

Examining Rape of Native Women in a Small City

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Why Sexual Violence?

- Criminal justice response to DV has been well-developed and analyzed
 - risk assessments
 - arrest policies
 - predominant aggressor statutes
- Sexual assault continues to be an area in which the criminal justice response is lacking
 - inconsistent investigations
 - lack of attention to safety
 - overly focused on victim behavior

Why Native women?

Native women are

- 3.5 times more likely to be raped than women of any other race.
- More likely to be raped by someone of a different race
- More likely to sustain additional injuries
- Less likely to have their cases prosecuted – we *think*



Why Duluth?

- Most work done on this issue for Native women thus far has been on reservations – almost nothing has been explored for urban Indians
- Duluth has a relatively high and diverse Native population
- Duluth is close to a number of reservations
- Some of the doors were already open - Duluth has a long history of collaboratively working to address violence against women

Premise of an audit

Workers are institutionally organized to do their jobs in particular ways—they are guided to do jobs by the forms, policies, philosophy, and routine work practices of the institution in which they work. When these work practices routinely fail to adequately address the needs of people it is rarely because of the failure of individual practitioners. It is a problem with how their work is organized and coordinated.

- Praxis International

Overview

- Institutions structure the way people work and think
- Gaps exist between individual needs and institutional responses
- Examine how gaps are created
- Look at institutions, not individuals
- Qualitative, not quantitative
- Recognize and address how racism is institutionalized in our work

Process

- Develop audit team
- Map the system
- Focus groups
- Interview and observe systems practitioners
- Text analysis
- Recommendations

Tips from our experience

- Go slow
- Don't be afraid to start the conversation
- Always bring the focus back to where it needs to be
- Take time for the personal trauma this triggers
- Keep cultural practices within the process
- Stay away from, "Gotcha!"
- Don't get defensive
- Remember that most institutional problems *can be fixed*

Some gaps from Duluth

- Credibility
- Consent defense
- Institutionalized racism
- Lack of accessible advocacy
- Lack of accountability within criminal justice response



**Important finding
from Duluth**

Most people
are in this
work to help,
not hurt (*that's
right, even the
police*)



“I want to be remembered
for emphasizing the fact
that we have indigenous
solutions to our
problems.”

Wilma Mankiller, Cherokee


