



An Intersectional Approach to Understanding Sexual Violence in the United States:

Looking into the systematic delivery of justice and related services by examining how the gender experience is shifted by race, class, orientation, nation status, geographic location, health status, religion... and how those intersections impact interpersonal violence. There is a silent, yet very powerful and sinister gender bias that looms in the perspectives of all human beings. This implicit bias is subconscious and can often shift the way in which we interact with the world around us. The predisposition of this bias creates a foundation from which we interpret experiences and events to include the many scripts we use to interpret our views and judgements about interpersonal violence. The manner in which victims experience the criminal justice and other response systems is unquestionably and often negatively impacted by gender bias. This lens of implicit or explicit (unknown or known) bias in which we view victims is often very powerful and neuroscience can accurately explain this phenomenon.

This presentation will focus on the Theory of Intersectionality by exploring how additional identities such as, but not limited to: race, class, sexual orientation, geographic location, HIV status, mental and physical abilities, nation status, religion, etc.... all intersect and interact with gender. When the theory of intersectionality is properly applied, we can begin to articulate the complicated and complex experience of victimization through a macro lens, thus positively impacting the individual response.

Further, the presenter will explain how to begin difficult and critical conversations at the individual and agency level around issues of race, national status, physical and mental ability. The predominant societal cultural driven attitude often educates and clouds the lens in which we view clients and may negatively impact services we deliver. It is unquestionably essential that we explore ways in which we begin the dialogue needed to dismantle systematic prejudice and discrimination in a compassionate and empathetic manner. These conversations are often fraught with emotion, pain, fear, stereotypes, assumptions, rhetoric and defensiveness which can very difficult to overcome.

Finally, this presentation will address tangible solutions to a complicated and complex paradigm shift. There are strategies and promising best practices that can be implemented to begin to shift the criminal justice system and social services experience thereby reducing secondary victimization.

Learning Objectives:

- Participants will be able to define and apply the theory of Intersectionality and see services beyond the Gender Lens.
- Participants will be able to recognize how intersectional identities (Race, Class, Gender, Sexual Orientation, Geographic Location, HIV Status, Nation Status, Religion, Etc.) impact the experience of victims of interpersonal violence (domestic and sexual violence, stalking, child abuse and trafficking)
- Participants will learn how to discuss and have critical conversations about these and other complicated and activated topics that are often wrought with emotion.
- Participants will learn about (5) key considerations for adopting and mainstreaming Intersectionality in practice and being able to articulate services beyond the traditional Gender construct.
- Participants will walk away with (5) strategies to implement applied Intersectionality into their systems and their work.