Women of Color and Leadership at Sexual Assault Coalitions

Addressing the Gap
Report 2002

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Sisters of Color Ending Sexual Assault (SCESA)   i

Acknowledgements

Preface

Leadership, mentoring, recruitment and retention of staff are issues that concern and relate to all women within the anti-sexual assault movement. However, as they relate to Women of Color in the movement, the barriers to realizing and addressing these issues are significantly different and challenging, primarily due to issues of racism.

Racism has been at the foundation of many issues in society and as such is often the root cause for the absence of Women of Color in leadership in many arenas including the anti-sexual assault movement. There is a misconception or naïve notion that racism is "not as bad as it used to be." There is an ideology that in addressing the issue of sexual assault we are all equal.

Women of Color in the anti-sexual assault movement have held caucuses at national meetings and in various states. Diversity projects, taskforces and groups have been formed at sexual assault coalitions throughout the country. However, taskforces and projects that operate without addressing the impact of racism on coalition policies, protocols and procedures are ineffective. As critical as these projects and groups are, they may reinforce the misconception that addressing the issue of racism in the anti-sexual assault movement is no longer necessary. Indeed some may believe that it is time to look at addressing other marginalized communities.

Racism exists in each sexual assault coalition as it does in every part of society; this is a fact that cannot be ignored. As we know, all too clearly, silence on an issue does not make it go away. Silence on the issue of racism will not make racism go away. To the contrary, racism will continue to manifest itself in different ways.

If the anti-sexual assault movement is truly to create and facilitate change, we must first look to changing our own personal beliefs, behaviors, attitudes, and assumptions. We must consistently question our motives and actions. Many coalitions and white allies have been struggling with addressing individual and institutional racism for a number of years and most would agree that their work is far from over; if indeed it ever really ends. Addressing individual and institutional racism cannot be a one-time training or workshop; it requires consistent work and a long-term commitment.

Your coalition should not use this report as its only tool to address individual and institutional racism. The report is not intended to create a quick fix or checklist to increase, train and support Women of Color at your coalition. Each coalition should commit to a long-term strategic plan that addresses not only individual and institutional racism but also commits to enhance and support Women of Color in leadership. The strategic plan should include measurable outcomes and a timetable to hold individuals and the coalition accountable. It will be critically important to the success of such a plan that there be an acknowledgement that although the issues of Women of Color in leadership and individual and institutional racism are intertwined, addressing each of these issues will require different strategies. Hiring a consultant or contracting with a community program can assist coalitions in this effort. Further, individual staff at coalitions must make a commitment to address their own issues.

Introduction

Women of Color[1] have been providing leadership in the anti-sexual assault arena since the beginning of the movement. However, the number of Women of Color in leadership and their access to influence policy decisions and social change has been limited. The limited number of Women of Color in leadership positions within the anti-sexual assault movement serves to thwart the movement's ability to respond to victims of sexual assault in a culturally competent and informed manner.

In the fall of 2000, the Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services, Inc. in partnership with the New York State Coalition Against Sexual Assault was awarded a grant from the Violence Against Women Office, Office of Justice programs, United States Department of Justice to create a National Women of Color Leadership Project (hereinafter Leadership Project) to assist in establishing a more coordinated, comprehensive and culturally appropriate response to sexual assault throughout the country.

Sexual assault coalitions and their staff are critical conduits of information, leadership and advocacy for local rape crisis centers, policy makers and various systems within each coalition's individual state and across the nation. The Leadership Project strives to create and support a larger pool of Women of Color leaders at sexual assault coalitions in key decision making roles and positions that offer an opportunity to affect and influence societal change and policy decisions related to sexual assault.

The goal of the Leadership Project is to identify, train, and support Women of Color in attaining or maintaining leadership positions at sexual assault coalitions.

The Leadership Project has a steering committee of Women of Color from sexual assault coalitions across the country. In the winter of 2001, the steering committee of the Leadership Project adopted the name, Sisters of Color Ending Sexual Assault (SCESA), to reflect a long-term goal, beyond the Leadership Project, of ensuring that Women of Color are given an opportunity to influence and affect system-wide responses and social change initiatives related to sexual assault.

Therefore, going forward, the Leadership Project shall be referred to as **SCESA: The National Women of Color Leadership Project** to ensure continuity and build long-term recognition with Women of Color in the anti-sexual assault movement.

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[1] Women of Color is defined in this document as women of African, African Caribbean, Asian/Asian Pacific Islander, Latina, Native American descent who identify as a Woman of Color on a daily basis.

SCESA: The National Women of Color Leadership Project

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Purpose of Report

This report should be used as a tool to assist your sexual assault coalition in creating a long-term strategy or to complement an already existing strategic plan for increasing training and supporting Women of Color at your coalition. It is a compilation of the experiences of Women of Color currently working at sexual assault coalitions. This report provides a snapshot of some key critical issues that need to be addressed. While it is suggested that Women of Color at your coalition be offered further opportunities (if they chose) to offer insight and feedback to this information, they should not be compelled to validate the information provided within this report.

This report is intended to provide support, validation, and options for addressing professional development for those Women of Color that are currently working at sexual assault coalitions.

Methodology

A needs assessment was conducted by surveying Women of Color at sexual assault coalitions. Additional information was collected through caucuses and focus groups held at each of the Sexual Assault Resource Sharing Project's regional meetings. These regional meetings brought together Women of Color from sexual assault coalitions across the country.

A Snapshot of Women of Color at Sexual Assault Coalitions

Please note that the information below is based on the numbers gathered at the time of this publication. Dual coalitions were asked to identify staff that is specifically sexual assault focused if the entire coalition staff is not responsible for both sexual assault and domestic violence work.

There is approximately 390 total staff at coalitions across the country. Of this total number 79 staff are Women of Color. There are 21 states that have no Women of Color on staff at the coalition. There are five states at which the Executive Director of the coalition is a Woman of Color.

Summary of the Key Issues Identified in Addressing Women of Color in Leadership at Sexual Assault Coalitions

In compiling the information gained from Women of Color at coalitions, there was an attempt to assess the most comprehensive way to report the information as well as identify underlying issues and common themes.

There were five key issues that were evident as common themes or threads. Although other issues identified were dependant on the individual responding to the question, a specific coalition, or even a specific region of the country, these five issues were consistently identified by all of the Women of Color in the research pool.

The issues are shared here in no particular order because each is of equal importance and Women of Color felt that all needed to be addressed simultaneously. The five key issues discussed in this report are:

- *Recruiting Women of Color*

- *Providing Support for Women of Color*

- *Ensuring Professional Development and Skills Training for Women of Color*

- *Ensuring that Women of Color Maintain Leadership Positions*

- *An Effective Ally for Women of Color*

Issue One: Recruiting Women of Color

Overall, there appears to be a limited number of Women of Color working within the anti-sexual assault movement. This is reflected not only at coalitions but also at the local sexual assault programs. Recruiting Women of Color is consistently noted to be a challenge by many coalitions. However, Women of Color maintain that if coalitions focused their recruitment strategies on the target audience they would be more effective.

There are many social justice issues and challenges for Communities of Color. The range of past work experience identified by Women of Color currently working at coalitions indicates that many of these social justice arenas are prime recruiting ground to engage Women of Color to apply for professional positions in the anti-sexual assault movement. Women of Color who do not have a background in the anti-sexual assault field may possess transferable skills that can contribute to the overall mission of the coalition.

Unfortunately, the anti-sexual assault movement is still seen and experienced by many Women of Color as a white women's movement. Although some of this perception is due, in part, to the media's representation of the feminist and anti-sexual assault movement, it is also reflected and reinforced by women within the movement.

There is a shortage of comprehensive and consistent outreach, education, and information about sexual assault shared within Communities of Color, which reinforces the idea that sexual assault is non-existent in the community. Therefore many Women of Color may not view working to address sexual assault as a critical issue for their community.

Hiring practices and processes may not reach out to Women of Color nor value the diverse experiences that Women of Color can contribute to the organization with or without a formal education. Although the movement as a whole has vocally supported the importance of appreciating experience in the absence of credentials, this sentiment seems to fall short when considering a Woman of Color for a leadership position. Some job opportunities, particularly for leadership or managerial positions, are shared and/or filled by networks of "whom you know". Therefore, because there are not many Women of Color already in leadership, it is often difficult to get information and "a foot-in-the-door" for some positions.

Additionally, many coalitions have not critically analyzed their reputation within Communities of Color in their own states. If the organization is viewed as not inclusive in regard to providing services and advocacy for Communities of Color, Women of Color may not be willing to work at the coalition.

Considerations for: Recruiting Women of Color

- Before attempting to recruit Women of Color staff, it is imperative that the coalition critically analyze whether the environment at the coalition would be welcoming to Women of Color.

- Coalitions should consider working with an outside consultant to adequately address their reputation within Communities of Color. The consultant could also assist in evaluating the attitudes and assumptions of the staff and overall environment at the coalition.

- Job descriptions requiring a degree may create a barrier for some Women of Color who wish to apply. There are a significant number of Women of Color working in social justice/social service positions in the state and at local rape crisis centers that have a wealth of experience and transferable skills but are without a formal degree. Job requirements should be flexible, allowing for experience in lieu of a formal degree. Coalitions should explore various ways to determine qualifications for staff positions that would value diverse experiences.

- The pay scale for the position may not be at a rate that allows a Woman of Color to adequately support herself and/or her family.

- When advertising for a position at the coalition, there is a need for broader thinking beyond the major city/town newspapers. Networking is a key avenue for learning about job opportunities. Coalitions should examine their outreach strategies and develop a plan for posting, advertising, and sharing openings for all positions to ensure inclusivity in how and to whom the information is shared.

- Coalitions should advertise within Organizations of Color, other social justice and social service organizations and papers that are exclusive to various Communities of Color. Job postings should also be sent to community leaders and local businesses, as both are significant conduits of information. Coalitions should translate job openings into various languages with particular attention to words that may not be reflected in certain languages (for example, advocacy). Although a position may require the individual be fluent in English, the job announcement initially might be more easily understood in the potential candidate's first language.

- Critically analyze the wording of the job posting. Does it say, "Women of Color encouraged to apply?" This may say to a potential employee that the coalition has had a previous problem with hiring and retaining Women of Color and are trying to fill a quota. Instead, consider including in the posting a position statement that your coalition has on connecting sexual assault to all issues of oppression.

- The composition of the hiring team should include staff who value having Women of Color at the coalition and are familiar with the issues of oppression. If the process is coordinated or conducted by one individual, that person should have done work on issues of oppression and addressed her/his own racism. Both steps are necessary to ensure that those involved with the hiring process are able to value the contribution of Women of Color and appreciate how diverse experiences can positively contribute to the organization. Further, the process should not be stifled by "limited qualifiers by which to measure competency."

- The outreach that is done to educate, inform and address sexual assault in Communities of Color should also include ways that the community can help to end sexual assault. If community members begin to understand that sexual assault is a critical issue for their community, then more people may be willing to be involved in a work/career capacity in the anti-sexual assault movement.

- Coalitions should look to multicultural programs (including student clubs and academic classes) on campuses as yet another way to create internships and career opportunities that bring Women of Color into the anti-sexual assault movement.

- Women of Color should be recruited for all positions within the coalition. As evident by the positions currently held by Women of Color at coalitions, many are hired for outreach or administrative positions. Women of Color bring experience in a variety of fields and should be sought for their diverse expertise.

- The decision to increase the number of Women of Color working at the coalition and in leadership positions must be agreed upon by all members of the coalition. An organizational commitment is crucial to ensure success and avoid the appearance of filling a quota. A commitment provides a supportive work environment that discourages negative comments and assumptions by other members of the coalition staff.

Issue Two: Providing Support for Women of Color

Presently, there are a few coalitions that have only one or two Women of Color on staff. These Women of Color may be part of a staff of ten to twelve. There are some regions of the country in which the total number of Women of Color working at coalitions in the entire area is miniscule.   With this significantly limited representation, there is often a sense of isolation and invisibility experienced by Women of Color at coalitions.

For some Women of Color, there may be a stigma associated with the issue of sexual assault and/or feminism within their cultural community. For these Women of Color, a decision to work within the anti-sexual assault movement may create a risk for themselves and/or their family. The challenge of dealing with individual and institutional racism within the coalition while also being ostracized or disapproved of by members of their community may create significant stressors to mental and physical health. These women may leave the movement due to the need for self-preservation.

Strategies to support Women of Color and opportunities that allow Women of Color to support each other must be deemed a high priority in retaining and maintaining Women of Color at coalitions and within the anti-sexual assault movement.

Many of the barriers to Women of Color receiving support at coalitions are said to be "unintentional" or "misunderstandings." However, as we know in dealing with survivors, the intent of the perpetuator does not lessen the impact of the trauma once a person feels victimized.

Tokenism remains a concern for Women of Color. Women of Color may often be burdened with the expectation that they represent all people of their race/ethnicity and all Women of Color. Additionally, lack of role clarification is a consistent issue for Women of Color. Women of Color on staff may be charged with the responsibility and accountability of all issues, concerns, outreach, and services that are related to Communities of Color regardless of whether it is a part of their job description. This is a setup for failure for Women of Color staff that are placed in this position, which may in turn lead to burnout and a sense of discouragement.

Women of Color may feel challenged to do things the "traditional way" without opportunities to explore, create or offer options to achieving the same goal.   For instance, advocacy may be defined differently in some Communities of Color. Many cultural populations do not see traditional counseling as an avenue to heal from traumatic events. Yet, when Women of Color offer non-traditional strategies to address sexual assault or want to address a related issue identified by the community, these suggestions and/or strategies may not be valued or respected by coalition staff. Women of Color may feel devalued as if they are not making a meaningful contribution to the coalition.   There may also be frustrations because of limited room for innovation due to a conflict between job descriptions and grant requirements that do not address needs recognized and identified by the targeted community.

For years, the anti-sexual assault movement has promoted the need to respect each survivor's experiences and feelings as valid, even if those experiences and feelings are relevant only to that particular survivor. Yet, when a Woman of Color voice issues or concerns regarding her experience with racism, there is a tendency with some white women to check out the experience with another Woman of Color for validation. This serves to increase the level of invisibility and lack of support for Women of Color.

Considerations for: Providing Support for Women of Color

- The Executive Director of the coalition should discuss the issue of increasing and supporting Women of Color on staff and in leadership positions as an organizational commitment to address oppression. The Executive Director should set a tone for encouraging and supporting diversity at the workplace that would also alleviate instances where Women of Color are seen as receiving "special treatment."

- Working with Communities of Color must be a coalition commitment that is infused in all areas of the coalition's strategic workplan. It should be part of each staff member's job responsibility. It should not be the sole responsibility of Women of Color staff.

- Coalitions should not assume that strategies to provide support, which are designed for white women, would also work effectively for Women of Color. These strategies should respect the diversity within and among Women of Color.

- Caucuses have long been recognized as an effective mechanism for people who share a common identity, experience or commitment to an issue to network and build support. The coalition should clearly state and actively show a commitment to the growth and development of a Women of Color caucus. The coalition should consider sending a letter of support for the work of the caucus to its membership. The meetings of the caucus should not be seen as "unimportant gatherings of Women of Color" or as a threat to white women. The coalition may want to consider creating a white women caucus to address racism that could work in collaboration with the Women of Color caucus.

- Some suggested tactics to actively support the caucus could include: supporting the necessity of the caucus to choose its autonomy; supporting the caucus with funding if possible; encouraging the caucus to offer suggestions and strategies for supporting Women of Color in the coalition; and working with the caucus to identify opportunities to implement suggested strategies.

Issue Three: Ensuring Professional Development and Skills Training for Women of Color

There are not many opportunities for advancement at coalitions due, in part to organizational structure, staff size and longevity of staff in the same position. For Women of Color on staff, there are the additional challenges of skills training, valuing diverse work styles, and willingness to share power.

A significant number of Women of Color are hired specifically to do outreach to marginalized communities. Consequently, the skills training they receive as well as the opportunities offered, may be limited to those which relate to providing outreach and services to marginalized communities. Although this training is important, it may not offer increased opportunities or encourage further development. It may also stigmatize Women of Color to just working with marginalized communities. Therefore, opportunities to expand skills and knowledge base are neither offered nor utilized.

Women of Color may not be offered the opportunity to gain managerial, supervisory and/or non-profit management related skills or training that would allow them to effectively move into a leadership position. Women of Color staff may never be approached, informed or encouraged to apply for a leadership position even when the Woman of Color has been doing the job for a significant amount of time. Further, Women of Color are often not considered for positions related to policy, technology, or marketing.

The requirements for leadership positions and opportunities may not reflect an appreciation for a diversity of work styles and approaches. Women of Color and white women may hold different views about the approach to ending sexual assault. Yet, Women of Color often feel the need to prove themselves just as capable as white women. Also, their differing priorities for organizing and determining critical issues relevant to sexual assault are sometimes used to inappropriately disqualify Women of Color from leadership positions.

Communication style is consistently reported by Women of Color in various fields as being a significant barrier to advancement. Women of Color are sometimes expected to look, act, and speak a certain way in order to attain leadership positions.

Although many coalition staff may give voice to the support of Women of Color in leadership, there is not a collective commitment to sharing power and valuing the contributions of Women of Color when it relates to decision-making and agenda setting. When administrative or legislative policy decisions and/or grant opportunities are being determined, Women of Color on staff at the coalition may not be consulted or involved in the process. Some white women are not willing to share space or power. Therefore, when representation is sought on a particular committee, project or issue, it is often not offered to a Woman of Color within the coalition who has the skills and knowledge to make a contribution.

Additionally, some projects or committees may designate one space/seat for marginalized communities and therefore all disenfranchised communities must compete to gain admittance. There is often an underlying or unstated assumption that all the other spaces/seats are for non-marginalized communities. This process and structure is disrespectful, devaluing and causes paralysis so that no marginalized community benefits.

There may be Women of Color who have no desire to be in leadership positions. While the lack of desire may stem from a variety of reasons, some Women of Color have noted that witnessing the challenges that other Women of Color in leadership have had to overcome is deterrence. There is a concern with having to face those same challenges.

Considerations for: Ensuring Professional Development and Skills Training for Women of Color

- The Executive Director must make an active commitment to encourage and promote Women of Color in leadership. The Executive Director should work to ensure that the Board of Directors of the coalition share this same commitment. The Board of Directors should be inclusive of Women of Color.

- Women of Color should be encouraged and offered opportunities to influence and affect policy and practice decisions related to the coalition and the anti-sexual assault movement. Coalition staff should actively work to include Women of Color at every level of involvement within the coalition. Coalitions should also challenge other agencies, coalitions, institutions, etc. to do the same.

- When creating job descriptions for various positions (particularly those that are in leadership) or writing grant proposals, there is an opportunity to do vision planning which recognizes and reflects the different views and approaches to doing the work that may be offered by Women of Color. This should also be reflected in annual performance reviews for staff.

- Opportunities for professional development and growth are one strategy to retain staff at coalitions. The professional development of Women of Color should be viewed as an investment in the long-term viability of the coalition to effectively carry out its mission. Many Women of Color are already leaders (if not positional leaders in the coalition, then grassroots leaders in their community) and possess leadership skills. They only need to be given an opportunity.

- The coalition should actively seek to provide the skills necessary for Women of Color to move into leadership positions. A formal process should be put in place to ensure that such skills trainings occur. Training budgets should be reflective of this process. Opportunities should be provided that allow Women of Color to be informed of

positions and encouraged to apply. Professional development has to be intentional, proactive and consistent.

- Trainings that would assist in attaining leadership positions should be shared with Women of Color staff. These trainings include: grant development, leadership development, policy advocacy, budget and fiscal management, program management, community organizing, evaluation, organizational development, and supervision.

- Skills gained from leadership trainings can be used to further an individual's personal as well as professional growth. However, when providing trainings for Women of Color there should also be opportunities provided within the coalition to utilize the skills learned. The coalition must make a commitment to providing opportunities for professional development, which includes sharing responsibilities that can foster a person's professional growth and knowledge. Increased opportunities can be offered to challenge staff to learn a new skill or adjust their job responsibilities.

- Change requires a phenomenal amount of work and often it may mean giving up something to someone else, whether it is letting go of a project or committee.

- Providing and supporting mentoring opportunities for Women of Color is also an effective strategy to assist with professional development of staff. Mentors are generally described as someone who can provide a combination of any or all of the following: information, education, support, guidance, networking opportunities, constructive criticism, encouragement, or even dialogue and perspective.

- Culture often determines and impacts a person's work style. There is a general acknowledgement that professionalism must be upheld when working at an organization. However, the definition of professionalism must be interpreted in such a way that does not force Women of Color to assimilate in order to be acceptable for leadership. The language, work style and cultural differences that Women of Color bring to the organization should be respected and appreciated.

Issue Four: Ensuring that Women of Color Maintain Leadership Positions

Women of Color may often be held to a higher standard than other women in leadership. Some Women of Color may feel that they need to "overachieve" to prove competency. Because of the challenges in attaining a leadership position, once in leadership, Women of Color may feel a need to work twice as hard as others in the same position.

Women of Color in leadership are constantly challenged in regards to their communication and management styles. Women of Color may not receive honest criticism on their management style and are left to wonder whether there is a justifiable concern with their management style or an act of racism. Additionally, some Women of Color may be challenged to question their abilities and skills in relation to their job responsibilities as well as their rationale for making decisions.

There may be a sense of isolation because even if there are other Women of Color working at the coalition, there may only be one Woman of Color in leadership. Further, a Woman of Color in leadership may be the only person in a management position challenging the coalition to ensure that policies and practices are consistently inclusive.

There may be a lack of support and respect from co-workers because of an assumption that Women of Color are hired or promoted to leadership positions because of race. There is a feeling of "being the goldfish in a bowl" in which all actions are heavily scrutinized. Therefore, Women of Color may feel a need to work harder than others to ensure that it is clear that the position was earned due to their skills. This is especially true when Women of Color are supervising staff that does not want or respect being supervised by a Woman of Color.

White women often perceive Women of Color in leadership as intimidating, too vocal or aggressive. This may impact on a Woman of Color's opportunities for advancement. Some Women of Color may feel overwhelmed by the burden "to be perfect", which may force them to leave the coalition and even the movement.

Considerations for: Ensuring that Women of Color Maintain Leadership Positions

Note: Many of the points covered under "Providing support to Women of Color" were also noted for this issue.

- Women of Color should be respected and valued as intelligent women who are capable decision makers, "coalition builders" and visionary activists.

- Women of Color should be respected in their leadership role and given every opportunity to be successful. Coalitions should ensure that Women of Color leaders

are provided with the necessary information and resources needed to be successful in their job.

- As mentioned earlier, culture often determines and shapes a person's communication and work style. Women of Color should not be forced to assimilate to the styles of the dominant culture in order to maintain a leadership position. The language, work style and cultural differences that Women of Color bring to the organization should be respected and appreciated.

- Coalitions should provide for processes and performance evaluations that reflect and appreciate different management styles.

- In providing feedback on the leadership style of a Woman of Color, critically analyze the intent and purpose of the feedback and assess whether the evaluation is reflective of the person's skills or about perceptions based on their race or ethnicity.

Being an ally requires holding one's self and others accountable even when there is not a Woman of Color present and sometimes at the risk of losing privileges and/or entitlements. Ally work is important and never ending. A person who decides to be an ally for an individual should remember that true ally work is not a one-time occurrence but rather consistent advocacy. It also requires that the person wishing to be an ally commit to doing his or her own work of education and exploration on the issue.

Considerations for: An Effective Ally for Women of Color

- Acknowledge that racism exists.

- Actively address and do your own work around issues of racism and privilege (including examining your own personal contribution to the issue).

- Be consistent in addressing all forms of racism.

- Consistently hold others accountable for acts of racism regardless if there is other Women of Color present.

- Publicly speak out regarding racism and the need for Women of Color in leadership.

- During conversations and/or meetings in which policies or protocols are being written or considered that are not inclusive of Communities of Color, be willing to speak out and encourage others to address the issue.

- Speak out in support of issues raised by a Woman of Color; however, do not speak for that person and do not take away her voice.

- Be supportive of working with Women of Color to develop strategies to address racism.

- Clearly state and actively show a commitment to increasing Women of Color at the coalition.

- Actively work to include and promote Women of Color at every level of involvement. Challenge other agencies, coalitions, institutions, etc. to do the same.

- Have an honest, respectful dialogue with Women of Color about what would be helpful to them. This strategy is often times misunderstood because there is a sense that all Women of Color will want to (and feel safe to) discuss issues of racism. It is imperative

that you do your own work on racism before expecting that Women of Color will be willing to engage in a dialogue with in about racism.

- Women of Color should not be compelled or expected to ask for what they need in an ally. Not all Women of Color define an ally in the same way. It is critical that you learn about what an ally means to Women of Color at your coalition.

- Understand and accept that Women of Color must make the decision about what is helpful for them.

- Be consistent in addressing all forms of oppression. Be willing to "talk the talk AND walk the walk" (i.e. taking the initiative to evaluate, update and implement anti-oppressive policies, hiring practices, etc). Also, offer anti-oppression trainings to all staff.

"Our commitment to end sexual assault will never be realized if all forms of oppression are not dealt with and the connections recognized."