

# Family Violence Prevention Fund

## CULTURAL COMPETENCY TIPS

- ***Recognize and be aware of one's biases and prejudices.*** We all make assumptions and in this area of work, assumptions can be lifesaving. However, assumptions that are unexamined and unchallenged can lead to misinterpretation of facts or acting with arrogance thereby creating further distance between the survivor and the advocate or professional.
- ***Listen to and build on the strengths of the survivor*** no matter where they are from.
- ***Recognize the power advocates and professionals have over the lives of survivors*** and avoid the imposition of the values of the system or the intervenor.
- ***Gather information on the survivor's interpretation of her culture to help paint a more complete picture of her context:*** it helps one understand the power structure of the community she has connections to as well as the level of support that she has within it.
- ***Negotiate the acceptance of a different set of values, without imposing your own.***  
The long and continued history of oppression makes it imperative that we not impose our own values on others who do not share those values. However, there is also recognition that domestic and sexual violence is a worldwide phenomenon. How does one navigate between these two seemingly contradictory ends? We cannot accept that just because certain behaviors are someone else's practice, we have no right to challenge those practices. Upholding the value that domestic and sexual violence is unacceptable is not about negotiation. Rather, the negotiation lies in *how* we challenge these practices, which makes the difference in when and how someone accepts a new value.
- ***Recognizing our own history and the interdependence and independence of people, lives, histories and contexts*** is essential to shaping the work to end domestic and sexual violence. Instead of looking at ourselves and each individual as existing in a

vacuum, it is necessary to place each person within their own specific social, cultural, and historical context and how those contexts interact and have influenced our own. These relationships and inter-relationships have shaped and continue to shape the culture of violence that currently exists. Understanding them is critical to ending violence against women.

- ***Build cooperation and collaborate and reach out to diverse communities both individually and programmatically.*** Community ownership of the issue is essential to promoting safety, accountability and building zero tolerance for sexual and domestic violence.