



Aspiring Leaders Lab

Episode 2

Advocating for Yourself and to Advance Equity and Inclusion in Services for Survivors

Key Takeaways and Resources

By guest: Kenyatta Grant



- Leadership commitment in the work to address gender-based is a state of being present, dedicated, confident, uplifting, authentic, aware, concerned, vocal to the issues, and accountable.
- Transparency is key. As a leader, it's okay to admit that you don't know everything. It's okay to say, "I'm not sure about this answer but let me find out and get back to you." There's always something new to learn.
- Look for inspiration and connect with other women of color who have been part of the movement for a longer time, ask for mentorship and guidance.

- Honest mentorship can be motivating and beneficial for both parties, fostering growth and innovation in how you approach this work. Being honest and sharing both successes and failures enables informed decision-making and prevents repeating ineffective strategies.
- As a Black woman in this movement, it is important to be vocal and fight for a seat at the table. Be in it for the long haul, don't be quick to give up, and rely on your mentors when you need to vent or for guidance. Take care of your mental well-being.
- Prioritize diverse staffing. Organizations need to be culturally sensitive because it is hard to anticipate who will seek out services from your organization. Challenge staff and board to ensure that the organization is as culturally inclusive as possible and that service providers represent the community served.
- When an organization truly values equity, respect, and inclusion, it will be felt and seen by organization staff and constituents. Everyone will feel heard, valued, respected, and appreciated.
- Black, Indigenous and Other People of Color in the movement, stay planted in your beliefs and convictions. Know your value and your worth, make sure you are transformational, moving, evolving, and stay planted. If you have questions, speak up.
- To advance to a new leadership position, prepare and recognize that you may need to develop new skills, be realistic and transparent of what you are able to do.
- When managing change, remember to breathe, be patient, take it in stride, and stay levelheaded. Remember that the proposed change is for the betterment of victims, survivors, and the organization. Don't hesitate to ask questions.

Personal Learning and Goal Planning

A. What are three lessons you learned through this podcast that you can apply to yourself, work, and/or your organization?

B. What can you do to strengthen your leadership and promote equity?

C. What strategies, resources, people, and support could be helpful?

D. What are your next steps?

Relevant Webinars:

- Developing an Engaged Board of Directors to Advance Equity
- The Benefits of Mentorship: Empower, Lead, Succeed in Organizations Serving Survivors of Violence
- Strengthening Domestic and Sexual Violence Programs to Support Human Trafficking Survivors: Intersections, Equity, Cultural Humility, and Collaborations

Tools:

- Advancing Equity and Undoing Racism, Promising Futures
- Ten Strategies to Enhance Employee Resilience and Engagement Within Survivor-Serving Organizations
- Using Spheres of Control to Build Resilience, The Management Center
- Practicing Culturally Aware Coaching
- Recommendations & Strategies that Further Women of Color's Advancement
- Undoing Racism Tool Kit, Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Articles:

- Showing Up: How We See, Speak, and Disrupt Racial Inequity Facing Survivors (2018 Report)
- Why is the gender-based violence movement pushing away Black advocates?, VAWNet
- What It Looks Like to Build a Pro-Black Organization, Liz Derias and Kad Smith

Relevant Websites:

- West Virginia Coalition Against Domestic Violence - Wvcadv.org
- Ujima: The National Center on Violence Against Women in the Black Community: <https://ujimacomunity.org/>
- Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance - <https://vsdvalliance.org/>
- Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence - <https://gcadv.org/>
- National Resource Center on Domestic Violence - <https://www.nrcdv.org/>

For information, resources, or technical assistance Futures Without Violence, SOS Institute Project, at learning@futureswithoutviolence.org.

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**Kenyatta Coleman Grant,
West Virginia Coalition Against Domestic Violence
Community Organizing Coordinator**

As the Community Organizing Coordinator for the West Virginia Coalition Against Domestic Violence (WVCADV), Kenyatta Coleman Grant continues to be a prominent figure in the domestic violence movement. Ms. Grant joined the West Virginia Coalition Against Domestic Violence in 2001. Since then she has been a passionate advocate for social justice, change and equality. In this time at the WVCADV, she has been the Criminal Justice Specialist at the where she focused on statewide coordination of the Batterers Intervention Prevention Programs (BIPPs), collaborating with law enforcement agencies and coordinating statewide trainings. Today she is the Community Organizing Coordinator where she is responsible for educating and raising awareness of domestic violence in marginalized communities such as communities of color and the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning and Intersex (LGBTQQI) community. Ms. Grant coordinates and facilitates culturally specific trainings on anti-oppression, implicit bias, diversity, cultural competency and awareness to statewide domestic violence advocates, law enforcement and other non-profit agencies.

As part of her multifaceted role, Ms. Grant invest her time on wide reaching, high value organizations that focus on racial justice like the Call to Action for Racial Equality (CARE) Coalition Board of Directors and the YWCA Racial Justice Committee. As a member of this committee, she co-developed the initial Implicit Bias training that the YWCA Racial Equity and Inclusion Committee has implemented and promoted within the community as a vital tool and resource to eliminate racism. For the CARE Coalition, she developed a curriculum that focused on diversity and cultural competency that was used to train local law enforcement officers. Her dedication to advocating for justice and equality is a priority personally and professionally. As an activist, she brings this passion and commitment as a trainer and public speaker.

Due to her reputation and commitment for social justice, Ms. Grant was honored to be selected by both Governor Earl Ray Tomblin and Jim Justice to serve as a Commissioner for the West Virginia Women's Commission (WVWC). The mission of the WVWC is to focus on elevating the power of and potential of women and girls by ensuring social, political and economic equality. In 2020, Governor Jim Justice confirmed Ms. Grant as the Chair of the West Virginia Women's Commission.

As a result of her commitment and leadership, Ms. Grant was recognized at a YWCA Woman of Achievement in 2022. She is also received the 2022 Sharing of Self Award from the Martin Luther King Jr. State Holiday Commission. Ms. Grant was recently named by the WV Living Magazine as one of the WV Wonder Woman.

Role modeling and mentorship has always been more than a hobby to Ms. Grant. How young people grow and develop attitudes about the world seems more like a duty and responsibility. For that reason, she has played a major role in student activities in the community. She is currently a cheer and gymnastics instructor. She conducts private lessons and works with teams throughout the community. She is also a certified cheer judge for the state through the West Virginia Secondary School Activities Commission. In 2021, the WVSSAC awarded Ms. Grant at the Cheer Official of the Year.

Ms. Grant received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from Marshall University with a minor in Criminal Justice. She also received her Masters of Science degree in Criminal Justice from Marshall Graduate College with a minor in Sociology. She resides in Charleston, West Virginia and attends First Baptist Church with her partner, Derrick Grant and three children, Savannah, Victor and Kenleigh.

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