

# Centering BIPOC Survivors, Advocacy, and Community Responses: Real Talk, Practical Strategies

## Presenters

**Jill Davies**, Greater Hartford Legal Aid, Inc.

**Lisa Goodman**, Boston College

**Kelly Coyne**, Safe Horizon

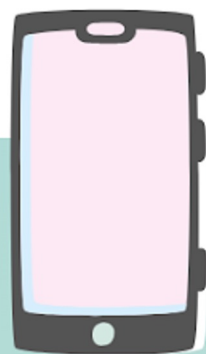
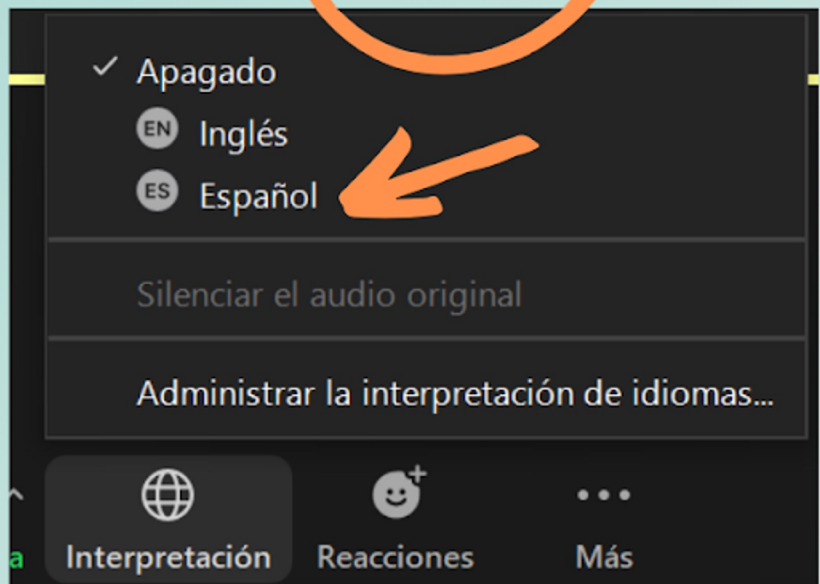
**Lisa O'Connor**, Safe Horizon

March 14, 2023

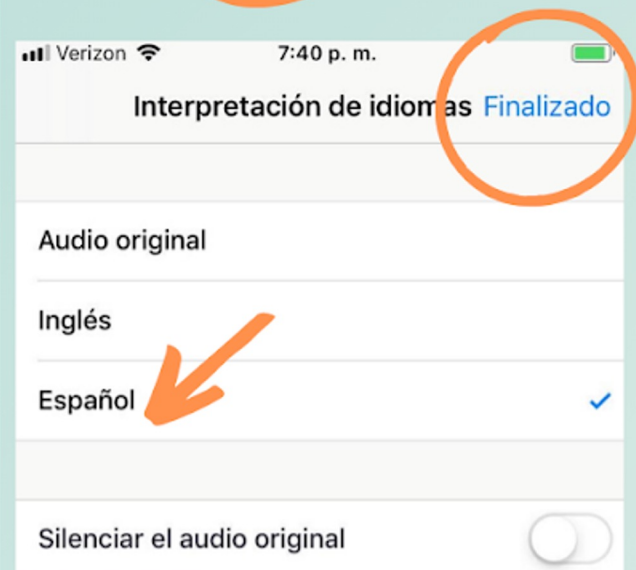
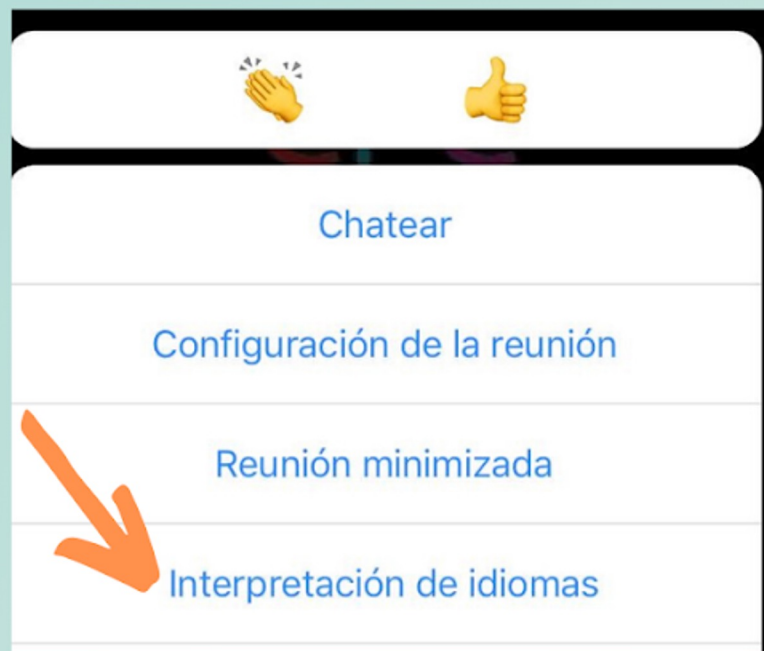
# PARA ACCEDER A LA INTERPRETACIÓN



Por computador



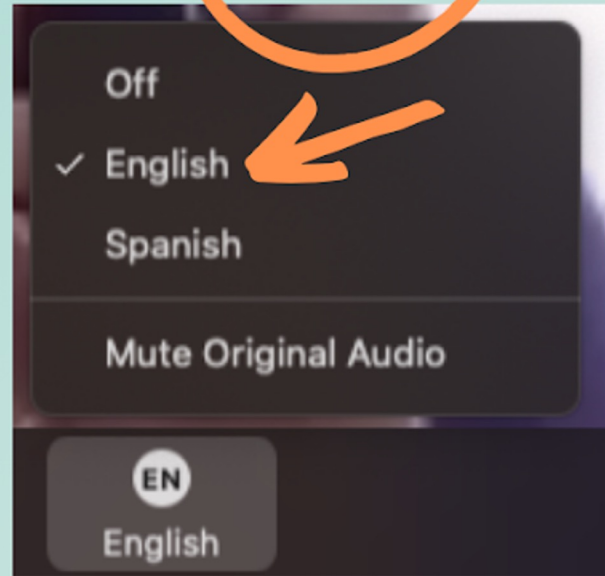
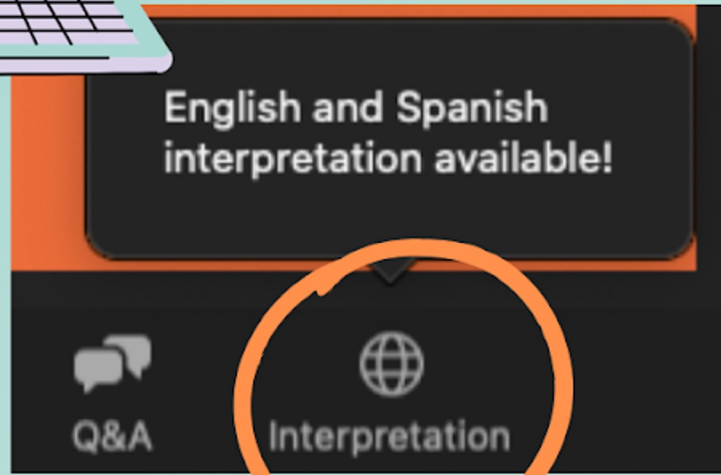
Por teléfono inteligente



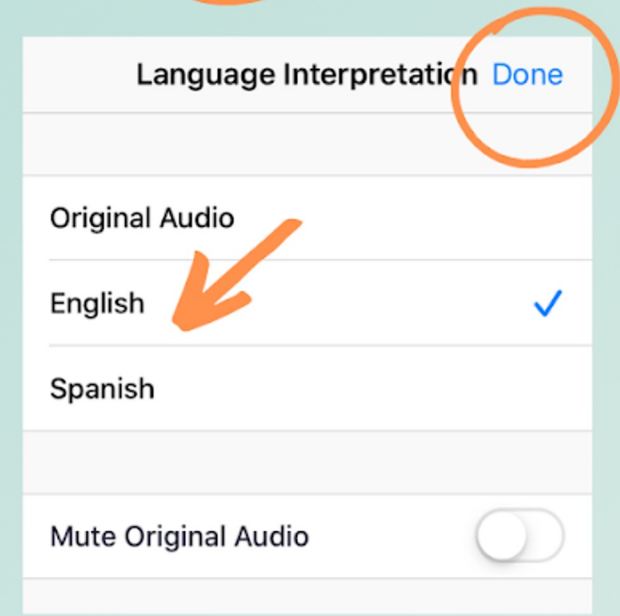
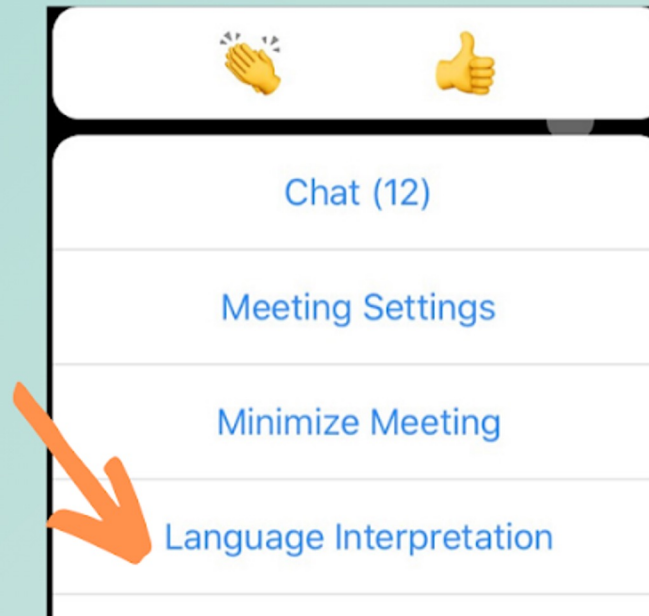
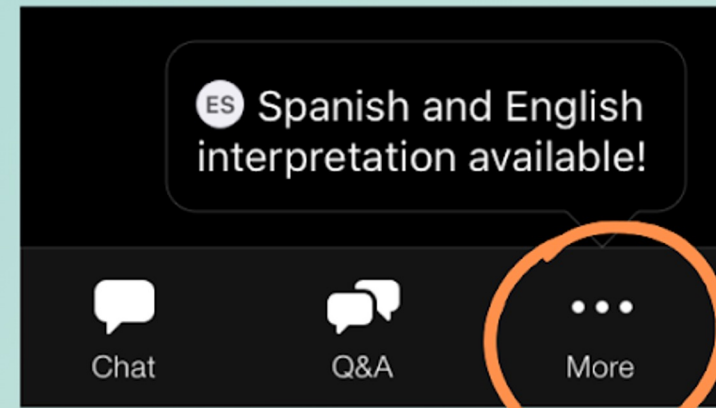
# TO ACCESS INTERPRETATION



Via computer



Via smartphone



# Domestic Violence and Housing Technical Assistance Consortium (DVHTAC)

## FEDERAL PARTNERS

- Family Violence Prevention and Services Program/HHS
- Office of Special Needs Assistance Programs/HUD
- Office for Victims of Crime/DOJ
- Office on Violence Against Women/DOJ
- US Interagency Council on Homelessness

## TA PROVIDERS

- Collaborative Solutions, Inc.
- National Network to End Domestic Violence
- National Resource Center on Domestic Violence
- National Sexual Violence Resource Center
- Safe Housing Alliance
- Safety, Training, Technical Assistance, Resources and Support (STTARS)
- Indigenous Safe Housing Center

# Lisa Goodman, PhD

## Boston College

# IPV Survivors' Emergency Outreach Efforts and the Forces That Shape Them

# COLLABORATORS

## Co-researchers:

- Deborah Epstein
- Nkiru Nnawulezi
- Emily Zhang
- Helen Hailes
- Allison Slocum



## Programs

### Advisory Group:

- Scholars, policy-makers and survivors
- Kelly Coyne, Jill Davies, Peg Hacsckaylo, Diana Mancera, Amy McCraney, Erin C. Miller, Heidi Notario, Cris M. Sullivan, Gwen Wright, and Latoya Young

## 25 women who shared their stories



# PROMPT FOR THE PROJECT

- **Murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor**
  - Discussion of harms at intersection of race & policing
  - Focus on community alternatives
- **Moment of Truth: Statement of Commitment to Black Lives**
- **But what about survivors?**



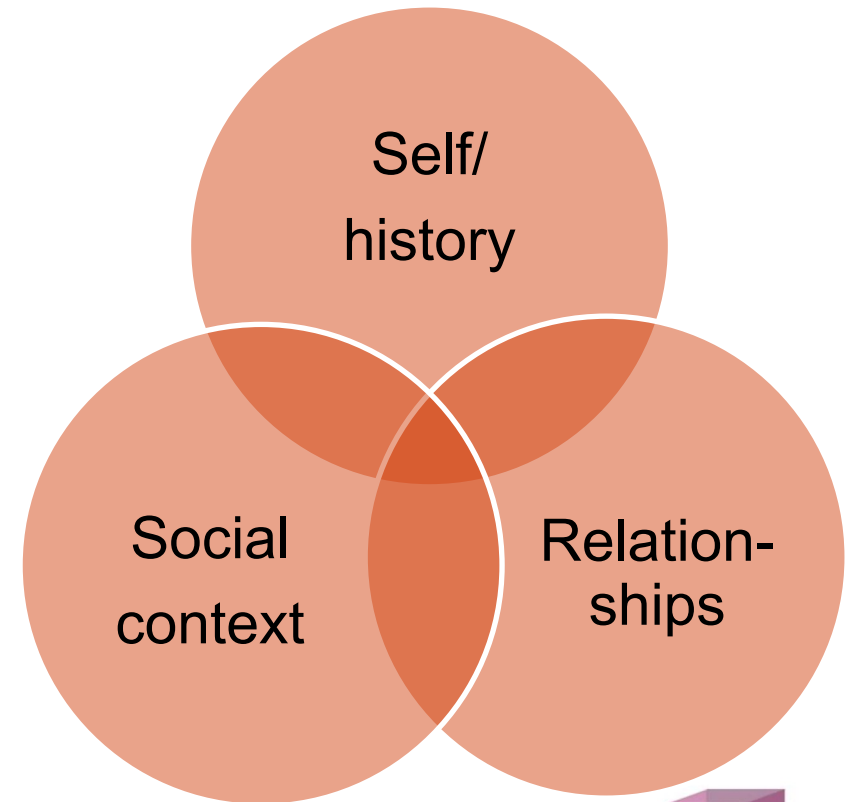


# STUDY QUESTIONS

- **Who do survivors already reach out to in moments of danger – separate and apart from whether they also call the police?**
- **What factors – across individual, interpersonal, and contextual levels – influence survivors' goals and decisions in these moments?**

# STUDY APPROACH

- Survivor perspectives
  - Wide range - ensuring strong BIPOC representation
- Range of stakeholders
- Relational and ecological approach



# STUDY SAMPLE

## Program partners:

- Indianapolis, IN; Charlotte, NC; Padukah, KY; NYC; Chelsea MA

## 25 survivors

- 18 identified as Black, 6 as White, 1 as Native American
- All English-speaking; all but one U.S.-born
- Half employed
- Age range: 21-61 (mean: 36)
- Children: 23 of 25 had at least one child
- 20 had spent time in shelter
  - (no difference between those who did/did not)



# THE QUESTIONS

Ask you about times when you (or your children) were deeply scared and unsafe because of your partner. The situation went beyond your own capacity to deal with it on your own and it felt like a REAL EMERGENCY.

- First time?
- Scariest time?
- Most recent time?

Who did you reach out to? Why?

What happened?

Is this what you wanted?



SAFE HOUSING  
PARTNERSHIPS

# THE DANGEROUS MOMENT

A moment of CHANGE in partner's behavior ~  
when the violence became more severe,  
when the partner lost control, or  
when the participant felt suddenly and completely  
powerless  
because of the partner's actions



# WHAT NETWORK MEMBERS, & WHY?

**A half reached out to no one most (or all) of the time.**

Most reached out to someone at least some of the time.

When they did reach out:

- Family, friends, neighbors

**Why?**

- #1: Would respond without judgment and with empathy
- #2: In a position to provide practical support (e.g. place to stay and transportation)
- #3: Close by



# WHAT DID PARTICIPANTS RECEIVE?

## **Painful:**

- discrediting the survivor
- refusing to provide help
- Telling her what to do
- Conditioning assistance on leaving the relationship

## **Practical:**

- A place to stay
- transportation out of the violent situation
- coming to the scene to serve as a supportive presence
- Calling the police

## **Emotional:**

- Empathic and nonjudgmental listening





# INFLUENCES – FAMILY HISTORY

**What influenced your decisions or actions at that moment?**

Family rupture through.....

- Intergenerational child and adult trauma (and disbelief/denial)
- Systemic intrusion (e.g. CPS)
- Instability:
  - Addiction, incarceration, housing instability/overwhelming stress

Physical distance

**Exception: Family strength**



# INFLUENCES – NETWORK MESSAGES

**Explicit messages from existing network members, like:**

- Tolerated DV as a necessary evil
- Lacked understanding of DV dynamics
- Blamed her for inciting the person who harmed her
- Disbelieved survivor/believed partner more
- Disapproved of/disappointed by/fed up with survivors' decisions related to safety

**Exceptions: messages of survivor's value and worth**

# INFLUENCES – SURVIVORS’ ORIENTATION TOWARDS OTHERS

- Alone in the world (except for person who harmed)
- Distrust of other people
- Shame avoidance
- Need to appear strong and independent
- Desire not to burden anyone – not the “way I am”

**Exception: S remains open to new connections**

- Reaching out to long-ago friends or acquaintances
- Reaching out to interviewers



# INFLUENCES – INDIVIDUAL SENSE OF MATTERING

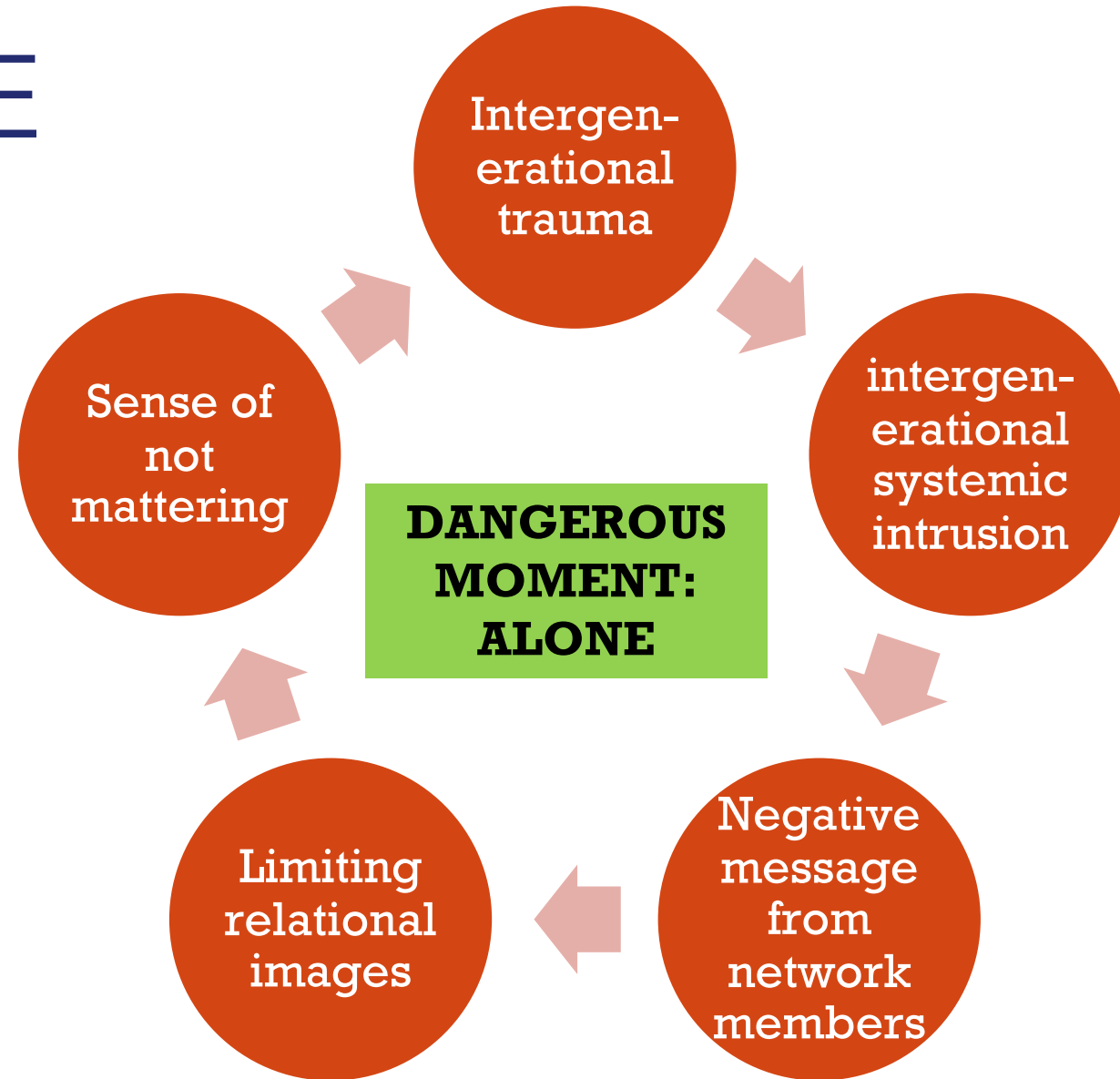
Sense of mattering:

- Not important to network members
- Not seen by network members
- Not cherished or loved by network members

Exception: “My family would do anything for me. There is nothing like a father’s arms”



# THE CYCLE



# WISHES

Physical safety

Psychological respite





# IMPLICATIONS

Listen, listen, listen.....without judgement– inside the walls and outside the walls of our programs

- By informal networks
- By other survivors through buddy system
- By advocates

**Pod-mapping** (Bay Area Transformative Justice Collective - Maria Mingus)

**CHAT project** (Collective Healing and Transformation – Dr. Mimi Kim)





# THE POLICE

$\frac{3}{4}$  called the police at least once and  $\frac{1}{4}$  reported that they would never call the police under any circumstances

- No correlation between strength/size of survivors' informal network and their decision to call the police



# THANK YOU



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Domestic Violence and Housing Technical Assistance Consortium  
[www.safehousingpartnerships.org](http://www.safehousingpartnerships.org)



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# Discussion / Questions



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