

## **Barriers to Barriers: Interviews with Local Agencies Who Service Victims /Survivors of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault within the Asian Community**

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Examining barriers between victims/survivors within the Asian community and professional sexual assault/domestic violence services is essential to improve service delivery. Research on the best practices to engagement suggests that service providers had more success engaging victims and survivors when they provided pre-crisis services, worked with community and family members, collaborated with religious leaders, addressed structural barriers, and developed alternative forms of service delivery (George & Rashidi, 2010). This study examined the potential complications and barriers of the proposed methodologies by conducting interviews and focus groups with several agencies that provide services to victims of domestic violence in the Asian community. Results revealed that there are complex layers of legal, clinical, and other systematic obstacles service providers face that challenge their ability to service this population in accordance with best practices outlined in literature. These barriers include: 1) Lack of racial and ethnic representation within service agencies, 2) Language barriers, 3) Geographic isolation 4) Systemic and intergenerational cycles of abuse/violence, and 5) Internal and external prophecies (i.e. sociological theories that analyze and explain cultural barriers both within the Asian community itself and outside the Asian community). The results imply that while all participating agencies integrated the aforementioned best practices into their programs, the resulting barriers contributed further to the difficulty of engaging survivors/victims of sexual assault/domestic violence within the Asian community. Future research can analyze the additional barriers to difficult engagement as well as their effects on access to other professional services (i.e healthcare, legal services, etc.). Suggestions for policy reform or developing clinical practices include incorporating these findings into educational community or professional resources.

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Asia Hutchins is a senior Criminal Justice: Juvenile Justice and Psychology: Community/Clinical double major. She has dedicated a significant portion of her academic and professional careers raising awareness about issues surrounding sexual assault and domestic violence. She is passionate about advocating for victims' rights through her research and hopes to continue the work beyond her graduation in December 2017.