Faithful Allies
Working with Christian Leaders

WHO IS KOREAN AMERICAN FAMILY SERVICES?

- Founded in 1983 by immigrant Korean women influenced by Dr. Tae Young Lee, Korea’s first female attorney, and women’s and children’s advocate
- Serve over 7,000 adults and children each year
KFAM OVERVIEW

- 42 Staff
- 13 Board Members
- 150+ Interns/Volunteers per year

- 4 key programs:
  - Counseling
  - Family Violence
  - Child Wellness
  - Asian Foster Family Initiative

COUNSELING AND MENTAL HEALTH

- KFAM’s mental health services are tailored to the unique needs of Korean American families, adults, & children
CHILD WELLNESS

- KFAM promotes child wellness & development through our Child Care Food Program
- Parenting seminars, children’s art workshops, Mommy & Me classes and other programs for Korean immigrant parents

ASIAN FOSTER FAMILY INITIATIVE (AFFI)

- AFFI launched in 2014
- AFFI recruits, trains, and supports Korean and other Asian Pacific Islanders (API) foster parents
- Strive to provide culturally appropriate homes to Korean/API foster children
FAMILY VIOLENCE

- KFAM’s Center for Women and Children provides free trauma-informed care and support for victims of violence.
- In 2019, provided 166 DVSA survivors with case management, counseling, & support group to
- Crisis hotline & walk-ins to 225 victims
- Plus other DV-impacted individuals: batterers’ intervention, anger management, individual/couples/family counseling, child supervised visitation, family law clinics

KFAM’s work with faith community

- Started in 2012 working closely with Korean faith leaders to build DV awareness, reduce stigma, improve 1st response
- Trained more than 1,000 Korean clergy members
- 40 hr. DV training, 2-day retreat, one day seminars, clergy conference, etc.
- We receive more referrals from churches, pastors are speaking on the pulpit, they are better first responders
Faith Leaders’ Knowledge of DV

- KFAM’s 2012 Community Assessment findings:
  - 8 out of 9 Korean survivors in focus group said they went to a faith leader before a DV service provider,
  - 100% had negative experience – were told their abuse wasn’t serious enough to warrant going to a shelter, criticized for calling police, shamed in the sermon for not supporting their husband
  - In survey of 102 Korean clergy, 60% reported they knew of DV amongst their congregants, yet only 28% referred them out (DV agency, counseling, police, etc.)

Why Christian Leaders?

- Easy way to reach out to the community
  - approx. 70-80% of Korean American immigrant families attend church regularly
  - The role of church & respect given to Christian leaders by the community
  - Church itself has various resources from the congregation
  - Congregation often gives absolute trust in faith leaders
### Values: DV v. Faith Community

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<th>Domestic Violence Community</th>
<th>Faith Community</th>
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<td>Feminist Origins</td>
<td>Patriarchal System</td>
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<td>Progressive, social justice values</td>
<td>Christian, conservative values</td>
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<td>Survivor-Center</td>
<td>Family-Centered</td>
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### Challenges?

- Since there are more male pastors, they bring conservative male dominant culture
- A lot of faith leaders believe they know everything they need to know about DV already
- A lot of victim blaming
- Don’t want to break up the family in any circumstance
- Not a lot of faith leaders acknowledge DV happening in their congregation
- When church find out about DV in their church, they would want to hide it rather than to open up or to speak up about it
- Messy situation because both partners & extended family often attending the church together
- When a pastor help a victim, she ends up leaving the church in the end anyways b/c of embarrassment
Clergy Conference

• Way to reach out to many clergy members
• 90+ attendees
• Guest Speaker, Panel discussion, Small group session..etc.
• To Introduce our agency and services around DVSA and to let them know about DV in the community.

2-Day Retreat for Women Leaders

• Started as a learning retreat for faith leaders where they learn about DV deeper.
• Utilize art and craft…etc. to provide “healing space” for participants
• Opportunity to building strong relationship/connection with faith leaders

• Why Women leaders?
  • In our community, women leaders are usually the ones that take care of families in the congregation.
40-Hr DV Training

- 40-HR DV Advocate Training
- In two settings; at KFAM and Seminary school
- Faith leaders learn how to serve their congregation as first responders
- Topics include DV 101, Sexual Assault, Legal issues (family law, immigration relief, criminal), dating violence, vicarious trauma, resources...etc.

Impact of our work

- KFAM's 2019 evaluation report findings:
  - Slight increase in noticing church members with DV related problems.
  - 43.5% of faith leaders identified DV as “the most serious problem” that Korean community faces compared to 15.7% in 2012.
  - Faith leaders have substantially gained knowledge in various forms of IPV.
  - Significant change in Korean faith leaders' perceptions toward the most appropriate way to help DV victims between 2012 and 2019
What Does it Take to Work with Christian Leaders?

- A lot of time/energy to build trust first before trying to change leaders’ belief
- Flexibility/patience handling different perspectives (sometimes opposing comments)
- Modifying training/outreach material to make it acceptable to Christian leaders
- Emphasis on how the training/DV is related to their work in ministry
- Need to attend events to make connection (ex. religious conference, prayers, services, etc.)

KFAM’s Strategy with Christian Leaders

- Emphasizing “Healthy Family” rather than “Domestic Violence”
- Utilizing group of Christian leaders as bridge (KFAC)
- Providing useful information/resources (e.g., 1-page sheet with list of dos/don’ts & numbers to shelters, legal aid, etc.)
- Having an event that could provide “healing” for them as well (2-day retreat for pastor’s wives focused on self-care)
- Providing opportunity for them to work closely with KFAM (e.g. volunteer for DV batterers’ group or facilitate small group discussion during 2-day retreats)
- Carefully timing controversial topics that could trigger negative reaction (hold off until trust is built)
- Facts rather than opinion
Takeways

- Be patient – building trust takes time
- Be humble – these are the respected leaders of the community who hold far more influence & sway than we do
- Be open minded – they may share different value systems and priorities, but ultimately we are all trying to create happier families and healthier relationships
- Be ready to be challenged – can be difficult working with those who may not respect things you feel deeply about
- Know your limits – think ahead where you, your colleagues, or your agency may have to draw the line

Question?
KFAM contact Information

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