



GRACE St. JUDE
African Immigrants Against Domestic Violence

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BRIEFING PAPER

Intimate Partner Violence Outreach to Immigrant African Women in Greater Houston, Texas

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INTRODUCTION

Anecdotal evidence indicates that intimate partner violence (IPV), also known as domestic violence (DV), against women is prevalent in the immigrant African community in Greater Houston, Texas. However, victims/survivors are often reluctant to seek assistance from victim service providers for protection against IPV. Factors contributing to this reluctance to seek help include one or more of the following: lack of knowledge about what constitutes IPV, lack of awareness of existing services, cultural and language barriers, immigration-related problems, and distrust of mainstream services. Against this background, outreach is a viable and invaluable method for reaching this ‘hidden’ population of victims/survivors.

This paper reports the findings of an outreach event that was designed to educate and provide information and resources about IPV to immigrant African women in Houston and its surrounding areas. It was an opportunity to reach women who may not otherwise engage with mainstream victim service providers. The event also explored immigrant African women’s views on the

implications of outreach for addressing IPV victimization. The event was funded by the Rice University Center for Civic Leadership and took place in October 2025 in Houston, Texas.

THE OUTREACH EVENT

The event was an awareness-building, information-sharing, networking, and support session. It was attended by 23 immigrant African women and two representatives from two victim service providers. The representatives presented information about their organizations and the services available to victims/survivors of IPV. Following the presentations, the women participated in focus group discussions on a range of IPV-related topics, including the relevance of outreach programs to the immigrant African population. The discussions provided an opportunity for participants to share their perspectives on how outreach can help address barriers to help-seeking.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS: THE BENEFITS OF OUTREACH

The participants identified several potential benefits of outreach to immigrant African women experiencing IPV:

- **Education:** Outreach provides education about the extent, types, and forms of IPV victimization.
- **Awareness of Services:** Outreach creates or increases awareness of services available to victims/survivors of IPV.
- **Direct Access to Service Providers:** Outreach creates opportunities for women to interact directly with service providers, seek information, and obtain resources.
- **Prevention:** Outreach has the potential to contribute to the prevention of victimization or repeat victimization by increasing knowledge and awareness.

- **Empowerment:** Providing information and resources through outreach initiatives can be empowering for women experiencing IPV.
- **Social Connection and Support:** Outreach can help reduce isolation and create or strengthen solidarity and support among women in the community.

PARTICIPANT RECOMMENDATION

In a nutshell, the women recommended the use of outreach programs to reach and educate immigrant African women who are experiencing IPV but may not know what to do or where to seek help. The recommendations highlight the importance of making information and services accessible within the communities where they live, work, worship, and socialize.

CONCLUSION

The outreach event provided an opportunity for immigrant African women to learn about IPV and available victim services while sharing their perspectives on the influence of community outreach. Their recommendations have implications for mainstream service providers, in that they indicate that outreach can serve as a bridge between women who may be unfamiliar with or hesitant to approach mainstream services and organizations that provide protection, support, information, and other resources. Additionally, the recommendations underscore the need for mainstream service providers to partner with trusted community organizations and community members. This will provide opportunities for service providers to establish relationships with historically underserved populations.