Black Women's Blueprint Recommended Socio-Ecolological Model of Prevention

About Black Women's Blueprint

Black Women's Blueprint is an organization using civil and human rights approaches to organize and develop a culture where women of African descent are fully empowered and where gender, race and other disparities are erased. Black Women's Blueprint is the convener of the first Black Women's Truth and Reconciliation Commission on Sexual Violence to occur in the United States.

Our Focus
- Sexual violence prevention,
- Advocacy
- Training and Technical Assistance
- Research and Policy
- Healing Justice

Current CDC Model to an Expanded CDC Model

For BWB an articulation of an expanded socio-ecological model designed by the Center for Disease Control builds on an already systematized, CDC evidence-based, proven effective strategy for preventing violence in cities and communities.

It is the complex interplay between a variety of factors that helps us understand what puts people at risk for experiences/perpetrating violence and conversely what protects people from experiencing or perpetrating violence. The overlapping rings in the model illustrate how factors at one level influence factors at another level.

While the current model used by the CDC provides an understanding of how the individual is influenced by societal, community and interpersonal factors, Black Women's Blueprint recognizes that the current model falls short and is incomplete. It is not enough to end our analysis at the societal level, without taking into account the structures that shape our current society as well as the historical context within which each of us and each of our identities are located. It is impossible to prevent violence against women broadly and violence against Black women in particular without an understanding of how the current culture has been shaped by a history of white supremacy dating back centuries, and a history of patriarchy and misogyny, dating back thousands of years. The model that Black Women's Blueprint uses in our primary prevention work (shown below) takes into account the historical and the structural layers that have a profound impact on the experiences of violence against women today.

Current CDC Model
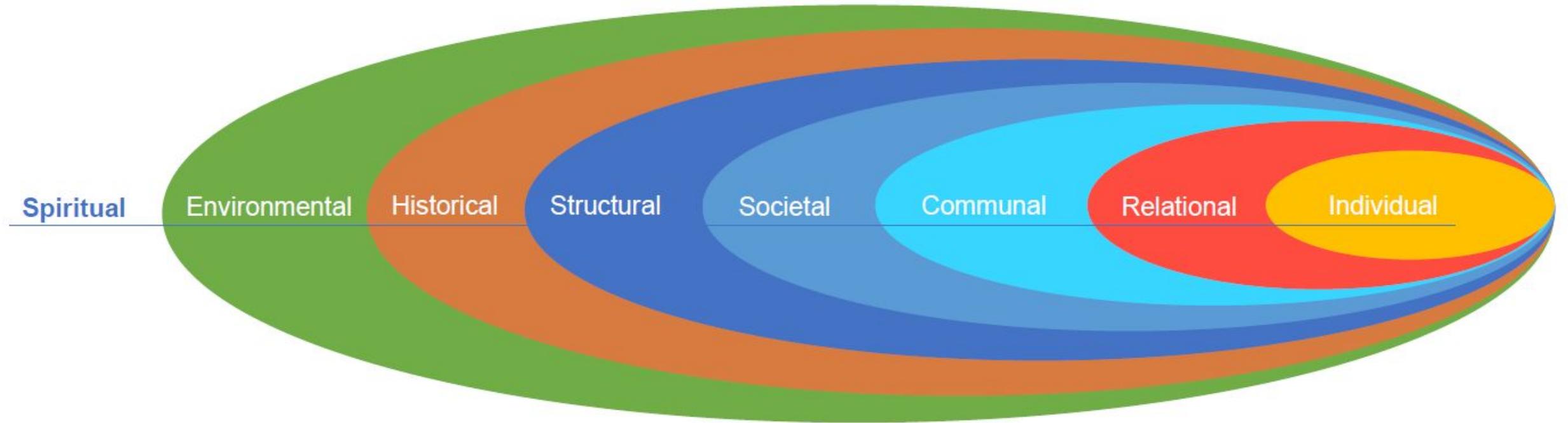
According to the CDC:

The (1) **Individual** level of prevention--The first level identifies biological and personal history factors that increase the likelihood of becoming a victim or perpetrator of violence. Some of these factors are age, education, income, substance use, or history of abuse. Prevention strategies at this level are often designed to promote attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors that ultimately prevent violence. Specific approaches may include education and life skills training.

(2) **Relational** --The second level of the CDC framework examines close relationships that may increase the risk of experiencing violence as a victim or perpetrator. A person's closest social circle-peers, partners and family members-influences their behavior and contributes to their range of experience. Prevention strategies at this level may include parenting or family-focused prevention programs, and mentoring and peer programs designed to reduce conflict, foster problem solving skills, and promote healthy relationships.

(3) **Communal** -- The third level explores the settings, such as schools, workplaces, and neighborhoods, in which social relationships occur and seeks to identify the characteristics of these settings that are associated with becoming victims or perpetrators of violence. Prevention strategies at this level are typically designed to impact the social and physical or home environment – for example, by reducing social isolation, improving economic and housing opportunities in neighborhoods, as well as the school and community climate, processes, and policies within school and workplace settings.

(4) **Societal** --The fourth level in the CDC framework looks at the broad societal factors that help create a social climate in which violence is encouraged or inhibited. These factors include social and cultural norms that support violence as an acceptable way to resolve conflicts. The CDC promotes addressing social factors including health, economic, educational and social policies that help to maintain economic or social inequalities between groups in society.

Black Women's Blueprint Culturally Specific Model

Black Women's Blueprint builds upon the CDC socio-ecological model of prevention as a framework for preventing violence against women and girls, and as a foundation for how we theorize and practice primary prevention work using a Black feminist lens. The CDC model (shown below), "considers the complex interplay between individual, relationship, community, and societal factors."

Within Black Women's Blueprint's expanded frame, while the societal aspect of the MODEL highlights policies which perpetuate violence, we contend that these policies are not created in a vacuum.

(5) **The Structural** --**A structural analysis and approach focuses on accountability** by those persons/leaders who make the policies and the groups who benefit from said policies which directly or inadvertently uphold racism and other oppression that perpetuate violence. **By looking at the structural,** we can name racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia or classism, which are, not simply societal beliefs, but factors that impact rates of violence. Policies which perpetuate violence are often the product or manifestation of the structural "isms." **Black Women's Blueprint addresses structural factors that perpetuate violence against women through base building, community organizing and policy advocacy both at the local and federal contexts.** Prevention strategies at this level place the power back into the hands of people and survivors and address entrenched structural inequalities that continue to exist regardless of social policy.

(6) **The Historical--In addition, a focus on the historical issues can go a long way in helping Black communities understand the particular history and historical experiences that are relevant to their circumstances,** how that history has impacted the individual and the collective and can allow for more transformative processes and strategies, which can then lead to shifts in culture and community priority where issues like sexual assault and "sexuality" are concerned. Our 2010-2016 flagship initiative, the Black Women's Truth and Reconciliation Commission was the actualization of a such a strategy, an intervention which focused on the past/historical legacies of harm and oppression in order to frame action in the present that continue to hold harm-doers accountable, social systems as well as communities accountable using international mechanisms and human rights processes and demands. Moreover, our educational programs include our Museum of Women's Resistance which is a methodology for teaching youth and adults peaceful resistance to gender and racial oppression.

(7) We are working to add an <u>environmental</u> layer and a 8) <u>spiritual</u> through-line within our framework, and have already begun addressing these layers in our work.

Closing Thoughts

REGISTER FOR UPCOMING WEBINARS AT BLACK WOMEN'S BLUEPRINT WHERE WE WILL CONTINUE TO ADDRESS THESE ISSUES.

www.blackwomensblueprint.org