation

(For a complete listing of conference participants, please see Appendix A, Conference Participants Contact List)

Total Participants:	33 ²
Close to Home Staff:	4 (2 facilitators)
Gender:	30 women, 3 men
Countries Represented:	Australia, Colombia, England, India, Indonesia, Malta, Nepal, Norway, Nicaragua, Slovenia, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, Ukraine, United States
US States Represented:	California, Massachusetts, Montana, Maine, New York Rhode Island, Washington, Texas, Washington, D.C., Michigan, Hawaii
Breakout of Professional Affiliations:	Practitioners / Community Organizers / Service Providers = 18 Researchers / Academics = 8 Donor / Intermediary Agency Representatives = 6 Media = 1

Conference Agenda

Day 1: Introductions and Greetings: Why is it important to mobilize family, friends and neighbors to prevent domestic violence?

Day 2: Strategies for building a grassroots approach to domestic violence prevention.

Day 3: Impact of Engaging Community Members: What is the impact of beginning a dialogue / mobilization process to prevent domestic violence in communities? What strategies are we using to evaluate our work?

Day 4: Building a Vision for Change: What is your vision for the relationship between formal services and engaging family, friends and neighbors around domestic violence prevention work? How can we integrate domestic violence prevention work into community development and community building initiatives?

Day 5: Conclusions / Next Steps / Evaluation: How can we continue to share information and be a source of support for each other's initiatives? What was the most important thing you got out of the conference? What kind of new action might you take or change might you make in your work or life as a result of this conference?

² Of the 33 participants invited to participate, 31 were actively involved in the conference (active involvement was interpreted as logging into the conference space at least several times during the conference and either reading and/or posting messages).

III. Summary of Conference Proceedings/Discussions

Over the course of five days, the conference participants generated a rich wealth of ideas, questions, and strategies about grassroots community mobilization around domestic violence.

Day 1: Why is it important to mobilize family, friends and neighbors to prevent domestic violence?

Family, Friends and Neighbors maintain social norms and can help bring about social change.

- “Family, friends and neighbors hold potential for preventing the violence from occurring in the first place...I think the violence continues because of the silence that still surrounds it, the tacit consent that occurs when bystanders look the other way not just at the face of physical violence but the more subtle discrimination and inequity that women face...Laws, policy, accessible services, women friendly institutions all help but ultimately, I think it comes down to what is in the hearts and minds of people on a street, in a neighborhood, in a community.”
- “Neighbors and family are the closest influence factor, which can shape the way couples behave and treat their partner. It is therefore neighbor and family that are the most basic level (after the couple) who should be aware of domestic violence issues. They should construct their perspective to be gender sensitive so they are able to educate and persuade their family/community member about the equal relationship between men and women. At the same time they should be sensitive to monitor whether there is domestic violence in the community.”

Family, Friends and Neighbors have important but complicated roles as responders.

- Most survivors tell a friend or family members before they turn to formal service providers. However, some survivors do not share their experience with anyone and remain isolated. Neighbors have the potential to reach out to these community members, and extend support and encouragement.
- Informal social networks may support the violence through silence, inaction, or justification. Marriage can be driven by social norms and parental preferences. Many women do not inform family because of the guilt – they may have been “warned” or cut off from family and friends.
- “Many LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) persons have been ostracized from family, some friends, neighbors, and religious institutions, etc. because of sexual orientation or gender identity. Friends and community members are especially important and may be the only people able to help.”
- “There is so much psychological suffering and many women do not realize that this can change – only in opening up with friends and people they trust can this change.”

Family, Friends, and Neighbors are essential because of the limitations of and potential harm caused by some institutional responses to domestic violence.

- US criminal justice system and child welfare system are well known for treating people from different race and ethnicities differently. Many women who are black, Latino, and recent immigrants are afraid that if they reach out worse things will happen to their husbands, their children, themselves. They suffer silently or reach out to friends and family.
- Asian community members avoid reporting domestic violence because of fear of negative consequences arising after involvement with the police; this has been exacerbated following 9/11, which has fueled anti-immigrant attitudes...Because of historical and contemporary discrimination and violence targeted towards the Asian immigrants in the US – the survival of the community is

often considered a priority. Acknowledging domestic violence could place additional stigma on the community. As a consequence communities deny or minimize the seriousness of domestic violence faced by women. This socio-historical reality calls for engaging family, friends, and neighbors and community members to bring about community wide change.

- “I think that for many women on the outer islands (the six islands other than Oahu) the greater challenge with the current shelter system is that the resource is so focused on permanent separation and relocation. People are very tied to their communities/families and neighborhoods. People don't want to leave their homes to relocate to something unknown. Since people aren't going to move from their home community if they are going to separate and divorce (which is pretty widely accepted here) they like to do so in a way that draws the least attention. And using a social service intervention - whether its getting legal help with a TRO or going to shelter is a big public thing that draws attention that most people don't want.

For example, if you were to disappear from your land, community and activities for a month or two - how will people respond to you when you try to re-enter the community? What will people think that you went to use outside services rather than coming to them for their help?

Also, many people really want to stay with their partners and many do even when they are receiving all kinds of services. Whether its true or not, I think people perceive shelters as an irreversible step towards permanent separation so for that reason people don't feel they can use them.” (Hawaii, USA)

Making domestic violence visible, naming the issue, and building skills within the context of informal social networks is necessary.

- “In the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) communities – and in many other underserved communities as well domestic violence is an invisible epidemic. And because domestic violence is almost always discussed within a heterosexual context, many LGBT persons aren't even aware that they're experiencing it...Mobilization and community education in this environment is critical.”
- People often don't recognize domestic violence. We may make assumptions about what it is.
- “Silence is our biggest struggle, and this holds true especially in the families, neighborhoods and friends we are trying to mobilize. Even if friends/families suspect there is domestic violence, they are afraid to ask because they don't want to hear the answer.”
- “Many people have no idea what to do if someone in their family or (group of) friends is being abused. We have these beliefs that it is none of our business, it is a private thing, a family matter. Or this fear, if we get involved we will get hurt. Or just a desire to deny...so part of the need to mobilize is to teach us all what we can do and that it is our responsibility to do something positive...”
- “We need to get personal with people – to expose the perceptions and practices that lie at the core of violence – how people think about women, the rigidity of gender roles, and the status [women] hold in their homes, communities and relationships. In this way, we move beyond perpetrators and survivors (both obviously important to engage) to the friends, peers, colleagues and family members – or bystanders.”

Day 2: Strategies for Building Grassroots Approaches to Domestic Violence Prevention

On Day 2, participants were asked to detail their strategies for how to best engage and mobilize community residents and informal social networks around domestic violence prevention work. This included the philosophical underpinnings of sharing responsibility between the service agencies and the community as well as the “how to” of doing grassroots community mobilization.

Why is it important for there to be greater distribution of responsibility between agencies and service providers and informal social networks in the work to prevent and respond to domestic violence?

- “Too many of our helping agencies take the responsibility away from the individual. We need to work with these ‘helping agencies’ and help them learn that they can engage their clients in creating solutions that will work for them.”
- “No longer should workers be ‘lecturing to communities,’ but rather involving the community in solution focused approaches and facilitating the sustainability of the solutions.”
- “I totally agree that we have to make people aware of their potential and capabilities and not gather accolades for our organization or ourselves. We do not have to spoon-feed them at each and every decision of their life; they have to be their own decision makers.”
- “When community members themselves are involved in creating and operating an organization, they can feel the ownership of it and therefore our work can be sustained in the community...Many times we think we know our communities and what our communities need and want just because we are also the members of the community. However, without talking to other community members we don’t know what they really want to do about domestic violence and how they want to go about it.”
- “Good community organizing and constituent building will help monitor and hold public authorities and governments accountable to take responsibility in appropriate ways.”

What role can community members play in the process of preventing domestic violence?

- A study conducted in Australia demonstrated that men could be very active in personal support networks: (1) intervening on the behalf of a woman and her children during a period of crisis, (2) supporting family / household while female partner provided support / emergency roles to a friend in need, (3) protecting female partner from threats from perpetrating male, (4) participating in process of relocating family, setting up house, lending money, etc. (Cultureshift / Australia).
- Community volunteers facilitate discussions, support and help to refer women experiencing violence, escorting them if they need any legal services, visit homes in community, hold discussions with people in homes, mediation... The idea behind the work is to let the community feel they can solve their own problems because they have capacity to do so. As a result of involving the community they feel that this is their program and they own it. The Center only comes in to support the community (Raising Voices / Uganda).

How do we get community members involved in this work?

- Involve “public figures” or “opinion leaders” in efforts: These do not necessarily have to be “official leaders, but the people that others respect and listen to.” Partner with informal community leaders and have them invite family and friends. Develop partnerships with community and neighborhood

organizations (Close to Home / MA, USA; New Visions: Alliance to End Violence in Asian/Asian American Communities / MI, USA; Montana Coalition Against Domestic Violence / MT, USA).

- Speak to people's interests: Involve business leaders and public policy makers around cost of domestic violence (H.A.W.K. / MA, USA).
- Give people a concrete way to address this difficult issue within their own communities (H.A.W.K. / MA, USA).
- Provide food, childcare, transportation, and multiple languages. Have fun (Close to Home / MA, USA).

Strategies: What are concrete things that we can do or are currently doing to engage communities to become involved in domestic violence prevention work?

While the participants had various degrees of experience working directly with communities and informal social networks to engage them in domestic violence prevention work, a great number of ideas, suggestions and practical approaches were shared.

The types of general avenues for engaging communities included: Education, Critical Thinking, Building Social Capital, Capacity Building, Community Assessment, Intervention, and Engaging Men.

Education

- Social norms can be changed through development and application of educational and awareness raising curricula for schools and churches
- Use of media, public events, bulletins, and leaflets for broad information dissemination
- Use of traditions and rituals to communicate about issues pertaining to domestic violence (India)
- Production of short radio soap operas depicting issues of domestic violence and how to deal with them at the community level (Nicaragua)
- Community Theater: compilation of stories of abuse, recovery, survival and hope that are publicly presented; cast comprised of community members (H.A.W.K. / MA, US)
- Posters: Different posters designed in local languages intended to provoke discussion and get people thinking; posted in schools, community spaces, and other public areas (Raising Voices / Uganda)
- Development and use of learning materials such as posters, booklets, games and murals to provoke people to think about and question violence, gender roles and women's status in society (Raising Voices / Uganda)

Critical Thinking

- Popular Theater Workshops: Audience engaged in discussions about what was observed in theatrical production and whether these behaviors are desirable (Raising Voices / Uganda); After skits, discussions provide opportunities for audience to find solutions to the problem of domestic violence (Montana Coalition Against Domestic Violence / Montana, US; WorkingWomen, Trinidad and Tobago)

- Discussion Groups: community residents engaged in discussions about how they understand and experience DV; what are the conditions, beliefs, root causes, attitudes and policies in communities that foster or condone violence (specifically, intimate partner violence); what are the consequences of domestic violence on the community; what is the community's responsibility in prevention; what holds them back from intervening; what could motivate them to get involved? (Close to Home / MA, US, Raising Voices / Uganda, Nicaragua, Montana Coalition Against Domestic Violence / Montana)
- Booklet Clubs: Clubs of 10 women and men that meet weekly to discuss a story booklet in local language; after discussions, they share with family members what they have learned; booklets suggest ideas for how violence can be avoided, how to solve family issues, effects of DV; useful in engaging community members in discussion (Raising Voices / Uganda).
- Support group for girls at canoe club: “ There are five different age groups, 12/13, 13/14,14/15/16 and 17/18 girls. We meet at the club either before or after their practice times. The point of the groups was give them a safe space where they could talk and explore their own identity, and relationships with family, friends, and boys. In all groups the #1 topic was boys and #2 was friends. While my agenda was certainly to talk about healthy and unhealthy relationships of all kinds and the importance of building social networks with other girls and treasuring them as a strategy for staying or getting out of abusive relationships, I waited until these topics came about naturally before I presented information about them.” (Hawaii, USA)

Building Social Capital

- Establishment of Self-governing Collectives or Village “Sanghas”: Small self-governed groups of women managed by the voluntary sector with the help of state funds; help women gain economic and political power at the local level; help community improve quality of life by increasing access to government and non-governmental programs, financial schemes, economic support and political power. These approaches vary between villages and collectives. Responses to DV emerge organically from culturally consistent solutions devised by local authority structures and from the increase in women's power. Attachment to economic initiatives. (India)
- Political empowerment of certain traditionally marginalized social groups.
- Build community around this issue – build relationships and trust (Close to Home, MA/USA)
- Forming self-help groups: Men and women, who will tackle issue of domestic violence in their neighborhood (Association of Men Against Violence/Nicaragua)
- Manufacturing informal social networks: Clients experiencing domestic violence that receive aid from legal aid agency invited to bring personal supporters to meetings (Cultureshift / Australia).
- Door-to-door visits: to introduce families to work of our organization and issue of DV (Raising Voices / Uganda, Association of Men Against Violence /Nicaragua)

Capacity Building

- Formation of Community Partnership Teams: Comprised of survivors and law enforcement personnel; doing trainings for police, hairdressers; distribution of leaflets at health and county fairs; delivered school curriculum on bullying and teen dating violence; virtual CPT where issues discussed over email; outreach to community based organizations, faith and business communities, school

administrators, and other community leaders = trained in concept of primary prevention (Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence / RI, USA)

- Creation of Community Working Group: Comprised of Asian community members from different ethnic groups and representatives from local mainstream DV programs to make them more responsive to Asian communities. Allows for community-specific planning and activities through Committees, while ensuring cross-community dialogue and exchange of information, experiences, and strategies among different ethnic groups through the CWG (Alliance to End Violence in the Asian/Asian American Communities / MI, USA)
- Helpful Response Training: Give everybody the basic skills to respond appropriately to a person who discloses or hints at a victimization experience without expecting people to go through long and intensive hotline trainings (University of Maine / ME, USA).
- Link with parish organizations for training.
- Holistic efforts to integrate domestic violence into widespread community development initiatives.
- Communities that are doing this work can share their strategies with other communities.
- Develop community task force with multiple stakeholders (clergy, law enforcement, social service providers, etc.) (Montana Coalition Against Domestic Violence / MT, USA).
- Strengthening capacity of local institutions (i.e. – police, health care workers, etc.) to better understand and respond to women experiencing domestic violence (Raising Voices / Uganda).
- Advocacy at a local level: Involve village leaders, religious leaders, local councils, etc. because in this region of the world they are relied on much more than the formal sector (Raising Voices / Uganda).
- Grassroots local activism: Working directly with women and men at the grassroots to challenge them to think about, question, and take action against violence (Raising / Uganda)
- Training volunteers in victim support services: to recognize signs of DV and family violence; training nurses and midwives to recognize signs of domestic violence in patients (Cultureshift / Australia).

Community Assessment

- Conduct surveys to determine prevalence of DV and identify it as an issue (H.A.W.K. / MA, USA).
- Community Asset Mapping: Understand sources of information community members use, who community leaders are (formal and informal), what resources are available in the community for survivors, how community members would like to respond to domestic violence. Recruit residents through this process. Develop strategies with community residents based on information (New Visions: Alliance to End Violence in Asian/Asian American Communities / MI, USA; Raising Voices / Uganda; Close to Home, MA, USA).
- Identify Leadership: Identify women who are active in their community – they can serve as recruiters for discussion groups (New Visions: Alliance to End Violence in the Asian/Asian American Communities / MI, USA; Close to Home, MA, USA).
- My hope was to build a participatory research project where we would assess the needs and strengths of a particular Hawaiian community in order to write to for grant money for services or resources that

were shaped and would be delivered in the community. The good of this is I had a chance to experience how things develop and realize how important process is. By not having a mission/product to deliver, I could let things grow naturally. (Hawaii, USA)

Intervention / Services

- Faith communities providing safe housing: for survivors of domestic violence where shelters are not a good option (Hawaii, USA).
- Community Based Crisis Center: Community members are recruited and trained in gender issues and violence against women; counseling training for survivors; providing paralegal services; and support on how to get this issue into their own community (Indonesia)

Engaging Men

- Gender Sensitization Process: Organizing debates, talks and interactive programs to involve men as a part of the wider gender sensitization process (India)
- Home Visits: Men in Association check in on others where they suspect there is violence in the family and remind them what the organization is about (Association of Men Against Violence/Nicaragua).
- Impromptu Discussions: with men in places they often frequent (drinking joints, taxi stands, garages and workplaces) Topics of discussion: how bride price promotes domestic violence, what is masculinity, etc. (Raising Voices / Uganda)
- Workshops: conducted in rural communities and poor barrios of Managua. Discussions focus on issues of gender-based violence and other gender issues; posters and educational materials taken door to door (Association of Men Against Violence /Nicaragua)
- Working with men on college campuses: Campus wide and fraternity outreach to men who want to engage in the work to end violence against women, and become women's allies in this work. (University of Maine / ME, USA)

Day 3: The Impact of Engaging Community in Domestic Violence Prevention

On Day 3 of discussions, participants thought about the impact of beginning a dialogue and mobilization process to prevent domestic violence in communities and how this process affects individuals, social networks, overall community and institutions. We also discussed strategies for evaluating our work.

Challenges of Engaging Communities

Across the board, many of the participants commented on the fact that engaging communities on the issue of domestic violence is generally very difficult because of the fears and frustrations felt by practitioners / service providers and community members. As practitioners, many of us face our own fears of doing the wrong thing or not being able to make a difference. Community residents are often reluctant to open up about this issue due to all of the stigma and shame connected with domestic violence or they feel a sense of hopelessness and frustration about how to affect change or provide support to people in abusive relationships. Conference participants shared the following thoughts about the negative impacts and challenges of engaging communities:

- We need to begin by contemplating our own barriers: Reflecting on what the barriers are for ourselves [as practitioners] will be a good starting point about what impacts others. Some of my own fears are:
 - (1) *Fear of doing the wrong thing / making things worse*
 - (2) *Fear of getting it wrong* (knowing how to raise this issue and how to break through the silence),
and
 - (3) *Fear of not being able to make a difference* (breaking the silence doesn't always mean that people are willing to make concrete steps; how will a friend react – will she withdraw from you or want to talk? Should you tell others in the friendship group?)
- Beginning a dialogue on domestic violence in the communities is not always easy: Most participants are either in denial, or believe that DV is "family business" and should remain private; they do not speak out as readily to get the process moving. However, once things get moving, many of the stories are told. Very often after the workshop we would find one or two persons who may have been quiet during the session, will engage one of us to speak privately of their problem.
- Engaging men on college campuses raises mixed feelings and frustrations: Male students have been struggling with what to do when they know or strongly suspect that one of the male peers is a rapist; lots of mixed feelings and paralysis at the same time; men also articulate struggling with supporting a victim of intimate or sexual violence, finding it somewhat easier to do when it's a woman ('hugging is okay') than when it's a man ('does hugging make you gay?'; homophobia is rampant).

Opportunities in Engaging Communities

Conversely, several of the participants have found evidence of positive impact from community engagement, including better, more coordinated response, greater openness and visibility about domestic violence, a gradual change of social norms and attitudes about gender and domestic violence and the creation of more safe spaces to discuss and deal with these issues. Some of the positive outcomes reported by programs are outlined below.

- Domestic violence is no longer a personal issue: People in the community have been sensitized to this issue and are free to talk about it and identify those who are experiencing it and are even able to report on the behalf of those experiencing it to the authorities. There have been more open conversations, more acknowledgement of the presence of DV, sexual assault, and stalking; less denial. The culture has changed somewhat because of taking DV out of the personal and putting it into the public arena. It is not just women, not just advocates.

- Men have come out openly to condemn DV. This is shown by the trend during community dialogue, impromptu discussions, etc. where men acknowledge that women have rights as compared to the past when they would only defend men's positions.
- Greater confidence in Community Volunteers. In the community, DV cases are mostly being reported to the Community Volunteers (CVs) as opposed to the local council courts. This is because the community has recognized the CVs efforts and has built confidence in them. The local courts have also integrated the CVs in their courts and whenever there are cases of domestic violence are reported they are invited to chair such cases because the local courts believe CV have more knowledge on the issues of DV. (The community selected 66 Community Volunteers that are involved in planning and implementing activities in the communities. They have been able to support and influence community perception on domestic violence.)
- The issues are more visible and on the radar screen of more people. This includes faith communities that are establishing bi-laws in regards to women experiencing domestic violence and teachers in schools that are forming action groups to educate and counsel children about the issue
- A coordinated community is emerging; people know more about each other's offices, about community agencies, and each other's roles and responsibilities; The campus tends to be fragmented and "niched" to an astounding degree -- the project has helped to overcome some of that fragmentation and build common ground, awareness, and resolve to act; now offering direct services for victim/survivors on campus.

Evaluating Our Work

One of the important aspects of doing any kind of community based project is evaluation. Participants talked about why it's important to conduct evaluations of their community engagement projects, how they have gone about doing this, what kind of information they focused on gathering.

Suggestions for Conducting Evaluations and Measuring Outcomes:

- Funding agencies want to know how many you helped and how much. So when you start, start thinking about how you will show how your program impacted the people you want to help.
- Universities as an affordable resource for evaluation. Evaluation can be expensive – but universities can be a source of help. In today's environment most students have to do some kind of service project. Your evaluation can benefit from this (maybe, if you find a good graduate student). You should look for a Department of Sociology, Social Work, or Psychology with a graduate program. You might find someone who can help design a questionnaire, your organization may provide the resources to collect and enter the data and then you can find someone to do analysis.
- Start simple - be sure that you keep consistent records of meetings and the number of participants. If you do presentations on Domestic Violence make a record of the locations, the names of the groups, the number attending, the number of men and women, general age categories, race-ethnicity and/or any other characteristic that is important in your area. I would suggest, if possible to keep these records in computer files. You don't have to be a wiz, just do what you know how to do and be consistent. Microsoft Excel is a good tool for this kind of report.
- Report on all services provided. If you provide domestic violence services and/or education be sure that you do the same kind of reports. Do this with any thing that you do regularly.
- Measuring Outreach. If you can show that you are increasing in size, reaching more people, reaching a diverse population, reaching people who previously were not being reached you are conducting evaluation.

- Measuring Outcomes. Funding agencies want to know about outcomes. If you provide education does the population for which you provided the education learn more about the topic? Do they understand more about domestic violence, do they call the police more often if they are abused or their city council to ask for better services.
- Evaluation Validity. You do need to have "valid methods" and someone who knows something about research methodology is important. It is worth your time and resources to use someone who knows. A consultant may be willing to help you figure out how to maximize your effort.

Case Study: Community Impact in Uganda (Raising Voices)

Raising Voices conducted a study of 180 randomly selected men and women living in the area where they focused their activities (only 19 were closely linked to the project). The study found a 50% reduction in the experience of violence and 75% of the men and women reported an increase in feeling assertive or accountable. The study also found some backlash to the project and some male resistance.

Study participants identified the following factors, which facilitated change:

1. Knowledge of women's human rights and the negative consequences of domestic violence.
2. Desire for happiness in the relationships and seeing rights (i.e., mutual respect) as an avenue toward that goal.
3. Male fear of consequences both formal (i.e. police and local council) and informal (i.e., public shame from neighbors or family)
4. Supportive environment within the community that no longer tolerated domestic violence as a natural part of relationships (particularly for women).
5. Desire to be a positive role model for their children and other community members. Contrary to when we started where being violent meant increased social status for men, DV is now perceived as damaging their credibility and leadership potential in the eyes of others.
6. An experience of extreme violence and serious injury strengthened women's resolve not to be violated and seemed to frightened men. These experiences seemed to galvanize resolve for both women and men to be in a non-violent relationship.
7. Women's economic independence.

Community Based Participatory Research

Beyond simply evaluating our work and the impact on the community, several of the participants acknowledged the importance of engaging community members in the research process of collecting and analyzing data about the prevalence of domestic violence and prevention initiatives. Engaging residents in the evaluation process was seen to be an effective strategy in empowering residents to take active ownership over community based interventions through the process of community awareness and capacity building that research projects entail.

- Community resident-driven research can be an informative process because it gives community groups incentive to get involved, provides residents training in survey methods, violence issues and analysis and then enables them to take the data they collected and apply the community-driven suggestions to their own work--which strengthens it. Because the questions are framed by community members, they were also culturally appropriate.

- We want to find ways for residents themselves to chart their own journeys in the process. Possible tools for doing this include: journaling and oral histories, ethnographic observation in Leadership Teams, role-plays and vignettes. Tools to evaluate the different ways in which women take leadership that women can use to reflect on their own lives can also be powerful.

Introduction to Community Based Participatory Research

- Community Based Participatory Action Research (also known under a number of other names - Rapid Epidemiological Assessment, Action Research, etc) is about engaging the community in identifying the research question, collecting the data, analyzing the data, and writing up the results.
- We have been guilty of saying we have the training and we understand the problem so we can fix it. The problem is our fixes may not fit the needs of those who need help. We may think that these people are so at risk and so involved with the problem that they can't see solutions.
- The Healthier Communities movement says that the resources to make the community healthy already are in the community. If the people in the community come up with a solution that they own and that uses the resources in the community they have the resources and are invested in keeping it going.
- Involve the community in the planning, design, implementation, and evaluation of your programs.
- To get a good community picture you have to get groups throughout the community that represent the community (young, old, male, female, white, black, Hispanic, those who get services, those who are victims of domestic violence, perpetrators, etc).
- It is a good idea to have a large group meeting to invite all the people who participated to come hear the overall results. This can help keep folks engaged and empower them to see that they can do things to improve the community.
- We usually start with a community advisory committee (CAC) made up of people who represent the community we are interested in and who are knowledgeable about the issue we want to study. We ask them to guide what we do.

Day 4: Building a Vision for Change

On the fourth day of the conference, participants were asked to think about their vision for the relationship between formal services and the work of engaging family, friends and neighbors around domestic violence prevention.

FRAMING THE ISSUE: Why is collaboration between formal service providers and community members on domestic violence prevention and intervention programs important?

- Domestic violence is a community problem that will need the whole community. We're hoping that framing our work in communities this way will alleviate some of the resistance to bringing in non-experts. So right now, we're really looking at a both/and approach - as in, both formal services and grassroots approach are necessary to respond fully to the problem. There are people who will use formal services, people who will use some formal services but not others, and people who will never use formal services. So we need to be working in multiple ways. (Texas Council on Family Violence / TX, USA)
- It is both of our (formal services and Asian community members) responsibilities to ensure the safety of Asian women and families and both sides have a lot to offer to each other. By bringing both Asian community members and domestic violence programs together, we provides space for constructive dialogue and co-learning between them, while holding both of them accountable for ending domestic violence in Asian communities. Domestic violence programs and other organizations increase their understanding of Asian communities and the needs of Asian women and families from Asian community members, and Asian communities members also deepen their knowledge of domestic violence such as root causes of DV and cycle of DV. (New Visions / MI, USA)
- Service providers are overburdened while still not reaching majority of those in need: In Texas, our research has shown that in a given year, the people going to DV programs for help represent only 5% of the total estimated number of DV victims in that year. And yet the programs are working well and desperately hard, are under-funded and always full. So clearly, the problem of DV is truly larger than the programs alone can handle. (Texas Council on Family Violence / TX, USA)

CHALLENGE: Resistance of the service providers and formal sector to engage community residents in domestic violence interventions, the role of formal institutions as a vehicle for changing social norms

- It is really difficult to envision a time when there will be no need for formal services. The formal and the informal (community responses) must be able to work together. For one thing the State is unable to do everything that is needed to stem domestic violence. The community being the first point of contact should be equipped to deal with situations as they arise, at least to do some initial intervention and if necessary refer. Formal services sometimes see community workers, friends and family as interference, rather than one link in the chain of healing. (WorkingWomen, Trinidad and Tobago)
- Education in schools is a challenge: Very little work has been done in the schools and the education department, even though this a key department to generate changes for the new generations. The problem is that the Ministries of education usually tend to be very conservative people and they pretend to be the gatekeepers of traditional values, which also tend to preserve traditional oppressive

gender relationships. I guess we also haven't found creative ways to make our way into this department. (Nicaragua)

STRATEGY FOR CHANGE: Building capacity of the formal sector (health care workers, police, judges, lawyers, social workers, etc.) to respond more appropriately and effectively to domestic violence.

- I think we need to train people who respond to domestic violence (formal and informal) not to give up when women don't do what we think they should do about the violence they are living with. When the time is right for them and the right supports are in place I think most women will act in their best interests. Many women don't seem to act because they judge quite rightly that the supports they need are not in place and it is not safe to act differently. (Australia)

Working with Health Care Providers

- Our findings at the beginning of the training were that health care providers were only interested in treating the symptom and not the cause of injury. Most times they were not even interested in finding out what was the cause of the physical injuries they treated, many of them said they didn't have time or the skills to know what to do if a client raised the issue of violence. Part of the training was recognizing that health providers have also gone through the socialization process and their perception may not be different from others. They need to be sensitized and motivated to know that they can play a big role in the prevention of domestic violence. (Raising Voices / Uganda)
- The emotional support that a woman needs from health care workers is entirely missing. One of the main reasons for this is that doctors do not think it is part of their job at all. Secondly they too feel that this is a personal issue and so they should not get into it. Lastly, they are not trained to probe into the history of violence as part of taking the history of the health episode. There is an urgent need for the health professionals to understand the crucial role that they need to play in caring for survivors of domestic violence. (India)
- Project in India: involved in training of the entire hospital staff on gender sensitization with an emphasis on their role in addressing the issue of violence. A group was thus formed comprising of medical and paramedical staff. These key trainers have had an intensive training in the last year on Domestic Violence, Gender, Patriarchy, Violence as a health issue, Role of health professionals in dealing with women facing violence and Counseling skills. A lawyer is available twice a week at the hospital. For women whose safety is in danger, the hospital would provide shelter for 24 hrs through admission. In the third year, we have identified individuals from the hospital who have been trained as counselors. (India)
- Partnerships with Health Clinics to make services more responsive of diversity and foster a better understanding of everyone's roles. We have strong partnerships with 7 local health clinics in the neighborhood. These clinics have DV advocates on staff and protocols to routinely screen for DV are in place (not always followed, but in place). The advocates are working with us to organize discussion groups with residents and other clinic staff about the way the clinics respond and to talk about how there can be links between the informal organizing and the formal services. (Close to Home, MA, USA)

Police and Criminal Justice System

- Working with the Boston Police Department: The goal is to make the services more responsive to AND foster a better understanding of everyone's role. The Department is interested in community

feedback and hopes to integrate it into how officers are trained to respond to domestic violence - they are clear that their role has limitations. (Close to Home)

STRATEGY FOR CHANGE: Engage community residents through activities and events

- Self-defense classes as a way into communities: Several projects in the UK and across Europe use them as a way to access women who do not use services, often initially issues about personal safety are articulated through public space, but once in a group the realities of private violence emerge. It is possible in what we call 'Women's Self Defence' (as opposed to martial arts) to explore through role play telling others, asking for help, and how to raise issues with a friend/neighbor. (Child and Women Abuse Studies Unit, England)
- One other strategy that the Men's Resource Center has used is to organize community events with activities that appeal to men, like a basketball championship or a dominoes tournament. Nobody preaches to the audience, but the mere fact that a men's center is sponsoring the activity creates curiosity among some participants (some have even joined the staff of the center) (Men's Resource Center of Western Massachusetts / MA, USA)

STRATEGY FOR CHANGE: Formal institutions and Community Residents can be a vehicle for changing social norms.

- Young people's exposure to the issue of domestic violence is very important, aiming at their not continuing the cycle of violence. Corporal punishment in schools and the home introduces children to violence. Eliminating corporal punishment is a good start to breaking the cycle of violence. We have to explore the alternatives to violence and make a conscious effort to use them. (WorkingWomen, Trinidad and Tobago)
- One aspect of cultural change is making the link between different kinds of violence in our society and taking an ethical position of non-violence. While I agree that it is important to maintain a focus on violence against women, I think we can still draw the links between this kind of violence and other kinds of violence such as bullying in schools, harassment in the workplace (not necessarily gendered) and aggressive militarism. If we want to prevent domestic violence I think we need to find ways to speak out against all kinds of oppression and to promote non violence whenever we can. (Australia)

STRATEGY FOR CHANGE: Better collaboration between the formal and informal sectors in their domestic violence intervention and prevention work.

- People living in public housing and experiencing DV face a difficult decision If there is a complaint from neighbors about noise, the victim and perpetrator alike are threatened with eviction. The choices for the victim are not good: lose her housing to stay with the abuser; leave the abuser; possibly the involvement of child protective services, etc. The idea we have had is to form a team with representatives from each of the parks, someone from HAWC, a DV police officer and housing authority personnel. (H.A.W.C. / MA, USA)

- The housing department and social services should have developed a safety plan which included her neighbours and invited them into being a protection net for her OR move her away from a location where her safety was so compromised.(Child and Women Abuse Studies Unit / England)
- Community can focus on prevention, while services can focus on immediate assistance and interventions: when there are no services available for survivors, the role of existing DV programs can be tremendous. They can engage and mobilize their community members to improve institutional responses to the needs of Asian communities, while Asian community members can focus on organizing for community change rather than developing their own service programs. (New Visions / MI, USA)
- The Men's Resource Center has also created alliances with organizations that work with specific populations, particularly immigrants and refugees. We have found it much easier to reach folks in these groups through already established activities, such as English as a Second Language and Citizenship classes and youth and senior groups. (Men's Resource Center of Western Massachusetts / MA, USA)
- We are also trying to find ways to link informal responses with formal responses. Collaboration between informal social networks (family, friends and neighbors); formal social networks and community building initiatives (civic groups, faith community, neighborhood coalitions, etc.); voluntary services, mandatory services (polices, courts, child protection); public policy / media. We have strategies to link all of these levels together with community residents in Leadership Teams leading the process. One of the ways we are working to have residents be part of thinking about how services are delivered is to convene discussion groups with community members and workers in the social and mandatory service systems. (Close to Home / MA, USA)

II. Next Steps

On the fifth and final day of the conference, participants were invited to comment on whether they would like to continue the dialogue initiated during the online conference and what their hopes were for future initiatives.

Importance of developing, sustaining and supporting a Community of Practice

Close to Home is committed to developing, sustaining and supporting a community of practice amongst professionals working to develop grassroots domestic violence prevention initiatives both in the U.S. and internationally. Many of the participants agreed with the value of having more opportunities to share ideas, resources and best practices as well as work through challenges together. It became clear throughout the conference that this kind of work is a new way of addressing the issue of domestic violence, so a community of practice, both online and through person-to-person networks, can help facilitate this social change movement. Several of the participants commented on why continuing to develop this community of practice was important.

The Importance of Sharing:

- To feel inspired by others and by the knowledge of what is possible to achieve
- Allows professionals interested in doing this work to tap into resources that may not readily be available
- Allows for opportunities to learn and share about the experience of doing this kind of work in communities with indigenous peoples and diverse ethnic groups
- Provides an opening for learning about the international perspective of doing this work in other cultures
- Chance to develop a network of organizers looking to create social change

Ideas for Further Development of Community of Practice

Close to Home suggested three concrete next steps for furthering the accomplishments of establishing a community of practice and learning with the conference participants.

- (1) **Organize ongoing monthly email / web based thematic discussions** : To allow for participants to take more time out of their busy schedule to contribute to dialogues, a monthly topic could be selected, which would allow for longer and deeper discussion and exchange of ideas. Other possible features of this monthly discussion could include a guest speaker as well as rotating facilitator responsibilities.
- (2) **Organize a face-to-face meeting**: While a difficult and potentially costly option, Close to Home will explore the possibility of organizing a live, face-to-face meeting that would bring the conference participants together for continued collaboration.
- (3) **Meeting of New England participants**: While the majority of the conference participants are geographically dispersed making a meeting in the near future difficult, Close to Home is interested in bringing its geographically closest neighbors from New England together for a meeting.

Potential Themes Suggested for Future Discussions

Many conference participants expressed interest in continuing the dialogue established during the conference by way of monthly thematic internet discussions. Several of the participants have already suggested themes for consideration for future discussions:

- Process of developing a community-based domestic violence prevention initiative from the ground up in a community where such work has not yet begun. This discussion could include developing a “road-map” of lessons learned and the skills and background necessary to do this kind of work effectively.
- How to address, acknowledge and help all members of a family in order to reduce abuse. Is it possible to move away from a response paradigm that calls for separation?
- Exploring the relationship between extreme poverty, poor health (drug addiction), lack of education and issues of culture and race as they impact approach used by community organizers to mobilize and engage community residents.
- Root causes of domestic violence: an examination of the human rights, sociology, psychology, health, law, political perspectives.

Close to Home plans to survey interested conference participants to generate more suggestions and ideas for monthly discussion topics as well as possible guest presenters. Several participants have already expressed interest and willingness to serve as a discussion group facilitator.

IV. Conclusion

Overall, Close to Home believes that the online conference was a successful event – both as a singular opportunity for information sharing and for its potential to evolve into an online community for community members, practitioners, researchers and policy makers interested in integrating greater community engagement into our current systems of domestic violence prevention work. The conference was an opportunity to share information, develop relationships and a spirit of community between diverse professionals and identify strategies and needs for moving further.

The conference confirmed that engaging communities around domestic violence prevention work is an emerging field that is distinct from the traditional crisis response approach. This conference provided a sampling of the work currently being done as well as the needs of practitioners for moving forward in the grassroots prevention field. There is a demand for more opportunities and venues in which practitioners committed to a community-driven prevention model can continue to share strategies and dialogue on an ongoing basis about strengths, challenges, opportunities and resources that can benefit us all in our work.

A number of important themes emerged in each day's discussions:

Family, friends and neighbors are already playing an important role in responding to incidents of domestic violence and can be important catalysts for bringing about cultural change necessary for primary domestic violence prevention. A more active involvement of informal social networks in domestic violence prevention and response work through more open dialogue should be considered a priority, particularly in light of the limitations and potential harm brought about by the institutional response (i.e. – discrimination, fear of involving criminal justice system and child welfare services).

There is a greater need for community members and more diverse stakeholders to begin playing a leadership role in domestic violence prevention work to encourage greater community ownership of this work. Presently, a variety of strategies are being pursued by organizations, which can be generally categorized into the following areas: Education, Critical Thinking, Building Social Capital, Capacity Building, Community Assessment, Intervention Services, and Engaging Men.

Engaging community members in this kind of work presents many challenges and opportunities Some of the challenges relate to the difficulty for both community members and practitioners in creating dialogue around domestic violence. Practitioners are often concerned about taking the wrong approach or creating new problems, while residents often feel anxious about opening up discussion on an issue that has traditionally be considered to be highly stigmatized and personal. Other frustrations may stem from not knowing how to best intervene on a problem that's seen as highly complex and with no easy answers.

However, it appears as if the opportunities outweigh the challenges. Some of the outcomes that participants have observed in their work include: cultural change as domestic violence moves from the private to public arena, greater community involvement from diverse stakeholders (women, men, children, volunteers, religious leaders, etc.), service providers showing increased sensitivity towards clients, and a better, more coordinated response system on university campuses and in communities.

There is a need for more ideas on strategies to effectively evaluate both program outcomes as well as impact on community members and practitioners, institutions and culture. Participants expressed an interest in integrating more community participatory approaches to study the issue of domestic violence and the appropriateness of various prevention and intervention initiatives.

While participants noted that there is currently a climate of resistance in the formal service institutions towards more actively and effectively engaging informal social networks in domestic violence prevention and intervention work, both formal institutions and informal social networks are seen to be potential

vehicles for social change if they can collaborate more effectively. There needs to be greater recognition of the important contributions that family, friends and neighbors can make in complimenting the work already being performed by formal institutions and systems.

While it is difficult to generalize and draw any conclusions from this event, Close to Home observed that in countries with a more developed institutional response, there is a need for greater engagement of community residents in the prevention process. In countries with a less developed institutional response, there is evidence of more varied and advanced community mobilization projects centered on domestic violence work on a grassroots level. Instead of looking at the institutional and cultural distinctions between various countries and their domestic violence response strategies, Close to Home feels that there is a need to foster continued international dialogue, which will allow for a diversity of ideas and approaches.

Close to Home is committed to supporting and continuing discussions with community residents, practitioners, researchers, and policy makers to advocate for a shift in the domestic violence movement from crisis response to addressing root causes and social norms. An online community of practice where professionals and community members can meet and share their experiences, wisdom and questions is a very concrete step that can help further this aim. Close to Home seeks to continue the community already established through this conference and will work towards broadening the collective resources and perspectives of the community through continued outreach and recruitment to new members.

APPENDIX A: Participant Contact List

Akullo, Betty

Center Coordinator, Center for Domestic Violence Prevention

E-mail: Centerdvpreservation@yahoo.com

www.raisingvoices.org/kawempe.shtml

Anicic, Klavdija

Cofounder, Association Against Violent Communication

E-Mail: Klavdija.anicic@guest.arnes.si

www.drustvo-dnk.si

Arean, Juan Carlos

Independent Consultant, Men's Resource Center of Western Massachusetts

E-Mail: Jcarean@yahoo.com

Attard, Grace

President, National Council of Women of Malta

E-Mail: Gracencw@hotmail.com

www.ncwmalta.com

Bali-Mahabal, Kamayani

Founding Member, General Secretary, AHAAS

E-mail: Kamayani2@vsnl.com

www.ahsaas.org

Burgess, Jacqueline

Founding Member,

Women Working For Social Progress (WorkingWomen)

E-mail: Jacquie.cafra@wow.net

Burk, Connie

Executive Director,

The Northwest Network of Bisexual, Trans,

Lesbian and Gay Survivors of Abuse

E-Mail: Connie@nwnetwork.org

www.nwnetwork.org

Casey, Gerrie

Assistant Professor of Anthropology

John Jay College

E-mail: Gercasey@aol.com

Chooi, Joon

Co-Founder, Project Coordinator, Community Engagement Project, New Visions: Alliance to End Violence in Asian/Asian American Communities

E-mail: Choiyj@umich.edu

Goff, Susan

Founding Director and Principal Researcher, Cultureshift Pty Ltd

E-mail: Susang@cultureshift.com.au

www.cultureshift.com.au

Holt, Susan

Prevention Program Coordinator, STOP Domestic Violence Program

L.A. Gay and Lesbian Center

E-Mail: Sholt@laglc.org

www.laglc.org/domesticviolence

Kelly, Liz

Director, Child and Woman Abuse Studies Unit

E-Mail: l.kelly@londonmet.ac.uk

www.cwasu.org

Klein, Renate

Professor and Director of the Safe Campus Project, University of Maine

Email: rklein@maine.edu

www.umaine.edu/safecampusproject

Kovtun, Olga

President, Kharkiv City Women's NGO "Nadiya"

E-Mail: crisiscenter@ukr.net

Lamsal, Yubanath

Country Coordinator, South Asia Free Media Association

E-Mail: yubanath@mail.com.np

www.SouthAsianmedia.net

Lane, Karen

Project Coordinator, Montana Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence

E-Mail: klane@mcadsv.com

www.mcadsv.com

Kelley Marylouise

Program Specialist, S.T.O.P. Program, Office on
Violence against Women
E-Mail: kelleym@ojp.usdoj.gov
www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovw

Margulies, Jen

Member of the Program and Education Team,
Texas Council in Family Violence
E-Mail: jmarguli@tcfv.org
www.tcfv.org

Michau, Lori

Co-Director, Raising Voices
E-Mail: lori.michau@raisingvoices.org
www.Raisingvoices.org

Mistrett, Marcy

Director for Training and Evaluation
Organization, Institute for Community Peace
E-mail: Mmistrett@ntcvp.org
www.Peacebeyondviolence.org

Otero, Luisa

Researcher in state intervention regarding
Domestic Violence
Centro de Investigaciones Sociojuridicas de la
Universidad de los Andes
E-mail: luisaoterop@hotmail.com
<http://sicua.uniandes.edu.com/investiga>

Palmer, Marilyn

PhD Student, Edith Cowan University
E-Mail: m.palmer@ecu.edu.au

Paul Eapen, Rachel

Adviser, Centre for Gender Equality
E-mail: rachel.paul@likestilling.no
www.likestilling.no/

Purvin, Diane

Ethnographer and Data Manager
Welfare, Children, and Families Study, Heller
Graduate School, Brandeis University
E-mail: Purvin@brandeis.edu

Reyes-Jiron, Ruben

Founder and Member, Association of Men
Against Violence
E-mail: ruben.reyes@mailserver.puntos.org.ni

Rios, Lucy

Training and Prevention Coordinator, DELTA
Program, Rhode Island Coalition Against
Domestic Violence
E-mail: Ricadv@RICADV.org
www.RICADV.org

Sherkarloo, Proshat

Community Development Coordinator
API Institute on DV
E-mail: psherkaloo@apiahf.org
www.apiahf.org/apidvinstitute

Spears, Bill

Project Evaluator, University of Texas Houston
School of Public Health-San Antonio Regional
Campus
E-mail: spearsb@uthscsa.edu
www.sasafefamily.com

Tringtyasasih Tyas

Executive Director, Rifka Annisa Women's Crisis
Center
E-mail: Tyasuva@telkom.net
<http://Rifka-annisa.or.id>

APPENDIX B: Resource Library

The following list is an annotation of the resources contributed by conference participants over the course of the conference. For access to any of the documents listed here, please contact organization listed below or Close to Home at aimeemt@earthlink.net or 617-929-5151.

Documents

- Domestic Violence Early Detection and Intervention
- Violence Against Women Study – conducted in public hospital in Mumbai, India.
- Bibliography of research on domestic violence and social networks
- Information about Indian Sanghas
- Summary of three violence against women studies (international cases)
- PowerPoint presentation from Marcy Mistrett / Institute for Community Peace, on framework for thinking about change at the community level.
- LGBT Resource Guide, developed by the L.A. Lesbian Center's S.T.O.P. domestic violence program
- LGBT Domestic Violence Booklet, developed by the L.A. Lesbian Center's S.T.O.P. Domestic Violence Program
- LGBT Domestic Violence in California Report, developed by the L.A. Gay and Lesbian Center's S.T.O.P. Domestic Violence Program

Bibliography

- Yoshihama, M. (2002). *Battered women's coping strategies and psychological distress: Differences by immigration status*. American Journal of Community Psychology, 30(3), 429-452.

Notes that people are rarely passive, and battered women are no exception. This study investigated the types of coping strategies that 129 women of Japanese descent (both Japan-born and US-born) chose and their perceived effectiveness in dealing with their partners' violence.

- Lempert, L. B. (1997). *The Other Side of Help: Negative Effects in the Help-Seeking Processes of Abused Women*. Qualitative Sociology, 20(2), 289-309.

Analysis of data obtained via in-depth interviews with 32 abused women in outreach groups demonstrates that respondents first sought assistance from informal helpers by telling about violent experiences. Telling was a significant social act since it made public their "fictions of intimacy" (Tifft, L. L., 1993) affected their perceptions of their relationships, & definitions of the couple. In part because help providers often reduced the complexity of intimate relationships to incidents of violence, well-intentioned help provision frequently negative consequences: eg, the assistance was often based on a definitional contingency, or acceptance of others' definitions of the situations & others' prescriptions for action.

- Wilcox, P. (2000). *"Me mother's bank and me nanan's, you know, support!" : Women who left domestic violence in England and issues of informal support*. Women's Studies International Forum, 23(1), 35-47.

Attention to domestic violence in developed countries has focused on agency responses. However, domestic violence is a widespread and long-term problem which agencies alone will be unable to resolve. This article draws on doctoral research, combining a community study with ethnographic research, to explore the experiences of 20 white working-class women who left violent relationships. Empirically, the research shows that systematic continued violence was suffered by one third of the women, for which effective police intervention is essential. However, also revealed was the paucity of women's informal support and support networks. Women lacked resources along many dimensions, to the extent that they formed a distinct socially excluded group. The conclusion drawn is that it is now vital to think about ways of enhancing informal support for women experiencing and/or leaving domestic violence and one way explored in this study was through the networking of women's friendships.

- Yoshihama, M. (2002). **Policies and services addressing domestic violence in Japan: from non-interference to incremental changes.** *Women's Studies International Forum*, 25(5), 541-553.

Domestic violence in Japan has long been considered an insignificant, private problem. In the absence of government initiatives, an increasing number of initiatives have been developed in the private sector, mostly by grassroots, voluntary women's organizations. This paper analyzes the philosophy underlying policies and social services in Japan that significantly impact the welfare and safety of women who have been abused by their intimate partners. Outdated policy and service delivery frameworks shape practices of non-interference by the police, court, and social service systems; the few available interventions are unresponsive and at times detrimental to women's well-being. Recent changes in policies and service delivery have not altered the overall frameworks for policy and services, and thus their effectiveness remains limited. Re-conceptualization of the welfare system and developing policies aimed at eradicating the root causes of domestic violence are urgently needed.

- Eisikovits, Z., Buchbinder, E., & Mor, M. (1998). *"What it was won't be anymore": reaching the turning point in coping with intimate violence.* *AFFILIA Journal of Women and Social Work*, 13(4), 411-435.
- Some good research on "Participatory or Empowerment Evaluation" is written by David Fetterman, Steven Faucett and the Urban Institute's NNIP project. Again, these focus on community-level indicators, rather than individual change measures.
- John McKnight's "The Careless Society", Robert Putnam's "Bowling Alone;" Theda Skocpol's "Diminished Democracy." These are intended as background reading that may help you think about community in different ways.
- Reading about Community Based Participatory Action Research (CBPAR): The current bible is "Community-Based Participatory Research for Health by Meredith Minkler, Nina Wallerstein, and Budd Hall. This will give a good perspective on why and how to do CBPAR; A good methods (how to) book is "Action Research" by Ernst T. Stringer.
- Logic Model for Evaluation: There is a lot of help on the Internet. The BDI Logic Model is one that you can learn easily, there is an on-line course at <http://www.etr.org/recapp/ches/BDILogicModelCourseintro.htm> More on the logic model is at <http://www.uottawa.ca/academic/med/epid/logicmodelstudy.htm>

Resource Guides and Toolkits

- Raising Voices has recently published a program tool called *"Mobilising Communities to Prevent Domestic Violence: A Resource Guide for Organisations in East and Southern Africa"*. The Resource Guide is primarily for countries in this region but parts may be applicable elsewhere –

particularly in developing countries. The Resource Guide was designed to help community-based organisations design and implement a participatory project to prevent domestic violence. It describes a conceptual framework for preventing domestic violence and provides extensive strategy and activity suggestions for organisations interested in working systematically to affect individual and social change within their communities. www.raisingvoices.org

Web Based Resources

- www.cavnet.org: online international network of professionals addressing domestic violence, sexual assault, rape, incest, stalking, human rights, same sex violence, and crime victims with disabilities; bringing together a community of professionals, which includes law enforcement, judges, clergy, human rights advocates, and others. CAVNET features an online database of information with over 2,500 items related to the aforementioned topics. Participants add to the database on a daily basis.
- www.apiahf.org/apidvinstitute: Asian Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence clearinghouse of over 300 reference materials and fact sheets on domestic violence in the Asian Pacific Islander communities.
- www.loka.org: Loka Institute offers annual conference on participatory evaluation
- www.atask.org/AFVrepfinal.pdf Asian Family Violence Report that examines attitudes in Asian-American groups towards family violence.

APPENDIX C: Lessons Learned and Best Practices re: Convening an Online Conference

Convening an online conference using a web-based messaging platform is a relatively new medium of communication. Both conference organizers and participants learned a great deal about this mode of communication – what works well and what can be improved. Close to Home collected conference evaluations from participants to solicit their feedback and suggestions for improving on this conference for future online events.

What was effective?

Overall, conference participants appeared to enjoy the conference format, style and structure. Most of the feedback was overwhelmingly positive and even those participants who expressed concern about their technical skills appeared to have few challenges using the conferencing software. Many of the participants noted that the conference was a “warm” environment where it felt comfortable to share openly with others. In particular, conference participants commented that the following aspects of the conference were especially effective:

Conference Preparation

- Registration and screening process was important in indicating that everyone participating in the conference was interested in further exploring the topic(s) at hand
- Pre-conference communication was very clear and easy to understand

Event Format / Technology

- “Just Three Words” exercise was a good icebreaker and helpful in providing participants with an opportunity to practice using the software
- Format allowed for a diversity of socializing: good that there were spaces for social butterflies and for getting down to business
- Liked the separate resource page
- Liked concept of virtual meeting spaces that mirrored real places such as the “café” and “front desk”
- The pictures of participants were a great idea – made the conference fun and nice to connect with faces
- Space was easy to navigate

Duration / Intensity

- It was convenient that participants could login and participate any time they liked
- By focusing on one topic a day, we had to be clear about our goals and focused in our dialogues
- I liked that there was a weekend break after Day 2 of the conference; it helped me to catch up and go at a leisurely pace

Content

- Themes were topical and relevant to wide range of participants

- Was interested in topic of engaging men in community organizing
- International participant pool allowed for richer dialogue
- I appreciated learning the perspectives of participants from different fields (NGO, academics, activists, etc.) and from different regions of the world

Facilitation / Instructions / Technical Support

- Pleasantly surprised to have received personal phone calls from conference organizers to inquire about my comfort level and progress
- Appreciated additional questions from conference facilitators which kept the dialogue moving forward and broadened the perspectives
- Summaries and reviews of daily discussions were very helpful
- Daily introductions to conference activities and topics were helpful
- Conference facilitators were very present and helpful in engaging participants and providing technical support and guidance in discussions.
- Conference facilitators were very supportive and friendly; it was helpful that they asked participants to respond to unanswered questions.
- Minimal tech support I needed was very prompt.

What could be improved in the future

Obviously, there is always room for improvement. Since online conferencing is such a new approach to team work and collaboration, the feedback provided was valuable in considering future events. Suggestions provided by conference participants on what they would like to see different next time included:

Conference Preparation

- It might have been nice to have received participant bios a day or two before the start of the conference so that we could get to know the group more beforehand.
- It would have been nice to receive more advance notice of the conference (at least one week)

Event Format / Technology

- It was a bit difficult to navigate back to the homepage; a homepage button would have been useful
- I would have preferred the option of receiving and posting messages by email since internet access is costly here
- Not always clear where discussion threads ended and started; it would have been helpful to have more visual cues
- Would have been nice to have an online chat session with all of the participants

Duration / Intensity

- Would have liked to see each topic covered for two days, particularly because of the time zone differences which made the conference move too fast
- Too short – too much concentrated discussion in just under a week; I would prefer less intense discussion and spread out over longer period of time
- I found some of the postings to be too long; I would have preferred crisp and to the point contributions.
- Would have liked to see more participation from conference participants.

Content

- Would have liked to have seen more details of actual program ideas / projects; the “how to” of projects
- It might be interesting to use short case studies that conference participants could read ahead of time to comment on during the conference as the basis for discussion
- Would have preferred more specific topics
- Because there was such diverse expertise on the part of the participants, specific workshops on highly focused or specialized subcategories might be beneficial
- We could have been more careful to post messages under relevant topics
- Because questions were so open ended, I felt that the conversation wasn’t structured or focused enough
- Would have preferred to hear more about barriers and lessons learned
- I’d like to hear more about organizing work in minority communities

Facilitation / Instructions / Technical Support

- I had difficulty posting from my home computer

What ideas from the online conference I expect will be most useful to me?

In the evaluation, conference participants were asked to note what information or resources they felt would be most useful in their work.

- Research studies
- Practical success stories
- Idea of organizing discussion groups “around a kitchen table” and with tea and coffee
- Reminder to engage in on-going evaluation

- Courage and that other people are committed and trying to deal with violence in many different places
- That people work in different contexts, bring different histories and biographies to their work and frame their ideas about community, their work and goals for community accordingly; that community can be defined differently depending on time and place, and people's life circumstances
- My ideas of men and women working together on these issues was reinforced – at the community level, it would be best for men and women to work together, not separately.
- Resources posted on monitoring and evaluation were of much interest to me and I have already begun to follow some of the links for online papers / tools. I also appreciated the suggestion about using grad or PhD students for monitoring and evaluation.
- I'll use the knowledge of domestic and international programs and service efforts communicated through the conference to inform the policy recommendations I'll make in my dissertation, with respect to what can potentially and is already being done to intervene in and prevent domestic violence in the informal / social network area.

APPENDIX D: About Close to Home Domestic Violence Prevention Initiative

Conference Organizer – Close to Home Domestic Violence Prevention Initiative

Close to Home, a nonprofit organization based in Dorchester, Massachusetts, aims to prevent domestic violence and get help for those affected, by educating, supporting, and developing leadership from the existing network of friends, families and neighbors.

Close to Home's **vision** is to create an environment where:

- all residents recognize what domestic violence is and that it affects the community
- all residents can find the support and resources they need to prevent domestic violence
- all residents affected can begin the healing process and build a safer neighborhood

Close to Home was founded in 1998 through a volunteer initiative of Dorchester residents who recognized the important role that informal social networks (family, friends and neighbors) played in all aspects of community life – but especially in providing support and resources to people experiencing violence in their lives. Aimee Thompson, founder of Close to Home, and a local community organizer and professional in the field of domestic violence, recognized in her discussions with residents something that has been well documented in research across the world: that people experiencing domestic violence in their lives turn to friends, family and neighbors sooner than they would report their abuse to police, the courts, or service providers.

The prevailing response to Domestic Violence in the United States is service and intervention oriented (shelters, criminal justice system, child protection, coordinated community response). Close to Home, however, recognizes the important role that informal social networks could play in supporting individuals experiencing abuse and in the process of working towards prevention of domestic violence by challenging and changing the cultural and social norms that allow for violence to permeate in our society. Close to Home believes that the responsibility to prevent domestic violence and provide support to people living with domestic violence in their lives needs to be shared between community residents and formal networks and service providers. Close to Home has been working in Dorchester to reframe the issue of domestic violence so that it is universally perceived as a community problem, closely related to other issues of concern to residents, such as public safety, economic development, and the development of vibrant communities. Without a concerted community driven response to domestic violence, communities like Dorchester will be challenged to achieve their other community development goals.

Close to Home has three main objectives in its work:

- I. Build capacity of family, friends and neighbors to respond to domestic violence.
- II. Mobilize the neighborhood's civic life, through dialogue and problem solving, to address domestic violence as a priority community issue in Dorchester.
- III. Facilitate coalition-building efforts among local residents, civic groups, faith communities, health centers, elected officials, police, courts and organizations committed to DV prevention to advocate to community led program and policy reform.

Close to Home aims to achieve the aforementioned goals by engaging the community to critically think about domestic violence and what it can do to make a difference. Close to Home staff conduct discussion groups with small groups of community members about domestic violence in the neighborhood. At these discussions, "What would you do?" and "What could you do?" scenarios are explored. This process opens

dialogue, identifies needs, inspires involvement, and creates the direction for Close to Home's community organizing strategies.

To date, Close to Home has worked to raise community awareness around the issue of domestic violence in civic association presentation meetings and structured discussions, that have brought together diverse groups of people – men, women, youth – of different ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds – to talk about domestic violence, how it affects their neighborhoods and what they can do to support people and work towards prevention.

In addition to conducting discussion groups and making community presentations, Close to Home is also working to develop community leadership around this issue. Community members who demonstrate a strong commitment to working to prevent domestic violence in their neighborhood are recruited into Leadership Teams, which are supported by Close to Home with trainings that impart community organizing, facilitation and other technical skills. One of the goals of Leadership Team development is that members of the community begin to take a more visible role as activists in the community. It's Close to Home's aim that Leadership Teams and civic leaders will come together across the neighborhood to create a neighborhood-wide agenda on domestic violence.

While there are many programs that work to educate the public, raise awareness about domestic violence, and provide direct services to people experiencing abuse in their lives, few programs take as active an approach as Close to Home does in addressing the root causes and social norms that allow for domestic violence to continue. Close to Home does more than community outreach – it comes to the people in their living rooms, backyards and church basements – and engages them around this issue to encourage critical thinking, the development of solutions, action-oriented problem solving and personal healing. Close to Home is placing the responsibility of crafting messages and solutions that aim to create social change around domestic violence solely in the hands of community residents – and believes that when a large diversity of stakeholders become invested in this issue, only then can we see a significant change in the levels of violence in our society and the methods applied to respond to it.

Building a Community of Practice to Engage Family, Friends and Neighbors

In the United States, where the bulk of federal and state resources have gone towards supporting a service-oriented response to domestic violence, there have been few opportunities for the development of a movement advocating for the emergence of grassroots, community organizing models to domestic violence prevention.

One of the goals of Close to Home is to encourage the development of grassroots advocacy around the issue of domestic violence. To increase the capacity of organizations doing this work already as well as those that are interested in beginning to more actively engage family, friends and neighbors, Close to Home is dedicated to developing and supporting a ***community of practice*** for sharing strategies, problem solving around common challenges, sharing resources and generally popularizing this prevention approach to domestic violence domestically and internationally.

Close to Home's vision for a community of practice is to bring together domestic violence community members, community organizers, practitioners, researchers, and policy makers to discuss and think about the ways in which informal social networks can be more effectively harnessed in order to take a lead in domestic violence prevention work and changing social norms that perpetuate domestic violence in local communities.

This online conference was part of Close to Home's overall strategy to initiate an international dialogue on why and how to do grassroots community organizing with family, friends and neighbors around domestic violence.

Conference Facilitators

The online conference was developed, designed, and facilitated by Close to Home staff, Aimee Thompson and Polina Makievsky.²

Aimee Thompson, Founder and Executive Director, Close to Home

Aimee Thompson is the founder and director of the Close to Home Domestic Violence Prevention Initiative. Nationally recognized for its community organizing strategies, Close to Home is working to mobilize the leadership of community residents to change the social norms that perpetuate domestic violence and engage the civic life of Dorchester in domestic violence prevention strategies. Prior to Close to Home Aimee was the manager of Project Harmony's Domestic Violence Community Partnership Program, which began multi-sector domestic violence coalitions in 7 cities in Russia, Ukraine, and Georgia through exchanges between Eurasia and the U.S. Aimee has been a community organizer and advocate for women and children living with domestic violence for ten years. Aimee was involved in conference promotion, participant selection, content development and conference facilitation.

Polina Makievsky, Communications and Policy Intern, Close to Home (Summer 2003)

Polina has joined Close to Home as a summer intern to help develop a communications and policy strategy for Close to Home's work. Currently, Polina is a public policy graduate student at Johns Hopkins University Institute for Policy Studies in Baltimore, MD. Prior to entering a graduate program, Polina spent four years living and working in Eurasia (Ukraine, Republic of Georgia) managing various international training and development programs related to professional development, women's leadership, internet technology and communications and domestic violence. Polina has actively used internet technology in her programmatic work and was involved in designing the online conference space, promoting the event, providing technical support and support in conference facilitation.

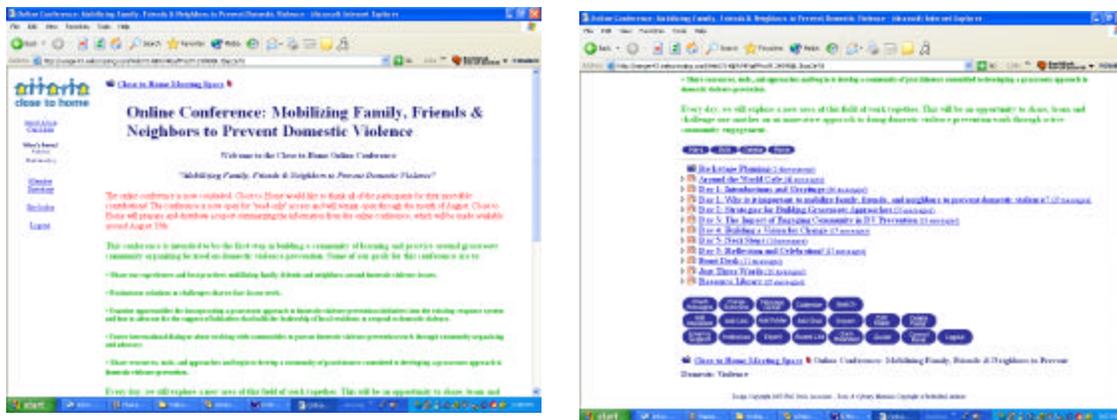
² Close to Home would like to thank Nancy White of Full Circle Associates, an online communications consulting firm, for her technical support, expertise and general spirit of sharing and collaboration. For more information about developing online communities and using Internet tools for collaboration and community of practice building, please visit Full Circle Associates at: www.fullcirc.com

APPENDIX E: Conference Format

The *Mobilizing Family, Friends & Neighbors to Prevent Domestic Violence* Online Conference was structured as a five-day facilitated conference convened on Webcrossing (www.webcrossing.com), an online collaboration software tool accessible from the web. Participants were given passwords to access the conferencing space, which was not open to the general public. The advantages of using the online conferencing platform was that all participants could login to the space at a time that was convenient to them and contribute to discussions that were of interest to them at their own pace.

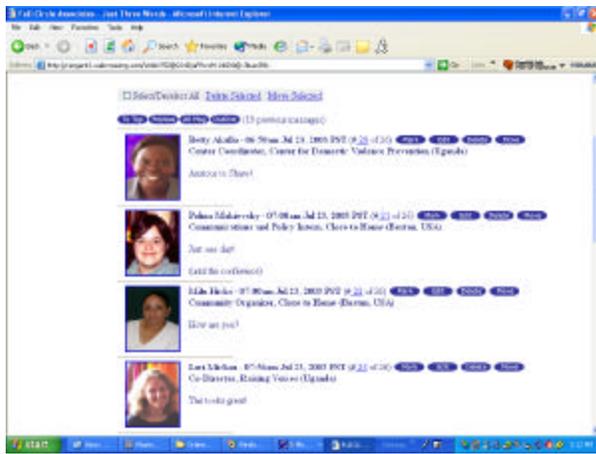
The conference space was divided into various discussion folders. Some of the folders were “work spaces” where conference facilitators introduced new conference discussion topics daily and other folders were for general / logistical information sharing, informal socializing, and resource sharing. Participants were able to post photos of themselves, which would appear next to each of their message postings. The photographs facilitated the process of relationship building, which greatly enhanced the conference environment and created a setting that tried to simulate face-to-face interaction as much as possible.

Main Page: The main page included an introduction to the conference, and a brief overview of day’s agenda as well as the menu of discussion folders.



* A screen shot showing the main page of the conference as well as the bottom half of the main page, which shows the discussion topics.

Just Three Words: This space was opened two days prior to the conference. Participants were asked to participate in an ice breaker by posting a message consisting of “just three words.” The goal of this activity was to ensure that participants were able to login to the space and post messages successfully and to begin breaking the ice with one another.



* Screen shot of the “Just Three Words” space – pictures of conference participants would appear next to their postings to facilitate the process of relationship building.

Front Desk: This space was used by the conference facilitators to communicate conference announcements to participants and for posting daily summaries of the previous days’ discussions.

Around the World Café: A space designed to enable participants to meet and socialize with one another informally and take a break from the formal conference interaction.

Work Spaces: Each day of the conference, a new discussion folder was added with the theme of the discussion for the day. For example, on the first day of the conference, Thursday, July 24, a folder titled: “Day 1: Introductions and Greetings” was opened along with a folder called “Why is it important to mobilize family, friends and neighbors to prevent domestic violence?”, on the next day, a new folder titled: “Day 2: Strategies for Developing a Grassroots Approach to Domestic Violence Prevention” was added and so forth. During the weekend, no new discussion topics were introduced to enable participants to catch up on their reading, take time to think through the ideas and continue to contribute to the previous days’ discussions.

Resource Library: This space was set aside for participants and facilitators to post interesting resources such as articles, contacts, web sites and documents.