

eliminating racism
empowering women

ywca

Seattle | King | Snohomish

HEALING AT THE INTERSECTIONS OF GENDER- BASED VIOLENCE:

**ADOPTING A CULTURALLY
SPECIFIC, TRAUMA-INFORMED,
& SOCIAL JUSTICE-ORIENTED
APPROACH TO ADVOCACY**

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LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

A MISSION TO:
ELIMINATE RACISM,
EMPOWER WOMEN,
STAND UP FOR SOCIAL
JUSTICE, HELP FAMILIES
AND STRENGTHEN
COMMUNITIES



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MEET THE PANELISTS

**"RARELY, IF EVER, ARE
ANY OF US HEALED IN
ISOLATION. HEALING IS
AN ACT OF COMMUNION."**

- bell Hooks, "All About Love: New Visions"

PRESENTATION OBJECTIVES

1. DEVELOP AN ANALYSIS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE . . .

(i.e., domestic violence, sexual assault, and commercial sexual exploitation) through an intersectional lens, including experiences of mental health and substance abuse.

2. UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF ADOPTING A CLIENT-CENTERED . . .

model for supportive services that is culturally specific, trauma-informed, and social justice-oriented.

3. EXPLORE THE EFFECTS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE ON THE HEALTH . . .

and wellness of survivors, and how these experiences are created and exacerbated by systemic oppression.

4. FOSTER A SPACE FOR SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROVIDERS . . .

to build partnerships and exchange insights, information, and best practices to improve client services.

YWCA GBVSS



The YWCA Gender-Based Violence Specialized Services (GBVSS)

Department specializes in responding to adult survivors who have experienced gender-based violence. We serve all individuals aged 18 and above who reside in either King County or Snohomish County.

By adopting an intersectional lens in our advocacy work, we acknowledge the compounded forms of marginalization that survivors experience at the intersections of **domestic violence, sexual assault, and commercial sexual exploitation**, and the profound impact these harms have on survivors' behavioral health.

DEFINITIONS

Domestic Violence (DV)

Domestic violence, also known as intimate partner violence, refers to a **pattern of abusive behaviors, of any kind (e.g., physical, emotional, mental), perpetrated by a person who is currently or formerly romantically linked with the person who is experiencing harm.**

Sexual Assault (SA)

Sexual assault is an egregious form of sex-based harassment that includes **any unwanted sexual activity– including instances where the complainant is incapable of giving consent.** It can be a one-time occurrence, or it can continue over a period of time.

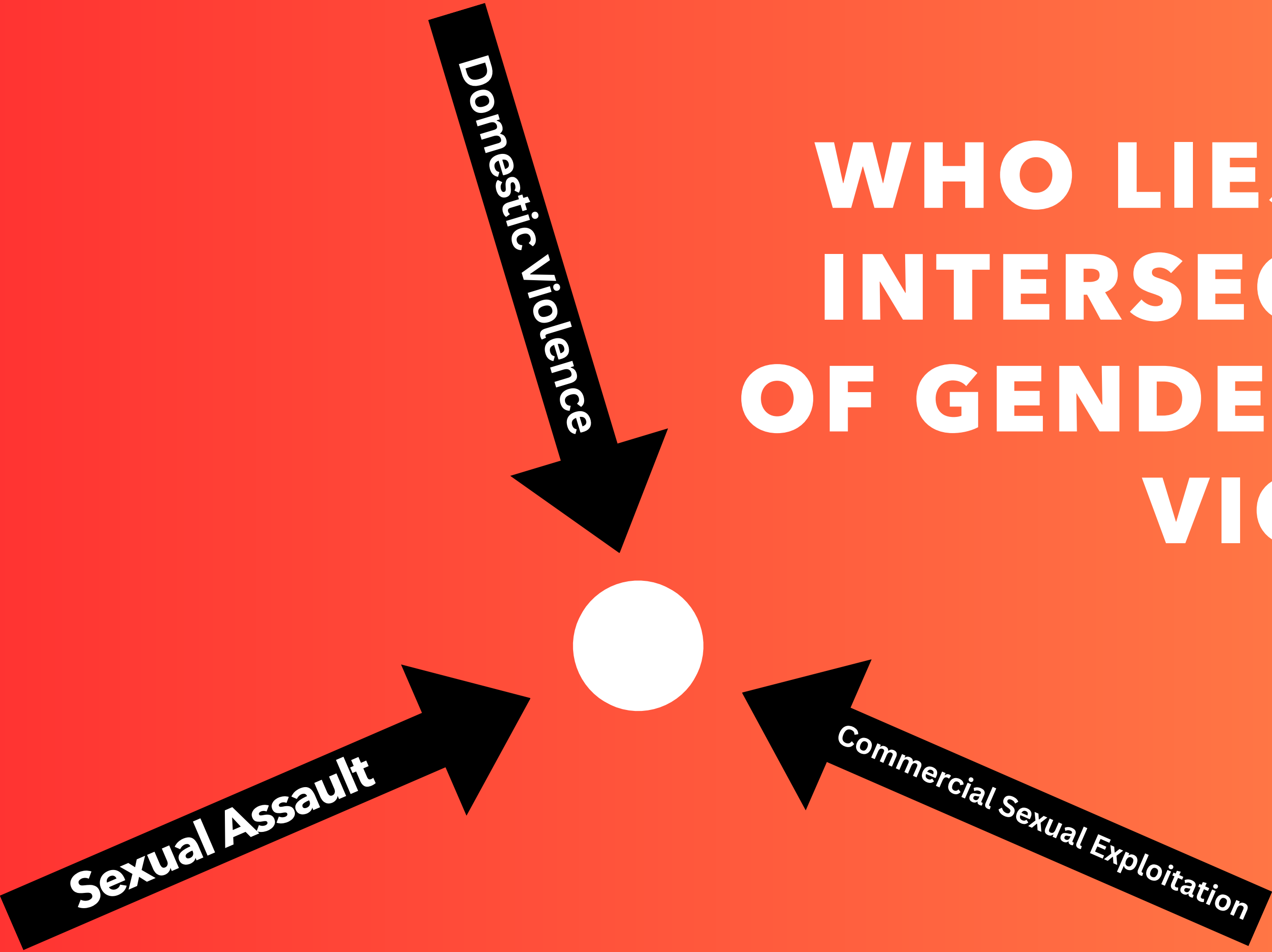
Commercial Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

The commercial sexual industry (CSI) involves the performance of sexual activities, or sexually explicit acts, in exchange for money, goods, or other forms of compensation (e.g., providing basic survival necessities).

Commercial sexual exploitation refers to **a phenomenon in which the line between choice and coercion is blurred for individuals engaged in the CSI, as exploiters seek to capitalize on their unmet needs.**

WHO LIES AT THE INTERSECTION(S) OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE?

Domestic Violence



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graph TD; DV[Domestic Violence] --> C(( )); SA[Sexual Assault] --> C; CSE[Commercial Sexual Exploitation] --> C;
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Sexual Assault

Commercial Sexual Exploitation

THE GAPS & LIMITATIONS OF CLIENT SERVICES

- **Systemic barriers caused and exacerbated by systems of oppression**
 - Oppressive laws and policies that perpetuate power differentials and social hierarchy
- **Inaccessible services**
 - Target audiences for services not reached
 - Marginalized identities not represented amongst provider populations, causing distrust due to lack of relatability
 - Generalization of client experiences resulting in lack of specialized services
 - Eligibility for services
 - Dismissal of survivors who do not fall under the “perfect victim” archetype
 - Language in grants that limit populations eligible for services
 - Availability of language and disability resources
- **Criminalization of survivorhood**
 - Victim-blaming
 - Racism steeped in police and legal institutions
- **Lack of provider capacity and emotional fatigue**
 - Inadequate structural supports for providers and agencies
- **Inaccurate data on individuals impacted by social issue(s)**
 - Stigmatization resulting in underreporting
 - Faulty collection methods and systems across service providers

**COMPLEX PROBLEMS
REQUIRE EQUALLY AS
COMPLEX SOLUTIONS.**

AN APPROACH TO ADVOCACY

CULTURALLY SPECIFIC

Our programming works to address the violence experienced by the most marginalized in society.

We understand that women of color, specifically Black and African American women, experience violence at an alarming rate, alongside the lack of relevant services in response to the violence.

It is critical that service providers reflect the identities of clients served, or that approaches to services adopt cultural frameworks and are informed by the leadership, guidance, and wisdom of marginalized communities.

TRAUMA-INFORMED

A trauma-informed approach recognizes that trauma can bleed into every area of a survivor's life, while also affirming each survivor as a whole individual with unique identities, strengths, and needs.

It fosters safety, trust, and empowerment by centering survivor agency and avoiding re-traumatization. At the same time, it acknowledges and challenges the systemic barriers that compound harm, promoting healing, resilience, and justice at both the individual and community level.

SOCIAL JUSTICE-ORIENTED

A social-justice orientation recognizes that advocacy is not about "fixing" individuals. The problem we seek to combat lies in systems, not people.

This approach is about affirming survivor agency, removing barriers, and co-creating pathways toward safety, healing, and lasting change.

By listening to client stories and centering their voices, we challenge the systems that are rooted in or further oppression and discrimination.



**BEHAVIORAL
HEALTH
FRAMING
MATTERS.**

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE



BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

**RAISE YOUR
HAND IF . . .**



REFLECTION PROMPTS FOR PROVIDERS

- **Do your screenings and intakes account for experiences of gender-based violence (GBV)?**
 - Do you know how to identify signs of GBV?
 - What language is being used to identify and assess GBV experiences?
- **Is your agency well-equipped to navigate GBV issues when they arise?**
 - If it is not within your scope of services, are you aware of available GBV resources?
 - Has your agency established connections and partnerships with agencies that specialize in GBV services?
- **Does your agency provide culturally specific services?**
 - If not, how can your agency adopt a cultural framework(s) to ensure the accessibility of client services?
- **Has the language of your screenings and intakes been reviewed through a trauma-informed lens?**
 - How do you remain conscious of the potential for the retraumatization of clients?
- **What measures are your agency taking to ensure that marginalized populations are reached and served?**
- **Do staff at your agency receive GBV-related training(s)?**

**WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO YOU FOR GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE
TO BE FRAMED AS A BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ISSUE?**

IT TAKES
COMPASSION

IT TAKES
COURAGE



IT TAKES
COMMITMENT



IT TAKES YOU



WE NEED ONE ANOTHER NOW MORE THAN EVER.

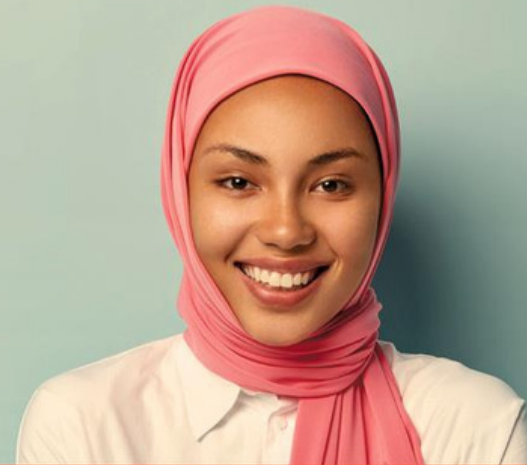
YWCA SEATTLE | KING | SNOHOMISH

Eliminating Racism | Empowering Women

THANK YOU!



JUSTICE



EQUALITY



**EMPOWER
WOMEN**



**ELIMINATE
RACISM**



**GENDER
EQUITY**

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