

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH DMH



# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE TASK FORCE WORKSHOP DEAF, HARD OF HEARING, BLIND, AND PHYSICAL DISABILITIES





## INTRODUCTION

Since 1971, Peace Over Violence has been providing intervention and prevention services to survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence, and stalking. We are a nonprofit organization committed to social service, social justice, and social change. POV is an expert in the local community and beyond, and has focused much of its work supporting underserved and marginalized communities. The project that we began utilizing Department of Mental Health funding was Accessibility Over Violence. We developed a 6 to 8-hour curriculum to help lay persons increase their knowledge around domestic violence, the disparities around access to care for community members from underserved groups including deaf and hard of hearing community members, blind and physically disabled individuals. We developed a training program that focused on identifying signs of domestic violence and how to intervene in a trauma informed way. We shared resources with community members on how to access services in the local community. We incorporated role playing so that people can experience what it would be like to help a survivor of domestic violence access services.

**In collaboration with the Department of Mental Health (DMH), Peace Over Violence developed Accessibility Over Violence (AOV).**







# An opportunity to make new community connections and collaborations.

## PURPOSE

The purpose of the Domestic Violence Task Force Workshop is to engage, empower, and enlist the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Blind, and Physically Disabled community members as well as their family members and caretakers into advocacy and activism around mental health. It aims to educate the participants on how to identify the signs of people who are victims of domestic violence and be able to provide resources and access to appropriate help.

## OBJECTIVE

A Facilitator is a clinician specializes in domestic violence and providing mental health services to the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Blind, and Physically Disabled populations will be hired. He/she will be responsible for the project's full implementation. This project is designed to promote mental health services, reduce stigma, and increase the capacity of the public mental health system

in Los Angeles County. It will enable this often underserved and marginalized population to access mental health services for themselves and empower other community members to access mental health services as well.

When we began this endeavor, it was really an opportunity for Peace Over Violence to reconnect with past community partners and strengthen connections and collaboration. It was also, an opportunity to make new community connections and collaborations. To recruit participants we developed flyers and contacted our local partners to circulate the information. We had a long-time relationship with local partners; GLAAD, Braille Institute, CSUN deaf studies program and our local deaf, hard of hearing, blind and physical disabilities coalition of Los Angeles's members.

We made accommodations for folks to make the workshops accessible by offering hybrid sessions. We created a pre-and post-test for participants and a feedback form and evaluation tool to gather information for future training. We identified folks that were community members from the three populations we focused on and trained them on the material used but also had them share their experiences with the participants so that people can understand the challenges and how challenges can be surpassed with the support of others.

RESULTS

# Facilitation of 9 sessions of Domestic Violence Task Force Workshop Program

SESSION DATE	POPULATION FOCUS	NO. OF ATTENDEES	LANGUAGE	CO-PRESENTER
2/9/23   Part 1	Physically Disabled	7	English	Karen Connell
2/16/23   Part 2	Physically Disabled	7	English	Karen Connell
2/16/24	Physically Disabled	18	Spanish	
3/3/23	Deaf and HoH	Cancelled ( Low Sign Ups)	ASL	
3/14/23   Part 1	Blind	41	English/Spanish	Lois Johnson
3/16/23   Part 2	Blind	41	English/Spanish	Lois Johnson
3/23/23	Deaf and HoH	31	ASL	Alexande Brown
4/24/23	Deaf and HoH	Cancelled ( Logistical)	ASL	
5/10/23	Deaf and HoH	4	ASL	Sara Clifton

We designed a thoughtful curriculum that considered what a lay person would need if they encountered a person in need of support due to domestic violence and called it Accessibility Over Violence (AOV). We began our curriculum with

psychoeducation surrounding domestic violence including the cycle of abuse, the power and control wheel, myths, and realities and safety planning for someone in crisis. We then also focused on crisis intervention skills on how to discuss sensitive topics and how to communicate support in a trauma informed way. We used trauma-informed care skills and tools to help coach participants and gave them a chance to practice in teams. We then covered vicarious trauma due to the burnout that first responders and crisis workers experience due to the consistent exposure to trauma stories. We discussed the importance of boundaries and how boundaries can help keep everyone emotionally safe. We shared tools on how to regulate our bodies during an emotional crisis, we shared tips that are easy to use and easy to teach others to use.

During this training we had 7 participants that completed the training, and this is what they found. People gave us feedback that the training was a great learning tool for them in the work that they do and all but one of these 7 were providers in the community but also community members living with one or more disabilities. The feedback was that it was great to hear from facilitators that were open about sharing their knowledge and lived experience. No gift cards were given but 1 for a community member.

The second workshop group that we trained was in Spanish. We had three facilitators Rosalinda Mendez, Ana Santamaria and Marilu Hinojosa who are all long-time staff members and volunteers of Peace Over Violence and a co-facilitator with lived experience. The participant was a victim of a violent crime which resulted in permanent physical disability. Together they had a wealth of experience and knowledge about domestic violence and the impacts of folks



with physical disabilities. On 2/16/23 we had a 6-hour in-person training course for 18 participants.

We learned a few things in this training that our clients that were invited to attend were already very informed and aware about domestic violence and resources in the community. Many participants expressed an interest in continuing to grow their learning. We were able to discuss this feedback with the leadership and training team and have decided to create more opportunities for our long-term clients to serve as peer support workers. We decided that during our Fall Counselor Advocate Training we will be recruiting our Spanish speaking clients to become volunteers on our hotline and peer counseling program. The pre and post test results showed that participants of the training already had a wealth of knowledge about domestic violence because they were survivors of violence themselves or were already interested in this topic. This was an opportunity for us to think about how to utilize our domestic violence 102 curriculum in the future and ways that we can probe more during our pre-test to learn more about knowledge base.

On March 3rd we advertised an in-person deaf and hard of hearing focused domestic violence workshop but due to the low turnout and low interest we decided to cancel altogether and resume with a virtual option which sparked more interest. On March 14 and 16th, we collaborated with a long-time partner Braille Institute. This was a product of a long history of working together in the community and partnering to serve the community. Peggie Reyna was the facilitator for this workshop along with a co-facilitator Lois Johnson who is blind and became blind later in her life. Together they presented the curriculum

and the material to 46 participants who received gift cards as a thank you for participating in the workshop.

Our next workshop was in collaboration with GLAAD on March 23, 2023, and we trained 31 participants. Our clinical case manager Demara Folk was the facilitator of this workshop along with a co-facilitator Alexander Brown who also is part of the deaf and hard of hearing community. This training was provided in ASL. What we found in the pre and post test results which we did not receive from everyone but mostly all results were improvements and the participants learned more about domestic violence as it relates to the deaf and hard of hearing community. The feedback was positive, and they were motivated to learn more about similar topics and how to become an ally. This collaboration sparked an interest for continued support of the Denim Day annual event to raise awareness. GLAAD participated in Denim Day and supported our efforts.

The next workshop on 4/24/23 in collaboration with CSUN was cancelled due to the timing of the training. The CSUN representatives collectively decided that because that week was finals week there may be low attendance on campus and therefore the in-person training may not be a priority. This training was canceled due to low interest due to CSUN not having enough time to circulate the flyer to advertise the event.

The last and final workshop was put together as an effort to engage our deaf and hard of hearing community members or caregivers who we believed could benefit from this essential information. As a wrap up we trained 4 participants with part two ending on 5/16/23.

## PRE AND POST TEST RESULTS

# We trained 103 participants exceeding our objective of 70.

Overall, we believe we made a significant difference in increasing knowledge about domestic violence. There is a lot of information shared so we want to make sure that people can retain the information without being overwhelmed. We want to make sure that the information is given in doses and that we have time to practice the material using role plays and observing others in mock situations. We could have used shorter sessions and spread out the material in 2-3 sessions so that participants could process the information and return with questions. We also learned that a lot of individuals that we trained already had some fundamental knowledge about domestic violence but were excited about learning about the challenges that people with disabilities experience. The participants wanted to continue to stay involved and requested more training.

Overall, we trained 103 participants exceeding our objective of 70. We trained folks with disabilities, allies, and caretakers. We connected with 103 individuals who learned about new resources including information about local organizations. Our trainings were provided remotely and in-person. Having in-person trainings allowed individuals to tour the offices of community organizations. All participants learned about emergency services, access to

case management services and hotlines that can provide emotional support and resources. In addition, individuals were able to build community among other participants and to identify a point of contact in case they or someone they know need the resources.

In providing these trainings, we discovered that many participants already had some knowledge about domestic violence and we were able to set aside space to process experiences that participants disclosed and experiences that they shared about their loved ones. We realized that participants are open to a domestic violence 102 which is a more in-depth training around domestic violence and how to help individuals that are challenged with this unhealthy dynamic. If given the opportunity, we would love to invite all participants to return to take our domestic violence 102 training or our counselor advocate training to respond to domestic violence hotline calls if participants want to get involved.

## LESSONS LEARNED

Challenges that arose for us during this workshop were getting the pre/post test results from the participants due to their visual impairments. We were unable to receive completed pre or posttests for all participants. Our recommendation for this would be discuss accommodations that could be made to:

1. Create pre and posttests in Braille which would be incredibly costly and would take time and not every person that is blind can read braille.
2. Create an alternative way to capture the pre and post test questions with a verbal test which allows participants to engage by raising their hands.

However, we did get positive feedback from the participants and the partners at Braille about the importance of this topic and the need to have more training about related topics.

## HERE IS SOME OF THE FEEDBACK WE RECEIVED

**“Hello Wendy, it was a pleasure and so informative! Thank you for opening our eyes, awareness is key. Peace and blessings”**

**“I found the workshop very informative. You guys make a wonderful difference in the world.”**

**“Overall, it was quite good. Because I have more vision than memory, having a listing of the mentioned resources would have been helpful. Peggie did an outstanding presentation. Because she was willing and able to share her story and ways, she was able to heal, she was both compelling and inspiring that others could do the same.**

**“Raised Awareness on a topic that usually gets ignored or swept under the rug.”**



“One highlight from the seminar: Peggy sharing her own personal struggles and how she overcame them. They were both fabulous presenters. Braille should have more seminars on a variety of topics especially self-defense.”

“I really enjoyed our first class session for the Domestic Violence Task Force training that addresses the needs of those with various forms of impairments and enduring domestic violence. Emotionally, it was a tough class but very thorough. I’m looking forward to Session 2.”

We also had many participants share their survivor stories with us. We had a few community members that later reached out to us for enrollment in services. We saw some amazing connections that were made and the motivation to learn more.





## RECOMENDATIONS

We would like to share some recommendations for future grants that would help organizations do better in sharing information and engage more with participants. First, we would like to share that this training is better in person to attract local community members. When we do training courses in person, we need to consider securing funds for lunch that can be given to participants and secure funds for parking costs. It is difficult to complete all pre and post-tests and evaluations virtually. It was difficult to obtain all documents, so we had to think about other ways to obtain this information in a more accessible way. Doing virtual training is great to increase participation as it makes the training more accessible, but the content is heavy, and it is important to consider that people need time to process how this information is impacting them.

What we recommend is that for underserved populations with disabilities we should think about other ways to obtain feedback from participants. We want to ensure that we receive feedback on ways we can improve, so our recommendation is to create a pre- and post-test protocol that includes interviews so that folks who struggle with reading and writing can contribute. For feedback we would also like to interview folks to share their thoughts. We appreciated the gift cards given to participants because it increased participation and commitment to complete the workshops. The participants also appreciated compensation for their time. There were a few community members that had a dual role. They are community members who identify as either deaf, hard of hearing, blind and physically disabled but could not accept

the gift cards as they were representing community organizations as well, but it allowed us to train more individuals because our gift cards went a long way.

We learned that having co-facilitators with lived experience is essential and empowering but we know that not everyone is ready for public speaking and so we need to train presenters not only on the content of the material but how to present it to large audiences.

Overall, we enjoyed the opportunity to train community members on how to be allies for survivors of domestic violence. Many participants disclosed their stories and shared their own experiences which only enhanced the engagement. It was great to build community connections and to strengthen our community collaborations.



## ADDENDUM

### ABOUT THE FACILITATORS

***Peggie Reyna*** is the Project Director for the Peace Over Violence Deaf, Disabled & Elder Services Program. Ms. Reyna holds a B.A. in Special Education with emphasis on Deafness. Herself hard of hearing from domestic violence, Peggie is a nationally recognized speaker in the fields of intimate partner violence, teen dating violence, child abuse, stalking and women's self-defense. She is best known for her pioneering work in the Deaf and Disabled communities and has been published in "Deaf Life," "WE" magazine and "New Horizons." Peggie has made numerous media and television appearances including "Good Morning America," "Southland Today," "L.A (Los Angeles). In The Morning," "The Leeza Show," "Up Front," "Deaf Mosaic," "Don't Be a Target" 95 & 96, NBC's "Save Our Streets" and "Lifestyle Magazine".

***Karen Conell*** is a domestic violence survivor who became an activist in 1982 to share her story as Community Educator and helped lobby for the first Domestic Violence Law. She then was invited to be on the CA Attorney General's Task Force to work with other law enforcement offices, D.A.s and judges, to write a curriculum for training Police and Sheriff's on responding to a domestic violence call. She then trained L.A.P.D. Next, she was recruited to create and implement a victim advocate program in the L.A. City Attorney's office.

### ABOUT OUR CLINICIANS

***Federico Carmona, APCC*** is a trauma therapist working with trauma survivors utilizing modalities such as Attachment and Strength-Based, Trauma-Focused, and Culturally Sensitive approach, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and Psychodynamic Therapy. Federico was helpful in his training in Community Resiliency Model (CRM) teaching participants about trauma in the body and brain and how we can cope with trauma symptoms.

***Rosalinda Mendez, AMFT*** has multiples years of experience working high acuity, sensitive trauma cases involving human trafficking, domestic violence, and sexual abuse. Rosalinda is fluent in Spanish and English and is highly qualified to teach on trauma and the body, somatic experiencing and how to cope with physical disabilities incurred from a traumatic experience such as being a victim of crime.

***Ana Santamaria***, is a Latina services counselor and has been for decades. Ana has a specialty in working with survivors of crime as it relates to how the body manifests trauma and how to cope through movement and processing trauma through community building and community connections. Ana is an advocate for survivors and has been asked to train folks in Spain as they develop their domestic violence programs.

***Marilu Hinojosa***, has been a volunteer with POV for many years and has an expertise in responding to the community on our Spanish hotline. Marilu was introduced to Peace Over Violence while on a bus on her way to work to clean a home. She met a woman who was providing educational workshops “Charlas” in the community. This was something that Marilu loved to do. She loved to educate others and inform. The women referred her to Peace Over Violence. Soon after, Marilu took part of Peace Over Violence monolingual Spanish counselor advocate/ violence prevention specialist training. In this training Marilu learned how to become a crisis counselor to support victims of sexual and domestic violence. As well as becoming a community speaker on violence prevention. Marilu joined POV on June 2, 2002, as part of POV’s Latina Service Program. Marilu volunteered with Peace Over Violence for 17 years until being hired as staff.

***Demara Folk, MSW*** is a social worker and has many years of experience working with the deaf and hard of hearing community and individuals living with a disability. Demara is incredibly involved in the deaf community and is a strong advocate for access and inclusion. Demara has kept strong connections with partners in the community such as deaf hope and national deaf counseling center. Demara is also trained in a parenting curriculum developed by deaf counseling, advocacy, and referral agency (DCARA) and Deaf hope.

***Joy Chow, APCC*** is an associate clinical counselor working in the mental health field since 2017. Prior to that, I had a decade-long career as a sign language interpreter with my hands in the K-12, college, VRS, and medical settings. Joy’s training includes working in a psychiatric acute and intensive care unit supporting patients experiencing severe depression, anxiety, psychosis, and dual diagnosis.

*We had six co-presenters who were folks identified as part of the underserved communities we were targeting. Some of these folks were volunteers who were interested in being advocates for others in their communities.*



## OUR MISSION

Building healthy relationships,  
families, and communities free  
from sexual, domestic and  
interpersonal violence.

[peaceoverviolence.org](https://peaceoverviolence.org)



**PEACE  
OVER  
VIOLENCE**