

## IMHC SVP Key Informant Notes 1-22-09

### Attendees:

- Calvin Roberson, Indiana Minority Health Coalition
- Elonda Wilder-Hamilton, Independent Consultant, Elkhart Minority Health Coalition
- Angela Goode, Marion County Minority Health Coalition
- Kimber Nicoletti, Multicultural Efforts to End Sexual Assault
- Angie Turk, INCASA
- Tory Bowen-Flynn, INCASA
- Katie O'Bryan, INCASA
- Abby Kelly-Smith, ISDH, Rape Prevention and Education Program Director
- Mary Boutain, ISDH, Office of Women's Health intern

Abby called the meeting to get perspective from minority health coalition partners and gather information and feedback on how to include minority community partners in the state sexual violence prevention plan.

Kimber Nicoletti gave an hour-long presentation on her many years of work with underserved ethnic populations in Indiana around sexual violence primary prevention. She has mobilized and educated many communities, and she discussed the different approaches that it is necessary to take with sexual violence prevention in these communities. She highlighted the difficulties of working with particular groups (one example was Muslim men) and how she learned to adapt her work with them to their religious beliefs and culture. The populations she has worked the most with recently are the American Indian/Tribal communities in Indiana and she has a long history with the migrant farm worker population. Her presentation inspired discussion and questions.

Abby Kelly-Smith presented after the lunch break on the public health concept of sexual violence primary prevention. Discussion followed the victimization risk factor slide presented by Abby. One participant wanted to stress the point that primary prevention is best when focused on the perpetrator (risk factors for perpetration were presented on a previous slide) and to develop programs that address risk factors of becoming a perpetrator (or the protective factors of not becoming a perpetrator). Another participant viewed the victimization slide and stated her situation was not represented there. An explanation was given that the slide was not created to explain why victims are victimized but rather to address factors that increases one's risk to becoming a victim. The larger social context in which individuals exist provides information of areas that can be addressed for primary prevention of sexual assault.

The group then began giving input on other partners that could be involved in sexual violence primary prevention in minority communities. The importance of working with faith communities was discussed. It was suggested that churches and faith communities work to shape or build values and could be a powerful ally. It was noted that it would be important to have discussions

with faith communities while developing programming, and to allow the faith communities to shape sexual violence primary prevention messages in the context of faith. It would not be well-received to develop programs for faith-based communities without their integral involvement.

Another participant suggested that churches are closed systems like schools and lessons learned about working with closed systems need to apply.

One participant suggested that some Black churches she was familiar with did not work on social action issues but rather restricted themselves to “moral” issues or issues of faith. There was general consensus that other churches functioned in this way as well. One participant noted that experiencing sexual violence might cause a crisis of faith for church members.

A participant noted that some ministers are addressing issues such as HIV from the pulpit and should preach to those who are not “saved” or rather what they did before they were “saved”. It was suggested that pastors may not be prepared to deal with these issues (SV) and may welcome more information.

Another participant suggested the “First Ladies” group, made up of Indianapolis ministers’ wives, may be a good resource in the church where sexual violence primary prevention programming could be introduced.

A participant told of her experience of renouncing her faith following a sexual assault and her journey back to the church with help from a group called Stephen’s Ministers. She suggested this type of ministry was more effective for her than rape crisis counselors. Stephen’s Ministers are lay ministers trained in grief counseling and she suggested that directing educational efforts to this group of lay ministers may be beneficial as most large Christian churches have Stephen’s Ministers as part of the ministry team.

It was suggested by another participant that using the faith community’s teachings to address the issue of sexual violence prevention would be important. An example: Wives’ obedience to husbands—what does that mean and how does that translate to relationships today.

It was suggested that some of the churches would be easier to engage than others. PAW (Pentecostal Assemblies of the World) are historically very staunch and straight-laced. Methodist may have more social action involvement. Catholics may be based on individual priest.

A suggested approach would be “Help us better empower you to discuss/educate on this topic”.

Marion county faith-based community: churches are taking the lead on some topics. There is a hierarchy of churches. PAW headquartered in Indianapolis. It would be necessary to mobilize through leaders.

Understanding that mentality is different in rural and urban church members approach may need to be different.

There was some discussion on “Plan B” distribution at Catholic hospitals. Not sure if it was being distributed to rape victims at Catholic hospitals.

There was enthusiasm from the group regarding working with faith communities as many see it as a largely untapped resource in the community. May want to pilot a program with one church and see how it goes.

It was also suggested that child sexual assault be addressed in the State prevention plan. INCASA will provide information for the report and recommendations regarding the prevention of sexual violence to children.

Fraternalities and sororities should be engaged. Most fraternalities have headquarters in Indianapolis. Magazines are published for alumnae and members and this might be a good use of media.

Suggested that there might need to be subcommittee to put together contacts for these groups and start meetings with these communities.

Questions were raised about corporation involvement. Lilly, Wellpoint, Vectron connected with sexual harassment training that is already required at these companies.

André Carson, U.S. House of Representative for Marion county, is very interested in SV and DV issues.

YWCA/YMCA have some SV programs already. May want to tap into those networks and expand to churches.

Indiana Youth Institute could/should be a partner. Juvenile Justice?

Possible to make use of social networking sites such as FACEBook. INCASA may already be doing some of this.

Indiana Black Expo, NAACP, Athlete's organizations could also be valuable partners.