

***Learning from Survivors:***

***The Beginning, the Middle, and the End of Community Assessment Projects***

*Olga Trujillo, Praxis International*

*with Alex Wilson, Department of Educational Foundations, University of*

*Saskatchewan*

*May 3, 2016*

Hello everybody and welcome to this webinar on institutional analysis presented by Praxis international in partnership with the office on violence against women. Today's webinar is learning from survivors, the beginning, the middle and the end of community assessment projects. My name is Olga Trujillo and I am the senior training and program specialist here and Praxis international.

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We have a few others on today's webinar. First we have other Praxis staff. First Maren Woods whom who will be monitoring the chat during today's webinar. Maren was also part of a project were going to be talking about, the native woman's research project in she would jump in from time to time and bring questions in and also with some of the content. Then we have lives Carlson, also Praxis staff and she will be managing the technical details of your participation. Before we get going I will pass this to Liz in see if she has got some important participation tips to go over.

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Thanks, Olga. Glad you could be with us today. Just a couple of tips to ensure a good webinar for you today. We have all of the phone lines muted. If there is anyone participating just by telephone, you won't be able to ask your questions through the audio connection but if you are able to send an e-mail to Liz@-- I would do my best to get it integrated into our conversation and also use that same e-mail if you have any audio issues. For the rest of us participating in the webinar itself, I will refer you to the lower left 10 portion of your screen. You see the tab that says public. That is the place to add your questions or comments at any point throughout our session today and asked Maren has demonstrated it is also a nice opportunity and a way to check-in about the weather across the country. If any of you would like to send a chat to the group letting us know where you are calling from, it looks like a few people are doing that right now, we appreciate it. It looks like there is a range from sun and cold and nasty weather. We are somewhere between all of that. We are glad you are witness. If you need to or would like to chat privately with our presenters today, whether a question or technical issue, you will see a tab that says private. If you open that tab and double-click on the presenters name that will allow you too have an individual connection with that person. That is also an option. If you get disconnected to either the webinar or the telephone at any portion, rejoined through your original process. If you happen to be connected for the audio component through voice over IP, the Internet audio. If it becomes low at any time during our session, you also have the option to dial in by telephone and once you make that connection you can turn the volume of your speaker off. Right now you will see the phone number for the conference line in the conference code in front of you should you need to dial back in by telephone. If it becomes low. Just remember if there

any interruptions for you in your participation today, this session is being recorded and will be posted to the institutional analysis archive recording page so you can revisit there. Olga, that is all I have.

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Thanks a lot. Let me tell you a little bit about our webinar today and our presenters. Today we will be exploring the ways in which communities can engage survivors to inform their services, advocacy and institutional responses to gender-based violence. Learning from the experience of survivors can transform your system. Alex Wilson our guest knows this well. I think it may be fair to say that Alex was one of the key researchers involved in probably the most extensive community assessment track this and she is our guest today. Let me take a bit about Alex. Alex's faculty at the Department of educational foundations at the College of education at the University of Saskatchewan. She is -- and received a master's degree and doctorate in education from Harvard University. Alex has been involved in a number of research and community projects including the -- resource centers community consultation on the creation of a virtual health and human resources center of excellence. Also involved in developing a method of assessing violence and safety in schools. Gay, lesbian and two spirit narratives from northern Canada and the criminal and civil justice systems response to Native American women who experience domestic violence. Alex is an organizer for Idle No More. Before return to Alex let's talk a little bit about the importance of incorporating the lived experience of violence. As some of you know, I've been bringing my lived experience of violence into my work on gender-based violence for almost 20 years. I believe that we do better when we incorporate survivors experiences in what we do. Figuring out how to bring their lived experience into our work is probably the tricky part and is vitally important. We've seen people using focus groups, community conversations, group interviews, talking circles, etc.. These allow us to learn from the first-hand experiences real people have with the systems we seek to change. They also provided opportunity for survivors to give back to their community to provide insights, experiences and suggestions to advocates, law enforcement, prosecutors and others to who come in contact with survivors of violence against women. Careful, thoughtful preparation, facilitation and analysis are key to honoring the contributions survivors make to our community assessment process. This webinar will offer concrete strategies and tools to support successful implementation of focus groups.

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Before we can get into the meat of how people have done this and in particular how Alex and others were able to do this on the native women's research project, let's talk about the lived experience of violence and the ways in which able around the country have been getting survivors involved. First of all, the lived experience of violence refers to people's first-hand accounts and reflections in relation to the full context of their lives. Lived experience tells people stories but it is more than this happened to me. It is people's reflective stories about the meaning of what has happened and the context of identity, culture and history. Lived experience pays particular attention to the ways in which people are marginalized according to identity, position and oppression in relation to the larger or dominant society. All experience however is not the lived experience. For example, being battered, living with battering is an experience. Watching a documentary about battering is an experience but not a lived experience.

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What I have seen across the country is programs and communities using a variety of different tools to try to get input from survivors based on their experience of violence and the programs

that are either providing services, advocacy or the system responses. I've seen people using surveys and in particular I've seen surveys used when women are leaving shelter or exiting advocacy services and in particular in sexual assault cases. Rather than using focus groups where it might be harder to get survivors to participate to utilize surveys to get feedback, I've also seen interviews used in sexual assault cases with survivors who have experienced sexual assault but we see these as women are leaving the shelter. Some programs will do exit interviews and you'll see people doing interviews with survivors who have experience with a particular part of the system. Advisory groups are also an interesting way to get survivors involved. What I've seen programs do in St. Paul, Minnesota, women who have participated with there services and participated in advocacy or shelter services, after they have left no longer needing advocacy or services, but ask if they would be willing to participate in an advisory committee to meet on a regular basis to give them feedback or help them figure out some issue as they are making changes to there programs to get there input. I know other programs around the country have also used listening sessions. Coalitions have used listening sessions and they will go either to community members or they will go to shelters or outreach programs and get an idea of how women are experiencing those programs or the system r esponses. What is interesting here in particular with listening sessions is that they are not just looking to people who have participated in the process or in services but also survivors who have not participated and getting a sense of why it is they haven't. Maybe it is limited English proficiency and there isn't language access or it might be the advocates were the system folks aren't people they feel comfortable working with. Both are equally important. Then of course there is focus groups. Focus groups or talking circles or other types of group discussions have been utilized throughout the U.S., especially as people have been doing community assessments.

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Let me check in with folks here, if you could use the chat, have you incorporated the lived experience of survivors into your work and if so, if you could say like we've done focus groups, like what vehicle have you used? I will wait a minute to see what the chat looks like. Mehran, could you let us know what folks are saying?

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Sure. We will give folks a second to chat in.

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Focus groups, surveys. Donna was talking about conducting focus groups starting with existing current client groups and inviting others. Some folks have used the inclusion of responses to surveys or focus groups in grant reports or community events.

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A really good point. The information they get from survivors is helpful for grant reports and even grant applications.

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Kathy is moving to have survivors on advisory boards. They also have the speakers group. Lucy was talking about a speakers group from her community that did a talk in Bozeman last month. Exit interviews in shelters. Support group meetings. I know some people have used town halls as a format to get some feedback from the c ommunity.

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These are really great examples. Thanks very much. Feel free to keep chatting those in. This is really helpful. Women's Expo, that is interesting. Really great ideas. The reason we are bringing this up in particular is because in the community assessment, the heart of the community

assessment process is the lived experience of the survivor. We were talking about lived experience, this graphic describes well the ways in which you bring in culture, the immediate circumstances, the way the institutions response impacts the survivor and the family and also what risks are generated and how important that is as you do a community assessment. At the heart of every community assessment, does this policy or practice enhance the safety of the survivor or does it diminish the safety of the survivor? Does it enhance offender accountability? That is always going to be what you are asking. It is hard for folks. When you are working as part of a team even as an advocate you get used to what the system responses are. Your job is to kind of really change the way institutions response, but you know them really well. Without making an effort to really get the input by the survivors who are experiencing these system responses, you can lose that perspective and instead focus on what it is the system wants or needs in terms of how to make it easier for the systems workers. It's a really key factor to getting there input. That is part of the reason we talked about this as the beginning, the middle and the end because learning from survivors in a community assessment is at the heart of what a community assessment is about. It helps I identify gaps. It helps clarify. What is the scope and focus of the assessment? As you're going through to go back to the community in the middle to get more details about the gaps, to tease out what might be the experience of survivors, like something that is coming up. For example if you're looking at intimate partner sexual violence but in the course of doing your interviews or text analysis you start seeing an issue around language access. Then you can go back to your community and your survivors to ask more details about those gaps. It can be a lot more targeted. Again at the end as you are starting to see what your findings might be and your recommendations are, it is again really important to go back to your community and to the survivors to find out the impact of what that might be, if the findings fit or some of the recommendations. In one community, they were really unsure about one of the recommendations they had and that was whether to have patrol officers asked domestic violence survivors whether they had been sexually assaulted? They were leaning towards doing that and then went back to the community and went back to survivors and asked. Because of some of the unintended consequences, they backed away from that. It just makes community assessments much more robust and I think more effective.

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That is just a little bit of the importance and the ways in which people get the lived experience from survivors. I think I will go ahead and invite Alex who has been patiently waiting. Thanks so much for being here.

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Hi there.

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Alex, I wonder if you could start by telling us about your institutional analysis project?

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Sure, before I do that I want to thank you for the invitation to be on this webinar and I also want to acknowledge the traditional territories. I'm in my home community and I want to acknowledge that as indigenous folks we have been around on this land for tens of thousands of years and it's an important thing to recognize. Maybe this is another way for our people to be involved in the chat function and maybe they can type in the traditional territory they are joining the call from.

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In Canada where I am, -- women have a long historical experience of colonial violence. We wanted to frame all of this within the history of what's happened to him indigenous people.

When the input patients are impacts of that is the women have experienced violence on much higher rates than non- indigenous communities. You can frame that in terms of historical genocide. Women here are three to four times more likely to experience intimate partner violence and the same statistics hold true for Native American women in the U.S.. -- is an indigenous group within a domestic abuse advocacy group within Minnesota and they provide training assistance to tribal nations across the land to our organizing in cities towns and on first Nations or reservations to confront violence against native American women by there partners. We applied for funding from the national Institute of Justice to conduct an analysis of the U.S. criminal and civil justice systems handling of domestic violence cases specifically involving native women.

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There are two things we looked at. Because tribal nations in the U.S. have sovereignty to some degree, they are able to set up there own legal and justice system so it was a strategic time about 15 years ago to look at how tribal nations could set up effective intervention strategies to protect the physical and sexual safety of indigenous women and there families and look at what interventions if any tribal nations could adapt from the existing U.S. legal system that would likely strengthen and protect the relationship between indigenous women who had experienced domestic violence and there families and children. The mending the sacred hoop staff organized a team consisting of four indigenous researchers from the University of Minnesota Duluth. I was lucky to be one of those four. Three elders from the community and the number of community members who had either used or worked in the local community-based human service agencies. They sought the assistance of a number of indigenous experts across the country as well to kind of guide the process. The project drew on the expertise of Praxis international and people such as Maren on the call were a big part of that project as the coordinator. Basically we looked at both the criminal and the civil legal assistance response to Native American women who had experienced domestic violence.

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What was that you thought you would find?

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From our own experiences, we hypothesized our findings and we thought Native American women are more for verbal to continued violence than women of European descent mainly because legal and human services agencies have institutional practices historically, policies and practices that fail to address our realities as native women. Our project sought to increase our understanding of how this occurs and kind of provide a layout for change in native and non-native agencies. We prod together native and non-native researchers and Native American community leaders to adapt the Duluth safety and accountability audit process for on reservation and non- reservation communities.

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Some of you might've heard of Dorothy Smith. She is a Canadian sociologist and we had her expertise along with Alan Pentz and they discovered something called an institutional ethnography. That method is used to uncover how institutional practices or systemic practices carried out by non-native criminal justice systems either enhance or marginalized attention to the safety needs of Native American women. We know both supportive services and legal interventions are far less available to Native American women then to non-native women. Over the past few centuries the federal government's policies regarding Native Americans or American Indians has served to undermine and our historical social controls, our traditional social values

that in most nations that have governed or self governed practices that have forbidden abuse against women or violence against women. Tribal controls over men's use of violence coupled with the introduction of European notions of male supremacy and maybe thinking about women as the property of men have really been disastrous for Native American women. And there children and families.

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The criminal justice system today response to mounting criticisms about his approach to crime associated with violence against Native American women. We know native women aren't equally protected by the civil land, the criminal justice system. In fact, some women become more vulnerable to abuse. For example in Duluth where a study was taking place, Native American women are rested at six time higher rates than non-native women and Native American women are far more likely to report hostile police interventions to advocates than non-native women and currently right now there is a huge study going on that looks at native girls and how please respond to there needs and finding extremely high rates of violence from the police themselves.

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There wasn't at the time in a study that scrutinized how negative outcomes are produced in the process, the case management processes of the criminal court system. One of the things that happens is often people focus on an individual, like a 911 operator or an individual police officer and said there is one bad cop or one misogynistic person in the system. What we wanted to do is look at the bigger picture and see how does the same thing keep getting reproduced and what exactly when interventions are working if a ny. We expected the process would uncover the practices in case processing that frequently fail to protect native women and ones that might have worked.

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Is interesting. In your answer I can hear the ways in which your community assessment or institutional analysis would be helpful in terms of looking at how people's work was organized rather than the individual workers. Why is it you went to committee assessment and how was that u sed?

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I think that is the key always in understanding how institutions work, like how the workers fit into the big p icture. We were asked to conduct a research project that stayed true to indigenous ways of knowing, and also the standards of the federal funding agency which is the national Institute of Justice. We also wanted to further our understanding of how we could draw from that experience of the U.S. legal system and design indigenous interventions to protect women from continued abuse. We had a number of guiding principles, is that what you want me to focus on?

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That would be great.

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This project is unique because I think it was the first time the national Institute of Justice had funded something that was designed and led by indigenous women. We were involved in all aspects of the designing of it which meant it came from an indigenous world view. There is some kind of guiding principles or guidelines we came up with as a group that also coincided or were congruent with other indigenous folks that were doing research at the time, qualitative research and other forms of research. At that time there really wasn't a field of indigenous research methodologies, but today there is. It is quite a big field and recognized by many people and used

by many indigenous people. When we started the study it was just kind of developing. We had some principles and one was we are the interpreters or not the owners that originate knowledge. The understanding is that knowledge belongs to all of us and is communal. Each of us has a place in contributing to knowledge, but not one person owns it. It is a little bit different than the Western understanding of copyright and copyright infringement and trademarking. This is an understanding we are working together as a group and each of us play a part in that. It also recognized there is a bigger picture in all of this and that is cosmology. Cosmology is our understanding of how we came to be in the world. I started by acknowledging my home traditional territory here but also the bigger picture in terms of our connection to the land and to the water and to everything that has a spiritual life. That is the way most if not all indigenous languages and cultures are framed and a belief system based on the understanding there is a spiritual consideration beyond us as humans so we wanted to recognize spiritual connections and we did that in a number of ways. One in the region we were in it was culturally appropriate to offer a gift so the notion of reciprocity is important and in that community often people would use tobacco or cloth or sometimes food to honor that reciprocal relationship. We offered tobacco, or the elders offered tobacco and brought along the researchers and team members to offer tobacco to the practitioners in the legal system and others when we approached them for help in conducting our studies. We came from the approach that we weren't know it all's. We were asking for their help and really shifted the relationship. I remember going to the police chief and he was offered tobacco. He was caught off guard I guess because he was confused. I think many times people think when researchers are coming in to look at your system that it's going to be about scrutiny and often they get defensive but establishing a relationship in that way kind of set the groundwork for working together over a long period of time towards a common goal. It shifts people's energy and shifts their mindsets that we are not there to attack the with the earth -- we are there to do something together that is important. Another example is you started off by talking about the importance of lived experience and bring in the lived experiences of women who have experienced different forms of violence. That is really key. It's not just the lived experiences. One of the things we found out very quickly once we started working as a group is we were having really significant dreams. We started recording our dreams and talking about them. It just isn't present lived experiences. It can go beyond that into dreams and history and some people may call that blood memory or whatever terminology you use. It is beyond him. System. In Piros is a means you can touch, feel, taste and here. We went beyond that to recognizing there is something else out there we don't know everything about. We also had a feast to welcome community participants into the study and into the work and the feast again was recognizing the territory. Recognizing the significance of our connection to land. Making the connection between violence against bodies and violence against land, resource extraction and the destruction of the environment and saying we are here for purpose. We did a pipe ceremony to kind of get us all in the same emotional and physical and mental space to do this hard work. We even gave the project a traditional name. There was a lot of additional work we did. People involved in this project to ensure it was done from a good place in our hearts. It wasn't just a go to go and get information and analyze it and send out a report. It was very much recognizing the significance of all of our lives.

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In those relationships that were recognized and validated through ceremony and other protocol, there is also relational accountability. We came from the perspective and understanding that with every relationship, whether it is between people were between us and the land or us and life,

water, animals, plants or even the relationship between us and ideas concepts that there is an accountability. Once you enter into a relationship there is that accountability that goes along with that. We took that accountability very seriously. It was our accountability to one another as a team and also our accountability to the community that we were doing this work for and why we started doing this in the first place, and accountability to the greater good I guess.

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Then I talked about reciprocity, honoring the balance when you take something, like information or ideas that you give something in return. Our ultimate goal was to improve the lives of indigenous women and we as indigenous women were part of that. It was helping our own communities. Of course it is recognizing as well that it's not just an academic exercise, that it is a holistic process. We tried to continually remind ourselves through the process and through protocols that the spiritual, physical, mental and emotional process we were going through, not just the research team but also the communities and the women that we were talking with or were part of the work, that had to be considered, too.

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We used the safety and accountability audit as it was called because it allowed us to analyze and institutions starting from the standpoint of indigenous women. Going back to the lived experiences or the experiences of the people who are being impacted and why we want to make the change in the first place. We designed the project to identify specific processes that were either problematic or helpful for women and then we traced the origins back to how workers were organized and again to reiterate, we weren't looking at good workers or bad workers but we were focusing on away that all workers were coordinated as you said to participate in institutional processes that either do or do not protect indigenous women.

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The design of your analysis of your project was really unique. I wonder if you could talk a little bit about that?

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It was unique in a number of ways. A number of things we did, one is we started with mapping. We drew this huge map of all the different players in the civil system and in the criminal system. We had a map with little strings attached that covered the entire wall, one for civil and one for criminal. All the jobs that take place within each of those, that was part of it, just to see the whole picture of how everyone fits together. We did individual interviews, one-on-one interviews with practitioners and with people who had have used the system in some way. We did observations. That was kind of interesting, going on right alongside or observing in the court for example. We analyzed different police reports and case files. Then we did focus groups as well. We shaped our focus groups like talking circles. There are many ways our project was unique. As I mentioned we wanted to stay grounded and the lives and experiences of indigenous women. Elders were advisors of the entire project from beginning to end. Elders from both of the indigenous community and the research community who had senior people doing research for a long time that were involved. The elders advised us to approach each agency offering tobacco so that is how the tobacco practice came about I mentioned earlier. Because we needed access to files, we were able to observe processes and interview workers that we probably wouldn't have been able to if we hadn't established that strong relationship and made it clear that we were going to honor our accountability in the relationship. There were community members on the civil research team and on the criminal research team. Each team was led by indigenous researchers. The team members came from the community and they were native women who had either used

or been caught up in the legal system or worked for community agencies that worked with the legal system. Everyone involved had their own specific knowledge of the impact on the lives of indigenous women. And then we had the talking circles.

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Can you tell me a little bit more about the talking circles?

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For those that don't know, you might've heard of a focus group before. A focus group is a group for you get people together and focus certain questions around what you were trying to find out and there is a process to it. It is used a lot in marketing and we use it in domestic violence research because it is a way to bring women, in this case women together who have a lot of knowledge and experience on the topic. For Native American women and specifically in the Midwest, the community region where we were, there is a practice called a talking circle and a talking circle kind of mimics or follows a communication pattern many indigenous folks use and that is where one person talks and then there is some time and the next person talks and then the next person talks. It is built in that one person speaks and then there is time for reflection and thought and that is a communication pattern fairly common in indigenous nations in the middle part of this land, and probably elsewhere as well. This method of a talking circle developed out of that communication protocol. It was culturally appropriate for the region we were in.

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In other communities and some families even people talk and they will finish each other's sentences. When I'm in a community like that I'm really uncomfortable so I often don't speak because I find it confrontational or I find I am competing to talk. For me, it is not really a safe space to be myself so we try to create a safe space for indigenous women to be themselves in a protocol that kind of works for that community. This is into stereotype all native people of course, but it is something people are generally comfortable with and used to. We've called it the talking circle. We had questions with followed and a process we followed. We held these community talking circles in many different areas of the region that we were doing this work in. Some within a larger urban city. Some on the reservation, some in community centers. Others in like the back of the meeting space in a restaurant, etc.. What we weren't prepared for was the huge number of people who attended the first talking circle.

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I think there was like 25 women.

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We were expecting about 10 and word got out and people came. They even brought their children. We had to think quickly and divided the group into smaller groups and luckily we had enough people to do the groups. It was a learning lesson for us because so many people had told us if you have a focus group or you were doing research, you won't get any native women coming. We had many people tell us that and it was the exact opposite.

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That's really impressive. What is really interesting is there is like three different things I want to say and they are a little bit off, but one of the things when you were talking about how there is people that answer and finish your sentences, I will say I think that is a bit of an East Coast thing. I have to work really hard not to do that to people. That totally resonated. It is a good reminder in terms of the different cultural references in terms of how you set some talking circles or get feedback from survivors as recognizing that. I can't really tell whether it is an East Coast thing or

a -- because it was also prevalent in my family so really good points at the subtleties of how to help those participating in the talking circles to be more comfortable and participate.

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I think knowing your community is key. I know one time I was invited to facilitate a group when I was down in Los Angeles and it was mostly African-American people. Within two seconds it was like this process is not going to work with us. We had to quickly come up with something that actually worked for the community so it was a learning lesson.

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That's great. I want to stop right here and see if we have any questions Maren is holding onto or if you have been waiting to ask a question now is a good time to enter a question into the chat. While I'm waiting to see if there are any questions, I wanted to let you know Alex people did talk about the lands they are on, the tribal lands. We've heard there is widget [Indiscernible] Osage and [Indiscernible]. People totally participating in the chat. I keep forgetting you are not able to see that.

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Donna have a question about the geographic area where this project was conducted.

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It was four jurisdictions within the Midwest of the United States.

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Sort of the northern Midwest U.S..

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Yes.

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I will add it was generally small jurisdictions although there was an urban center that had a larger system let's say and several other more rural communities that surrounded the urban region.

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When you say urban, you were saying Duluth?

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Correct.

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I just want to make sure people have a picture because when I think urban, I think New York City.

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Urban relative [Indiscernible].

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To me, Duluth is urban.

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[Indiscernible] was also a consideration as we went through.

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Alex, can you say little bit more about the strategies you used to get so many people to participate in your talking circles?

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I think the main thing was that really wasn't even a strategy, it was providing people with a voice. I don't think we can ever underestimate the power of making space for people that have been historically marginalized and oppressed, so just providing that space itself is powerful.

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The feast I mentioned earlier, involving the community, people knew about it. The first feast we had I think there were 24 people that came. From there we asked people if they wanted to continue to be involved in the process of the work and out of that group, over half of them said they would like to continue on to help with the data collection part. That was one thing, to make it open to the community and from the community have people involved who were intimately impacted by this and wanted to see change. Because mending the sacred hoop is well respected in that region, they had a good reputation. They are the made many connections with the community so it wasn't too difficult to get the word out. Also having elders involved gave it another layer of legitimacy.

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This is Maren, I like to make one comment before we move onto the next content area. The native women's research project was the first project that utilized the safety and accountability audit methodology I was a part of. Since then they have held every audit Project to project to that standard. It was an amazing project and well resourced, not only through funding but also because of the community connections. The thing I love about this project we are highlighting is the way in which the entire project was designed with community and lived experience. It wasn't just focus groups which we see a lot of in other audits that have been conducted since then, the lived experiences represented by community-based advocates which is vital and important, but the actual voices of battered women or survivors of sexual assault come to the focus groups. It is why I get excited about sharing this project because I think he gives us a different perspective on how community assessment projects like these can be designed throughout the entire process.

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It is so tricky. What I love about what you all did was that you Incorporated elders and the community members were on the team and part of the study group that people had voiced through the talking circles. It just feels real and meaningful involvement and information that you are getting. My worry is so many of the ways in which we look at how we can change systems involve our CCRs and our system folks and how to meaningfully bring community into it. Just like kind of adding a community member to a CCR or an assessment team wouldn't really work. It might even backfire and set up that community member. This is really powerful what you all did.

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That reminds me, we just didn't say elder ABC come and be a part of this. That relationship part was really important because like you said it could backfire so we were really careful about the relationship with elders that had an understanding of how domestic violence worked and how sexual violence works. We weren't going to reinforce oppressive practices themselves. That is a tenuous thing to discuss especially in different cultural communities where patriarchy has really been forced on communities and religious groups, etc.. We were really careful about taking the right time to establish and strengthen those relationships and also ensure we were going to move in the right direction rather than undo things by certain people.

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I wonder if you could talk a little bit about your findings.

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Sure, can I say a couple of logistic things I thought were important, in people think and people think of these things now, but it was into common at the time. Make sure there was childcare provided and the times when we had the talking circles were convenient for the most people and provide food. And we provided time for people to get there and we were careful about starting

when we said we would and ending when we said we would and honoring their time and providing stipends or transportation for people to get there and providing advocacy as well. Those kinds of things are small points that they are also very important.

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People do forget that.

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Going to the findings, like I said earlier, we expected we might uncover maybe some individual biases and cultural insensitivity or individual examples of racism or lack of cultural competency that might've led to the protection of indigenous women and their children. What we found was an all pervasive way of knowing and thinking about and acting on cases involving violence against indigenous women that produced false accounts of indigenous women's experiences and promoted a state intervention in indigenous women's lives that not only fail to protect women under the stated goal of the U.S. system to ensure public safety, but actually drew indigenous women into state forms of social regulation that further endangered them. Rather than protecting we found some were further harmed just by the fact they entered into the system in some way. We focused on how the institution itself carries with it an overall worldview or ideological practice that dictates a way of thinking about and handling the actions based on that thinking of these cases we were looking at. And a way of thinking and acting that precludes intervention from attending to the most cherished values of indigenous people which was our connections to our relatives and the sacredness and sanctity of women and the bond between women and children and the notion of holism was severed and all forms of interconnection were disconnected. We found a lot of evidence the system replicates many of the characteristics of battered women's relationships with their abusers. We are seeing patterns and features within relationships between an abuser and someone who has been abused better on a bigger picture happening within systems, even on the larger picture happening within the ongoing process of colonization. It was a big row microcosm of what is happening in a relationship where there is power and control happening.

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I know you identified some problematic features, and this kind of has become a really big theme in terms of looking at kind of the way institutions take up the lived experience of survivors. When was this assessment done?

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I think we started in 1999. We finished in 2000 something, it was a really huge project. We did find problematic features. We started to categorize and write down themes that were coming out and from there we put them into these features that seemed to be problematic. There were so many of them and we ended up just kind of listing them and I think those have morphed into the 12 problematic features of institutions of social management that people are using today to look up the civil system and the criminal system. Do you want me to go over some of those categories?

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Maren, do you have a question in the chat?

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Specifically looks like people are wondering about sidetracking violence and textually coordinated meant. We have about 10 minutes left, maybe we can focus on those two and then I will send a link to the executive summary for this report the people can read more about the other findings.

Could you also send a link to the article?

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Absolutely.

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Sidetracking violence was where the impact or the actual degree of violence is kind of removed from the whole situation. Women become cases so their lives are removed from the case and the case file kind of moves through. One example of sidetracking violence was in the jurisdiction where there is a requirement that the victim had to be notified at least three times prior to the release of the perpetrator or the partner. One example we saw of this, and we saw it in many other ways, too, the correctional officer phoned at 1:06 to notify the victim is being released and there is no answer. The correctional officer phoned that 1:08 and no answer. The correctional officer phoned at 1:16 and still no answer. Up according to departmental policy they made three attempts to contact the victim and under their policy that is expending reasonable efforts to notify the victim. The judge can then release the suspect. The violence has been removed from the actual what happened. Three calls to comply with the requirement, a reasonable attempt and the suspect is let go. What was the other question?

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The other one was about what does textually coordinated mean?

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That is when people's lived experiences are reduced to a written report and that written report becomes the official record and becomes a case file and it stands in for person. For every like a police report that is made, whatever text is in that small report, and we looked at how many reports, some of them were less than a paragraph and that became the person's experience, the woman's experience. Everything was coordinated around that little bit of text which was so minimal in many cases. That is what textually coordinated means. There is an overreliance on these little pieces of text here and there.

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Alex, we have about five minutes left. Maren, anymore questions in the chat?

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No other questions in the chat. This theme about textually coordinated is why a lot of the work I think has come out from lots of safety audits including this one and attention to make sure those police reports represent as well as they possibly can the full depth of the risk and danger survivors are facing because of that report is standing in for her experience and if they're going to continue to be reliant on these texts that take her place basically, a lot of advocates have been working to make sure those police reports are really documenting that well.

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Right, and well people doing community assessments are doing text analysis and making recommendations about how to change those forms because if it's not on there, they don't ask it and record it. -- record it. Alex, could you talk a little bit about the recommendation?

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Sure. We have a number of recommendations. We kind of went back to those indigenous values and that there needs to be a way to honor all of our relationships and that the system needs to be holistic and truly respect women in order to have integrity for indigenous people in the communities.

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Community involvement must've been really big in terms of reaching that recommendation.

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Yes. It was important. Even for those of us that were so-called researchers, going into a courthouse for example and observing, we had a very different view on things. We had our own experience as indigenous people, the attitude with that and having elders involved. They were necessarily working within the system so they didn't necessarily share the assumptions of those who routinely work within these institutions. That was part of it.

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That is again the challenge of having community be really part of the team in a really robust way. Then you are more likely to come up with recommendations that aren't just generated by the system.

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Yeah, there is always an advantage of having a different perspective or lens and I think in that case it really helped and it's distinct from many other projects where teams were exclusively working with assistance and a lot of knowledge and experience.

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I know when I have facilitated teams, CCRs or sexual assault response teams that had community members on them, what you were talking about what was so valuable for your project to have community members involved, that would be hard for a team of mostly system people with one or two committee members, it would be hard for them too have patients with the fact they were bringing a real-life view and not a system savvy do you.

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We are trained to kind of remove the human from the system. Even though the reality is people working within the systems have experience and the range of violence themselves in there lives but the human is removed.

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Alex, we are at the end of our time today. I want to thank you for being on our call and giving us a really great example of bringing in survivors lived experience into research and to the community assessment. Thank you so much.

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Thank you.

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I want to let everyone know we next month on June 7th have a webinar, again from 2:00 to 3:15 central daylight time about community assessments, what is happened in communities that have done them. Have the implemented recommendations? You completed your audits, now what. Successes and challenges in implementing audit recommendations. We have Lucy Pope from collaborative consulting who I think is on today's call listening and will be our presenter next month. Again, thank you for joining us and Alex, thank you so much for your participation today and thank you all very much.

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[Event Concluded]

Actions