

Praxis International –
Advocacy Learning Center

Please note: This text was generated during the in-session webinar closed captioning and is less accurate than an official transcript. We apologize for any confusion created.

Advocacy for Social Change: CONNECT

Diane Docis, Jill Abernathey

10/18/18

Please stand by for real-time captions.

>> Please stand by for real-time captions.

>> Hello and thank you for joining. We are at the top of the hour.

>> Good afternoon and good morning everyone. This is Diane at Praxis International and I'm happy to be back with you in Class Q for this year's last individual advocacy strategy session. Before we are back together in the Twin Cities next month for your ALC Institute. Today we are exploring the core activity CONNECT and focusing on how we as advocates and programs cannot with survivors, and how we are connecting them with our efforts to create systems change in our community and efforts to create social change. We asked for input in a survey and we will bring in responses there and you are always welcome to pose questions or make comments to the Q&A box. We are joined today by Jill Abernathy who is on the faculty and I'm sure you met her at your immersion event. She's a longtime advocate who brings a wealth of experience and thinking around this topic. I'm pleased she could be with us today. Let me turn things over to Elena from praxis who is with us for some reminders before we get started.

>> Hello, Class Q, good to be back with you. I will touch on highlights for your details of the webinar. At the top you will see an English closed captioning, and this is real time so please ignore any mistakes. If you notice the audio is unstable, please dial in by phone and once that connection is made you can turn off your computer speakers and it will correct your audio issues. Please share your

This project is supported by grant #2017-TA-AX-K016 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the view of the U. S. Department of Justice.

Praxis International –
Advocacy Learning Center

Please note: This text was generated during the in-session webinar closed captioning and is less accurate than an official transcript. We apologize for any confusion created.

thoughts in the Q&A box and the comments will be routed to us as presenters and we will do our best to respond in the audio component of the webinar. This webinar is being recorded and it will be posted on ALC's protected class webpage and it should be posted by the end of the day tomorrow, so you can look at that and share with your coworkers or revisit. However you wish.

>> Thank you so much, Elena. Happy to have you with us today as well. As you will recall it wasn't that long ago that we were together at the immersion and one of the things we did there was looked at the core activity of CONNECT as one step on the path to social change. And the way we can do our individual advocacy in a way it is leading to making a difference and we talked at our tables in the big group about several dimensions of how we connect, and we also reflected on what can get in the way of making these connections. We want to revisit some of that today and dig a little deeper into some of the questions that came up. We will be thinking particularly about how it is we connect as advocates and programs with survivors, what opportunities we offer, the ways that practices or policies might affect the ways that we connect, and also think about what changes we might want to make. What is it we could do in our programs differently that would allow us to strengthen these ways of connecting. Thought about how we are connecting with survivors. We started with the exercise where we asked you to pair up and first just ask questions of your partner, and then switch and the person asking had to follow a form. In part that gave us insight about how a form can direct our conversation and sometimes get in the way of connecting. We are going to start with this question and let me invite Jill in.

>> Thank you.

>> [laughter] That was a very enthusiastic thank you.

Praxis International –
Advocacy Learning Center

Please note: This text was generated during the in-session webinar closed captioning and is less accurate than an official transcript. We apologize for any confusion created.

>> Yes, hello, everybody.

>> What are the things -- one of the things that comes up in discussions we have -
- we some calm -- sometimes call it the B word. Boundary. I have connected with
survivors and what can get in the way that sometimes we use -- we throw that
word boundaries in there and assume we all think it means the same thing.
Boundaries exist to protect those who have less power from those with more
power, but really it is from a clinical or medical model that many advocacy
programs have just adopted. Boundaries of themselves are necessarily bad but it
seems like sometimes they can have unintended consequences especially when
we think about what they mean in terms of making connections. It came up in our
advocacy comes -- and -- conversations about grant practices -- unwritten
practices about whether sharing stories about survivors and whether we are
restricted from doing that and why is that? Joe, -- Jill, I wonder what comes to
mind for you as we consider [Indiscernible - multiple speakers].

>> What comes to mind for me as a trainer, how often this comes up for
advocates. We can't do that. One of the exercises that myself and a co-trainer
created -- and I hope you all get the opportunity to try this -- you put on the board
the word always with a been long arrow all the way to never. Start to list the
things that you want to be able to do with your women survivors but there may
be policies and such against it and then you put them where they belong all the
way to never. For instance, things like can you give rides to women, could you
visit them in their home? Can you go with them to court? Any of these questions
that you think you would like to do and don't know if it's okay with your agency
and put it somewhere on that line between always as if we can do that to never,
no, we can't touch that. That's discussion for staff to look at where did we come
up with that we could never do that? What policy is that based on? I know that's a

Praxis International –
Advocacy Learning Center

Please note: This text was generated during the in-session webinar closed captioning and is less accurate than an official transcript. We apologize for any confusion created.

lot of discussion but it's an exercise -- I'm a visual person and I like to put that right on the board. That's one of my thoughts with how to work in your own organization and looking at what you can and can't do for connecting with women survivors.

>> Diane?

>> Sorry, I was muted. [Indiscernible - multiple speakers]

>> I'm trying not to go on and on with each question.

>> Unless you don't hear me, keep talking.

>> I got nervous.

>> I was saying that's a great exercise and it reminds me of one we do at the immersion where we talk about what gets in the way of making these different connections. The chart doesn't look quite like this one but similar saying -- the way you are describing it I think is a really interesting approach because part of having this time in the ALC we hope will allow programs to reflect on these things and make changes. Even just to look at that list and say if these are things we would like to do, but we are not currently quote unquote allowed, why is that? It goes back to concepts and theories. What is it that we think or why do we think this rule is important? Why is it in place and are there any unintended consequences of that?

>> Right. Exactly.

>> Which I can think for the examples that you just gave if you about can we drive someone? Can we watch her kids?

Praxis International –
Advocacy Learning Center

Please note: This text was generated during the in-session webinar closed captioning and is less accurate than an official transcript. We apologize for any confusion created.

>> Can you get her food? Really, you think about this is what I would like to do for this woman survivor and it would be helpful, and it would be a connection.

>> Right. And for each of those I can absolutely see unintended consequences and things that would get in the way of connecting. Subduing the opposite of what we want to do especially when we talk about connecting as being inegalitarian process that if we are going to dismantle those pillars of oppression and approach and connect with women, connect with survivors that is in a way liberating than it means erasing that hierarchy as much as possible. It is there and also acknowledging that reality. Something as simple as sharing food. Anything else when you think about how to strengthen those ways of connecting? Have you seen any outcomes doing that exercise where advocates or program managers that had an aha moment?

>> Well, --

>> And changed the policy?

>> Absolutely. I kind of had that for another question you are asking. These all connect together. I will bring up quite a bit of having gone to work in our programs visitation center because there was no advocacy there. It was offering pretty neutral visitation center and it was created because battered women needed -- there needed to be a safe place where he could visit kids but it comes from her being battered and the children being in danger and so we changed policies like crazy to help protect the children and by listening to her story. So, yes, I will tell you some of the things that women said -- they would say I think we should call that Mary's policy and they were really excited that we were listening and doing focus groups. Yes, that is how we would get our aha moments and realize that our policies were allowing batterers to continue to be in control.

Praxis International –
Advocacy Learning Center

Please note: This text was generated during the in-session webinar closed captioning and is less accurate than an official transcript. We apologize for any confusion created.

>> Powerful insights. We want to make sure we have some time to reflect together about this aspect of connecting. Really, I think it's one of the most powerful things that we as advocates and advocacy programs can offer and create space for because it can be transformative. Having survivors connect with one another and you see here some of what we say in the ALC of why this is a goal. Ultimately connecting in this way will allow -- it creates space for survivors to develop consciousness of violence is a social problem. When you see this happened, did it -- it didn't just happen to me it happened to these other people and has different meaning. It also helps to break the sense of isolation that so often is an attribute of being a victim of violence and it can also help create solidarity as we talk about the importance of that collective action that leads to social change and creating solidarity and seeing the ways we are in this together, the ways we can be a powerful force for change and connecting survivors can help make all of those things happen. I think we can see that just in our own lives for many of us as survivors ourselves but for many of us thinking about any time you've connected with somebody else over either a struggle you were dealing with that you felt alone in or something you were frustrated with something you are excited about. Just how powerful it is in affirming to connect with somebody that you feel like gets it, understands on a different level because of their own experience that relates to yours. Jill, what comes to mind for you when we think about how CONNECT and connecting women with one another can help us do these -- why is it powerful?

>> I want to tell quickly a personal thing that happened to me. I recently had some things happen in my life and thought I'm going to see a therapist. I had a couple hard things happen. They accepted me, and I had to do an intake like over the computer which was actually my phone and the intake was so long. To make matters worse, because of my technical inexperience I would sometimes lose it

Praxis International –
Advocacy Learning Center

Please note: This text was generated during the in-session webinar closed captioning and is less accurate than an official transcript. We apologize for any confusion created.

and have to start over. I was dealing with some violence that it happened in my family and a friend's suicide and I had to write those words down so many times that I just started crying and I thought I'm not going. I called the office and said I need a therapist to help me fill out your form. Now I want you to think about that because that is an institution, and they needed diagnosis I supposed to do their work. Although when I told the female therapist this, she was elated and thanked me because she said I never thought about someone having to explain their trauma over and over before they get help for it. What we want to keep in mind as we are not an institution, we are nonprofit, so we should have a whole lot more room to recognize that when we work with somebody or someone comes to us, they are in trauma and we will meet them where they are at. We won't ask for explanations and all kinds of questions. That's a personal experience I just had.

>> It's funny, I wasn't sure where the story was going to end up. [Indiscernible - multiple speakers] really what I was thinking was the ways that connecting with the therapist can be really helpful for many of us at different points in our life and for those of us that are survivors and the ways that that doesn't negate the power of connecting with somebody who has shared your experience.

>> Yes, it was a powerful lesson to me. What I'm thinking is -- I guess this is another difference when you talk about advocacy not being an institution like a lot of the service agencies that we turn to. We are also not therapist and so how do we create -- I guess sometimes group therapy does that and support groups do that where it's people sharing -- people with shared experiences connecting with one another.

>> If I could, yes, I want to say from when I first started in this work learning about what is social change, I had gotten this chart about what our social services and what is social change and one of the biggest things that stays with me is social

Praxis International –
Advocacy Learning Center

Please note: This text was generated during the in-session webinar closed captioning and is less accurate than an official transcript. We apologize for any confusion created.

services look -- looks at what is wrong with the person and social change looks at what is wrong with society and that is always -- it's been a foundation for me.

>> Yeah. I think that can also reflect this kind of therapy versus connecting with others with a shared experience. I think there -- there are very progressive and radical clinicians who are deeply connected and recognize the social implications and cultural implications of things like gender-based violence. Were typically people turn to their work on themselves as individuals. Not always in the context of social change but maybe that is a different discussion. When I think about this, part of what I'm interested in hearing from you, Jill, is ways that -- I guess just examples. We all probably have them in our lives, but I wonder if anything comes to mind for you about how it has been powerful or a time in your life that's been powerful to connect with other people with a shared experience?

>> Yes, absolutely. I do have some specific connections and stories where the connection, of course, created a bond where I still have contact with these women from many years ago. For instance, one woman was ordered to go -- she had her children taken away because she lived with a batterer and it was her religious beliefs that said she should not leave.

>> We are casual here.

>> I am so sorry. She was a Christian, had very strong beliefs. He was abusive but social services took her kids away. They also said she had to come to my women's groups. She called me and was really angry and she said in your group is on Wednesday and that is when I get to see my kids at the church. And I said immediately, let's figure something else out then. I'm all about you being able to be with your kids. And she said I'm ordered to, and I'll get in trouble. I said who is the worker? I took the name down. I said, when do you come to town? When is a

Praxis International –
Advocacy Learning Center

Please note: This text was generated during the in-session webinar closed captioning and is less accurate than an official transcript. We apologize for any confusion created.

time you could meet me in the office? Or even for coffee. She was stoned -- stunned. she wouldn't think she was fulfilling her caseload and so I called the social worker and said it doesn't work for her, so we will meet at a different time during the week and I will let you know that she's coming. That was so good, and she enjoyed meeting so much that she wanted to come to group. She came to group and she didn't say anything to anybody, but when she had fulfilled what she was supposed to do and get her kids back, he immediately started up his own behavior and she knew what he was doing because her consciousness had been raised. So, I can't believe it, it was the next Monday morning she was sitting when I got to work saying I get it. I get what he is doing. I was able to do something different for her instead of -- let's think of another way.

>> [Indiscernible - multiple speakers] power of connecting and connecting is the first step to understanding and what it meant in terms of strategizing what you could do to help and that all had to start with connecting.

>> Right. I have another example. I know one of the things is about how do we keep women? We make a connection, we want them to join us. This is a movement. One of the things that is very clear for women as our employment. One thing that our organization did was women who had no work experience and they had to have something on a resume. We would give them we would do year-long contracts of working the front desk. One time we ran into trouble but I'm telling you 10 times we did that. The success rate was incredible. I recently had this happen where a woman was coming to group, and she was also ordered to group. I'm not working in this organization anymore but I still mentor. She did custodial work and she lost that job because the childcare -- she had to work certain hours and childcare didn't work out for her. Our organization was opening up the custodian position. One of the advocates called me and said the rest of the

Praxis International –
Advocacy Learning Center

Please note: This text was generated during the in-session webinar closed captioning and is less accurate than an official transcript. We apologize for any confusion created.

staff was telling her this wouldn't couldn't even apply for this job. I brought her back to the original philosophies of that program because just like the patriarchy, anything you don't keep practicing differently, you will fall back into a norm. We have to remember we came from a radical place and that is where we need to be, or we are another service. The woman was able to get that job and I can't remember a time where we didn't -- we were not giving or trying to help women get jobs within our organization. Even if sometimes it was just stipends to do something. It makes for great connection.

>> What is the rationale for not hiring her?

>> Exactly what I was saying, slipping back and not having the leadership of somebody whose first thought is for the women.

>> What she currently part of the program?

>> No, she had finished her obligation but was enjoying the community of women's group so much she kept coming. There wasn't even the issue she was ordered there although had she been ordered there I would've pushed for her to be able to apply.

>> Such an interesting example, thanks for sharing that. To give the opportunity to think about concepts and theories and how to do that step back like the exercise you did and say why do we think this?

>> We have to do that.

>> I did it all the time in my advocacy because I was so connected with these different clinical programs or medical programs and it was so easy to be influenced by them because it was the culture and norms in workplaces I was in. Even though I was in a sexual assault program, it was connected to a counseling

Praxis International –
Advocacy Learning Center

Please note: This text was generated during the in-session webinar closed captioning and is less accurate than an official transcript. We apologize for any confusion created.

program or the medical center and that is such a powerful -- powerful force. I would find myself adopting their practices without -- as you were describing, it takes an active resistance and ongoing reflection and what you did in terms of we challenge and hold each other accountable to say I lovingly encourage people to ask why is it you think that? Approach it with curiosity. I would think it would be okay to have this position. Sometimes just stopping to ask and reflect on ourselves can get us to rethink what we think is a given and realize it is not a given, it is something we create, and we can create differently. I'm going to point out some of the survey responses and also remind people if you have questions or comments you can post those to us in the Q&A box and would be happy to hear from you. One of the things we asked you was what opportunities you offer for survivors to connect with one another in your programs? This is -- I feel like there's differences between domestic violence or dual programs because shelters offer so many informal ways to connect whereas sexual assault programs tend to be more formal and mostly look like support groups because there's not the shelter setting. Some of the things you all mentioned were parenting classes, language classes, field trips, a survivor like support group, different classes and groups, communal living areas, very creative things like art classes and yoga classes. Events like book clubs and bonfires and vigils. Interesting examples there. Jill, does any of that bring anything to mind for you?

>> Yes.

>> Ways you have seen in programs or creative ways? I think also that value of what sometimes can happen informally but how do we create space to move us [Indiscernible - multiple speakers] because sometimes we stop at support groups. So many of these went beyond that and I'm thinking beyond support groups but also the power of support/education groups.

Praxis International –
Advocacy Learning Center

Please note: This text was generated during the in-session webinar closed captioning and is less accurate than an official transcript. We apologize for any confusion created.

>> Yes, on that topic of both groups I always called my groups educational groups although women got support there. About consciousness-raising and bringing us together and out of isolation and why are we experiencing the same forms of abuse? I always look at our beliefs -- again very visual person and I would put the personal -- person in the middle and put the circle around that and name all our institutions that we are involved with. Schools, churches, medical, the law and those things. On the outer circle our beliefs, beliefs that built all of our institutions and how much have we bought into those beliefs that are not benefiting us? In fact, are keeping us separate from one another. Just doing a lot of that in women's groups, that consciousness-raising an earlier I was talking to you about how when women tell their stories after they have been meeting with an advocate or coming to women's groups, they are better able to frame their experience in a way that is articulate rather than -- because they better understand their situation. For me in doing women's groups, that's where a lot of connection came from because there would be some experience -- extremely similar themes that would come up. For one thing, I was also -- I did public education as well in the schools so when stories fit a certain audience that I was going to speak with, I would ask that woman to come with and tell her story. For example, I remember being very powerful, a young beautiful woman who had been involved in gangs, had been the top -- I hate to say what word they called her, and I won't. Anyway, being able to bring her into the high schools and how kids could relate to her and I could facilitate that. I got a lot of women involved in the committee that way and also with certain themes like custody and visitation. Now she has finally left, but now she doesn't get to be there to protect the child or children when he has them so starting a group around that of the women who needed that and getting them set up and giving them space. But I didn't need to be the facilitator of that. I could be part of it, I could be there, but our

Praxis International –
Advocacy Learning Center

Please note: This text was generated during the in-session webinar closed captioning and is less accurate than an official transcript. We apologize for any confusion created.

organization had a room, had space and they could meet, and they started on this helpline on social media and they meet other women that go to court. I have a lot of examples of that. One time I remember in group we got to talking about what is women's culture? We were talking about why all of the experts are male. We started a woman's culture group and that was at that time at women's transitional housing and we would meet, and I was there, or I wasn't, but the women were meeting on Friday afternoons in a different department to talk about what women's culture is and they would bring books written by women and that group really excelled. Those women, they are often out and about in this world making a difference. Those are just some things.

>> Yeah, great examples.

>> Also, along with that, myself or somebody else would go out to different restaurants and ask if they could provide a meal for a meeting. We had some of the best food in the city donated.

>> I want to loop back to something you said because this also came up and some of the survey responses. One of the ways that programs connect survivors to systems change efforts, which you touched on, Jill, which also connects to social change is by doing what you described. Inviting a survivor to speak somewhere. Actually, this question came up -- we had a keynote yesterday with the girls from gender equity. They do this powerful program and they've had young women, girls and young women, testify at these events and hearings and somebody said how do you prepare them to do that? Part of what you are acknowledging is that none of us comes to this workgroup creating social change are trying to educate people about what our experience was. We are automatically having this perfectly thought-out framework that acknowledges it's a social problem and recognizes the impact. Having ways in programs to do that -- and it can start with

Praxis International –
Advocacy Learning Center

Please note: This text was generated during the in-session webinar closed captioning and is less accurate than an official transcript. We apologize for any confusion created.

something with support or education groups because it's creating that space to say this didn't happen to me because of something that's wrong with me. And laying the foundation for a different framing of it. Also, programs were talking about the challenges of not wanting -- for lack of a better word -- tokenize thing and just inviting them now and then to come to this when it suits our needs. How do we do this in a way that centers survivors and sees them as a critical part of creating systems change and social change and that they are not just a calm once a year and speak at our annual meeting or can we share -- you had some awful thing happened in can we share that in our fundraising appeal. How do we better integrate and connect in an ongoing way? I think it's one of the challenges programs are facing. Any other tips come to mind? I think it's as simple as inviting and asking.

>> Yes, I was orchestrating a bit of a speaker's bureau, this will pertain to being a Christian or this will pertain to the young or this will pertain to being older -- whatever it might be. We also started a women's advisory Council and had to ask how often they would like to meet. We would meet monthly so that the women we were asking if they wanted to come out and do some community work with us or also meeting on a regular basis and about the advisory Council, what we would do is -- our program was always creating new materials and trying to stay up with what was happening for women so that is what we would bring to the Council. They loved that. And if we did such and such with probation with this help or hurt you in your situation and so we had women coming together and teaching us. They loved it and that was a great way of keeping women together instead of just giving a call once in a while and saying could you do this for us?

>> And having it be [Indiscernible - multiple speakers]. Go ahead.

Praxis International –
Advocacy Learning Center

Please note: This text was generated during the in-session webinar closed captioning and is less accurate than an official transcript. We apologize for any confusion created.

>> I'm just going to say I would mention it to you earlier -- had mentioned it earlier, women did love telling their stories and I know there's controversy around is that exploitable or not? But if you have a woman -- women's Council that are living and breathing what we are working to end, we find out from them that they want to tell their story.

>> We always had to go back to our core which is the women that we are representing, the women we are connecting with and that we want to have better lives.

>> Right. Without treating them as the experts. [Indiscernible - multiple speakers] I think in terms of exploiting, if we are only asking once a year and it's because we need to parade a survivor in front of our donors, I think that's exploitative. I think what you are describing having multiple opportunities and recognizing for many women and many survivors, part of what they want to be able to do or what makes what we go through have meaning is having it make a difference. I've gone through this and had a bad experience with this institution and you're asking me to tell you about it and what could be changed to make it better or the other example around we are thinking about making this change or working with probation to make this change and how would that affect you? That feels different. It's authentic engagement and seeing them as experts in their own lives and partnering with us. It also tells me -- I know when we talk about doing focus groups at Praxis we really encourage people to pay participants because we pay other experts.

>> That's right.

>> What are the ways we allow for that in our programs? Are we paying survivors?

Praxis International –
Advocacy Learning Center

Please note: This text was generated during the in-session webinar closed captioning and is less accurate than an official transcript. We apologize for any confusion created.

>> And just a little idea there, when there's no money, some of us would go out to stores and get them to make a contribution in gift cards. I wish it could've been a lot more money but one time we got \$20 gift cards and provided childcare, we provided food. Always try to do the best you can to pay our experts. I want to loop back to how it is that we are inviting, engaging survivors and participating in change and so much of what we explore in the ALC is about this. If we are to create change, those that are most effective need to be a primary force in the collective action. We've explored a little bit here that there is not one way that it should look, whether it is improving institutional responses, which we will be focusing a lot on at our next in-person event in November. It can look like community organizing and the ways that immigrant communities and [Indiscernible] in ways that we are training people to connect [Indiscernible - Muffled Audio] approach and we will talk more about that at our community advocacy training. Also, I think as you are talking and thinking of my own experience, one of the things we can reflect on is how we got involved. What was it that connected each of us to this movement? How did it happen? Sometimes we can trace that to one person inviting us or one person inviting us again after we didn't get involved the first time or somebody seeing that we had a skill or some knowledge that we could contribute. What about you, Jill, anything you want to say about what connected you or what we can learn?

>> One of the things of course that connected me is I relocated to where my sisters were and because I'm a very lucky woman my sisters were already working in this work but I did not think I was a battered woman. They wanted me to go to a women's group and I said I don't need to. I had four small children and they said there is childcare. There is food and transportation so once I got there I've also told you this before -- I nicknamed the group the Ya Ya group. I found my people. I had only been going about six weeks before -- I got involved in an action group

Praxis International –
Advocacy Learning Center

Please note: This text was generated during the in-session webinar closed captioning and is less accurate than an official transcript. We apologize for any confusion created.

that was going on and we had so much fun, it was mostly about how much fun we were having together and I really didn't have the political -- I didn't understand everything by any means. I knew I loved being with these women. And then the actions we did -- [Indiscernible - Muffled Audio]. We were having a blast with that and I am connected to this day -- that was 25 years ago. It was the sense of community.

>> Absolutely. We had a comment in the Q&A about some other ways that programs are making these connections. Support group, different vocational training, sending children to summer camp so the kids can go [Indiscernible - multiple speakers].

>> That's great.

>> Tickets to concerts and sporting games. Some of what you are describing are these informal and it doesn't have to be we are here with this political framework to teach you how to make change. Although do that to -- too but also these informal ways that any of us would like to connect. A concert or sporting event. I also want to be sure to mention here as we think about connecting survivors and how we are framing our movement, is making connections to other social change movements as well. Reflecting on how we as advocacy programs are connected to other movements. I think that's another way to think about connecting especially anti-oppression movements, movements such as adjust -- addressing just a -- justice issues including many that interact with survivors. Immigrant rights, housing, mass incarceration and reproductive justice. There's so many ways that is important for us as programs to think about how we are connecting and supporting those and how we are also presenting those opportunities to survivors as well. We asked you in the survey, if you are doing this, fabulous. If you are not, what are reasons you are not. What gets in the way of connecting in these ways? I

Praxis International –
Advocacy Learning Center

Please note: This text was generated during the in-session webinar closed captioning and is less accurate than an official transcript. We apologize for any confusion created.

think particularly connecting survivors to creating systems change and social change. Some of you talked about financial considerations. If you don't want to put this on the survivors or the programs, there is something else they need to be doing or should be doing if they are poor or struggling or worrying about their job and kids. If it is somehow asking them by inviting them to get involved, any thoughts?

>> Yes, so important what you said. The way we began to organize that was our program literally reaching out to all of these other programs that you are mentioning. I recall literally we would look -- I don't think people have phone books anymore but we would look they have this in our area and we would call all these agencies that in some ways are helping. So many you already mentioned. Reproductive rights, we were at the -- domestic abuse sexual assault program and we called and set up that we could start to meet monthly so we could learn what each other's services did. That is how we got to know one another so we were making connections at least. You become more visible and then also we had interagency meetings and I want to precaution here, those were so great. I'm going to use the term back in the day because battered women were asked -- it was advocates, battered women and probation, police, attorneys. Eventually what would happen was the heads of organizations were the only one sitting at the table. It was shocking to me to see how quickly -- it is not shocking anymore, and I know that's what happens but when we aren't putting the women in the forefront we start to become very institutionalized and the next thing you know the Director of so-and-so is going to go meet and we are losing the prominent stories of what's happening to women in our community today.

>> Yeah, you mentioned some other comments that are interesting in the surveys. One program said most of what we do now is personal skills

Praxis International –
Advocacy Learning Center

Please note: This text was generated during the in-session webinar closed captioning and is less accurate than an official transcript. We apologize for any confusion created.

development and we want to start thinking about how to provide more education on systems and social issues. I'm thinking, that's [Indiscernible]. We talk about the influence on the liberation educator and his influence on the creation of the ALC curriculum. He did his work on literacy so increasing literacy among groups of poor, marginalized people but did it in a way of combining it. Opportunities to reflect on their economic and social status, what were the forces that created that in That in place but doing that as part of this literacy education, so they were going hand-in-hand. I saw this comment in the survey and thought you can do both. You can do personal skills development along with systems and social issues. I think it would be a fun thing to think about how to do that. Your example, Jill about survivors and women that want to share their stories with practitioners or at an event, what would a group look like that helped build those skills about public speaking or choosing what you want your focus to be or how to challenge or challenging questions. That totally intersects with education on systems change and social change. Any thoughts?

>> Yeah, we are listening to women. We are seeing what they need. What is a roadblock for them? The one person who mentioned the skills, that's good. I remember a huge theme was women wanting to want to buy their homes, so we got together a representative for first-time homeowner programs. A realtor who actually became a realtor after she went through a program, but we got some folks together. A loan officer from a bank -- we got women together interested so they could ask questions and learn about where they -- how they could start and what they needed to do to start to think about being a homeowner.

>> I also think about how skills get passed along. One person gets that information and they will share it with their friend or neighbor or sibling. Another comment. Protecting survivors and often times the fear if we are connecting

Praxis International –
Advocacy Learning Center

Please note: This text was generated during the in-session webinar closed captioning and is less accurate than an official transcript. We apologize for any confusion created.

survivors with one another it could be triggering for them if they share their experiences. Sometimes concerns around confidentiality and in some of the comments there's this recognition of how what we frame as being protecting can end up being patronizing or paternalistic. Who is deciding what is too much for another person to deal with or to face or who's deciding whether somebody is quote unquote ready to get involved with creating systems change? And what are the ways, again, going back to our theories and assumptions -- ways that we can fall into a pattern assuming somebody won't want to do that or isn't ready or doesn't have the capability and so then we stop asking or stop creating opportunities to allow for that. Any thoughts on that?

>> Yes, the advocate is an expert in that she has been working with the women and so her position in her program is extremely important and she needs to be trusted. When she says I've been working with this woman and I know this woman, and they would like to do this -- I believe in them and she needs to be believed and within the organization. That is my thought. Advocates are kind of at the bottom of the hierarchy in women's organizations these days, which is heart wrenching for me. We are the closest to the women that are coming to us for services and so our voice -- I think we need to be trusted.

>> Yeah. That gets to a couple closing thoughts here because what we want to always do in the ALC is not just theorize but put things into action as we are encouraging all to think about what changes could you make in your programs and how you organize advocates to strengthen these different ways of connecting and I think there is all sorts of great possibilities out there. We explored some of them today but going back to what we started with around referencing back to the form and how forms direct us in so many ways, one of the things we have heard that they tried is including -- if you have some kind of an orientation form

Praxis International –
Advocacy Learning Center

Please note: This text was generated during the in-session webinar closed captioning and is less accurate than an official transcript. We apologize for any confusion created.

or I hate the word intake but one of the questions you ask and is there a way to include a question about interests or getting involved or, as we take this up at the Institute next month, asking about what their experiences were with institutions or practitioners they may have interacted with because that can be an opportunity to reconnect with them to say we are trying to address this, would you be interested in sharing more about that experience. Would you be experiencing getting involved to help create change in that institution? Going to a meeting with us to share? Those are ways we can potentially make a change to strengthen the ways we connect. I know other people are trying to use social media for some of those purposes, going back to that simple ask. Asking do you want to get involved? Making sure we have opportunities that will support and allow that. And again, I'm happy we will be back together in person next month to explore some more of this. Ultimately what we want is for this to lead to social change and an end to gender-based violence and you all were great at recognizing the importance of this, so we asked you how might making these connections lead to social change? You really said that's powerful and it sends a message for communities about the strengths of survivors. It sends a message to survivors about their own strengths and it strengthens their movement. The more people we get involved and committed to helping to create change, that is how change is going to happen. I hope you left here with a little bit of food for thought. Some reminders before we say goodbye to you today, you will of course get an evaluation pop up and we ask you to take a minute to complete that. We are interested in your feedback on this session and you also received a bulletin about the upcoming Institute with some reminders and it. You received for free an e-learning course and that course is interactive, it has things you read and exercise as you complete and videos you watch. It is largely designed as preparation for coming to this institute. You will be in a different place to understand and

This project is supported by grant #2017-TA-AX-K016 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the view of the U. S. Department of Justice.

Praxis International –
Advocacy Learning Center

Please note: This text was generated during the in-session webinar closed captioning and is less accurate than an official transcript. We apologize for any confusion created.

participate in some of what we are doing at the Institute if you complete that first. So, I really encourage you and your teams to take some time to complete that e-learning course. You also were asked to complete a survey about your institutional advocacy and what it is you are seeing in your community regarding how institutions are responding or not responding to gender-based violence. So please complete that before you come as well. Finally, your impact homework. We want to hear with you -- from you what has been the process for you in your program? When you think about any changes you've made or are thinking about making in your individual act of -- advocacy as a result of the ALC so far. We would like to hear that from you as well. Thank you, everyone. Thanks to you who completed the survey to help inform our discussion today and special thanks to Jill Abernathy for being with us to share her experiences and tips and knowledge and insight. I always learn something from every conversation we have. And Class Q, we will be back together until we see you in person in a few weeks here in Minnesota at the ALC Institute. Until then, safe travels and we will see you all soon. Goodbye, everyone.

>> Goodbye, everyone.