



Technical Assistance Approach

Ujima seeks to equip service providers, family and friends, and other stakeholders with the tools necessary to respond to and prevent domestic, sexual, and community violence in the Black community. Ujima's approach to Technical Assistance (TA) is holistic, culturally competent, and trauma informed. Technical Assistance serves the interests of all members of the African Diaspora, including, African Americans, Africans and African Immigrants, Afro-Caribbeans, and Afro-Latinos/as.

Ujima's approach to Technical Assistance is rooted in seminal scholarship that has been the catalyst for culturally competent work with marginalized groups in various fields. Ujima seeks to address the needs of the Black community from a framework that is both empowering and relevant to the people we represent. In 1985, Beth Richie offered a powerful argument for providing culturally specific services to address domestic violence in the Black Community. In her words:

The meaning of violence against women in our communities is different from that in white or other third world communities. We need to create time and space for researching a new, more meaningful analysis that is relevant to our lives. This is work we must do alone with no apologies for not including others. (No one apologized for the long years we have been excluded.) Our community needs something that the white women's movement has not given us, and we should know better than to expect to be given anything. We must do our own work" (Richie, 1985, p.43).

While the movement has evolved since 1985, her statement still reigns true as it pertains to eradicating violence in the Black community, **"we must do our own work."** According to Gillum's definition of culturally appropriate interventions (2009), Ujima's TA approach is tailored to the African diaspora by collaborating with members of all backgrounds and cultural expressions within the Black community, **all resources provided and research conducted utilizes language and settings familiar to the Black community**, a majority of the staff have African heritage in common with those they work with, and specific values, norms, and customs of the Black community are taken into account with the Technical Assistance provided. Dr. Bent-Goodley (2005) determined that the integral principles for Black people are fundamental goodness, self-knowledge, communalism, interconnectedness, spirituality, self-reliance, language and oral tradition, and combining knowledge with social action. Technical Assistance is provided with the understanding that people of African descent prioritize these specific values and that effective interventions will need to be developed with these principles in mind.

Ujima is committed to providing culturally specific services, while also addressing the needs of the Black community through a holistic lens. Fels Smyth and Goodman in their Full Frame Approach article (2006), posited that specialized services (i.e. services that focus on addressing one particular issue), while well intended, have neglected to meet the needs of marginalized people. Instead they assert that the survivors from marginalized backgrounds cannot be separated from their context therefore, effective services must be holistic, and client centered. Given the Full Frame Approach for marginalized women, Ujima's TA approach



promotes providing holistic, survivor centered services within the Black Community. Holistic services involve addressing individual client needs while **understanding the role that historical trauma, power and oppression** play in the lives of Black people. Ujima also acknowledges that for Black people, friends and family are important extensions of the self, encourages providers to allow survivors to be the author of their own narratives and to determine the trajectory of their healing process, and fosters the value of building and supporting strong communities that work toward common goals and seek to impact the greater good. **Ujima recognizes that violence in the Black community, stems from centuries of systemic racism and cultural oppression and seeks to address these systemic issues at the root as well as at the interpersonal and individual levels that have been impacted by this systemic problem.**

Along with promoting culturally competent services through a holistic and survivor centered lens, Ujima's TA approach is also trauma informed. **Historical, societal, and personal trauma is inextricably linked with violence in the Black community.** Ujima understands the impact of such trauma and operates with compassion, empathy, and flexibility when addressing issues tied to trauma. Ujima's approach to Technical Assistance is driven by the needs of the Black community and utilizes research to inform our practices to ensure that people of African descent are at the forefront of the movement to address the violence that plagues our communities.



Ujima, Inc. was founded in response to a need for an active approach to ending violence against women in the Black community.

Established in 2015, Ujima is an organization under the DC Coalition Against Domestic Violence that is striving to create a world where Black women and girls are valued, respected, safe and free from violence.

Our mission is to mobilize the community to respond to and end violence against women in the Black community by serving as a resource to survivors of violence, advocates, service providers, and the community at-large. Ujima actualizes its mission through research, public awareness, community engagement, and resources development.

Ujima, pronounced oo-JEE-mah, is the third principle of Kwanzaa and means "collective work and responsibility."

Ujima's approach to Technical Assistance is driven by the needs of the Black Community.

References

Bent-Goodley, T. (2005). An African-centered approach to domestic violence. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services*, 86(2), 197-206.

Gillum, T. L. (2009). Improving services to African American survivors of IPV: From the voices of recipients of culturally specific services. *Violence Against Women*, 15(1), 57-80.

Richie, B. (1985). Battered Black women a challenge for the Black community. *The Black Scholar*, 16(2), 40-44.

Smyth, K. F., Goodman, L., & Glenn, C. (2006). The full-frame approach: A new response to marginalized women left behind by specialized services. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 76(4), 489.

<https://www.ebony.com/news-views/study-shows-black-women-in-the-u-s-are-killed-more-than-all-other-races>



This publication is supported by Grant No. 09EV0432 awarded by the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration of Children and Families, Family Violence Prevention and Services Administration. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the United States Department of Health and Human Services.