



# Innovations in Survivor-Centered Advocacy

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June 2019

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# Introduction

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***By recognizing that we are all experts of our own lives, [we] dismantle the idea of "expert" as the exclusive purview of the knowledge-elite, liberate "expertise" from the "ivory tower" and redistribute its power and authority to ordinary people***

*Survivor Centered Advocacy Project 1 Report*

## Where We Started

The Survivor-Centered Advocacy Project ("SCA Project," or "SCA1") was a multi-site community-based participatory research (CBPR) project seeking knowledge about the meaning and practice of culturally specific SCA. Specifically, the SCA Project used a co-learning approach to generate, collect and share knowledge about how culturally specific practitioners and communities conceptualize and practice survivor-centered advocacy, in order to meet the needs and surface the strengths of survivors of domestic violence (DV) from marginalized communities.

Over the course of fifteen months, the five research teams through their respective CBPR projects and Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence (API-GBV or the Institute) staff engaged in deep reflexive inquiry with historically marginalized culturally-specific communities, in order to cultivate the wisdom metabolized in the margins that can inform how the anti-violence field can better practice survivor-centered advocacy. A more in-depth discussion about the SCA Project's research process and research findings can be found in the report titled, "Survivor-Centered Advocacy in Culturally-Specific Communities: A Community-Based Participatory Research Project." While much of the findings of the field research teams are in the aforementioned report, further learnings that came out of this project resulted in an article in the Journal of Family Violence titled, "An Exploratory Framework for Community-Led Research to Address Intimate Partner Violence: a Case Study of the Survivor-Centered Advocacy Project".

## Setting New Intentions

After the success of SCA1 and the rich findings of each team, Institute staff envisioned a way to take the work to the next stage and develop a way to build on the knowledge that was generated in SCA1 by centering the field research teams' knowledge and experience, and supporting them to translate their findings into practice aimed at transforming the field. The Blue Shield Foundation was supportive of this endeavor and believed in the profound and moving work accomplished with SCA1 and thus began the next iteration of this work: Innovations in SCA ("SCA2 Project" or "SCA2").

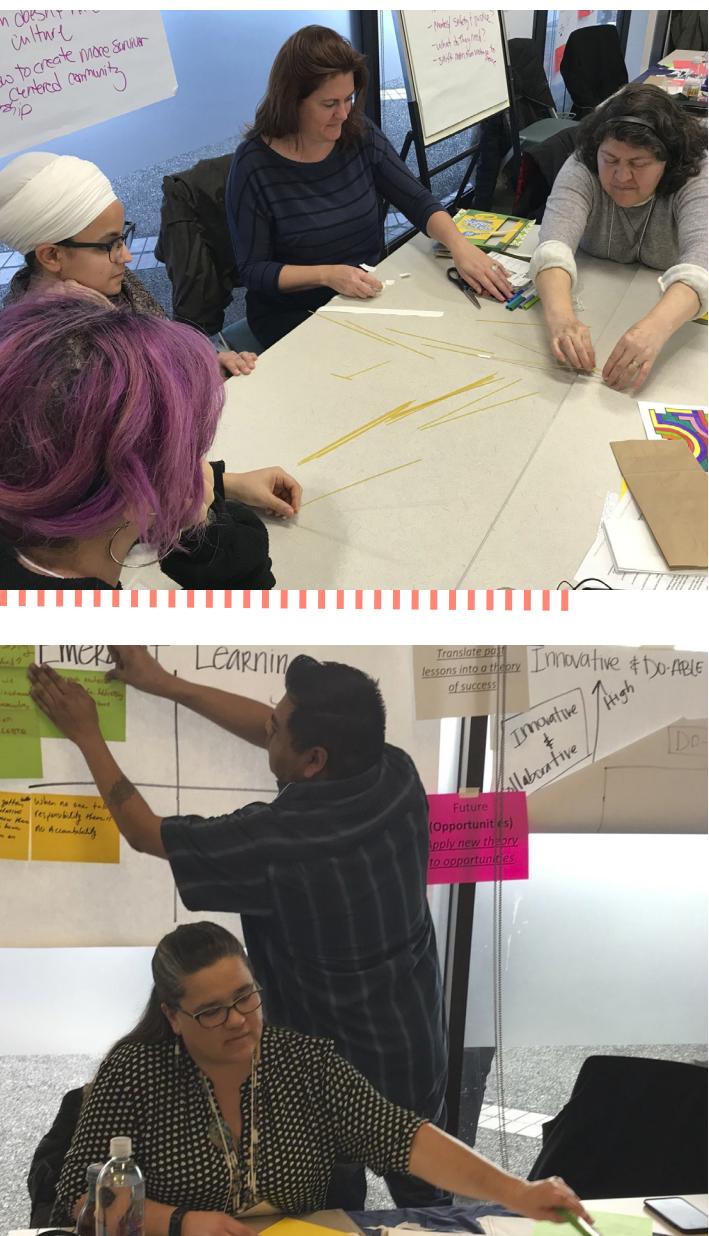


The goal of the SCA2 project was to intentionally diverge from antiquated and status quo domestic violence program design, which is typically unresponsive to changing conditions and privileges a service provider orientation. Instead, the project aimed to support both processes and outcomes that center survivors and encourage new ways of thinking about some of the most difficult challenges in the field.



It also intended to allow each of the teams the spaciousness and resources needed to manifest the next steps they saw from their SCA1 research findings. It was not enough to simply know what was happening in their community and why – they learned what it is that their respective communities needed. Now was the opportunity to bring about tangible solutions that would work best for survivors. To manifest this vision, Institute staff utilized Design Thinking, which allows for a high degree of flexibility, encourages experimentation, prototyping, midstream course corrections, and “failing forward”.

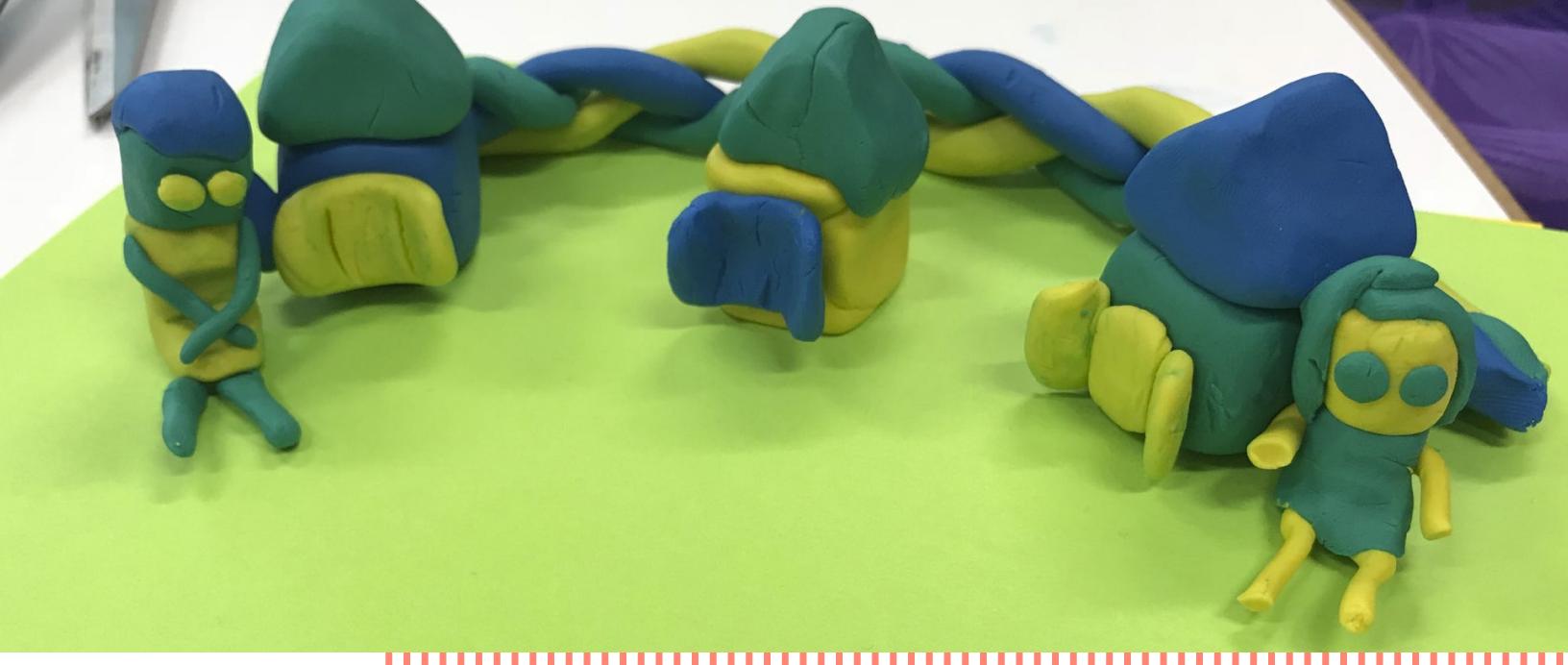
# Design Thinking



On February 26-27, 2018, the five field research teams attended and participated in a convening, with the goal to support the teams in developing one or two concrete project ideas and to create an implementation plan for at least one of those ideas. Project staff and a consultant with subject matter expertise in Design Thinking guided participants through a process intended to help spur their best creative, outside-the-box thinking for their project ideas. Because Design Thinking processes work best in teams, each field research team was invited to bring a total of three people to the convening, including whoever was written into the grant, as well as anyone else they felt would be a good thought partner – staff person / member of their group, board member, survivor, etc. – whether or not they would be participating in the implementation of their project.

Ultimately, three of the teams were able to bring two members, and two teams were able to bring three members, for a total of twelve participants.





## Why Design Thinking

Design Thinking, as it was adapted for these communities, was a useful framing device through which team members could practice creative ideation, experimentation, rapid assessment and re-design, and “user-centered” (survivor-centered) design.

It was also important to share culturally-responsive adaptations of innovative practices like Design Thinking with historically marginalized communities who might not otherwise have access to those resources.

## Adapting for Multilingual Space

Design Thinking has traditionally been facilitated for groups of English-speaking participants or only in one language, and has rarely if ever been used in a multilingual space with participants who speak multiple and different languages. Thus, it was critical to apply learnings from SCA1 around language justice to how the Design Thinking workshop for this project was constructed. Project staff worked closely with the Design Thinking subject matter expert to think creatively about exercises and activities that can both maintain the integrity of Design Thinking principles, and be inclusive to those who speak languages other than English or who are navigating multilingual spaces. That is not to say everything went completely smooth. Three were technical difficulties with the headset equipment used for simultaneous interpretation and were forced to forgo using headsets. The Spanish interpreters had to then improvise on how to best provide consecutive Spanish/English interpretation. However, the entire group was extremely understanding and accommodating, which speaks to the trust and relationship built with one another throughout the course of this project over the last few years.



# Outcomes

At the end of the two days, the feedback from the teams regarding the Design Thinking process was positive, with many folks sharing that they were able to gain new tools and approaches to think about their work. Constructive feedback on their project plans and support given to set up their implantation plan were particularly important and valuable.

All teams left the convening with initial designs of their projects, plans for implementation, and with dates set for in person meetings to discuss their plans to evaluate the success of their projects.





Design Thinking Team Name & Members

# Avellaka Program: Rainbow of Truth (a project of the La Jolla Band of Luiseño Indians)

Wendy Schlater & Timothy S. Ruise

## Research Findings from SCA1

Avellaka conducted a focus group with Native participants who identify as LGBTQ/2Spirit from the La Jolla Band of Luiseño Indians or other tribes in the surrounding, largely rural area. The research asked participants to share their experiences around "coming out," including what would have made these experiences safer and more positive. It also explored how the effects of colonization disrupted cultural customs and traditions. Participants described how they felt they had to leave the reservation to come out, feeling "There was no 'Indian way' to come out" due to stigma, discrimination, and lack of resources. However, coming out outside the reservation was not safe or culture-affirming, either, as the "white way of coming out" included "unwanted sexual experiences, drugs, circuit parties, isolation, depression and suicide attempts." Participants all decided to "come home" to the reservation but wished their LGBTQ/2Spirit identities could be affirmed and respected there, and connected back to pre-colonial cultural traditions in which these identities were an integral and honored part of the community.



## Focus for SCA2

Erasing invisibility of LGBTQ/2Spirit folks to access tribal justice systems. Raising awareness of the effects of colonization for prevention & intervention. Creating a safe space for straight family members of LGBTQ/2Spirit folks to receive education and support.



## Initial Prototype (Project Idea)

1. Create a Native float for the San Diego Pride Parade, with parade participants including Native LGBTQ/2Spirit community members, their family and friends, elders, and other allies; with flags from as many local tribal communities as were willing to support them
2. Create a tribal-specific PFLAG support group (which would be only the second in the US) to offer a safe space for straight family members of LGBTQ/2Spirit folks to receive education & support





## Participants/Users

- For the parade float: Native LGBTQ/2Spirit community members, and others in the community who supported them (family members, elders, and tribes that allowed their flags to be represented); ultimately, all members of local tribal communities, by raising awareness of the issue through the float
- For the Avellaka adaptation of PFLAG: straight family members of Native LGBTQ/2Spirit folks



## Experimentation & Course Corrections

- After looking more into PFLAG, realized that setting up a chapter was not viable, as PFLAG doesn't recognize groups that are not 501(c)(3) nonprofits and is not designed for sovereign nations / Native communities. Thus Avellaka shifted to creating their own, culturally-specific and Native-centered adaptation.



## Final Prototype

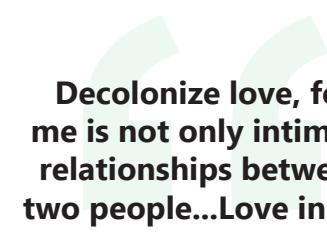
- Float: They created and fielded a "Decolonize Love" Native float in the July 2018 San Diego Pride Parade, with over 100 parade participants including Native LGBTQ/2Spirit community members, their family and friends, elders and other allies, and the flags of all 18 local tribal communities (which was unprecedented).
- Family & friends support group: They created a monthly Rainbow of Truth support group, similar to PFLAG, but culturally-adapted to Native communities, in which straight family members, friends & allies of LGBTQ/2Spirit folks can receive education and support in a safe space in the community. Participants have also engaged in facilitated conversations about pre-colonial Native stories and traditions in which LGBTQ/2Spirit identities were an integral and honored part of the community.

## Highlighted Learnings & Reflections

- Community members expressed a lot of relief and validation that someone is finally talking about these issues and is going to address the invisibility of LGBTQ/2Spirit folks, and that now there is a place for straight parents to talk and receive support because they want to see their children thrive and be loved.
- Permission to show banners from all 18 local tribes at the Pride Parade was a very significant and unprecedented show of support for 2Spirit folks. Intergenerational participation was also very important, particularly demonstrated by the participation and support by the Tribal elders.
- This movement has picked up a lot of momentum, tribes have come through an uncomfortable learning curve and now are stepping up to the plate and validating this work; even for those who disagree, there is a feeling that "if you're not a part of the movement, you have to step aside, otherwise you'll be rolled over."



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- ▶ This work is not just about violence & safety, but about human rights and is also connected to related issues such as health, education, housing, etc.
  - ▶ This project was not one-dimensional or individualistic; it not only focused on LGBTQ/2Spirit folks but also included the conversation about how to be good relatives to each other. One example was the reconciliation and strengthened bonds between parents and their 2Spirit kids. Whether we are intimate partners, parents to a child, or an individual in the community, it is important to be accountable and responsible to our relationships to the people around us. This community-level agreement, and moving forward together, is really important.



**Decolonize love, for me is not only intimate relationships between two people...Love in our language is *má-má*. I'm sure it means a lot of things to a lot of people, but one of the common things you'll see is love means to be a good relative to each other, to care for one another**

Wendy Schlater

## Next Steps

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- Continue growing the Rainbow of Truth support group
  - Plan a float for the 2019 San Diego Pride Parade, and perhaps a 2Spirit powwow
  - Mentor younger generations of LGBTQ/2Spirit folks and elevate their leadership
  - Share information and learnings from the project to the Indian Health Council
  - Encourage tribal leadership to institute laws & policies that include LGBTQ/2Spirit folks, and create safety and equitable access for them around housing, education, and other benefits that straight people receive in the community.
  - Hope to bring Timothy on as permanent staff at Avellaka

## Notes

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- Avellaka commissioned a video of their journey to create the Decolonize Love float and Rainbow of Truth support group, available on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r70vvZInXQ8>



# DeafHope

Aracelia Aguilar & Amber Hodson

## Research Findings from SCA1

DeafHope conducted in-person and virtual interviews with Deaf and Hard of Hearing survivors to understand where they go for support after abuse, and what their experiences are with both formal and informal support providers. Participants shared that their more positive experiences with support tended to be when it was provided by nonjudgmental friends, who might also offer other important resources like childcare and information about services. Many also used Deaf-specific formal support services. In contrast, many reported negative experiences with mainstream (non-Deaf) domestic violence service providers and police, especially if they were Deaf survivors of color. Poor or nonexistent ASL interpretation services were frequently a barrier, and their research concluded that "communication barriers, patronizing attitudes, and cultural ignorance" were pervasive.

## Focus for SCA2

Building off SCA1's findings that Deaf survivors turn to the community for support, rather than systems, the SCA2 focus is on finding ways to create / build the Deaf community's ability to support survivors.

## Initial Prototype (Project Idea)

Creating an anti-violence / social justice curriculum for middle school students at CA School for the Deaf.

## Participants / Users

- Initially: Deaf middle school students, and their teachers and parents, at the CA School for the Deaf; as well as potentially the high school and the community at large
- Finally: People who access the middle-school focused social justice curriculum DeafHope is creating in ASL, which is currently under development and will be launched online on a publicly-accessible website

## Experimentation & Course Corrections

- After feedback from the principal (who was supportive), teachers (who identified obstacles), and other stakeholders, DeafHope scaled back their initial prototype to shift to integrating it into places and times in the curriculum where there are easier opportunities for doing so (like the annual Day of Respect), rather than as a complete, full year curriculum.



## Highlighted Learnings & Reflections

- After challenges with the initial consultant who had to drop out due to timing, and struggling to find the time and resources to develop and implement a curriculum in the remaining part of the school year, DeafHope pivoted to a suggestion raised by another consultant: creating ASL-specific content for a social justice curriculum and putting it on a website, where it could be accessed as a resource by the whole community.

### Final Prototype

Creating a website with ASL-specific social justice content, aimed at middle school students, which can be freely and publicly accessed.

- Deaf community members want social justice resources that are in ASL; but many resources are either in spoken English only, or are captioned in English, but not provided with ASL interpretation.
- There is a huge need and interest in the Deaf community for conversations, materials, and discussion space around social justice issues, and antiviolence and antiracism work, and perhaps a feeling that the community is a little behind in having these conversations because there are so few resources in ASL.
- Creating space online could work, as Deaf folks are early adopters of tech and eagerly seeking connection, although it is harder to create safe spaces online.
- There are many kids and families of color who attend the school, but who do not see themselves, their culture, ways of learning etc., represented in the curriculum or reflected in the teachers and administrators, the majority of whom are white. This is also why there is a great need to support more Deaf POC leadership of these efforts.
- Deaf communities are not getting access to what their hearing counterparts are getting access to, at all ages and in all communities, across the board. This leads to a vicious cycle in which Deaf folks therefore do not seek services, because they are not accessible; which leads hearing organizations to say, if Deaf folks are not showing up, they must not need these services, and using this flawed and self-serving circular reasoning to continuously cop-out of providing critical services.
- Even a relatively small investment into creating social justice resources for the Deaf community has a huge impact, because currently almost nothing exists.
- The Design Thinking approach was very enjoyable and useful, and they are sharing this attitude of "thinking big and not being afraid to fail" with their leadership and board.

### Next Steps

- Over the summer, create a sizable amount of ASL-specific curriculum content, and launch it under the DeafHope website so that it is freely accessible to the Deaf community

- Host a community forum (either online, in-person, or both) to hear from parents what they would like to see in the curriculum, after it launches
- Get more buy-in and a softer entry to the curriculum, to meet teachers and administrators where they are, and build more support for future integration into the school curriculum
- Continue talking to schools and communities in other locations to see what broader community needs and interest might be
- Continue talking with parents and peer DV advocates to share what they are doing and get feedback
- Recognize and support Deaf POCs to lead this work
- Continually add to and grow the website curriculum content, and find ways to integrate it into schools once people have had more exposure to it





# Mujeres Unidas y Activas (MUA)

Maria Jiminez, Maria Carillo &  
Jennifer Alejo

## Research Findings from SCA1

MUA conducted a story circle and focus group with some of its members to explore the impact of integrating mental health and healing services into their Latina-focused domestic violence program. Members spoke about needing to undergo their own healing process before feeling ready to participate in other activities or political activism to help others. They wanted this healing for their families, especially their children, in a supportive and nonjudgmental space.

**I discovered things inside me that I thought were fine but in fact my life, my soul and my heart were damaged”**

SCA1 story circle participant

## Focus for SCA2

Integrating traditional self-care and healing concepts into MUA's work with their members and members' families, and adapting the tools of transformative justice for use in their community.

## Participants / Users

- Initially: MUA's members (mostly women who've recently immigrated from Mexico and Central America)
- Finally: MUA's members and staff

## Initial Prototype (Project Idea)

Using traditional medicine and ancestral practices to promote healing among MUA's members.

## Experimentation & Course Corrections

- Observation and feedback from members and staff at the first couple of MUA events incorporating traditional and ancestral practices, made the MUA team understand that the project needed to shift from just members and their families, to encompass staff, too. Some staff were enthusiastic or curious about these practices, and others were hesitant, resistant to, or unfamiliar with them, in similar ways to MUA's members. Like members, some staff had a hard time connecting these practices with their own cultural identity.



## Highlighted Learnings & Reflections

- Based on their observations of members' growing interest in indigenous and traditional customs, they created a different process for the Día de los Muertos altar in their office: they set up the base, but then allowed members to fill the altar themselves, with their own photos, flowers, sugar skulls, and other items, rather than filling it all in themselves. Additionally, in the past there was some resistance to or stigma around this celebration, however this time, many members joined in to observe it. In a similar way, MUA decided to replace its usual Christmas celebration with a Thanksgiving one, based on feedback from indigenous members who did not identify with celebrating a Christian holiday.

### Final Prototype

- Using traditional medicine and ancestral practices to promote healing among MUA's members and staff.
  - ▶ Many of the ancestral and traditional healing practices that MUA was looking to engage with come from or are associated with indigenous people and cultures. MUA saw that they needed to build more understanding for and solidarity with indigenous cultures among their own members, and more fully include indigenous women in MUA's activities, too, including language support for the Mam language (not just Spanish). This meant recognizing and actively resisting one of colonization's impacts on Mexico and Central America, which is the degradation of indigenous culture, and how those attitudes and other effects of colonialism permeate Mexican and Central American mainstream culture even unintentionally (as in large, ubiquitous celebrations of Christmas, when many indigenous folks are not Christian and/or prefer to observe pre-colonial celebrations).
  - ▶ Healing is a wave, it is not linear. It took quite a while, and many different kinds of activities and discussions, before members really started taking an interest in learning more about traditional healing practices, and actively participating in them.
  - ▶ For some of the activities, they create healing items together that can be taken home. For example, they prepare water by infusing it with natural and medicinal botanicals, then give members some to take home and use in their everyday life.
  - ▶ The experience of being together on a camping trip in the woods on retreat, learning how to do some of these traditional practices like infusing water with natural and medicinal botanicals, was really powerful and healing, even for people who were unsure or negative about it before.
  - ▶ We cannot help others heal if we are not doing it ourselves.
  - ▶ There are many different ways of healing. MUA offers counseling, and now it is able to demonstrate that healing can happen at home, too, even when MUA is closed – through breathing, use of sage, and other traditional healing methods. This also supports one of MUA's core values of self-determination.



## Next Steps

- Trying to incorporate aspects of traditional healing into MUA's everyday work (somaticas & dynamicas) and staff meetings, like passing fragrant oils around and drinking traditional teas instead of coffee
- See whether incorporating these healing practice also helps them have calmer and more productive conversations about challenging or contentious topics
- Very interested in doing another camping trip
- Would love to be able to connect with other communities who may have similar practices



## Notes

The current political climate and in particular deportations/family separations, as well as children and families being abused and dying in detention, is important context for the need for MUA's ancestral/traditional healing work and responding to trauma & triggering for both their members, as well as their own staff. This anti-immigrant climate makes MUA and its members feel shame about themselves, and is trying to push them to assimilate by not using their traditional medicines or other practices for fear of being targeted or ridiculed; so this healing project is working to counter that.





# QYUL, the Queer and Trans Workgroup of the Korean American Coalition to End Domestic Abuse (KACEDA)

Hyejin Shim & Stacy Suh

## Research Findings from SCA1

QYUL conducted an online national survey and an in-person focus group to ask queer and trans (QT) Korean-Americans (including members of QYUL) about their experiences with different forms of violence, such as family and intimate partner violence. Participants shared their experiences with mental health issues; family, domestic, and sexual violence; and about cultural, family and other barriers to "coming out" as queer/trans. Very few survivors sought out either informal support from their immediate families, or formal support from service providers such as domestic violence/sexual assault programs or LGBTQ programs. All who sought help from the police reported negative experiences. Most preferred confiding in friends and "chosen family", though they did not always know how to best support survivors, and there were issues of privacy and confidentiality related to being a small community where many people know each other.

## Focus for SCA2

Lack of resources & information on QT domestic violence for Korean community.

## Participants / Users

- Initially: readers of graphic novel
- Finally: participants in workshops

## Initial Prototype (Project Idea)

Creating & printing a pair of graphic novels or other illustrated collection, based on interviews with QT Korean survivors. One set would depict stories of positive queer/trans relationship dynamics or moments, especially when things could have gotten bad, but they did not. The other set would be survivors' stories, what would have helped them at the time, and info on how to support QT people in an abusive relationship.



## Highlighted Learnings & Reflections

### Experimentation & Course Corrections

- Pivoted from illustrated collection, to doing workshops, due to low staff capacity. Did a big lift getting the SCA1 report out, and needed to shift to something different.
- Got a lot of positive feedback from a couple of workshops they tried out at a QT Asian & Pacific Islander conference (NQAPIA) and a QT Korean conference, and wanted to develop it further.
- After running first workshop in Oakland, made a few tweaks to the registration process and content, based on participant feedback/ evaluation forms and their own observations and capacity.

### Final Prototype

Pivoted from illustrated collection, to planning a series of day-long workshops in Oakland, LA, NY, and Seoul doing a deep dive on community safety planning in the QT Korean community and peer support for DV. This was based on SCA1 research that showed that most people would go to friends when they were being harmed, but sometimes friends were not always a predictable source of support, depending on how much they understood DV.

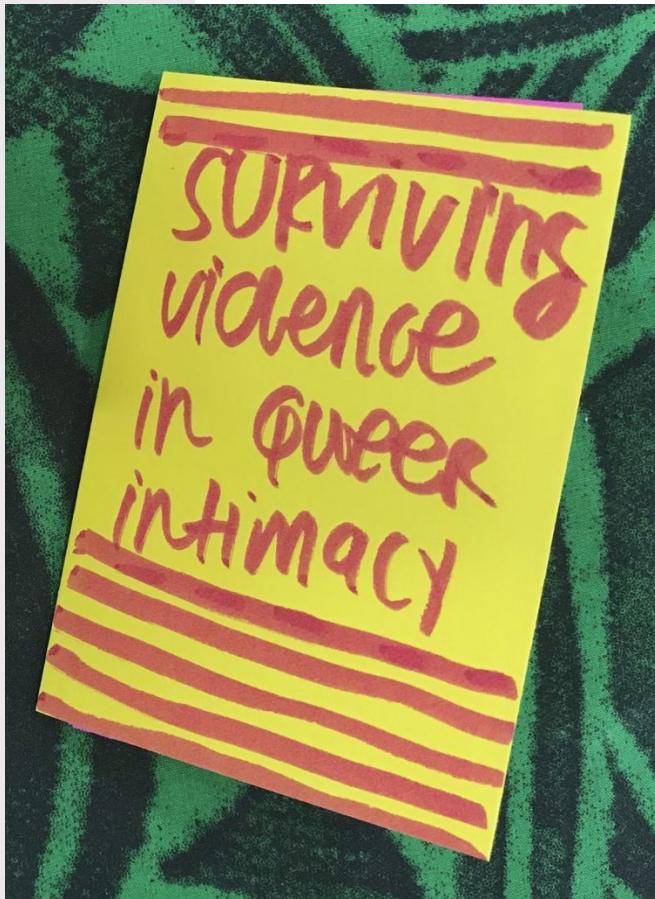
- ▶ There is such a high need and want for this information because things as they currently stand are not really working for people, but there is not much out there to meet that need.
- ▶ Need to tailor the DV training to be specific to QT folks and to also be culturally-specific. People are really interested in prevention and intervention work that's really tailored for them. Importance of doing work in small communities, that is also seated in those communities, otherwise you do not have access or reach. Cannot have an outsider doing this work, because it just feels like another layer of pathologizing, and QT Korean are already being pathologized all the time by mainstream culture and non-QT Koreans.
- ▶ People are very confused about what abuse is and how to identify it, as abuse can look so many different ways. Even in this small community, there is a lot of discourse about violence and abuse, but a disconnect exists between interpersonal violence and political/structural violence. DV does not always neatly map onto how we understand structural abuses of power. It is really helpful to educate on how it is a pattern of power and control, not always about individual acts or oppressed identities, and it also depends on who is using it.
- ▶ There is a big need for more practice and safety planning, such as role plays in peer support in which participants practice listening to someone and not rushing in to fix the problem.
- ▶ Developing/growing skills to support survivors is not outlandishly difficult – if you already have friends, you already probably know how to do emotional support. There are things that are very doable; there is a way to build that peer capacity so that when things come up, people are ready.

- ▶ A big goal is to get people to understand DV is about a pattern of power and control, not just individual acts. People get really confused by mutual abuse, especially in queer relationships, where it may seem mutual because they are both the same gender and both are oppressed. Want people to feel they are able to tackle these conversations on their own and build themselves up to do that.



## Next Steps

- Planning trip to Korea in the fall to do more workshops. Want to meet with multiple groups, particularly an anti-violence organization in one of the less-populated provinces, where this work can be more challenging and stigmatized.
- Thinking about doing smaller seminars and sharing with different community formations, such as folks doing queer feminist work; working with queer youth, etc.
- While workshops are great due to their more interactive nature, it would be good to have an online or written resource, as well, since not everyone can be reached by the workshops and the facilitators also have limited capacity.
- Think about how to balance the written curriculum, with the nuance and context that are necessary to present it in person. The skills to facilitate it are not instantly transferable, so need to think through who is an appropriate facilitator.





# Sikh Family Center (SFC)

Harmit Cheema

## Research Findings from SCA1

SFC conducted focus groups and interviews with Sikh women in the Bay Area, to find out more about what services and support already exist in the Sikh community to address family violence and how to strengthen these or create new ones. Participants particularly indicated that they would prefer more informal and community-based sources of support, rather than formal interactions with police, mainstream DV shelters, etc. Participants talked about how family violence and particularly violence against women is fairly common, but invisibilized due to survivors' and others' fear of stigma and losing face or being shamed within the community. Gurdwaras (faith centers), which are an important resource in many other aspects of community life, are not seen as being willing or able to offer support to survivors. Parents and family, particularly older generations, are perceived as not being reliably supportive, either. Participants wanted a way to raise awareness within the community about the pervasiveness of abuse, de-stigmatize it, find collective community solutions to address it, and ensure that younger generations understand how to have healthy relationships and gender norms, and to not regard abuse as acceptable or the norm.

## Focus for SCA2

Lack of supportive, culturally-specific services for Sikh survivors, and the lack of information on available options for survivors as well as not enough ease of access for them

## Participants / Users

- Youth participants in workshops
- Peers who participate in helpline training

## Initial Prototype (Project Idea)

1. Teen workshops with updated curriculum – workshop in a box
2. Peer training / outreach that will increase capacity to support the helpline



## Highlighted Learnings & Reflections

### Experimentation & Course Corrections

- Based on discussions with partner organizations or groups who are recruiting for and/or offering the workshops, have modified how the workshops are run. For example, one group only had a male facilitator but had a mixed gender audience and wanted a woman to co-facilitate, so SFC sent someone.
- Changed curriculum focus from high school students to college age, due to feedback from facilitators and their own observations about readiness for content and different ages' ability to access the workshop without fearing family interference.
- Based on participant feedback in the workshops, have thought about adding content such as on alcoholism and domestic violence

### Final Prototype

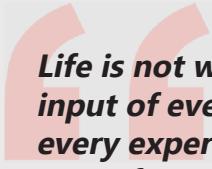
- Curriculum and facilitator's guide for the workshop in a box created by educational fellow for college students
- Infrastructure upgrades (updated website, created Salesforce database to track helpline).
- Training for volunteers
- At least three workshops done at different sites and with different partners

- ▶ While it is important to adapt to facilitators' and audience feedback, it is equally important to be careful not to change the core content, as it is central to the goal, and some of the content is going to be uncomfortable regardless.
- ▶ If you're reaching students, need to be mindful of their schedule and availability – for example, holidays and exam times
- ▶ Misunderstanding when people show interest in wanting to help on helpline. Upon discussion of how the helpline works, they are often surprised that it is more than just answering the phone, e.g., it includes maintaining confidentiality, since they collect and store information.

### Next Steps

- Planning Train the Trainer for the workshops
- Thinking about a regional community convening as the share-back
- Possibly create a mental health workshop now as there is a lot of interest

# Cross-Cutting Themes



*Life is not what you alone make it. Life is the input of everyone who touched your life and every experience that entered it. We are all part of one another.*

*Yuri Kochiyama*

The Design Thinking teams did not have significant interaction with one another after the opening convening, or an opportunity to share back their learnings and reflections with each other after their projects closed. However, over the course of multiple interviews with the teams, Institute staff observed several themes emerging from these conversations that seemed to resonate beyond a single team's experiences. In some cases, these themes came up in similar ways across multiple teams.

The themes have been broadly grouped into two categories: reflections on the process, funding and administration of the overall project, and how that impacted teams' own operations; and similarities between the work that teams chose to do, their communities' needs and strengths, and contextual issues.

## Process, Funding & Administration

### ■ COLLABORATION

All teams wished for more interaction and sharing of ideas between teams, similar to the all-team presentations at the closing of SCA1.

### ■ FLEXIBLE FUNDING

All teams expressed appreciation for the wide degree of trust they were given in managing their own funds, and the flexibility of what those funds could be used for. They contrasted this with what they described as "micromanaging" of other funders, who strictly dictate boundaries around both what the funding can be used for (which sometimes conflicts with cultural or facilitative needs, like offering meals, child care, and transportation to program participants), and the degree to which funding can be re-directed in response to participant feedback, staffing changes, or changing external conditions.

### ■ "LIBERATED GATEKEEPING"

Related to flexible funding, all teams mentioned a constellation of administrative practices operative in the project that supported their autonomy, which Institute staff collectively referred



to as "liberated gatekeeping". These included the ability (even the encouragement) to make quick shifts in project design without needing approval; check-ins with Institute staff provided helpful thought-partnership, project documentation and accountability, without acting like an "overseer" or requiring too-frequent meetings; accounting procedures that collected information using formats the teams were already commonly using; and the "global budget" format that allowed teams to use their funds in whatever ways they thought were necessary to accomplish their project (within the scope of the overall grant), such as filling short-term consultant needs or providing participant incentives.

#### ■ **TRUST & RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING**

Both the flexible funding and liberated gatekeeping approaches were undergirded by the focus on relationship-building throughout both SCA projects. This strong foundation built mutual trust, and ensured that Institute leadership could feel confident that the teams would be good stewards and use these resources wisely to build on the good work they were already doing. Similarly, the teams knew they could be up front about what was working or not working in their projects, and pivot accordingly, without fear of retribution or unreasonable demands.

#### ■ **STAFFING**

The ability to hire short-term consultants to complete targeted project goals was a great benefit. Conversely, high staff and volunteer turnover, and persistent underfunding of this extremely challenging work, consistently obstructed the work of many of the teams.

#### ■ **LOW COST, HIGH IMPACT**

As one team member stated, "This is a relatively small amount of money that will have a major lasting impact in the Deaf community."

#### ■ **MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES**

It was deeply meaningful to the teams to receive this funding support. One team member noted, "As people working in marginalized communities, working in community-based organizations, we don't have access to the funding that mainstream organizations have...we're working in the margins and we stay invisible, and it's not ok!"

#### ■ **EXPERIMENTATION NOT SUPPORTED**

Nearly every team spoke about how they were already interested in experimenting and risk-taking, but rarely have funding that supports it. As one said, "If you don't do what's in the grant, you get dinged – funders aren't interested in why [you're making the change] or how it's being responsive." Having experimentation as a fundamental attribute of this project was a breath of fresh air to many.

#### ■ **DESIGN THINKING PRINCIPLES BUT NOT JARGON**

The teams greatly appreciated the flexibility, adaptiveness, and survivor-centric qualities of the project, but rarely used Design Thinking jargon to describe them, outside of the opening convening.

## **Focus of Work & Community and Contextual Issues**

#### ■ **PRIMARY PREVENTION & EDUCATION**

All of the projects have some connection to primary prevention and/or education. SFC and DeafHope are explicitly developing curricula to educate their communities and change norms around healthy relationships/gender norms and social justice/equity, respectively. Similarly, QYUL developed a training curriculum for activists in their community who do social justice



work. Avellaka is seeking to change community norms around how LGBTQ/ 2Spirit Native folks are treated in their communities. MUA wishes to reclaim ancestral healing practices and change community norms around how indigenous people and culture are treated in their healing and organizing spaces. This focus on primary prevention of root causes and community norms change is unusual in the field, and insufficiently supported by most funders, who are more focused on crisis services and secondary prevention / interventions. Another commonality is that these curricula must be largely developed from scratch, because there are few or no existing resources that meet these community-specific needs.

#### ■ **MULTILEVEL AND WHOLE-COMMUNITY FOCUS**

It was notable that, when given the spaciousness to ideate, none of the teams chose to create a traditional secondary prevention-focused program or intervention. Instead, they created innovative ways for advocates to support survivors' healing, promote social justice and equity in their communities, and build both healthy intimate relationships as well as strengthen relationships between many different other groups in the community, such as between parents and children, and elders and other generations. Many of them looked to strengthen the community as a whole, or to connect different groups within communities, in order to shift community-level norms around violence and gender, rather than focus just on dyadic intimate relationships.

#### ■ **WHOLE-PERSON APPROACHES**

For both healing work and promoting equity for marginalized identities within marginalized communities (such as indigenous folks within the Latinx community; people of color within the Deaf community; and LGBTQ / 2Spirit folks within Native or Korean communities), several of the teams took the approach of validating and supporting the whole person, rather than only creating space for or validating one part or side of people.

#### ■ **COMMUNITY-SPECIFIC ADAPTATIONS**

For many of the teams, there simply is no existing vehicle or model that fits for their communities, so they needed to create it. For example, Avellaka created its own version of a PFLAG chapter, because the existing model did not fit. Similarly, DeafHope found that the vast majority of existing social justice resources are not in ASL, but most Deaf resources do not have the social justice content they needed, and particularly not around communities of color.

#### ■ **SMALL COMMUNITIES**

Both DeafHope and QYUL wrestled with how to handle issues that arise in small communities, where survivors and abusers may both show up at community-oriented events, and there may be a lot of overlap between the groups. How does one create a safe space around this, either in virtual spaces or in person?

#### ■ **OPEN SOURCE**

Because these communities are very small, there is a desire to share the resources that are developed as broadly as possible. For example, both DeafHope and SFC are aiming to create "open source" projects in which they post their curriculums online, for folks in the community to easily access and disseminate.

#### ■ **ANTI-COLONIALISM**

For the teams working with Native and indigenous communities, like Avellaka and MUA, their projects involved pushing back against colonialism and hearkening back to ancestral and pre-colonial traditions, practices, and stories. For Avellaka, this came up as reclaiming narratives about 2Spirit people's acceptance and honored status in Native communities; for MUA, it meant reintroducing traditional healing practices and de-stigmatizing their roots in indigenous culture. Both teams also had a strong connection to bringing in indigenous/Native languages,



which colonialist forces historically tried to suppress or eradicate. For other teams, histories of colonialism manifest in experiences of collective and historical trauma, such as in India (SFC) and Korea (QYUL).

## ■ **LANGUAGE JUSTICE**

Language is a critical part of culture and came up in multiple ways throughout the project. For example, QYUL grapples with how to translate terms related to sexual violence or queerness, when Korean (especially in Korea) does not have words to describe them. For MUA, it was important to support language justice in their meeting spaces, so that indigenous folks could communicate comfortably in their mother tongue, Mam. For SFC, the ability to communicate in Punjabi is critical to engaging older folks who are first generation immigrants. The SCA2 project maintained a separate language justice budget, so that any groups that needed language support could have it without cost to them, over and above their individual project budget.



# Recommendations



*There is no greater power for change than a community discovering what it cares about*

Margaret J. Wheatley

Based on interviews and discussions with the Design Thinking teams, a number of reflections emerged that were either directly identified by team members, or came out of the overall synthesis and analysis of project findings, as learnings that should be shared with philanthropic and other external stakeholders:

- **PROVIDE FLEXIBLE FUNDING**

Advocates need unrestricted, flexible funding so they can provide a holistic, culturally-appropriate experience for program participants, and swiftly respond to changing conditions and stakeholder feedback.

- **PRACTICE “LIBERATED GATEKEEPING”**

Funders and other external stakeholders need to minimize administrative and documentation burdens, maximize program autonomy, offer good thought-partnership, and share culturally-responsive adaptations of innovative practices like Design Thinking with historically marginalized communities who might not otherwise have access to those resources.

- **BUILD TRUST AND RELATIONSHIPS**

Much of the flexible funding and liberated gatekeeping approaches were predicated on a history of relationship-building, which led to mutual trust and respect between the Institute project leaders and the teams.

- **FOCUS ON PRIMARY PREVENTION & EDUCATION**

Communities urgently want to address current gaps in the field by changing norms to support healthy relationships, and educating on gender equity and social justice issues.

- **SUPPORT WHOLE-PERSON, WHOLE-COMMUNITY APPROACHES**

It was striking how much appetite there was, both for the teams and their communities, to approach anti-violence work from a multi-level or whole-community perspective. Similarly, it was really clear that this was needed for both healing work, and promoting equity for marginalized identities.



## **SUPPORT DECOLONIZING METHODOLOGIES**

For Native and indigenous communities, decolonization efforts can include re-affirming or re-connecting with ancestral and pre-colonial community norms, traditional ways of healing, origin stories and other folkways, and community-centric (rather than individualistic) relationship building.

## **EMBED LANGUAGE JUSTICE**

Supporting language justice – including earmarking sufficient financial resources that are free and easily-accessible – is critical to this work, especially in marginalized culturally-specific communities that are discriminated against and excluded on the basis of language.



# Conclusion

The SCA2 project is an object lesson in the innovative and adaptive approaches advocates are able to implement when they are supported with a high degree of autonomy, flexible funding, empathetic thought-partnership, and minimal administrative burdens. When they are given the spaciousness to dream big, and follow their preferred (though frequently unsupported) orientation towards experimentation and holistic, community-responsive program design, they can create wildly imaginative projects. And these projects aim big: they not only look to create healthy intimate relationships and positive gender norms, but also to build community-wide relationships, overturn inequities and toxic social norms, and decolonize love and healing.

Design Thinking (adapted for these communities) was a useful framing device through which team members could practice creative ideation, experimentation, rapid assessment and re-design, and “user-centered” (survivor-centered) design. However, we learned from the teams that many of these qualities are core to how they would wish to operate routinely, but funding constraints, inflexible project parameters, and unstable funding and staffing rarely permit it. This reality, together with the positive response from the communities in which these projects were embedded, underscores the urgent need to re-think traditional approaches to anti-violence work.

**We need to invest trust, stable resources, relationship-building, and autonomy into projects led by and for members of marginalized culturally-specific communities – because they know best how to catalyze radical transformations within their communities. Imagine what they might achieve if given the chance.**



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