Kameela Edun Hus 1202-Community Mental Health Section 2838 Professor Shepard

**Domestic Violence in Guyana**

 Domestic violence is emotional and physical abuse. It is behavior used by one person in a relationship to control the other individual in the relationship. Victims can be of any age, sex, race, culture. Although both men and women can be abused, most victims are women (Domestic violence).Domestic violence among women has always been a touchy subject growing up, due to the fact that my nationality is Guyanese. In Guyana domestic violence is so common that I have seen domestic violence on the busy streets of Guyana and no one tries to help these women. The question is, and has always been, how can family members, friends, the community and law enforcement, recognize the pattern of abuse and not do something to prevent the frequent cases of abuse and murders based on domestic violence? I will be basing my research on domestic violence towards women in Guyana.

**Part 1:** The social, economic, political and psychological stressors that affect Guyanese women that have suffered from domestic violence are the following issues. physical and mental health concern. Women that have been through domestic violent relationship tend to be more susceptible to disease because of stress, depression, anxieties, panic disorders, phobias and low self-esteem because they feel mentally vulnerable towards society. Family decline there family members may feel ashamed to speak on the issue of domestic violence and may not support the women leaving her partner if they are in a committed relationship. Unemployment because victim deal with issues surround self-doubt, and developing professional relationships with fellow employers these factors can cause the victim to lose or not gain a position in their job, which can lead to homelessness (Health Effect of Domestic Violence). Law enforcement does not get involved with many domestic cases in Guyana, “the Guyana police force confirmed that it had received and investigated 2,811 reports of domestic violence in the policing divisions throughout the country. 579 people were charged and placed before the courts, while 299 cases were referred to the Probation and Family Welfare Department of the Ministry of Labor, Human Services and Social Security” (Stabroek).

 My hypothetical program would be called Women of Worth. Based on encouraging Guyanese women who are suffering from domestic violence to receive help and realize they are worth so much more then they know. Facilitating Human Development: Focused Strategies; the services I would provided in this section is counseling outreach, I would go to local communities in Guyana where women are suffering the most from domestic violence, and build relationships with the women. Hopeful while building the relationship, I can help them realize and focuses on the main issue by empowering, education, and helping build self-advocate, prevention skills to help them face their situation and get out of it. Facilitation Human Development: Broad Based Strategies; I would focuses on prevention and intervention I would educate the ladies on traits of men that may be potential abusers and ways to safely escape there abuser by having an emergency kit with money and important documents in a safe place if needed and encouraging them to ask for help if they need it while reassuring them they are not being judged by others.

 Facilitating Community Development: Focused Strategies; I would encourage the ladies to self-advocate. By going to the Guyana government and demanding that law enforcement not ignore women who are victims’ cries for help as mealy noting. I would also encourage them to use their voice towards there partner to escape the situation but it will also help them release anger and tension build up. Facilitating Community Development: Broad Based Strategies; I would encourage the government to develop more agency and organization geared toward counseling individual that have been through domestic violent issue because not only are the women affect but their children are also affected causing them to be victims too. For the partners that are being violent I would encourage counseling for anger management

**Part 2:**  One serious issue that can be prevented that I have seen many, Guyanese women of domestically violent relationship do is, go back to their partner after leaving the situation. As a counselor I would give the victim emotional support she needs to believe that she is a good and a worthy person. Help her examine her strengths and skills. Emphasize that she and her children deserve a life free from abuse in any form emotional or physical. Help her develop a safety Plan. Help her think through the steps she should take if her partner becomes abusive again, or if she needs to leave suddenly.

 Two major barriers that can’t be prevented among this population are shame and the belief that the situation will get better. The reason I say shame because many women in this particular population believe that others will gossip and judge them and the embarrassment and humiliation from that cause them not to seek help. The belief that the situation will get better based on my own personal interviews with Guyanese women stems from their belief that there partner did not mean to hurt them or that they are just having a bad day. As a counselor I would help the client with one on one counseling. So they realize their own self-worth and that they need to have self-love for themselves and to do so they should not be ashamed of what others think or say. I would also set up a group counseling session with the ladies and let them discuss their issues out loud among others and with women that have been in there position and escaped the situation, so they can realize they are not alone and maybe through the group counseling they can realize their strengths and self-worth.

**Part 3:** The client advocacy services I would initiate that would help expand the helping network currently available for my clients are hotlines for example, “Hope Line from Verizon puts the nation’s most reliable network to work in the community by turning no-longer used cell phones into support for domestic violence victims and survivors” (Hope LineVerizon wireless). Support groups for example counseling in groups or one on one, for example support groups like Help and Shelter located in Guyana which focuses on reducing domestic violence or a religious groups in the community.

 The self-help option I can identify for my clients are getting an order of protection, to order the offender to stay away or the police can arrest the offender if he or she violates the order. Leave the scene, the victim may feel violated and may retaliate in a negative way which has consequences going somewhere safe and peaceful to calm down is a better option or just leaving for good is a better option. Talk to someone, such as a counselor. The counselor can help you with a safety plan so you and your children have the security and resources to leave the abusive person. The political action strategies I would be willing to support in creating a more expansive helping network would be a facebook and twitter page also a rally to encourage the Guyana government to encourage law enforcement to get more involved in domestic violent situation there are laws again domestic violence but they are not implemented properly. The coalition-building efforts I think that would be helpful in fostering the kind of helping network that would more effectively meet my clients unique needs are their families and friends support. Many individuals in the Guyanese community do not support women leaving there husbands. I believe because they have this idea that the women can’t do better and that people will gossip about them it all just goes back to the shame issue. But with the support from family and friends the women would be stronger and be easier to escape the situation with her abuser.

**Part 4:** The skills I have now to help manage the program are organizational skills. I enjoy keeping track and planning projects, keeping track of funding and time management. I am receptive to feedback which many people are not it allows me to use my empathy and listening skills. I would like my program that I manage to work as a group and talk about issue and solutions but in a timely well mannered fashion this will allow me to use my problem solving skills and self-discipline skill to focus on the issues. The skills I would need to develop to be a more effective manager in the future is public speaking. I will speak in public if I need to, but I would like to be a bit more confident and get over the fear of it, but I am currently trying my best to work on it.

**Part 5:** I plan tolearn new skills by attention workshops or take personal classes to learn ways to manage effectively in the future. I believe knowledge is power and the more we learn we grow. I will defiantly try my best to learn as much as I can, to help and serve my population of interest. To me if you’re passionate about something there is no way to stop someone from doing their best towards the better cause. I will take care of myself by exercising and just having fun once a night on the weekend. Exercising release stress and on the weekend I enjoy dancing and just hanging out with friends which also release stress. I would also try to look for or be a part of a agency or organization that offers therapy if I need it.

**References**

*Domestic violence*. (n.d.). Retrieved from http://www.domesticviolence.org/definition/: http://www.domesticviolence.org/definition/

*Health Effect of Domestic Violence*. (n.d.). Retrieved from ripple-effect: http://www.the-ripple-effect.info/pdf/healtheffects.pdf

*Hope LineVerizon wireless*. (n.d.). Retrieved from Verizon wireless: http://aboutus.verizonwireless.com/communityservice/hopeLine.html

Stabroek. (n.d.). *Waging war on women: domestic violence in Guyana*. Retrieved from Stabroek New: http://www.stabroeknews.com/2009/guyana-review/05/28/waging-war-on-women-domestic-violence-in-guyana/