

# Promoting a Culture of Safe Housing and Access to Services for Diverse Populations

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# RACHEL'S STORY



**The Eviction Process**

# RACHEL'S STORY

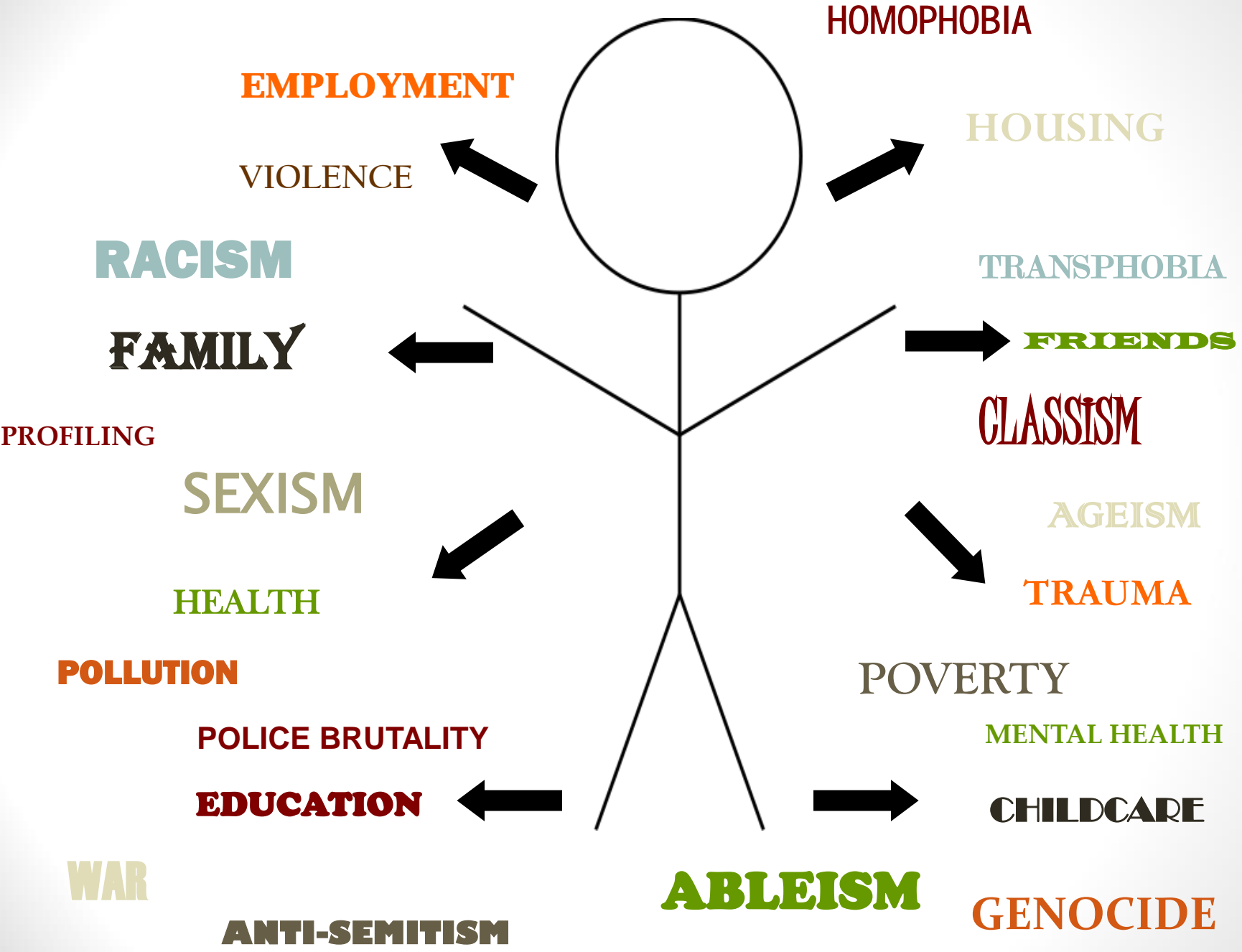
- Why did we show this short video?
- What immediate reactions did you experience?
- How does this connect to your work?

# INTERSECTIONALITY



*“There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle, because we do not live single-issue lives.”*

*—Audre Lorde*







# DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

## DIVERSITY

The range of human difference. Each person has multiple layers of diversity which make their perspective unique and their own.

## INCLUSION

Intentionally involving and valuing human differences and viewing such differences as strengths.



# CREATING INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

## We value inclusion by ...

- identifying, addressing and removing barriers in processes, policies, plans, practices, programs and services
- facilitating opportunities that result in effective and meaningful participation
- creating ideas and solutions built upon a range of perspectives

# WHY DO WE STRUGGLE MORE?

Black Women and Domestic Violence

*Deborah Collins-Gousby*



Chief Operating Officer

# ABOUT BROOKVIEW HOUSE...

- Started in 1990 for women and children experiencing homelessness
- Our Core Values:
  - Homeless children can thrive with proper support and attention
  - Motivated families can break the cycle of homelessness if given the right resources
  - Provide families a safe place to stay
  - Access to support, education, job/life skill training
  - Support their children
- Provide services to more than 350 moms, children, and youth per year
- 92% leave the ranks of homelessness permanently
- 88% of our youth graduate high school; national graduation rate is 25%



# ABOUT BROOKVIEW HOUSE...

- Programs
  - Emergency shelter and affordable housing programs
  - Youth Development Programs
    - Licensed Afterschool program
    - Full Day Summer Camp
    - Teen Program
    - Girls Group
  - Training and Education Program
    - Each adult participant develops a plan
    - Partner with workforce development, education and training programs
  - Women's Safety Network
    - Domestic violence
    - Health and Wellness Program
  - Behavioral Health
    - Licensed clinicians and graduate level interns
  - Community Services – we work to help stabilize our community



# BY THE NUMBERS...

- Black women are 4x more likely to experience death as result of DV/IPV
- Black women make up 8% of the population
  - 22% DV/IPV homicides
  - 29% of all victimized women
- Black women experience higher rates of psychological abuse – including humiliation, insults, name-calling, control – than women overall
- Sexual violence affects black women at high rates; 22% of black women are raped during their lifetime

# WHY DO WE STRUGGLE?

- When someone decides to threaten, stalk, harass or abuse their partner, what should a victim do? Call the police? Tell someone? Not always so simple for black women.
- Entrenched black culture
  - “The Strong Black Women” We don’t ask for help because we need to be strong; we don’t discuss what happens in our homes in front of other people
  - The fear of calling 911
    - A system put into place to protect is often abusive
  - Racism and judgement
    - Community feels racism is a bigger issue than sexism; racial issues are put ahead of sex-based issues
    - Judged by your own community; a traitor to the race
    - Not comfortable handing over “one of own”; fear of harm instead of help



# WHY DO WE STRUGGLE?

- Spiritual beliefs
  - Discourage divorce
  - Encourage forgiveness
  - *Pray Until Something Happens* (PUSH)
- Negative views about mental health services; 1 of 3 actually receive mental health treatment
- Support looks different for us
  - Focus on the entire family
  - Wanting the abuse to end, not the relationship





# LGBQ/T AND PARTNER ABUSE

*Sabrina Santiago*

the **Network** la **Red**  


Co-Executive Director

# the Network la Red




- Survivor-led, social justice organization dedicated to ending partner abuse in the **lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer** and/or **transgender** communities, we also work with **SM** and **polyamorous** communities.
- Services include:
  - *24-Hour Hotline*
  - *Housing Stabilization Program*
  - *Rental Assistance*
  - *Advocacy*
  - *Support Groups*
  - *Outreach & Community Organizing*
  - *Trainings & Technical Assistance*





**1 in 4** lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer and/or transgender individuals is abused by a partner.

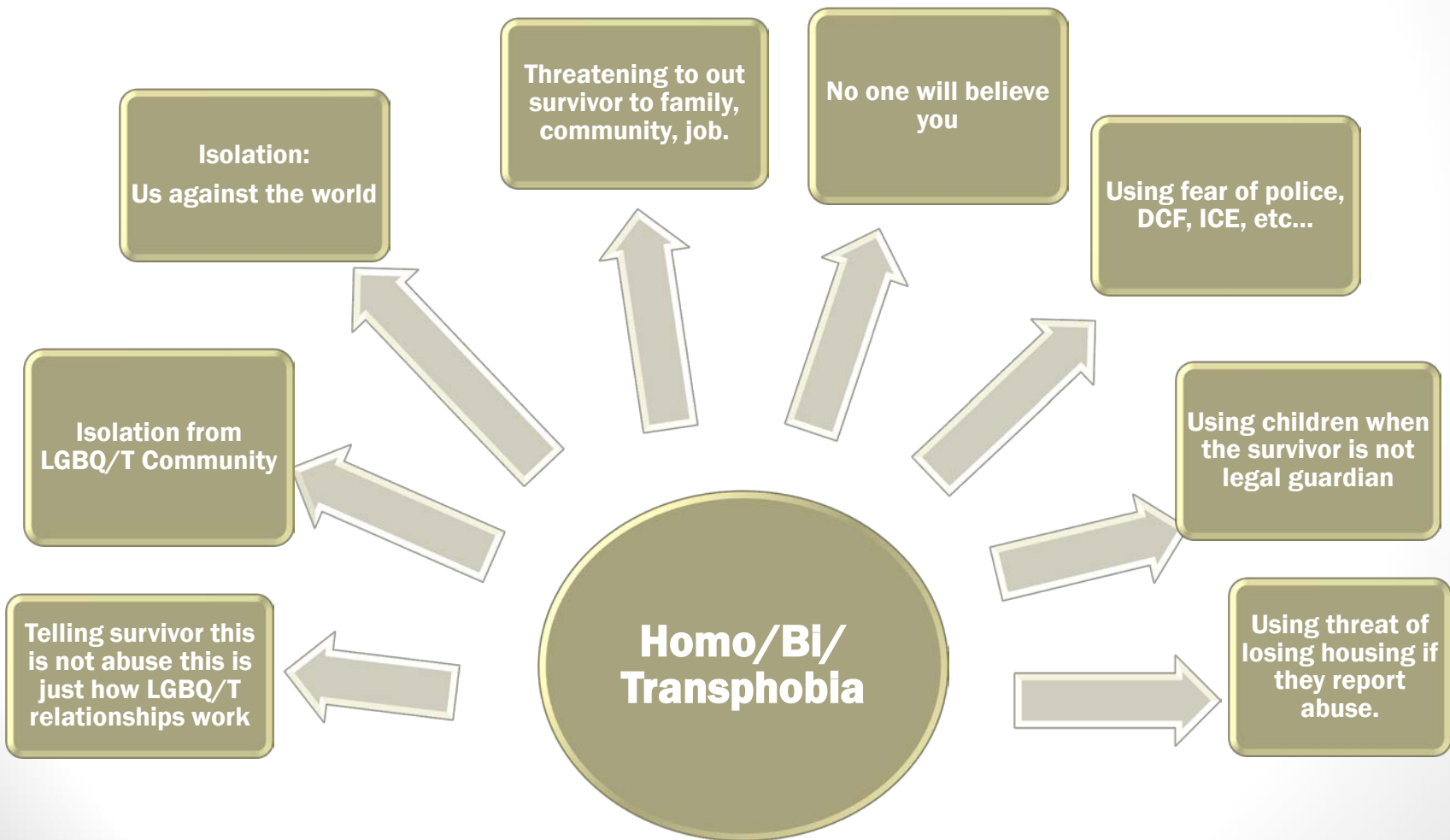


# Homophobia/Biphobia/Transphobia

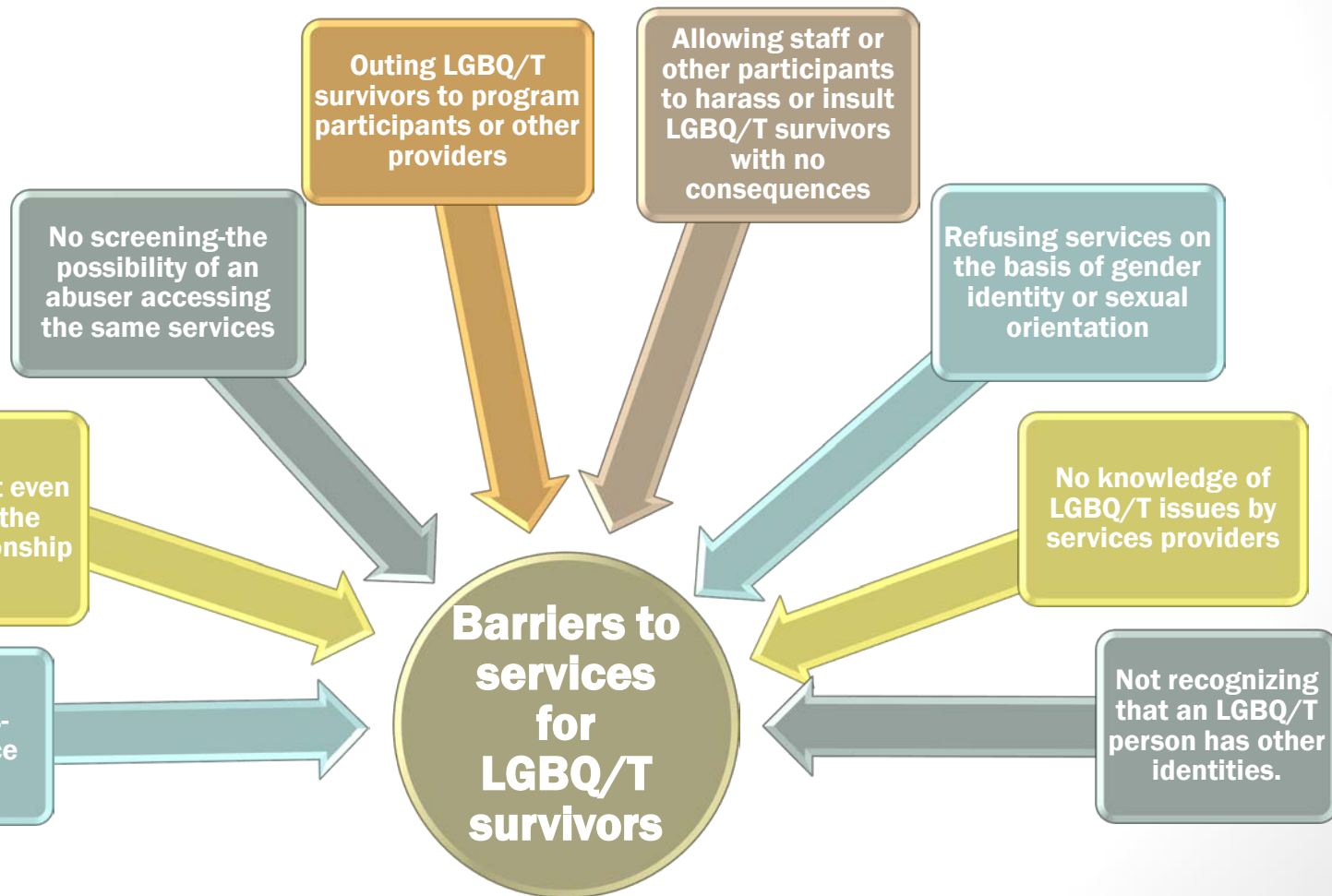
- An irrational fear, of lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer or transgender people based on their sexual orientation or gender presentation, including a prejudice often leading to acts of discrimination, sometimes abusive and violent.

(Adapted from Warren Blumenfeld, 1992)

# How Abusers Use Homo/Bi/Transphobia

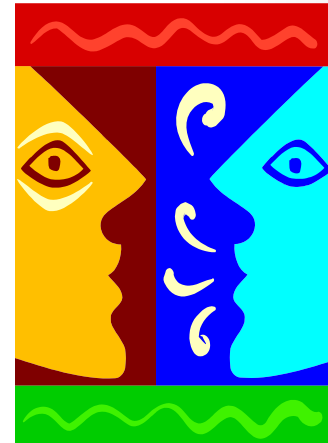


# Barriers to Resources for LGBQ/T Survivors



# Supporting Survivors

- Listen
- Don't judge
- Don't assume
- Mirror their language- use gender inclusive language, a person's cultural language, etc...
- Don't act as though you know what is best for the person
- Remember they are the expert on their own life.
- Ask what they need
- Recognize they are an individual with multiple identities.
- Remember that calling the police is not a safe option for everyone.
- Confidentiality
- Do not confront the abuser







# CREATING INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

What does this mean?

What practices should be considered?

What strategies should be employed?

What mechanisms need to be developed to hold ourselves accountable to this commitment?

# FAIR HOUSING ACT OF 1968

- Fair Housing Laws are an expansion of civil rights. These laws provide citizens protection from discrimination and harassment in all aspects of securing and maintaining housing.
- These protections are based on membership to a protected class.
- It mandates the provision of equal housing opportunity.
- Fair Housing Laws have been used as guidelines when developing state and local laws.

# STATE & FEDERAL PROTECTED CLASSES

- Race
- Religion
- National Origin
- Gender
- Disability
- Familial Status
- Age
- Gender Identity
- Marital Status
- Sexual Orientation
- Receipt of Public Benefit
- Military Status
- Genetic Information

# LONG TERM STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

## CRITICAL COMPONENTS OF DEVELOPING AN EFFECTIVE WORK PLAN FOR CREATING INCLUSIVITY

- Informed and committed leadership
- Comprehensive scope of goals and activities
- Integration of objectives within each department
- Dedicated resources
- Focused education and training opportunities
- Policy review and development
- Shared responsibility and individual accountability, and
- Measurement and evaluation

# PEER LEARNING

- What challenges have you encountered?
- How have you managed those challenges?
- What effective responses do you recommend?

# NEXT STEPS





# RESOURCES

Boston Fair Housing

[www.bostonfairhousing.org](http://www.bostonfairhousing.org)

Boston Public Health  
Commission

[www.bphc.org](http://www.bphc.org)

Local Initiatives Support  
Corporation

[www.lisc.org](http://www.lisc.org)

Massachusetts Commission  
Against Discrimination

[www.mass.gov/mcad](http://www.mass.gov/mcad)

Mel King Institute

[www.melkinginstitute.org](http://www.melkinginstitute.org)

MWI Consultants

Josh Hoch at 617.973.9739 x23

Third Sector New England

<http://tsne.org/programs-services>

Visions Inc.

<http://visions-inc.org>

And many, many more!

