Understanding the Specific Barriers of Immigrant Women Facing Intimate Partner Violence

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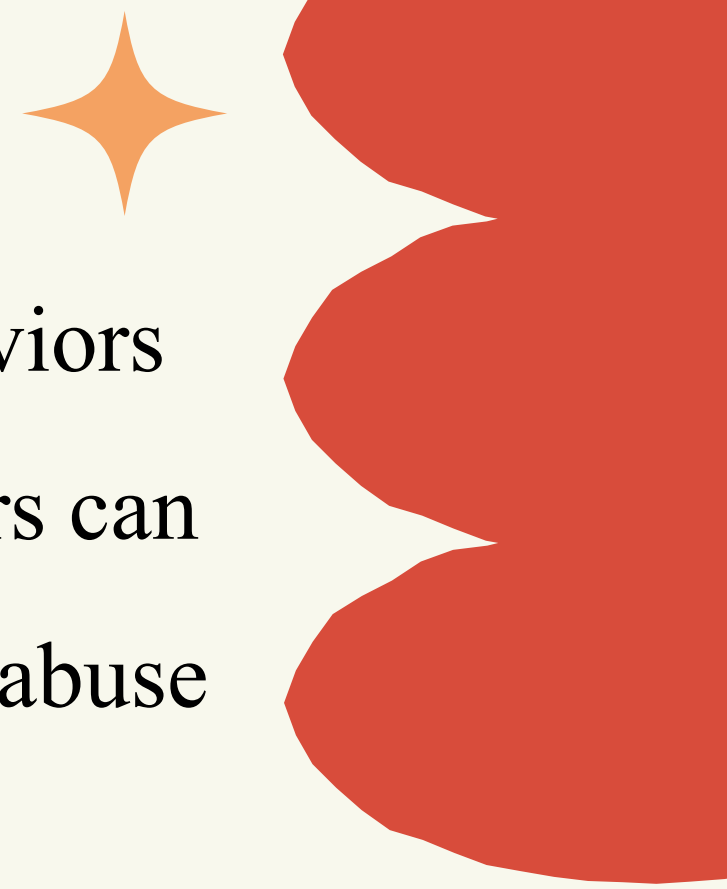Faculty Mentors: Temperance Staples, MHS & Cinzia Pica, Ed.D.
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Introduction

- **Intimate partner violence (IPV)** refers to assaultive or controlling behaviors by one partner against another in an intimate relationship. These behaviors can manifest in the form of physical, emotional, verbal, financial, and sexual abuse (World Health Organization, n.d.)
- Survivors of IPV face help-seeking barriers
- Immigrant women experiencing IPV face additional, more specific help-seeking barriers
  - Utilize culturally responsive and trauma-informed approaches
- Best practices when working with women who have immigrated to the United States with their spouses or joined their spouses through the family-based immigration system

Methodology

- A literature review was conducted.

- Utilized one Database: PubMed.

- Utilized additional literature from the American Psychological Association, SAMHSA, American Counseling Association, University of Illinois Chicago, University at Buffalo, National Alliance on Mental Illness, Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence, American Immigration Council, Portland Community College, and Center for Health Care Strategies.

- Identified research and other works focused on intimate partner violence, help-seeking, cultural competence, and trauma-informed care.

- Key Terms: intimate partner violence, risk factor, barrier, immigrant, immigration, help-seeking behavior, cultural competence, culturally responsive, cultural humility, trauma-informed care.

- Limiting Terms: All research was based on publications made in the past five years (2009-2024), with no translations.

Risk Factors

- Immigrant women face additional risk factors for IPV
- The intersectional aspects of a survivor's identity shape their unique experiences as asylum-seeking women
  - Characteristics can act as both risk and protective factors
- Sociocultural Barriers
  - Beliefs and values
  - Stigma surrounding divorce
- Immigration
  - Fear of deportation
  - Isolation
  - Language barriers
  - Knowledge of legal systems
- Financial insecurity
  - Economic dependence
  - Financial abuse

Culturally Responsive Practices

- Knowledge of immigration policy and migrant rights
- Acknowledge and value clients' unique cultural identities and backgrounds
  - Values, beliefs, and customs
- Provider recognizes their biases and privileges and how they inform their perspectives
- The provider practices cultural humility
  - Identity may not reflect their clients' identities
- Does not impose Western-centric practices on the client
- A client's cultural identity influences their worldviews, experiences, and perceptions
- Interventions/care are tailored to meet the specific needs of culturally diverse clients
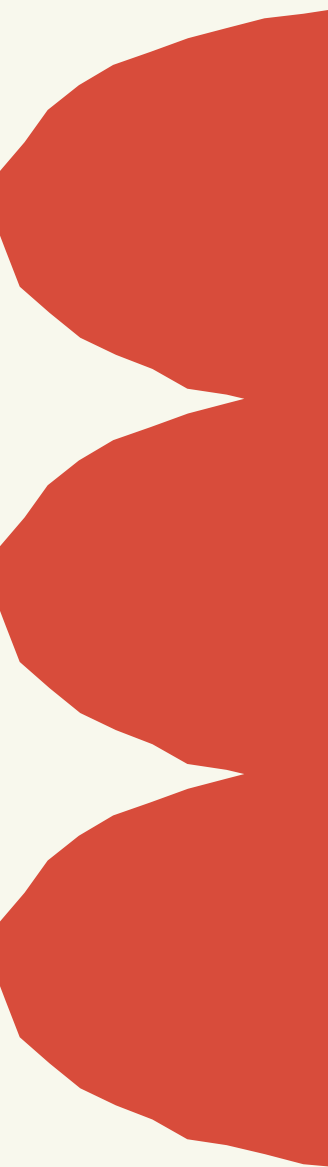
Trauma-Informed Care

- Acknowledge and consider trauma symptoms and their effects on a client's life
- Shift focus from the problems resulting from trauma to learning about the client's experiences connected to their trauma
- Support the client's psychological, emotional, and social needs rather than fix their trauma symptoms or problems
- Treatment based on five principles: safety, choice, collaboration, trustworthiness, and empowerment

Discussion

- Health and human services providers must understand the additional risk factors for IPV experienced by female immigrants

    - Possess knowledge of immigration policy and migrant rights

- Further knowledge of help-seeking barriers

- Culturally responsive practices include acknowledging, respecting, and utilizing the client's unique identity in interventions

- Providers also possess cultural humility

- Trauma-informed care recognizes the impact of trauma on a client's life while seeking to return a sense of control, respect, and empowerment

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