



**It's On Us Workshop:
LGBTQ+ Mythbusters, Part II:
Theory, History, and Prevention**

Learning Outcomes

Define systems of oppression and their connection to sexual and dating violence against LGBTQ+ communities.

Inspect ways in which systems of oppression contribute to risk factors for sexual and dating violence against LGBTQ+ communities across the socio-ecological model.

Determine ways to resist systemic oppression by implementing violence-prevention techniques.

Agenda

- Introductions
- Self care check-in
- Refresher
- Defining systems of oppression
- Systemic oppression across the socio-ecological model
- Prevention as resistance
- Toolkit materials and next steps
- Self care reminder
- Post-training survey

INTRODUCTIONS



SELF CARE CHECK



GENDER AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGAINST LGBTQ+ COMMUNITIES



Quick Reminder: Know the Stats!

Over 70% of bisexual, gay, and lesbian survivors were assaulted by men.

Most survivors across sexual identities reported that the person who harmed them was someone they knew.

Black and Hispanic LGBTQ+ survivors are affected by violence at systemically high rates.

Why do people commit sexual assault?



To assert power and dominance over another person.



They believe violence is acceptable when necessary.



To assert power or control in a given situation.



They believe they deserve or are owed sexual acts.



They believe that it's ok to "convince" someone to have sex.



They don't believe or refuse to accept someone's "no."



They have peers who hold violence-supportive beliefs.



They feel hostile about a person's social identity.



They believe that sexual violence is normal.

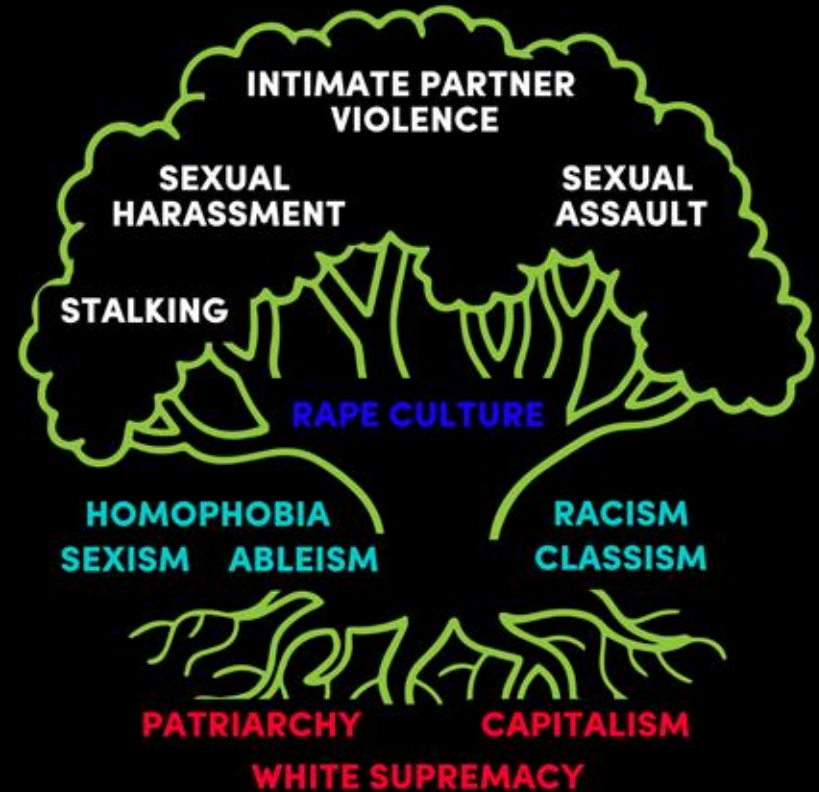
Tactics used to commit sexual assault against transgender and nonbinary people:

- Threatening to out them if they do not comply
- Threatening to spread rumor or withhold access to community or chosen family
- Threatening to withhold or get rid of hormones, gender-affirming items (such as: clothing, makeup, prosthetics, etc.)
- Threatening to limit access to medical treatment
- Mocking, insulting, or intentionally misgendering
- Touching body parts that the person does not want to be touched
- Objectifying, fetishizing, or eroticizing someone's body against their will

A GUIDING APPROACH TO SEXUAL VIOLENCE PREVENTION



What are these “Systems of Oppression?”



PATRIARCHY

A system of cisgender men's dominance in which men hold power over all other genders in all aspects of society, including the family, economy, and politics.

Employing sex/gender as a tool for oppression by:

- Enforcing strict gender roles
- Reinforcing heterosexuality as the norm
- Restricting sexual autonomy
- Dividing people along gender differences

PATRIARCHY AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

- Normalizing men's entitlement to others' bodies
- Undermining bodily autonomy and consent
- Silencing survivors and reducing access to accountability and healing in order to enforce cycles of violence
- Using gendered violence to maintain control

WHITE SUPREMACY

A system of White people's dominance in which White people hold power over Black and Brown people in all aspects of society.

Employing race as a tool for oppression by:

- Controlling access to resources, rights, and opportunities
- Defining Whiteness as the societal standard or ideal
- Dehumanizing and criminalizing communities of color
- Creating racial divisions to maintain social, political, and economic control

WHITE SUPREMACY AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

- Weaponizing stereotypes to justify sexual violence against racially marginalized communities
- Denying justice and protection to Black, Brown, and Indigenous survivors
- Imposing racialized narratives about purity, danger, and deviance
- Using sexual violence as a legacy and instrument of colonization and control

CAPITALISM

A system of economic dominance in which wealth and power are concentrated among the few through private ownership and profit-driven exploitation.

Employing class as a tool for oppression by:

- Prioritizing profit over people and the planet
- Exploiting labor and natural resources for accumulation
- Creating and maintaining economic inequality
- Dividing people by class, race, geography, and status to weaken collective power

CAPITALISM AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

- Creating vulnerability through poverty and economic dependence
- Treating bodies — especially marginalized ones — as commodities
- Obscuring exploitation under the guise of “choice” or “work”
- Limiting access to support, safety, and healing for survivors

REFLECTION

Social Justice Framework Overview

Traditional Approaches	Social Justice Framework
Focuses primarily on individual responsibility	Focuses on individual actions and systemic/cultural factors, institutional policies, political context
Perpetrator's personal agency is invisible	Perpetrator's individual agency and the systems that support their actions are named
Does not acknowledge identity, power, and oppression	Recognizes identity, power, and oppression as essential to deconstructing interpersonal dynamics
Prevention work occurs in isolation	Prevention work is collaborative and recognized as a community effort
Overlays existing practices, programs, procedures, and policies	Infiltrates and disrupts the systems, structures, culture and core values of the institution
Depends on one "champion" of prevention	Is sustainable and has many "champions"

CONNECTING SYSTEMS OF OPPRESSION WITH SEXUAL VIOLENCE



Grounding Ourselves in Historical Context

1400s–1800s:

- European colonizers brought their own notion of gender and sexuality across the globe, forcing Indigenous communities to assimilate.
 - North America: Two-Spirit people held respected spiritual and social roles — but colonizers labeled them deviant and targeted them for forced assimilation and conversion.
 - Africa: Pre-colonial same-sex intimacy and diverse gender roles were common, but redefined as "sinful" or "unnatural" under Victorian morality and Christian doctrines.
 - Asia: British colonial laws (like Section 377) criminalized homosexuality in India.
- During chattel slavery in the United States, enslavers of Black women denied them of bodily autonomy, raped, and forced reproduction to create more children to enslave.

Grounding Ourselves in Historical Context

1900s:

- Medicalization and pathologization of LGBTQ+ people
 - 1952: Sexologist Harry Benjamin reported the first “transsexualism case.”
 - 1968: “Homosexuality” is added as a mental disorder to the DSM-II (the diagnostic manual for psychologists and psychiatrists).
 - 1973: “Homosexuality” is changed to “Sexual Orientation Disturbance.”
 - 1980: “Gender Identity Disorder” is added to the DSM after being used informally for decades.
 - 1987: “Homosexuality” is removed from the DSM.
- The HIV/AIDS epidemic was weaponized to justify homophobia and racism, being framed by some as a "punishment" for gay men, while also falsely blaming Africans to reinforce anti-Black and xenophobic narratives.

Grounding Ourselves in Historical Context

2000s:

- **Institutions continue to harm LGBTQ+ people through forced institutionalization, conversion therapy, and family separation.**
- **Survivors of violence, especially those who are Black, Indigenous, and disabled, face disproportionate surveillance, incarceration, and violence.**
- **Gay marriage is legalized in the United States and 37 other countries. However, queer relationships remain criminalized in 67 other countries.**
- **Increasing legal attacks limiting access to healthcare, public spaces (like restrooms), and community involvement (like youth and college athletics).**

Organizers take different approaches based on theory:

- **Liberal/Mainstream:** Focuses on gaining equality within existing systems through laws, policy changes, and inclusion (e.g., anti-discrimination laws).
 - **Critiques:** Leaves existing systems of oppression in tact.
- **Radical:** Sees patriarchy as the root of all oppression; seeks to dismantle cisgender male dominance in all aspects of life.
 - **Critiques:** Can oversimplify oppression to sex/gender alone; lack of tangible solutions for overturning systems.
- **Cultural:** Focuses on transforming societal norms and values by emphasizing the positive aspects of feminine traits that already exist.
 - **Critiques:** Relies on gender stereotypes, especially pertaining to White cisgender women.
- **Marxist/Socialist:** Sees capitalism as relying on the gendered division of labor; both social and economic systems need to be transformed.
 - **Critiques:** Risks downplaying gender and identity if not centered.

What is intersectionality?

“It’s not identity politics on steroids. It is not a mechanism to turn white men into the new pariahs. It’s basically a lens, a prism, for seeing the way in which various forms of inequality often operate together and exacerbate each other. We tend to talk about race inequality as separate from inequality based on gender, class, sexuality or immigrant status. What’s often missing is how some people are subject to all of these, and the experience is not just the sum of its parts.”

— Kimerlé Crenshaw, Law Professor, Civil Rights Activist

Dr. Patricia Hill Collins'

PRINCIPLES OF INTERSECTIONALITY

Race, class, gender, and similar systems of power are interdependent and mutually construct one another.

Intersecting power relations produce complex, interdependent social inequalities of race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, ability, and age.

The **social location** of individuals and groups within intersecting power relations shapes their experiences within and perspectives on the social world.

Solving social problems within a given local, regional, national, or global context requires intersectional analyses.

WHY THEORY?

- Knowing the theory behind our work helps us see the roots of oppression, choose strategies that match our goals, and understand our own biases.
- Understanding theory helps us see the systems we're fighting, but theory alone doesn't change those systems.
- Action without theory risks reproducing the very harms we want to dismantle.

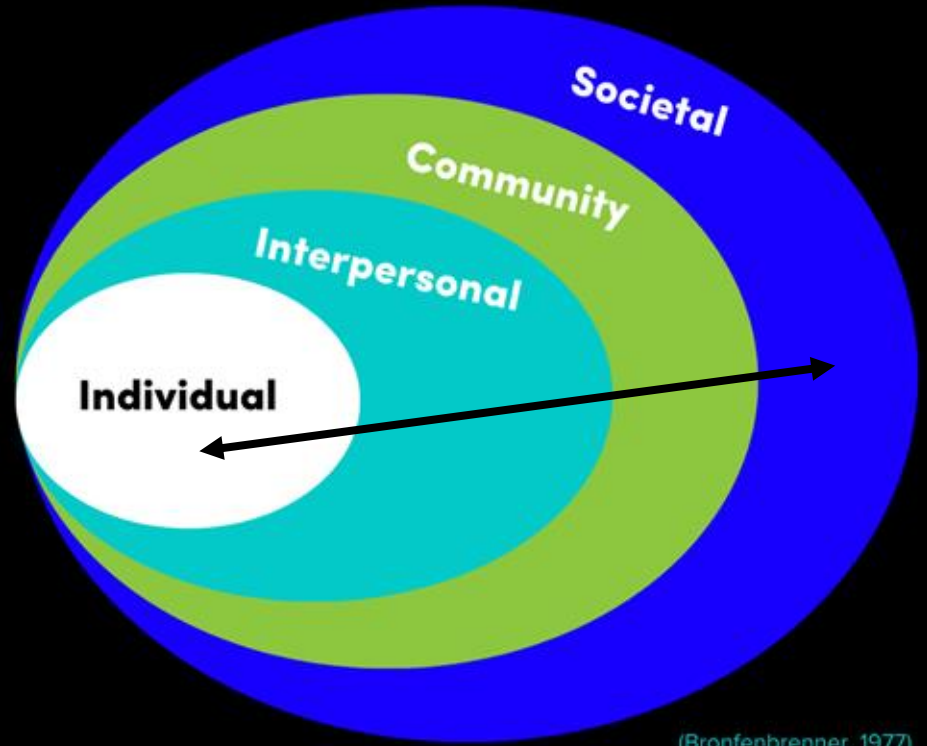
“Theory without practice is just as incomplete as practice without theory. The two have to go together.”

— Assata Shakur, American Political Activist

PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACH TO PRIMARY PREVENTION

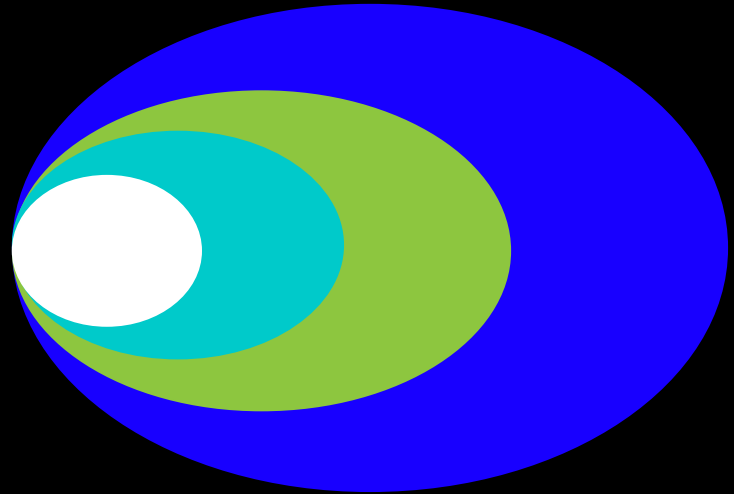


Primary Prevention: Strategy and Theory



At a Systemic Level:

- Criminalization of sex work, HIV status, or transgender identity
- Anti-LGBTQ+ legislation (e.g., bathroom bills, bans on gender-affirming care)
- Racist, misogynist, and heteronormative media representations
- Lack of legal recognition or protection for LGBTQ+ identities and relationships
- Structural racism, classism, and colonialism
- Restrictions on comprehensive sexuality education



Prevention at the Societal Level:



COMPREHENSIVE ANTI-DISCRIMINATION LAWS



GOVERNMENT FUNDING FOR PREVENTION



LEGAL PROTECTION OF DIVERSE FAMILIES AND GENDERS



REQUIRED COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION



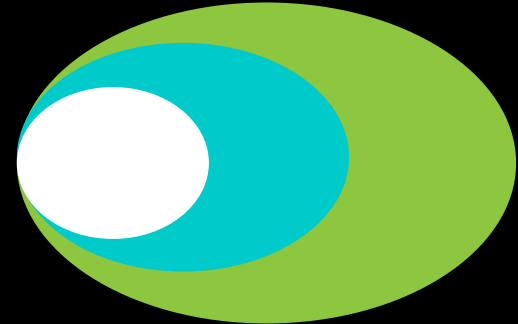
REPRESENTATION IN MEDIA



ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

At the Community Level:

- Unsafe schools and work environments (e.g., limiting access to gender inclusive housing and bathrooms, strict dress codes)
- Police profiling and violence
- Inaccessible healthcare or LGBTQ-hostile providers
- Exclusion from faith spaces or other community organizations
- Lack of LGBTQ+-specific support and care
- Inflexible policies to accommodate recovery from gender-affirming surgeries or hormone treatment



Prevention at the Community Level:



**FAIR ACCESS TO
PUBLIC SPACES**



**SAFETY AND COMMUNITY
CARE/RESPONSE TEAMS**



**COMMUNITY WELLNESS
CENTERS**



**GENDER-INCLUSIVE
HOUSING**



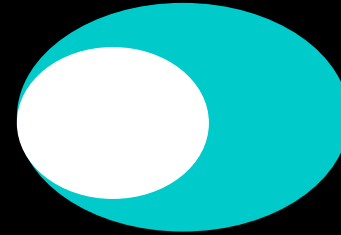
**CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE
SUPPORT SERVICES**



**CULTURALLY
RESPONSIVE POLICIES**

Relationship-Level Risk Factors

- Family or community rejection or hostility based on gender/sexuality
- Peer bullying or harassment
- Lack of LGBTQ+ peer support
- Hostility from faculty, staff, or other educators
- Violent silencing (the pressure to keep violence “within the community” and not speak out against it)
- Pressure to apply heteronormative expectations to relationships



Prevention at the Relationship Level:



**CHOSEN FAMILY AND
AFFIRMING SOCIAL NETWORKS**



**PEER MENTORS AND
LGBTQ+ ROLE MODELS**



HEALTHY COMMUNICATION



**SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY
MEMBERS**



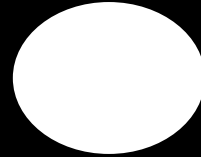
**ACCEPTANCE AND
UNDERSTANDING**



**SELF-DEFINED
RELATIONSHIP ROLES**

Individual-Level Risk Factors:

- Childhood experiences of abuse or trauma (including coming-out-related)
- Internalized stigma (homophobia, transphobia, racism, ableism)
- Internalized gender stereotypes
- Substance misuse
- Economic marginalization (e.g., homelessness)
- Mental health issues exacerbated by systemic oppression



Prevention at the Individual Level:



**CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE
TRAUMA RESPONSE SERVICES**



**LGBTQ+ SPECIFIC MENTAL
HEALTH SUPPORT**



**IDENTITY ACCEPTANCE AND
PRIDE**



**HEALTHY COMMUNICATION
AND CONFLICT SKILLS**



ECONOMIC STABILITY



**EMOTION
REGULATION SKILLS**

DAILY HABITS



- Drinking enough water
- Eating filling foods
- Getting enough sleep
- Talking to friends or family

Taking care of basic needs is the beginning!

SELF-SOOTHING



- Taking a bubble bath
- Getting a massage
- Zoning out on social media
- Cooking a cozy meal
- Doing something fun with others

Take time to tune out daily stressors.

MANAGE EMOTIONS



- Meditating or spiritual practices
- Exercising
- Snuggling up to a favorite movie
- Listening to calming music
- Venting to a friend

Practice regulating your nervous system with familiar things.

EMOTIONAL WORK



- Journaling
- Counseling & therapy
- Reflecting
- Feeling emotions fully
- Practicing coping skills

Work through your emotions towards healing.

HEALING WITH COMMUNITY



- Participating in cultural practices
- Engaging in spiritual or religious gatherings
- Group dancing or singing
- Advocacy and activism
- Group discussion or reflection
- Sharing a meal

Intentional community with others is the ultimate path to healing!