



# **Blanketed By Blame, Empowered By Support:**

## **Kim, A Cancer Survivor's Story**

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May 2010

Dramatization by the Center for Pan Asian Community Services (CPACS)  
Adapted with permission from an exercise developed by the Asian & Pacific Islander Institute  
on Domestic Violence  
Based on original work by the Duluth Project and Ellen Pence

### **THE SCENE:**

- A person representing a cancer survivor sits in a chair in front of the audience, she plays Kim.
- Be prepared with 8 blankets or shawls - the blankets produce a more dramatic effect. The last blanket (for the 8<sup>th</sup> character) is recommended to be black for dramatic effect.
- Eight characters stand in a circle, each holding a blanket, facing outward, with their backs to Kim.
- The Narrator stands outside the circle, to the side, and reads the script of Kim's Story.
- The Narrator pauses after each statement from Kim's Story.
- At that point, one character steps forward and places a blanket over Kim.
- When the reversal begins, after each statement, a character removes a blanket from Kim and then faces into the circle towards Kim.
- The exercise is followed by audience discussion.

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*The purpose of this exercise is to help participants visualize the structures that can cause harm and how they can be different – contributing to making change in their work.*

### **CAST OF CHARACTERS:**

**Maya** (seated in the middle)

**Narrator** (stands to the side, outside the circle)

### **Blanketing**

(Cast of characters in order)

1. **Friend**
2. **Neighbor**
3. **Her Mother**
4. **Her Spouse**
5. **Clergy**
6. **Hospital**
7. **Mainstream Service Agency**
8. **Legislator**

### **Uncovering:**

(Cast of characters in order)

8. **Legislator**
7. **Mainstream Service Agency**
6. **Hospital**
5. **Clergy**
4. **Her Spouse**
3. **Her Mother**
2. **Neighbor**
1. **Friend**

You will need ten people.

## **SCRIPT:**

(The entire script is read by the Narrator only.)

Kim is forty-five years old. She has been married for 16 years. She has two children – ages seven and fifteen. She finally goes to see her doctor about an abnormal swelling and feelings of fatigue. **Her doctor reveals to Kim that she has been diagnosed with cancer.** (Pause)

Kim has taken many steps, surrounded by friends, family, community and various systems around her.

## **BLANKETING**

### **1. Friend**

Kim has finally told her friend Lisa about the cancer.

“Cancer? You’re kidding Kim. But you’ve always been so healthy.”

(Pause, wait for one person to step forward and cover Kim with a blanket.)

### **2. Neighbor**

Her neighbor notices Kim has been missing work and staying home on most days.

“But I thought Asians have long life expectancies?”

### **3. Her Mother**

Kim calls her mother, even though it’s so expensive to call home.

“Cancer doesn’t run in our family, Kim. Stop talking about it. You are too young to die, and your children do not need to know about this death sentence.”

### **4. Her Spouse**

Kim reaches out to her husband for some solace and comfort.

“Cancer? That’s nothing. Everyone has it nowadays.”

### **5. Clergy**

Kim confides in her pastor about her recent diagnosis.

“There’s not really a lot of resources for people like you who have cancer, Kim. But Kim, it’s in God’s hands. If you pray hard enough, God will heal you.”

### **6. Hospital**

Kim wants to know what options there are for her, so she heads to her local hospital.

“The first thing you need to do is change your dietary habits. Maybe you’re eating too much raw fish and beans. And forget traditional cures – chemotherapy is the only option for you.”

**7. Mainstream Service Agency**

Kim is referred to a mainstream agency to obtain resources about cancer services for the uninsured. They give her a translated brochure, in Chinese, but Kim is not does not speak or read Chinese.

“What do you mean the brochure doesn’t make sense? You can’t read it? But it’s in Asian.”

**8. Legislator**

Kim schedules a meeting with her legislator to talk about her struggles accessing cancer services and the lack of data about Asian Americans and cancer. She is upset that Asian Americans are considered “other” in all the reports that she reads.

“Kim, I am sorry about your diagnosis, but there’s not really much I can do to increase legislative support for Asians in the community. Your population is too small. Whenever I see data and reports it says your numbers are insignificant”

**Narrator asks Kim:** “Kim, how do you deal with all this? Don’t you feel so hopeless?”

*(The person under the blankets replies non-verbally by attempting to move but cannot get up because of the weight of the blankets.)*

**EMPOWERING**

(Cast of characters in reverse order from Blanketing)

(The Narrator pauses after reading each of the next statements. Then each character steps forward and removes a blanket, and faces into the circle.)

**8. Legislator**

“Kim, as my constituent, your voice matters. I realize the growing Asian population in our community and know that we need to do more. Your voice will be heard. These are some options – speaking before a committee hearing, we can even work together to draft a bill.”

**7. Mainstream Service Agency**

“Kim, we will work with you to find an option for your treatment. Let me introduce you to Ms. Lee, she is a community navigator that speaks your language. ”

**6. Hospital**

“Kim, there is a variety of treatment options for you. Let’s take a look at what works best for you, and your cultural beliefs.”

**5. Clergy**

“As your pastor I’m here to support you, Kim. I talked to the community center and members of the clergy and I know there are lots of people in our community who are affected by cancer. Starting next week we are going to hold cancer support groups so you will know that you are not alone.”

4. **Spouse**

“Kim, to be honest, I am really scared of losing you, but I know we can survive this together.”

3. **Her mother**

“Kim, I may not know much about cancer, but I am willing to learn. Tell me more about how I can support you in your journey to survivorship.”

2. **Neighbor**

“Kim, I didn’t know that Asian Americans are disproportionately affected by cancer. I want you to know that I am here to support you. I signed up for a fundraising walk that raises funds to increase culturally appropriate cancer research and data.”

1. **Friend**

“Kim, I am going to start getting annual screenings for cancer. Thanks for being so open about your diagnosis; it gives me strength. “

*Kim gets up and stands encircled by her supporters.*

## **AUDIENCE DISCUSSION:**

Invite audience to discuss and comment on their reactions.

Be sure to ask the actors, especially Kim, how they felt.