

Culturally Informed Care

BEST PRACTICES FOR SERVING SURVIVORS OF COLOR

*Leah M.
Forney*

Welcome & My Promise to You

Welcome to "Culturally informed Care: Best Practices for Serving Survivors of Color"

Over the next 90 minutes,

- You will gain an understanding of your role in creating a service environment that prioritizes cultural sensitivity, respect, and well-being for survivors in BIPOC communities.
- You will learn how to foster an environment where every survivor feels valued and heard, and contribute to building not just a supportive service landscape but a stronger, more inclusive community.
- You will gain a comprehensive understanding of culturally informed care principles and best practices.
- You will be empowered to actively contribute to creating a more inclusive and supportive environment for survivors from BIPOC communities.

Introducing Leah M. Forney

Author | Speaker | Consultant

- Leah M. Forney, widely known as The Culture Doctor™, is a cultural strategist, social and behavioral sciences researcher, trauma-informed educator, and consultant dedicated to transforming how institutions show up for survivors of sexual violence especially survivors from communities of color
- As the Founder and CEO of Unculture Your Workplace, Leah partners with organizations, institutions, and community-based programs to identify and dismantle uncultured leadership and workplace systems that undermine survivor-centered values in practice.
- Leah's approach is grounded in her lived experience as a proud Black woman and survivor of sexual violence, combined with over a decade of professional advocacy and research in the gender-based violence and public health fields.
- Leah has been featured in over 200 media outlets, including Elle Magazine, USA Today, HuffPost UK, ABC 7, The National Desk, and Authority Magazine.
- She is the author of *What Works for Susan Won't Work for Tameka: A Culturally Responsive Approach to Sexual Violence Prevention and Response*
- Currently sitting on the community advisory board at George Mason University, contributing to their initiatives on digital messaging for black families about sexual health, sexuality, and sexual assault.

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Ice Breaker

If you could have one advocacy superpower, what would it be and why?
(i.e. instantly build trust)

Shocking Statistics

1 in 3

Nearly 1 in 3 women and 1 in 4 men in Delaware have experienced sexual violence in their lifetime

1600

Approximately 1600 women in Delaware reported experiencing non-consensual sex in a single year.

8,390

In one statewide analysis, 8390 out of 26,571 violent incidents were domestic-violence related.

Delaware Health & Social Services
OJP.GOV

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In Lieu of Recent Events.....

- Femicide is the gender-related killing of women and girls, most often by intimate partners or family members, rooted in power, control, and systemic inequality.
- Across the U.S. and in our communities, recent domestic violence-related homicides have brought renewed attention to the safety of women particularly women of color.
- These are not isolated incidents.
- Over 50% of women killed in the U.S. are killed by intimate partners
- Black women experience intimate partner homicide at disproportionately higher rates than other racial groups
- Nearly half of intimate partner homicides involve a firearm

Harsh Truth

Without culturally informed care, survivors are left to navigate systems that misread their realities and those misunderstandings can cost people their safety, their autonomy, and in some cases, their lives.

Laying the Groundwork

UNDERSTANDING CULTURALLY INFORMED CARE

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Common Terms Used Throughout This Presentation

Glossary of Terms

- **Culturally Informed Care:** An approach to care that recognizes and respects the cultural backgrounds, beliefs, and values of individuals, ensuring services are responsive to their unique needs.
- **Trauma-Informed Advocacy:** A supportive approach that recognizes the impact of trauma on survivors and emphasizes safety, trustworthiness, empowerment, and collaboration in the advocacy process.
- **Intersectionality:** Coined by Kimberle Crenshaw in 1989, The understanding that individuals have multiple, interconnected identities (e.g., race, gender, class, sexuality) that interact to shape their experiences, particularly with regard to systems of power and oppression.
- **Trauma:** An emotional, psychological, or physical response to an event or series of events that cause harm, distress, or disruption, often leading to long-term effects on an individual's well-being.
- **BIPOC:** An acronym that stands for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, highlighting the distinct experiences of these groups, particularly in relation to racial and systemic inequities.

These Terms are Often Used Interchangeably

- Cultural Sensitivity
- Cultural Humility
- Cultural Competency

Understanding Culturally Informed Care

What is Culturally Informed Care?

- Culturally Informed Care recognizes and respects diverse cultural backgrounds, values, and needs.
- It integrates cultural understanding into all aspects of care, from assessment to support.
- Services are tailored to meet individuals' unique needs based on their cultural context, beliefs, and practices.
- Culturally Informed Care fosters an environment of trust and collaboration, ensuring survivors feel valued and understood.
- It promotes inclusive and equitable care by addressing cultural barriers that may prevent survivors from accessing support.

7 Key Principles of Culturally Informed Care

- Acknowledge & Respect Diversity
- Honor & Integrate Cultural Beliefs
- Culturally Responsive Communication
- Inclusive Engagement & Collaboration
- Empower & Support Autonomy
- Individualized & Culturally Tailored Treatment
- Recognize & Address Bias

What is Intersectionality?

THE ROLE OF INTERSECTIONALITY IN CULTURALLY INFORMED CARE

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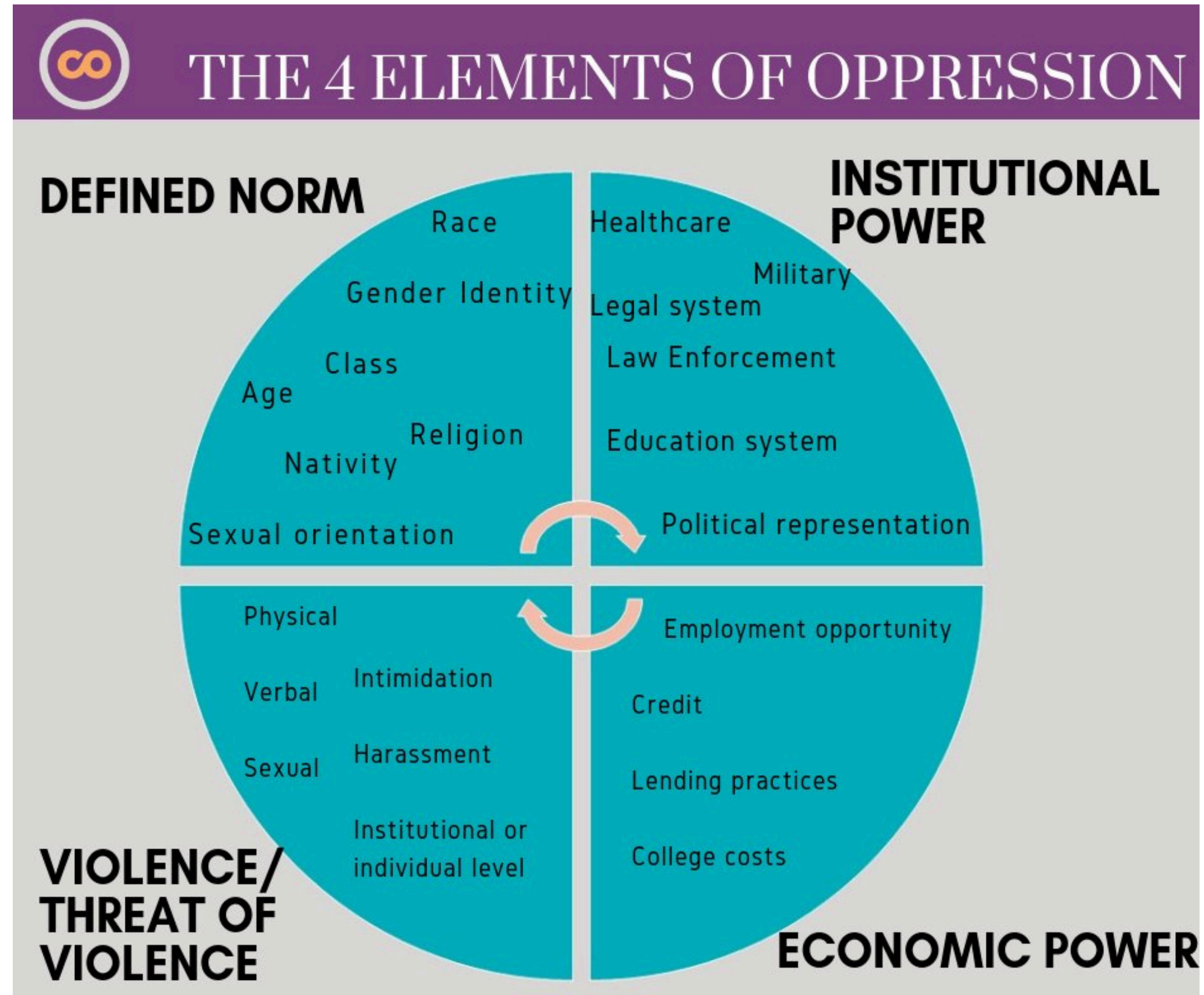
Think & Share

How might a survivor's multiple identities such as race, gender, sexuality, disability, or immigration status shape both their experience of sexual & domestic violence and their access to support?

What is Intersectionality?

- Intersectionality is a framework that helps us understand how different aspects of a person's identity such as race, gender, class, sexuality, disability, and more intersect and overlap to create unique experiences of privilege and oppression.
- Coined by legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw, intersectionality highlights that individuals do not experience discrimination or marginalization based on a single aspect of who they are, but rather through the interconnected nature of their identities.
- This approach urges us to look beyond one-dimensional views of identity and consider how systems of power, like racism, sexism, ableism, and classism, interact to impact a person's lived reality especially for those from historically marginalized communities.

The Role of Oppression & Intersectionality



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Understanding Implicit Bias

Implicit bias refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. These biases are automatic, unintentional, and often deeply ingrained, yet they can influence how we engage with survivors especially those from BIPOC communities without us even realizing it.

Applying Intersectionality in Culturally Informed Care

Intersecting Identities Creates Unique Challenges

- Recognizes the Complexity of Identity
- Challenges One-Size-Fits-All Approaches
- Addresses Systems of Oppression
- Enhances Cultural Competency
- Promotes Holistic Care

Navigating Intersectionality In Practice

How does this look as a service provider?

- Provide Comprehensive Individualized Treatment Plans
- Build Trust through Empathy & Understanding
- Challenge Structural & Systemic Inequities
- Integrate Intersectional Training for Staff
- Foster Inclusive Support Networks

Trauma & How it Shows Up

THE ROLE OF TRAUMA IN CULTURALLY INFORMED CARE

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Think & Share

How does understanding the impact of trauma change the way you approach survivors not just in what you do, but in how you show up for them?

What is Trauma?

Trauma is a normal response to an abnormal experience.

The 5 Traumas Impacting BIPOC Survivors

Types of Traumas

- Historical Trauma
- Cultural Trauma
- Racial Trauma
- Collective Trauma
- Intergenerational Trauma

Understanding How These Traumas Manifest

How these traumas manifest

- Distrust of Systems & Institutions
- Cultural Barriers to Disclosure
- Emotional & Psychological Responses
- Fear of Being Silenced or Invalidated
- Need for Culturally Affirming Healing

The Role of Trauma-Informed Advocacy Within Culturally Informed Care

How does it look as a service provider?

- Recognizing the Impact of Historical & Racial Trauma
- Centering Cultural Humility & Lived Experiences
- Building Trust Through Transparency & Empowerment
- Addressing Implicit Bias & Reducing Harm
- Incorporating Culturally Responsive Healing Practices

Understanding Barriers

THE IMPACT OF BARRIERS IN CULTURALLY INFORMED CARE

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Think & Share

What barriers might prevent survivors in your community from accessing or staying connected to your services?

Barriers Defined

A barrier is any obstacle either visible or invisible that prevents a survivor from accessing or receiving the support, care, or services they need.

Barriers can be systemic, such as policies, institutional practices, or discriminatory structures; they can also be interpersonal or internal, such as language differences, fear of not being believed, or cultural stigma.

Internal vs External Barriers

Internal Barriers

- Self-blame
- Guilt or shame
- Desire to protect the perpetrator
- Fear of disrupting family or community dynamics
- Societal pressure to “move on” or be silent
- Fear of judgment
- Denial or minimization

External Barriers

- Victim blaming by others
- Fear of being misgendered or misunderstood
- Provider bias or projection
- Lack of confidentiality or privacy
- Cultural or religious stigma
- Lack of BIPOC or culturally competent providers
- Discrimination based on identity

Identifying Barriers for BIPOC Survivors

Accessing Support

- Systemic Racism & Discrimination
- Economic Disparities & Financial Constraints
- Lack of Culturally Competent Services & Resources
- Limited Availability & Geographical Barriers
- Language & Communication Barriers
- Fear of Deportation & Immigration Status Challenges
- Unawareness of Services & Resources Available

Accepting Support

- Cultural Stigma, Shame, & Silence
- Fear of Victim Blaming & Judgement
- Mistrust of Institutions & Systems
- Family & Community Pressure
- Lack of Representation
- Doubt about Help/ineffectiveness
- Safety & Privacy Concerns

Addressing Barriers in Service Delivery

- Provide culturally responsive care
- Increase accessibility
- Implement trauma-informed practices
- Engage in community partnerships
- Continuously assess and adapt services

From Awareness to Action

Dr. Anita Hill

“It's not just about demanding justice, but creating a world where justice is the norm.”

Activity: Cultural Exchange Wall

Scenario #1:

A Indigenous woman who identifies as LGBTQIA+ seeks help after being sexually assaulted at a community event. She feels caught between her racial identity, sexual orientation, and the discrimination she faces from both her own community and society at large. She struggles to find support within either her racial or LGBTQIA+ communities due to fear of being ostracized or judged.

Activity: Cultural Exchange Wall

Scenario #2:

A South Asian survivor of sexual assault faces tremendous stigma within her community, where sexual violence is often silenced to maintain the family's honor. She is afraid of bringing shame upon her family by disclosing the assault, and her parents are pressuring her to "move on" for the sake of the family's reputation. However, she is deeply struggling with the trauma and feels alone in her experience.

Understanding Survivor Centeredness

IMPLEMENTING SURVIVOR- CENTERED SUPPORT

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Think & Share

What's one takeaway from this training that you can commit to implementing over the next 90 days?

What does Survivor Centered Really Mean?

- Prioritize Safety & Wellbeing
- Respect Autonomy & Choice
- Believe & Validate Their Experiences
- Provide Culturally Responsive Support
- Ensure Confidentiality & Trust
- Offer Strength Based & Recovery Focused Care

Best Practices for Serving BIPOC Survivors

- Create a Welcoming Physical and Emotional Environment
- Build Community Partnerships
- Offer Flexible Support Options
- Prioritize Survivor Autonomy
- Develop a Network of Culturally Sensitive Referrals
- Integrate Holistic Healing Practices

Your Role as a Service Provider

- Recognize Implicit Bias and Actively Work to Reduce It
- Seek to Understand The Cultural Context in Survivors' Stories
- Respect the Role of Community and Family
- Use Trauma-Informed Communication Techniques
- Adapt Services to Reflect Cultural Relevance
- Advocate for Systemic Change

Tying It All Together

As we wrap up, Here's 5 Key Takeaways I would like to leave you with:

1. Historical & Cultural Context Shapes Survivors' Experiences
2. Trust is Built Through Intentional Effort
3. Survivor Autonomy is Paramount
4. Practical Changes Can Make a Big Impact
5. Cultural Sensitivity is an Ongoing Commitment

My Gift To You



Please Complete Evaluation Form



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Let's Connect!

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