Alternative Interventions to Intimate Violence: Defining Political and Pragmatic Challenges

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Defining Political and Pragmatic Challenges

Mimi Kim

We live in a town, but many of my husband's whanau (extended family) live in the valley where he grew up, about 40 kilometers away. My husband and his brother are renowned for a number of things — one being how they extend the life of their cars and vans using highly technical items like string and wire — another for how they share these vehicles for a variety of tasks such as moving furniture or transporting relatives, building materials, tractor parts, rongoa (traditional herbal medicines), eels, vegetables, dogs, and pigs (dead or alive). They are renowned for being people of the people, the ones to call on in times of trouble and death, the ones who will solve the problem and make the plan. They travel to and from town, to the coast to dive for seafood, to endless meetings, to visit whanau — along the many kilometers of dirt roads in and around the valley, through flood or dust depending on the season, in those patched up, beat up, prized cars.

There are a number of things to know about the valley — one is that the last 33 children in the world of their hapu ririki (small subtribe) to grow up and be educated on their own lands go to school here, despite government efforts to close the school. Another is that the valley is known to outsiders and insiders as "patu wahine" — literally meaning "to beat women," and this is not said as a joke. The mountain for this valley is named as the doorway spirits pass through on their way to their final departure from this life. This valley is also the valley where my husband and his siblings were beaten at school for speaking their first

language. It is the valley their mother sent them to so they would be safe from their father   back to her people. It is where they milked cows, pulled a plow, fed pigs but often went hungry, and were stock whipped, beaten, and worse.

My brother in law still lives in the valley, in a group of houses next to the school. So it's no surprise that one of our cars would be parked by these houses right by where the children play. Perhaps also not a surprise that while playing that time old international game of rock throwing our eight year old nephew shattered the back window of the car. If I'd been listening, I probably would have heard the "oh" and "ah" of the other children that accompanied the sound of glass breaking from town, and if I'd been really tuned in I would have heard the rapid, frightened heartbeat of "that boy" as well.

His mother is my husband's cousin   and she was on the phone to us right away. She was anxious to assure us "that boy" would get it when his father came home. His father is a big man, with a pig hunter's hands who hoists his pigs onto a meat hook unaided. He is man of movement and action, not a man for talking. Those hands would carry all the force of proving that he was a man who knew how to keep his children in their place. Beating "that boy" would be his way of telling us that he had also learned his own childhood lessons well.

So, before he got home we burned up the phone lines   sister to sister, cousin to cousin, brother in law to sister in law, wife to husband, brother to brother. This was because my husband and his brother know that some lessons you are taught as a child should not be passed on. The sound of calloused hand on tender flesh, the whimpers of watching sisters, the smell of your own fear, the taste of your own blood and sweat as you lie in the dust   useless, useless, better not born. This is a curriculum like no other. A set of lessons destined to repeat unless you are granted the grace of insight and choose to embrace new learning.

So, when the father of "that boy" came home and heard the story of the window, "that boy" was protected by our combined aroha (love) and good humor, by the presence of a senior uncle, by invitations to decide how to get the window fixed in the shortest time for the least money. Once again phone calls were exchanged, with an agreement being made on appropriate restitution. How a barrel of diesel turns into a car window is a story for another time.

Next time my husband drove into the valley it was to pick up the car, and "that boy" was an anxious witness to his arrival. My husband also has very big hands, hands that belong to a man who has spent most of his life outdoors. These were the hands that reached out to "that boy" to hug, not hurt.

A lot of bad things still happen in the valley, but more and more they are being named and resisted. Many adults who learned their early lessons there will never return. For tangata whenua *(people of the land) this is profound loss   our first identifiers on meeting are not our own names but those of our mountains, rivers,* hapu *(subtribe), and* iwi *(tribe). To be totally separate from these is a dislocation of spirit for the already wounded. This is only a small story that took place in an unknown valley, not marked on many maps. When these small stories are told and repeated so our lives join and connect,*

when we choose to embrace new learning and use our "bigness" to heal not hurt, then we are growing grace and wisdom on the earth. He Korero Iti (A Small Story) submitted to The StoryTelling & Organizing Project, a project of Creative Interventions, by Di Grennell, Whangarei, Aotearoa New Zealand.

Creative Interventions was established in Oakland, California in 2004 as a resource center to create and promote community-based interventions to intimate and interpersonal violence, in alignment with the liberatory goals of the social justice movement. The motivations for this endeavor stem from multiple concerns spanning from political to pragmatic, each pointing toward an approach to violence intervention that, for now, this organization refers to as "community-based interventions to violence." Although Creative Interventions is grounded in the needs and experiences of communities of color and immigrant and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (queer) communities, the implications of its work transcend the specificity of these oppressed communities and are intended to challenge prevailing conventions within the antiviolence and social justice movements.

At the heart of Creative Interventions is the deeply held belief that our approach to violence intervention must be guided by the knowledge held by everyday people, carried out by those closest to and most impacted by violence, and situated in the very spaces and places where violence occurs—within our homes, neighborhoods, and communities. Looking straight into the face of violence perpetrated upon those we love, live with, raise, and grow old with provides an opportunity for us to disentangle ourselves from the madness that guides our world today and free ourselves to come together as co-creators of a future closer to that which so many of us dream.

We live at a time when communities face unprecedented rates of dislocation and devastation. Domestic violence, sexual abuse, child abuse, and other forms of intimate and interpersonal violence result from community conditions of increasing economic, social, and environmental degradation and contribute to their deterioration. We yearn for community while deeply distrusting those very people with whom we live and work. We look for community and often find only scattered remains. Thus we have created a system outside of community—in shelters, advocacy centers, child welfare systems, foster care homes, prisons—to protect us from violence, complete with a qualified set of experts to manage our way toward that mirage called safety.

Community education and publicity campaigns reach out to communities, heightening awareness about intimate violence and asking us to take a stand. However, community education merely informs us how to recognize violence, how to provide emotional support to survivors of violence, and where to call to "end violence." This end to violence is to be found in a

program that may not speak our language, a restraining order that may ask us to leave someone whom we do not wish to leave, a lawyer who may be able to process our divorce for a cost we cannot afford, or the police who may decide to arrest the perpetrator of violence or who may even end up arresting us.

The community-based interventions approach turns back to community, not expecting a healthy, thriving, cooperative set of family members, friends, neighbors, or congregation members, but rather an incomplete and imperfect collection of individuals connected in some way to a situation of intimate violence that we assume at least some are motivated to end. Whether defined by family ties, geography, identity, workplace, religion, or merely by convenience or happenstance, many of us remain connected to others in ways that form the basis for concern and collective action.

The community-based intervention model is fundamentally an organizing model. It seizes upon the opportunities offered by violence, rather than succumbing to its disintegrating effects. It shifts attention and resources back toward those directly impacted by violence, beyond individual survivors and perpetrators, to engage circles of friends, families, and communities. Through the process of coming together to address violence, identify the problem, map allies, create common goals, and coordinate a plan of action and response, communities in their various formations can create a new set of norms, practices, and relationships to not only end violence but to build community health.

What models of violence intervention can we create to support caring and motivated individuals to come together and take effective action to end violence, replacing it with a shared commitment to safety and healing? How can we provide adequate information, skills-building, and accessible resources to strengthen these systems enough to be effective in sustaining the necessary long-term strategies? How can we learn from these strategies and share successes with other communities, thus expanding our collective capacity to end violence?

Communities already have a lot to tell us. The StoryTelling & Organizing Project of Creative Interventions, in collaboration with DataCenter, Generation Five, and individuals and organizations across the country, is collecting stories from everyday people who have already come together to try to end violence. These stories such as *He Korero Iti* (A Small Story) that introduces this chapter excavate the wisdom embedded in otherwise neglected and forgotten community memory to inspire and inform us on the creative and courageous efforts of everyday people.

The antiviolence movement in the United States and across the globe offers many lessons about the ways in which survivors transform victimization into a sense of power, about the complexity and persistence of patterns of abuse, and about how some perpetrators have changed their own behaviors so that they can enjoy relationships based upon respect and equality rather than power and control.

We begin with this partnership among grassroots communities, the antiviolence movement, and the broader social justice movement to build toward an alternative response to intimate violence. And we take advantage of the structure and resources of an organization committed to long-term social change to transform these lessons and experiences into accessible community resources. In this way, we contribute to ongoing efforts to build a new set of community-based knowledge and practices that may some day become as familiar as violence is today.

POLITICAL AND PROGRAMMATIC LINEAGE

Creative Interventions is just one among a growing community of individuals and organizations working toward alternative social justice responses to intimate and interpersonal violence. Although the Creative Interventions project is based on practical, down-to-earth models of community-based interventions to violence that can be carried out by individuals, organizations, and community institutions, this work is situated within a broader context of emerging conceptual and political frameworks. A landscape of alternative interventions to violence is developing throughout various sectors of the social justice movement. Constantly shifting, evolving, and renaming itself, this landscape currently includes such formations as "transformative justice" as articulated by Generation Five (Generation Five 2007) and Critical Resistance in the United States, and a broad movement of organizations and individuals throughout Canada, Australia, and New Zealand-Aotearoa (Second Maori Taskforce on Whanau Violence 2004). "Harm free zones" constitute a set of principles and practices developed by a coalition of New York community-based social justice organizations challenging state, intimate, and community violence (Harm Free Zone [n.d.]). The more general term "community accountability," is used by Incite! Women of Color Against Violence (Incite! 2003, 2005, 2006) and other social justice organizations (Communities Against Rape & Abuse [CARA] 2008; Kim 2002, 2005, 2006) to describe a wider array of practices challenging interpersonal violence and other forms of violence outside of the context of the state.

Although those working within the sphere of restorative justice (RJ) have engaged many similar concerns (Coker 1999, 2002; Pennell and Anderson 2005; Pennell and Burford 2002; Pranis 2002; Strang and Braithwaite 2002), antiviolence advocates and social justice activists have been largely removed from such discussions and practices. Indeed, many of the alternative frameworks have developed, in part, as a response to the perceived limitations of RJ concepts and practices (Generation Five 2007; Second Maori Taskforce on Whanau Violence 2004; Smith 2005). This book offers a much needed opportunity for dialogue across these terrains.

Creative Interventions also draws upon the concrete programmatic advances of many sister organizations in the movement led by women of color, immigrant, and/or queer women. These include Communities

Against Rape and Abuse (CARA 2008) and Northwest Network of Bi, Trans, Lesbian and Gay Survivors of Abuse in Seattle (Incite! 2003; Smith 2005); Institute for Family Services in Somerset, New Jersey (Almeida, Dolan-Del Vecchio, and Parker 1999; Almeida and Durkin 1999); Audre Lorde Project and Sista II Sista in Brooklyn (Incite! 2003; Smith 2005); Freedom, Inc. in Madison, Wisconsin (Kim 2005); Caminar Latino in Atlanta (Perilla, Lavizzo, and Ibanez 2007; Perilla and Perez 2002); and Sharon Spencer's Men's Program and Ke Ala Lokahi in Hawaii (Kim 2005). Despite the marginalized or invisible status of many of these achievements, the resulting experiences and innovations hold wisdom for the diversity of oppressed classes and communities that constitute the majority of the U.S. population.

Although these frameworks and programs have arisen as positive advances in struggles to address and end violence in its many forms in alignment with a broader social justice vision, they are also a response to the limitations of the conventional antiviolence movement. In this chapter, I outline how the "binary logic" of the conventional antiviolence model aligns with individualistic and state-based remedies. I follow with the alternative vision of intersectionality and the radical challenges represented by Incite! Women of Color Against Violence, Critical Resistance, and other organizations challenging interpersonal and state violence. I end with some observations based upon the early experiences of Creative Interventions and posit current successes and contradictions presented in a community-based intervention approach to intimate and interpersonal violence.

THE BINARY LOGIC OF THE CONVENTIONAL FEMINIST MODEL

The prevailing feminist model of violence intervention follows a familiar coherence and logic. The dominant ideology within our culture and sub-cultures, whether within a white middle-class suburb of Cleveland, a Korean immigrant community in Los Angeles, or an African American neighborhood in Baltimore, remains decidedly patriarchal. Men's lives are valued over women's; male-defined values determine dominant societal and subculture values; violence or the threat of violence continues to be the way in which these values are maintained and enforced. Denial, mini-mizing, and victim-blaming in the face of all forms of intimate violence remain rampant even in the most politically progressive communities. Those whose sexual orientation or gender identity fail to conform to the conventional appearances or practices of heterosexual masculinity and femininity face invisibility, marginalization, and endangerment not only within abusive intimate relationships but throughout the spaces and insti-tutions of everyday life. They likewise fall out of the very conceptualization of patriarchy and the liberatory framework of conventional feminism.

To counter these ideological and institutional patterns of patriarchy, the antiviolence movement has embraced the division of gender and turned

it on its head, thus privileging the voices and perspectives of women. Championing those women who have suffered physical, sexual, emotional, and economic violence at the hands of men and the demands of patriarchy, it has designated such forms of intimate violence as "gender-based." Domestic violence, sexual assault, sexual harassment, and child sexual abuse—formerly private, invisible, unnamed, and unchallenged matters—have risen to the forefront of public discussion and policy, although with contradictory results.

Safety and protection for women and girls have become paramount principles in the face of what has been experienced as an overarching pattern of physical, sexual, economic, and emotional violence at all levels of society. Gender-based violence is not only perpetrated by abusive family members, intimate partners, and other individuals. It is maintained, supported, or encouraged by a community that often colludes with violence and by a state that often responds with actions and policies paralleling or further contributing to the harms inflicted by more intimate perpetrators.

In an effort to challenge the denial, minimizing, and victim-blaming expressed by male perpetrators of violence and reinforced by colluding community members, the antiviolence movement has held a strong us–them position based upon the divisions of gender. "We" as women are the victims or survivors of intimate violence or the advocates for survivors of violence. "They" are male perpetrators of gender-based violence or those who collude with the abuses of patriarchy. The framework for our understanding of gender-based violence is thus situated within an assumption of a conventionally gendered and heterosexually defined context. Although we may contend that violence results from unequal power dynamics embedded within these structures and categories, we often fail to question the categories themselves.

The antiviolence movement has long been criticized for its universalist categories of women, which silently presume white, heterosexual, middle-class, Christian, able-bodied, U.S.-born, English-speaking characteristics. Despite some colorization within the antiviolence movement, today's leadership, prevailing program designs, and policies remain largely driven and defined by this same constituency.

Patriarchal, white-supremacist, heterosexist notions of gender further define victims deserving protection as those who conform to this idealized norm (Kanuha 1996). Those deviating from this norm face reduced access to the institutions of protection and are even subject to persecution by these same systems (Richie 1996; Ritchie 2006; Smith 2005). Behind the bureaucratic language of "underserved" or "under-represented" communities lies the complex system of attitudes, procedures, policies, and laws that constitute the institutionalized systems of oppression that we more familiarly name as racism, sexism, classism, ableism, and so on.

Within the antiviolence social service sector, lack of access manifests itself in many different forms. In many communities, lack of access means complete unavailability of services. "Lack of access" can also be embedded

in program practices and policies, such as screening processes designed to exclude "difficult/nonconforming" clients. Women who do not speak English are still denied shelter because they cannot participate in their support groups; undocumented women are still told that funding does not permit them access to services; women racially profiled as drug users are still routinely screened with tyrannical scrutiny; persons who fall outside the conventional definitions of sexual orientation or gender identity are often left with no options whatsoever or vulnerable to further dangers of homophobia or transphobia within those spaces meant to deliver safety.

THE ANTIVIOLENCE MOVEMENT AND THE STATE

For many sectors of the antiviolence movement, the involvement of the state as an active agent in violence intervention and prevention follows an evolutionary process initiated by antiviolence advocates challenging the state's policies and practices of collusion with perpetrators of intimate violence. In the struggle to get state systems to "take violence against women seriously," advocates and activists have pushed for local, state, and federal legislation supporting the increased criminalization of acts of domestic violence and sexual assault. Changes in legislation have been accompanied by antiviolence advocate participation in police and judicial trainings, in an effort to "sensitize" these state agents to the issues facing survivors of violence and to their responsibility in enforcing laws meant to enhance protection for survivors of violence and increase penalties for perpetrators.

This reformist strategy has resulted in increasing collaboration between the antiviolence sector and the state. Advocacy led to legislative and procedural gains, followed by partnerships between advocates and the state as these changes were negotiated and implemented into practice. Relative successes, particularly within the domestic violence arena, have resulted in what may be regarded as concrete benefits for this sector, such as inclusion of domestic violence advocates in police review teams or state advisory panels and significant funding increases throughout the 1980s and 1990s.

The passage of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) of 1994 represents a watershed moment for the antiviolence movement. This first federal legislation decrying violence against women remedied many of the measures that had devastated the lives of immigrant women following passage of the Immigration Fraud and Marriage Amendments of 1986 (Schor 2000). VAWA 1994 mandated a national domestic violence hotline and established the Office of Violence Against Women, thus opening significant funding and advocacy opportunities for antiviolence programs. Under the auspices of the Clinton administration, advocates struggling many years for the passage of these provisions were finally able to get the Act passed as an attachment to the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (Crime Act), an example of pragmatism or

opportunism that took the breath away from many who were struck by the political and practical implications of this compromise.

The increasing coordination between the criminal legal system and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), formerly known as the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), presents further implications for violence intervention strategies that engage the state (Ritchie 2006). For example, felony conviction on domestic violence charges of noncitizen perpetrators can now result in deportation. Current practices allowing ICE "sweeps" of local jails for undocumented persons can also lead to deportation even if that person is never actually convicted of any criminal offense. While advocates could once reassure survivors of violence with some confidence that calling the police would not lead to deportation, this is no longer the case.

The child welfare system poses similar threats, particularly to communities of color, which face disproportionate rates of child removal. Recently, concerns have risen throughout the antiviolence movement due to increasingly punitive measures against mothers experiencing domestic violence, such as charges of "failure to protect" against mothers remaining in violent relationships (Enos 2003; Generation Five 2007).

Many mothers face a complex web of threats—fears of harm to themselves and their children by abusive intimate partners, distrust of social services or state remedies, and threats that any action or lack thereof could expose them to accusations of "failure to protect" their children. For parents involved in same-gender or gender-variant relationships, the real and perceived threats of child removal are heightened by discriminatory attitudes, policies, and laws limiting the rights of parenthood for queer people. Immigrant women face further fears of ICE scrutiny and the risk of detention and deportation—their own, their partner's, and/or their children's—often compounded by repeated threats by abusive partners that seeking help will lead to the possibility of permanent separation from children.

THE PRIMACY OF SAFETY IN THE ANTIVIOLENCE MOVEMENT

In many ways, the conventional binary logic of the feminist antiviolence model supports this historic reliance upon the state. The response to the culture of patriarchal violence and danger has been increasingly focused on a concern for safety. Safety has been defined as a state achieved through securing individualized safety from the harm of the individual perpetrator. Physical safety is best met by physical distance from the perpetrator, thereby requiring temporary if not permanent separation (through leaving the relationship and/or separation of the perpetrator from physical access to the survivor of violence).

Thus, the use of civil and criminal restraining orders, the most commonly applied criminal legal tool in situations of domestic violence, attains

safety largely through mandated physical separation of the survivor from the perpetrator of violence, a requirement often surprising to women who simply wanted a safeguard from the act of violence, not necessarily from the person perpetrating the violence.

Because intimate violence is often characterized by a pattern of many overt and covert acts of power and control and not simply a single act of violence, the maintenance of safety through a persistent state of separation from the person exhibiting this pattern of behavior offers an easily understood if not achievable goal. Many women experiencing domestic violence seek assistance from antiviolence programs with the goal of leaving an abusive relationship. But many women do not choose to leave, or only choose this option after all other possibilities have been exhausted or refused.

Those working in the antiviolence movement understand the power of the notion of safety for persons whose most intimate sense of safety has been ruptured or for those who have never experienced its possibility. Physical separation from an identified perpetrator of violence offers a seemingly controllable context in which safety can be achieved. Thus, safety is reduced to the level of the individual's physical body or perhaps expanded to include those of involved children. It follows that if we find ways to maintain and sustain the individual woman or the woman and children separate from the perpetrator of violence, then they can achieve safety.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND ITS VOID

The perpetrator of violence stands on the other side of this situation. Insofar as we have identified the perpetrator to be male or, as we often say, "95% of all intimate violence is men perpetrating against women," our model of violence intervention still overlays the gender bias of victim/ perpetrator. Our primary concern for women who conform to acceptable notions of femininity and are hence "deserving" victims can be stated as safety and increased choices. However, our position concerning men and/ or perpetrators of violence falls into a complex of emotions and opinions resulting in few definable principles or strategies. Many refuse to discuss "what about the men?" because we rightly contend that this parallels the caretaking role of women in society. Crossing this line makes us susceptible to putting more energy and care into the well-being of those who violate us than into the safety and well-being of affected women and children. Others point to the countless experiences and studies finding that the possibility of changing violent behavior in men is questionable at best.

Currently, the antiviolence movement has adopted a common language of *accountability*, a term covering a range of meaning vastly divergent and rarely specified. Coming to terms with what we mean by accountability demands that we explore our concerns for men and/or perpetrators beyond our political and emotional comfort zones. This

exploration leads us into dangerous territories: on one hand, it may reveal sympathies for men and/or perpetrators of intimate violence that slide us perilously close to collusion. On the other, it may reveal hopelessness about the possibilities of change, leading us to question the real possibility of safety. Ultimately, we face untenable fears of our own complicity in and/or vulnerability to violence.

The antiviolence movement demands accountability but, in actuality, expects none. The understandable skepticism resulting from countless stories of manipulation, disappointments, and lies by abusers claiming remorse and promises to change have ossified into a mantra of impossibility. Indeed, many of us fail to imagine what accountability would even mean. No wonder that we are left with a void readily filled by the state and its one-dimensional response to the demands of violence. Despite our growing recognition of the political and material problems embedded in the criminal legal response, our answering machines still tell women in crisis to call 911 in case of emergency. We still instruct women—whether undocumented immigrants, queer, transgender, fearful of the police due to targeted brutality, or otherwise unwilling to subject themselves or their abusers to this system—to call the police.

PROTECTIONISM AND STATE PARTNERSHIP WITHIN THE ANTIVIOLENCE MOVEMENT

This coupling of the unquestioned primacy of safety with the void of accountability gives rise to a paternalistic protectionism within the antiviolence movement, in partnership with the state as the overarching defender of safety. Our narrow focus on safety as an individual, physical separation from danger has led to the belief that safety is best achieved through survivors leaving the abusive relationship or situation of violence. The ability and power to engage with abusers has been ceded to the state. The many women who do not want such outcomes are left with few alternative options.

Rather than expanding options for women, the antiviolence movement has endorsed a narrowing vision of safety supported throughout the interweaving systems of counseling centers, shelters, hotlines, and legal advocacy programs. What has become known as the "coordinated community response" (Pence and Shepard 1999) has promoted and legitimized the partnership between antiviolence programs and the state, a partnership strengthened by the "embedded" placement of many advocates within criminal legal settings. Many antiviolence programs have increased capacity due to expanded funding under the Office of Violence Against Women following VAWA, a source of funding that has promoted such activities as enhanced arrest policies, narrowing definitions of intimate violence language to coincide with criminal codes, and the recent proliferation of Family Justice Centers that have attempted to physically and

procedurally centralize domestic violence–related services under criminal legal leadership.

The antiviolence movement has unwittingly colluded with the state's law-and-order agenda by allowing the state to categorize certain activities and people as threats to liberty and to control them through the mechanisms of protection and punishment. Thus, reliance on the state to protect women from the patriarchal violence of "dangerous" men can be compared to U.S. military policy that uses invasion and occupation to protect the rights of women in Afghanistan and Iraq against the tyranny of Islamic patriarchy (Razack 2004). How is it that so many segments of the feminist movement have fallen for such unquestioned support of policing and militarization as a solution to gender oppression and gender-based violence?

THE PROMISE AND CHALLENGES OF INTERSECTIONALITY

Despite efforts to maintain the prevailing feminist model of violence intervention, the intersection of women of color, immigrant, and queer people struggling to end violence against women in all of its forms has challenged the once-dominant white, middle-class, Christian, heterosexual, and able-bodied leadership and assumptions of the antiviolence movement. Intersectionality is now publicly recognized as an alternative paradigm contesting the simple primacy of gender and promoting the perspectives and agendas of marginalized communities (Crenshaw 1994; Sokoloff and Dupont 2005).

In practice, intersectionality has meant that women of color, including queer and gender-variant people, have increasingly created independent institutional spaces that support complex identities, analyses, and responses to intimate, state-initiated, and other forms of violence. During the 1980s and 1990s, much of this activity was focused on the creation of "language accessible and culturally competent" programs and institutions targeted to the needs of specific communities characterized by race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, gender identity, and disability. Many of these programs were constructed in the likeness of the conventional model of violence intervention, with variations based on accommodations to culture, language, accessible community resources, and geographic specificity.

The inclusive framework of intersectionality has too often been limited by a myopic interpretation and implementation. The concept is often employed to make room for one or two additional categories of oppression, depending upon which best fits one's interests or experience. It often names and privileges certain categories while dismissing or excluding others. Hence, persons championing the rights and perspectives of women of color may fail to include immigrant or disabled women or persons whose sexuality or gender identity falls beyond the boundaries of comprehension or concern.

The increasing visibility of transgender and gender-variant persons presents a set of challenges and opportunities to the conceptualization of intersectionality among those opposing gender oppression. The questioning of woman-only spaces, gendered language, and our very definitions of women (and men) demands that we expand our notions of patriarchy and our views of liberation. It also asks us to broaden our understanding and practice of intersectionality to include the realities of gender-variant persons and the differences marked by race, class, immigrant status, ability/disability, and so on.

INCITE! AND CRITICAL RESISTANCE: DEFINING A NEW TERRITORY FOR LIBERATORY ALTERNATIVES

The founding of Incite! Women of Color Against Violence in 2000 with the Color of Violence Conference in Santa Cruz represented a critical opportunity for women of color with a radical agenda to organize nationally. Originally representing women of color with a history of participation and leadership in the antiviolence movement, the co-founders of Incite! created an institutional space from which to address interpersonal and state violence, as well as the intersection of all systems of oppression including those based on race, class, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability/disability, and age. Critical Resistance, founded at the Critical Resistance: Beyond the Prison-Industrial Complex conference in Berkeley in 1998, represents the coalescence of a national and international organizing force challenging the prison-industrial complex. These two organizations formed powerful new institutional spaces from which to push for an alternative social justice agenda.

Together, these two organizations came together to define the territory historically dividing the strands of the broader social justice movement represented by the antiviolence movement and the anti-prison-industrial complex movement. The Incite! Critical Resistance Statement (Incite!/ Critical Resistance 2005) names areas of challenge represented by each movement while committing to a common vision and future collaborative strategies.

Although concerns regarding "overreliance on the criminal legal system" have gained attention among an increasing sector of the antiviolence movement (Dasgupta 2003), Incite! and other advocates and activists have moved beyond the language of "overreliance" to challenge the very notion of the state as a viable partner in the struggle against violence against women and children (Generation Five 2007; Harm Free Zone [n.d.]; Incite! 2003, 2006; Ritchie 2006; Smith 2005).

These movements also challenge the primacy of individual safety, noting that, for oppressed people, the possibility of individual safety is a myth or luxury afforded to the privileged few. The goal, rather, is liberation; and this goal can only be achieved through a collective struggle

toward the radical transformation of the material conditions contributing to violence on all of its levels.

ALTERNATIVE COMMUNITY-BASED VIOLENCE INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

Despite growing concerns over current antiviolence interventions to domestic violence, sexual assault, and other forms of intimate and inter-personal violence, the development of concrete, on-the-ground alternative approaches and programs remains remarkably sparse in comparison to the demand for such measures. National conversations and conferences have increasingly called for new strategies, but have produced limited developments.

Although RJ responses have engaged the issues of intimate violence in limited instances, the few programs in North America, Australia, and New Zealand-Aoetearoa still remain the most documented strategies of alternative interventions to intimate violence (Coker 1999, 2002; Paulin et al. 2005; Pennell and Anderson 2005; Pennell and Burford 2002; Pranis 2002; Strang and Braithwaite 2002). Distrust of RJ measures among antiviolence advocates, the dominance of legal theorists and practitioners in discussions and implementation of RJ activities, and negative reports among antiviolence advocates witnessing the lack of power analysis and safety mechanisms within RJ have limited meaningful discussion and engagement between antiviolence advocates and proponents of RJ (Coker 1999, 2002; Smith 2005; Stubbs 1997, 2002).

Furthermore, RJ practices have primarily been initiated by the state or practiced in close coordination with the state (Generation Five 2007, Smith 2005). While they do represent alternatives to the conventional criminal legal response, they are generally diversionary practices still held within a criminal legal context. State control limits participation to those who are already within the criminal legal system, determines procedural constraints and allowable outcomes of such practices, and excludes mean-ingful engagement by those challenging the viability of state intervention.

THE COMMUNITY-BASED INTERVENTION MODEL: CREATIVE INTERVENTIONS

Creative Interventions enters this relatively unexplored territory with a deliberate set of strategies aimed toward bridging the gap between critique and new possibilities, grassroots community needs and programmatic response, and the safety concerns of the antiviolence movement versus the liberatory aims of the broader social justice movement.

Based upon initial discussions among the former Community Accountability Task Force of Incite! (Incite! 2003, 2005) and an early draft model co-created with Generation Five, Creative Interventions has begun some preliminary explorations in concrete situations of intimate and

interpersonal violence, with a primary focus on communities of color, including immigrant and queer communities. Several individuals and groups, particularly from the social justice movement, have come forward seeking alternative responses to their situations of violence.

Following these early explorations, Creative Interventions initiated the Community-Based Interventions Project. This demonstration project seeks to develop, pilot test, evaluate, document, and distribute a replicable comprehensive alternative community-based approach to violence intervention. This approach is aimed toward expanding the capacity of oppressed communities to end and prevent violence by equipping its most accessible resources—family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, and others toward whom persons in need first turn—with the model and tools to effectively intervene. This focus on the front lines of intimate and family violence raises the possibility of intervention at early stages of abuse, offers more accessible and sustainable resources, and builds intervention and prevention strategies into the very spaces and places where violence occurs—homes, streets, and communities.

The current phase of the Community-Based Interventions Project features a collaborative project led by Creative Interventions along with Asian immigrant domestic violence organizations based in the San Francisco Bay Area. These organizations include Shimtuh, a domestic violence and sexual assault advocacy organization serving the Korean community; Narika, a South Asian domestic violence advocacy organization; and Asian Women's Shelter, which is a pan-Asian domestic violence shelter with an interest in developing alternative strategies for the Asian Pacific Islander queer community and Mien community. It should be no surprise that interest in a community-based model is particularly keen within immigrant communities since they are distrustful of criminal legal systems, oriented toward problem-solving approaches actively engaging intimate networks, and interested in solutions that hold the possibility of keeping families and community intact.

Creative Interventions defines community-based intervention to violence as "any intervention to intimate violence that primarily involves community or collective solutions and/or engages the perpetrator without involving the state." Central characteristics of the model distinguish it from most currently available options. Rather than relying upon social service organizations as the primary site for violence intervention, the model offers an alternative facilitated space for participants to create an intervention to violence that is carried out within their own home or community space.

Another significant characteristic of this approach is that the model engages anyone interested in exploring further action toward violence intervention, including allies such as friends and family. It is not dependent upon the initial engagement by the survivor, as are most conventional antiviolence services. It does not necessarily rely upon the knowledge or consent of the primary survivor. Leadership (or at least buy-in) of the primary survivor may be a desired goal of the particular intervention

using this approach, but, in general, is not a presumed prerequisite to initiation or implementation.

Unlike most conventional antiviolence approaches, this alternative model does not presume safety to be the ultimate goal of violence intervention. Rather, Creative Interventions offers space for the articulation of a more nuanced individual and collectively oriented set of goals often held by survivors and community members (Davies, Lyon, and Monti-Catania 1998). Key components of this model are (1) articulating individual goals; (2) making transparent the tensions that exist between individual goals, often according to the power and affiliation relationships of respective players in situations of violence; and (3) constructing a consensus within the collective involved in the intervention.

This organizing model recognizes anyone able and motivated to come forward to initiate a possible intervention as a potential leader and entry point to a given situation of intimate violence. From this starting point, the initial participant or participants are engaged in an organizing strategy that facilitates a process that encourages clarification of the situation of abuse, maps the parties involved, identifies common goals, prepares safety plans, and creates and implements viable strategies for ending violence or promoting repair and healing. At each point, the possibility for further collective engagement is explored. Who else can help? What role can they play? Do they want to come into this facilitated space? Or, do the participants want help preparing themselves to facilitate team-building on their own, within their own community space?

Another feature is the possibility for engagement with the perpetrator of violence or the person doing harm. While this is by no means a necessary component of the model and is only approached with great care, it is considered a possible option. The community-based model assumes that people within the survivor's intimate network may already be engaged with the perpetrator. Some may hold particular influence or connection. Some may also wield a meaningful threat. As RJ practices show, meaningful engagement of the perpetrator through the authority of the community and a connection of care can hold more promise for long-term and sustainable change than the transfer of this authority to the criminal legal system (Pranis 2002).

What this model offers for the survivor of violence is a greater access to options than those conventionally available. What does she value? What are her goals? In what ways can she take leadership in attaining these goals? How can she organize her intimate network and other accessible resources to help her attain these goals or initiate others to take this role? If engagement with the perpetrator is a possibility, who can participate? Is this strategy feasible?

It also builds upon the capacity of those resources most accessible and meaningful to survivors of violence. While intimate networks have often failed to provide adequate support to survivors or effective interventions to reduce harm, these networks hold the most knowledge about those

involved in violence. Such networks include those whose attitudes and actions may carry the most meaning, and those who face the greatest risks when violence continues unabated or unaddressed. Meaningful collective action toward positive change holds transformative potential not only for individual survivors or perpetrators of violence but for all of those involved in creating healthy solutions—or who at least come together to imagine their possibility.

While we share information regarding safety and explore critical questions regarding safety and safety planning, this model does not presume that immediate safety is a goal. The space to explore and co-create more meaningful goals allows for more creative strategies and actions more aligned with the broader principle of self-determination at the level of the individual and community.

A concrete example from one of the collaborative Asian immigrant organizations illustrates how this model offers access to a different array of options and displaces immediate physical safety as a necessary primary concern.

Case 1

A young immigrant woman came to one of the collaborative organizations seeking assistance. She had gone to a party with her former employer, the owner of a bar. That evening, he attempted to rape her. She struggled free and was able to get away. However, the experience was clearly traumatizing. The woman had decided that she wanted to confront this man. She talked to the advocate about her plan to enter the bar and confront her assailant, convinced that her sense of violation and indignity could only be met by this bold move.

The advocate, moved by the courage of this woman, responded by offering to go into the bar with her, a strategy ultimately challenged by the advocate's team of co workers. This offer went beyond the usual practices of this organi zation and much beyond what most antiviolence organizations would recom mend. Interested in further exploring this woman's request, the organization invoked the model of the community based intervention and its role as a facilitator for further exploration rather than as an advocate accompanying her on this mission or imploring her to give up this idea for reasons of safety.

The staff team discussed what a facilitated community based interven tion would look like in this situation. The advocate met again with this young woman. This time, she helped her explore her goals in confronting this man. Could her goals be met in other ways? Upon further exploration, it became clear that her goal was direct confrontation. She was open to discussing safety plans and to role play this action, but she was not willing to give up her primary goal.

The advocate role played possible scenarios based upon her knowledge of the dynamics of sexual assault. She presented possible dangers as well as responses of victim blaming, denial, threats, and violence. She helped the woman explore who else in her intimate network might be willing to help.

The role play brought up many situations that this woman had not considered. It helped her to clarify a safer plan that still met her goals.

The woman could not identify anybody within her community to help out when this plan was first discussed. The exploration did, however, raise possibilities as she prepared on her own. She talked to a friend who agreed to stay close to her phone in case any crisis occurred. She called her assailant and asked him to meet her at a restaurant. In preparation for the meeting, she talked to the wait person at the restaurant and asked him to keep a close watch on the situation in case anything happened. It is notable that she ended up engaging another community member to participate in her plan.

The woman ended up meeting with her assailant, and confronted him by naming his action and her outrage. He admitted his guilt and apologized without further incident. She called the organization following this confrontation with great appreciation, relief, and a sense of closure.

This case illustrates the basic principle of this model: the critical role of helping the survivor identify her own goals and create a plan of action to meet these goals. It also highlights the importance of exploring a collective response and the opportunity that this opens for a different set of options resulting from the involvement of other people. It also offers one example of engagement with the perpetrator and the transformative power of this possibility for the survivor.

Of course, this example begs further questions. We do know that the survivor took back her sense of agency and power through this intervention. We can reasonably assume that the healing that this experience allowed was more immediate and powerful than a more conventional individual counseling approach or engagement with the state. We do not know if or how this man was changed by this experience. Did this prevent further assaults? Did this simply inform more successful strategies for future assaults? Did he find that apologies could relieve him of more painful consequences, including the possibility of criminal legal engagement?

The "facilitated community-based intervention model" represents the organization's central contribution to alternative interventions to intimate and interpersonal violence. If communities fail to provide concrete solutions to individual situations of violence, then conventional social service and criminal legal remedies will remain the only viable option. The development of effective intervention responses involving individual situations of violence, however, are linked to strategies addressing those wider circles of community that violence impacts.

Effective and sustainable interventions rely upon the involvement of intimate networks that include friends and family, as well as broader community supports. The development of specific education, tools, and curriculum targeted to intimate network members is a critical component to the overall community-based intervention model.

The long-term vision for the development of this intervention approach includes the development and involvement of broad levels

of community leadership as agents of community accountability. Programmatically, the training of informal and formal community leaders as intervention facilitators, community allies, and community leaders promoting violence intervention and prevention are important components to the expansion and sustainability of this model. Further work on creative supports aimed at deeper and more sustainable change for perpetrators of violence is also being explored.

CONTRADICTIONS AND CHALLENGES FACING COMMUNITY-BASED INTERVENTIONS TO VIOLENCE

Early experience with the model has also raised areas of contradiction and challenge. Collective involvement opens up the arena of public disclosure, defying the usual antiviolence practices of confidentiality as well as community practices of secrecy surrounding intimate violence. Public disclosure for survivors still raises the possibility of shame and victim-blaming. Public disclosure for perpetrators suggests public shaming as punishment rather than as a restorative measure or as an attempt to destigmatize violence. Most communities are not yet prepared to perceive and carry out public disclosure without succumbing to the level of rumors, gossip, victim-blaming, or persecution.

Another tension exists between survivor-centered principles and notions of the collective good. The recognition of the community as a victim of violence, as well as an important actor in ending violence competes with the primacy of the individual survivor supported by the survivor-centered tenet of the antiviolence movement. While I contend earlier that the protectionism of the antiviolence movement and its partnership with the state actually subverts this very principle, the community-based intervention approach also challenges survivor-centeredness. At best, this model allows for a negotiated process in which the individual interests of the survivor and her allies (who have their individual and collective interests) can reach consensus about shared vision and goals. It also acknowledges the wide impact of violence, not only on individual survivors but on the broader community, and supports the involvement of this wider network to coordinate more effective and sustainable solutions to violence. In practice, we have witnessed how the sentiments of the survivor can come into active conflict with those of her allies or how allies may feel pressured to comply with actions with which they disagree.

A related contradiction occurs between transformation and collusion. In the desire for a more reparative and holistic model for violence intervention, it would be easy to advocate for resolutions that offer excuses to perpetrators and that pressure survivors to accept processes or outcomes for the sake of the public perception of resolution and closure. Many criticisms of RJ warn of such tendencies (Coker 1999; 2002; Smith 2005; Stubbs 1997, 2002). My own work in community conflicts reveals how easy it is to push for premature closure out of compassion, weariness,

and a host of other conflicting emotions and agendas. Political demands for alternative interventions to violence that are more "transformative" open ample opportunities for community processes that provide excuses for violence.

On the other side of this tendency is the replacement of state punishments with our own parallel forms of retributive community justice. Community banning, firing from jobs, persistent public shaming and persecution of perpetrators, unclear and arbitrary consequences to unspecified demands, and physical violence are all tactics that have been employed in the name of community accountability. Are such tactics ever justified? In what situations?

Clearly, the accountability void discussed earlier in this chapter has not yet been filled by those seeking alternative interventions to violence. The tendencies either for punishment or easy excuses are unacceptable if we are looking for solutions that are truly transformative to survivors, perpetrators, and communities. Unfortunately, it appears that we tend to choose one option over another depending upon who has power, who we like, who we pity, who appears most accommodating, and a myriad of other subjective factors.

As we create and test these alternative models, Creative Interventions also faces the contradictions of creating a community-based response from within the boundaries of a formal organizational structure. On the one hand, this structure allows for the consolidation of resources including funding, collaborative staffing, outreach capacity, and more, thus increasing the possibility of reaching the goal of creating lasting documented public resources to support community-based alternatives. On the other hand, we constantly ask ourselves whether the models and approaches we create will ultimately come to rely upon the kinds of institutional resources afforded to formal organizations.

One of our most significant measures of success will be the ability for these models, tools, and approaches to be adopted effectively and safely (enough) by the least-resourced and least-formally organized communities. The collection of stories deriving from grassroots communities through The StoryTelling & Organizing Project, the constant testing of practices within diverse organizations and communities, and an attempt to maintain the least organizational infrastructure necessary to create the greatest desired outcomes are some of the intentional practices driving this project.

PROMISING DIRECTIONS: A TRIBUTE
TO MANY PATHWAYS

The exploration of accountability and principled and effective processes for accountability is an area requiring much more resources and research. Developments in other antiviolence programs offer promising conceptualizations and practices for accountability within a more transformative

framework. The work of Alan Jenkins (Jenkins 1990; Jenkins, Hall, and Joy 2003) and the narrative therapy theorists and practitioners affiliated with the Dulwich Centre in Adelaide, Australia (Dulwich Centre 2003) have developed language and processes "inviting responsibility," as opposed to using more conventional authoritarian or behaviorist models found in "batterer treatment" programs. Rhea Almeida and the Cultural Context Model of the Institute for Family Services in Somerset, New Jersey promote active discussion and analysis of systems of oppression and individual acts and attitudes that collude with these systems. Their model also values change through collective engagement using group work and the inclusion of community allies to support accountability and transparency. Stith, Rosen, McCollum, and Thomsen (2004) have developed and evaluated programs for couples experiencing domestic violence. In response to more conventional contraindications against such work, they have developed an innovative group model for couples that specifically addresses domestic violence. Pennell and Burford (Pennell and Anderson, 2005; Pennell and Burford 2002) developed RJ practices that build upon the expertise and motivations of family members closest to and most impacted by intimate violence, being careful to include even the most problematic members in developing collective solutions that are workable for that family after they leave the office.

New models for addressing accountability specifically rooted in communities of color address the parallels between colonization, state-based violence, and gender-based violence. Freedom, Inc. in Madison, Wisconsin organizes with Hmong youth, prioritizing an analysis of gender-based violence within the context of war, immigration, poverty, racism, and state-based violence (Kim 2005). Caminar Latino has developed an explicitly "liberation" social change model that integrates women's, men's, and children's violence intervention programming and challenges gender- and generationally-separated conventions (Perilla, Lavizzo, and Ibanez 2007; Perilla and Perez 2002).

The Ke Ala Lokahi (Turning Point) program in Hilo, Hawaii has created a batterer's treatment program based upon indigenous Hawaiian cosmology and an analogy between the destructive legacy of colonization on the Hawaiian people with the devastating impact of domestic violence (Kim 2005). *Whanau* (family) violence intervention models among the Maori in New Zealand/Aotearoa have similarly posited a violence intervention framework that centers collective Maori values, recognizes colonization as the source of and historical context giving rise to the increase in family violence, and challenges Western state-based approaches that rely upon the punishment and criminalization of the Maori people (Second Maori Taskforce on Whanau Violence 2004). The Just Therapy Team operating out of The Family Centre in Wellington, New Zealand/Aotearoa share a unique collaborative program model challenging *pakeha* (white) domination and colonization within a multiracial organizational setting. The result has been an evolving set of holistic approaches to sexual

and family violence intervention that build upon Indigenous cultural values and practices grounded within Maori, Samoan, and *pakeha* communities, respectively (Waldegrave et al. 2003).

Each of these models and programs has developed through the search for solutions to intimate violence that do not replicate the individualism, separation, and dislocation inherent in conventional remedies, but rather build new visions and practices for collective and community change. Each has faced and continues to face challenges from those championing conventional violence intervention approaches. And each has offered invaluable insights and inspiration to the work of Creative Interventions.

CONCLUSION

Our collective work in creating a new approach to violence intervention is just beginning and, at the same time, follows trajectories that go as far back as violence, itself. Currently, many of us have refined our critique of the prevailing intervention model and must now challenge ourselves to take the risks necessary to shift our assumptions and defy our dogmas so that we can realize new possibilities. I believe that the answer lies deep within our own selves and our communities. If we learn to trust and build upon this wisdom, we will be able to create models that harness the creativity and reparative energy of those most motivated for change.

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