



**MOVEMENT
BUILDING with
youth, people of color,
transgender and
gender non-conforming
people, and people
with disabilities in the
LGBTQ anti-violence
movement**

The Movement Building Committee was a project of the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs. A special and warm thanks to the folks of the Movement Building Committee for sharing their wisdom and years long wisdom with NCAVP and the anti-violence field.

Movement Building Committee:

- **Diane Amaya** from BSEEDZ in Denver, Colorado
- **Tasha Amezcua** from the Audre Lorde Project in New York, New York
- **Nico Fonseca** from the Audre Lorde Project in New York, New York
- **Ruby Corado** from Casa Ruby in Washington, DC
- **Kiyomi Fujikawa** from API Chaya in Seattle, Washington
- **Lourdes Ashley Hunter** from Trans Women of Color Collective based out of Washington, DC
- **Essex Lordes** from Community United Against Violence in San Francisco, California
- **Emani Love** from the Ruth Ellis Center in Detroit, Michigan
- **Sebastian Margaret** from the Disability Justice Collective based out of Albuquerque, New Mexico
- **Lidia Salazar** from Community United Against Violence in San Francisco, California
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INTRODUCTION

The Movement Building Committee of the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP) was established to address the crisis of violence against transgender communities, LGBTQ communities of color, and LGBTQ youth in the United States. Recognizing the disproportionate impact of violence against these communities, the Movement Building Committee sought to support leaders engaged in innovative anti-violence work from these communities. Traditional crisis intervention, advocacy, and response services are critical for survivors of violence; however, for LGBTQ people living at the intersections of racism, transphobia, poverty, ableism and other oppressions, larger structural conditions such as housing and job discrimination and criminalization contribute to increased exposure to violence.

The Movement Building Committee convened over a two-year period from the summer of 2014 to the summer of 2016. During this time, the Movement Building Committee worked to share experiences from various parts of the United States and identify root causes of violence against transgender communities, LGBTQ communities of color, LGBTQ youth, and LGBTQ people with disabilities. The project sought to identify and lift up promising anti-violence programs and strategies led by these directly impacted communities. The project worked with a smaller group of committee members to identify strategies and key principles that are imperative in reducing and preventing the crisis of deadly violence against transgender people, LGBTQ people of color, LGBTQ youth, and LGBTQ people with disabilities.

This report shares insights and lessons learned from the project. The Movement Building Committee report shares self-identified causes of the disproportionate violence against transgender people, LGBTQ people of color, and LGBTQ youth, as well as promising strategies developed by these communities to reduce and prevent violence in their own lives.

Members

Movement Building Committee members include:

- **Diane Amaya** from BSEEDZ in Denver, Colorado
- **Tasha Amezcua** from the Audre Lorde Project in New York, New York
- **Nico Fonseca** from the Audre Lorde Project in New York, New York
- **Ruby Corado** from Casa Ruby in Washington, DC
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Why This Project: Disproportionate Violence Against LGBTQ People of Color, Transgender People, and LGBTQ Youth

NCAVP's 2014 LGBTQ hate violence report found that LGBTQ people of color represented 80% of LGBTQ homicide victims, transgender women represented 55% of homicide victims, and 45% of homicide victims were 24 years old or younger.¹ The report also found that transgender people were four times more likely to experience police violence and LGBTQ people of color were over twice as likely to experience physical violence as compared to other survivors. LGBTQ youth were two and a half times more likely to be injured and over twice as likely to require medical attention compared to other survivors. NCAVP's 2014 LGBTQ intimate partner violence report documented that of those victims whose race was known, a majority of intimate partner violence homicide victims were people of color, and that transgender people of color were over twice as likely to experience discrimination, and over three and a half times more likely to experience intimate partner violence in public spaces.²

In addition to experiencing higher rates of severe violence, LGBTQ people of color³ and transgender communities⁴ have higher unemployment and poverty rates⁵, which can increase the risk of experiencing violence and decrease their access to resources. Due to the intersections of racism, classism, ageism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, and the specific ways in which different communities experience violence, transgender communities, working class, LGBTQ communities of color, and LGBTQ youth require specific, community-led anti-violence interventions.

Multi-issue Framework for Understanding Violence

During the course of the project, the Movement Building Committee developed a framework for understanding how violence against LGBTQ people of color,

1 Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and HIV-Affected Hate Violence in 2014 ([National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs](#))

2 Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and HIV-Affected Intimate Partner Violence in 2014 ([National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs](#))

3 Poverty in the Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Community ([The Williams Institute](#))

4 Injustice at Every Turn ([National Center for Transgender Equality & National Gay and Lesbian Task Force](#))

5 Labor Force Characteristics by Race and Ethnicity, 2009 ([US Department of Labor & US Bureau of Labor Statistics](#))

transgender people, LGBTQ people with disabilities, and LGBTQ youth is connected to broader societal structures. The violence, discrimination, and oppression these communities face originate in supremacy systems that work in tandem and create a social climate that increases their vulnerability to violence.

Disability and transgender community educator Sebastian Margaret brought an anti-ableism and disability justice perspective to the Movement Building Committee's process. This politic grounds itself in an understanding that disabled lives are not individual experiences of tragic, heroic, and burdensome inspiration, but collective experiences of discrimination, segregation, and oppression. It is the absence of this understanding, coupled with the lack of exposure to disability community members within LGBTQ community organizing in general and anti-violence work in particular, that perpetuates the marginalization of LGBTQ disabled community members. Disabled queers struggle to secure basic survival needs and are relegated to the edges of LGBTQ organizing and service provision work, which in turn neatly and problematically allows an absence of disability specific access, further compounding the isolation and estrangement disabled LGBTQ communities experience and contributes to a collision of factors that lead to exploitation, maltreatment, and systemic violence.

In a deep and deliberate manner, ableism works as both a mechanism and product of misogyny, racism, and colonialism. This creates a societal climate that engenders disability specific violence that is tacitly justified, as people with disabilities remain "unproductive" under capitalism; a system designed to protect profit and wealth over people and communities with the key principle of productivity being inextricable linked to value and credibility. As a result, people with disabilities are at a much higher risk of violence than non-disabled⁶ individuals. In the same way that people with disabilities are marginalized and denied access to societal participation, LGBTQ people of color, transgender people, working class, and LGBTQ youth experience marginalization that increases exposure to violence. These unique factors and causes were explored in depth by the Movement Building Committee and are described more fully below.

6 Violence against adults and children with disabilities ([World Health Organization](#))

ROOT CAUSES OF VIOLENCE IDENTIFIED BY DIRECTLY IMPACTED COMMUNITIES

Ignorance, bias, stigma, and disposability

The Movement Building Committee identified the pervasive bias and stigma against LGBTQ people of color, transgender people, LGBTQ youth, and people with disabilities as the foundations of violence against these communities. This conscious and unconscious bias and stigma is rooted in homophobia, transphobia, ableism, biphobia and racism that exist in families, workplaces, housing, employment and other everyday relationships and environments that these communities exist in and interact with.⁷ Negative attitudes and beliefs create a culture of disposability — where transgender people, LGBTQ people of color, LGBTQ people with disabilities, LGBTQ youth, and the working class are viewed as less valuable. This effect is demonstrated in how infrequently law enforcement and media prioritize deadly violence against these communities and the general invisibility of violence against transgender and gender non conforming people and people with disabilities. Ignorance, bias, and disposability are the prevailing attitudes which have created the structural conditions that places these communities at such high risk of violence.

Lack of Social support and Community

Movement Building Committee members highlighted how social stigma and bias can lead to social isolation for LGBTQ people of color, working class transgender people, LGBTQ people with disabilities and LGBTQ youth. Without a social support system, people have less access and community to secure emotional, physical, and emotional well-being. Additionally, social services for the communities often focus on individual needs without simultaneously building up community support or connection.

⁷ Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and HIV-Affected Hate Violence in 2015
(National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs)

“Without greater emphasis, value, and necessity placed upon the implementation of basic access and accommodations within the LGBTQ community overall, and service provision in particular, disabled LGBTQ people are relegated to live our lives in segregated spaces (special ed, group homes, para-transit, sheltered workspaces etc.). This keeps us separated from community, participation, and the scent of connection. LGBTQ people with disabilities are isolated so effectively; we remain literally unable to get into the doors all manner of spaces, we remain largely invisible and ignored from even the most progressive LGBTQ spaces. If we, disabled queers, are not even in your spaces due to the lack of disability specific access and the complete absence lack of an anti-ableist politic, outreach and culture in LGBTQ organizing, how will you have the capacity to identify us as leaders and key stakeholders in need of dedicated sustained and principled leadership development? How will disabled LGBTQ community members gain access to the skills, experience or social capital to wrestle out of the poverty most of us live within? How do we find support, safety and solace for the violence that accompanies us in the survival and street economies we often try to get by within. How will the anti-violence movement seek to support our self-determination and persistent struggle to mobilize our community and organize for greater political power? Why is it still a tolerated inconvenience that LGBTQ disabled and sick folks remain excluded from so much of LGBTQ provision, resources and movement work? What will bring about the realization of just how much harm this causes, how many opportunities for incredible collective collaborations are missed and how much there is to gain by turning back towards disability and illness?”

– Sebastian Margaret, Disability Justice Community Educator

Lack of access to leadership skills and opportunities

Opportunities to develop and use leadership skills are lacking for LGBTQ people of color, working class, transgender people, LGBTQ people with disabilities, and LGBTQ youth, both within and outside the LGBTQ movement. Movement Building Committee members discussed how these communities are often undermined in their work because of the general assumption that they lack leadership skills. Service programs rarely take the time to support these communities in developing and using leadership skills. This creates a system of dependency on these programs and undermines these groups to self-determine in various areas of their life.

As a result of bias, stigma, and limited opportunities connected to the oppression and discrimination that transgender people, working class, LGBTQ people of color, LGBTQ people with disabilities, and LGBTQ youth face, Movement Building Com-

mittee members discussed how important it is to create leadership opportunities within social support systems and community based work.

“It is important not only that we provide leadership skill development opportunities for LGBTQ youth of color but also that we invest in sustainable opportunities for LGBTQ youth of color to lead and see other folks with similar experiences as them lead as well. This is the same for LGBTQ people of color, working class, transgender people, LGBTQ people with disabilities.”

– **Jai’ Shavers, BreakOut!**

Lack of skills for healthy relationships

Our society does not often promote healthy relationship models, and due to a lack of visibility and the social stigma associated with LGBTQ relationships, there are even fewer opportunities for LGBTQ people to build healthy relationship skills.⁸ There are very few LGBTQ inclusive sexual education programs that have a queer and trans inclusive consent culture. This is particularly true for LGBTQ people with disabilities, who are often perceived as unable to consent and given little to no access to sex education or relationship skills.

The trauma and isolation caused by the oppression of LGBTQ people of color, working class, transgender people, LGBTQ people with disabilities and LGBTQ youth can also impact relationship dynamics. Movement Building Committee members identified the lack of resources and opportunities to build healthy relationship skills as a contributing factor to intimate partner and sexual violence against transgender people, LGBTQ people of color, and LGBTQ youth.

“Transgender people are vulnerable to intimate partner violence because they have no protections in society. Many of the recent homicides of trans women of color are related to intimate partner violence. It is hard to find safe services for transgender survivors of intimate partner violence, and the trans community does not have access to healthy relationship conversations in the larger society”

– **Lala Zannell, New York City Anti-Violence Project**

8 Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and HIV-Affected Intimate Partner Violence in 2014 (National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs)

Alternative Accountability for People who Harm

The Movement Building Committee acknowledged the lack of resources and the criminalization of people who harm as another root cause of violence. The criminalization of LGBTQ youth, working class LGBTQ people of color, people with disabilities and transgender and gender nonconforming people supports the system of disposability that was mentioned earlier. Members discussed how sometimes survivors and victims know the people who harm them — including peers, partners, neighbors, and sometimes family members. Current criminal justice responses to violence offer mainly punitive measures that do not allow for community healing and transformation.

Barriers in Education

The educational system in the United States can have a lasting influence on the course of students' lives. For transgender youth and LGBTQ youth of color, pervasive bullying and harassment in schools leads many of them to skip school, perform poorly, and drop out⁹. Weakening and failing public school infrastructure has strained resources available for public schools, and an increased presence of law enforcement and arrests within schools has contributed to an increasingly hostile school climate for many youths. The education of LGBTQ youth of color and LGBTQ youth with disabilities is underserved, undervalued, and over policed. For these youth, especially youth with disabilities, it's primary function is to prepare youth for a life of lowered expectation and unquestioning compliance and provides no opportunities for understanding the power structures and prejudices in play in their lives – layering risk factor on risk factor for current and future violence maltreatment and abuse.

LGBTQ youth of color, transgender youth, and LGBTQ youth with disabilities failed by the educational system face challenging employment and economic opportunities, and may engage in survival economies early on in their lives, increasing their risk of violence and criminalization.

9 Is There an Emotional Cost of Completing High School? ([Journal of Homosexuality](#))

Homelessness, poverty, and the dismantling of the social safety net

Transgender people, LGBTQ people of color, LGBTQ youth, and LGBTQ people with disabilities experience disproportionately high rates of poverty, unemployment, and homelessness as a result of bias, discrimination, and oppression. Committee members identified homelessness and poverty as a key root cause that creates vulnerability and increased risk of violence.¹⁰

Movement Building Committee members described how the “war on poverty,” welfare reform, the dismantling of the social safety net and a complex and inaccessible social service system have all further contributed to increased economic violence against LGBTQ people of color, transgender people, and LGBTQ youth. Many homeless services in the United States are provided by private religious organizations that are hostile towards transgender and LGBTQ people, leading to elevated levels of violence against these communities within shelter programs.¹¹ People with disabilities experience high rates of violence within shelter systems, including sexual violence by staff and caretakers. Additionally, people with disabilities often lack the same work protections, such as minimum wage protections, as others as their labor is not valued as work and are fundamentally less likely to be reached by labor organizers.

Decreasing funding and resources for as well as increasing the restrictions on social welfare programs impacts those who are most reliant on them. Often the decrease in funding or increased restrictions for these programs is based on the idea that certain communities are less worthy and more costly, particularly transgender and gender non-conforming people and people with disabilities. This framing of “costs” often leads to those services and programs that would actually increase housing and employment for the most marginalized being cut, and continues to perpetuate intimate partner violence, hate violence and systemic violence against these communities.

Movement Building Committee members discussed the need for housing and economic empowerment programs that are holistic, inclusive, and increase individuals self-determination to address this root cause of violence.

10 LGBT Selective Victimization: Unprotected Youth on the Streets ([The Journal of Law in Society](#))

11 Ibid.

Criminalization: Profiling, the war on drugs, and gentrification

The Movement Building Committee named the criminalization of transgender people, LGBTQ people of color, LGBTQ youth, working class, and LGBTQ people with disabilities as another root cause contributing to violence. Multiple factors have contributed to the political climate in the United States where these communities are heavily policed and criminalized. For example, transgender women of color are particularly profiled for engaging in sex work, and LGBTQ youth and people of color are read as deviant.¹² The role of the war on drugs in creating mass incarceration and over-policing in communities of color has also contributed to the state of over-policing and criminalization in the United States.¹³ Additionally, police are often the first to respond when someone is experiencing a mental health crisis, leading to increased violence against people with mental health disabilities and increased rates of police violence against the disability community.

Movement Building Committee members identified that the national pattern of urban gentrification is increasing the criminalization of LGBTQ people of color, transgender people, LGBTQ youth, and people with disabilities in ways that contribute to vulnerability and violence.¹⁴ When neighborhoods gentrify, law enforcement may increase patrols and policing in an attempt to “clean up” a neighborhood from seemingly deviant individuals – including these communities. Multiple Movement Building Committee members are engaged in local campaigns to reform policing, profiling, and end the criminalization of LGBTQ youth, transgender people, LGBTQ people of color, and LGBTQ people with disabilities.

“When we can’t turn to the police or the systems that are supposed to ‘help,’ then our communities are turning to each other to respond to and end violence. We need to invest in giving our communities power to build safety and healing, not outside entities. We need solutions that support our communities rather than targeting them”

– Kiyomi Fujikawa, API Chaya

12 Sex Work Policy Recommendations (The National LGBTQ Task Force)

13 Resisting Hate Crime Discourse: Queer and Intersectional Challenges to Neoliberal Hate Crime Laws ([Critical Criminology](#))

14 The Demise of Queer Space? ([Journal of Planning Education and Research](#))

Internalized shame, coping, stressors of oppression

Movement Building Committee members discussed the importance of addressing internalized oppression, shame, and stressors that transgender people, LGBTQ people of color, LGBTQ youth, and LGBTQ people with disabilities experience which can lead to increased vulnerabilities and violence. The same bias, stigma, and discrimination that leads to interpersonal violence also has a profound impact on the emotional and psychological well-being of these communities. The concept and harmful practice of “curing” LGBTQ people, people of color, and LGBTQ people with disabilities feeds into internalized shame, particularly for people with disabilities who are often segregated from their peers and communities. Internalized shame and oppression can lead to a myriad of risk factors, including suicidal ideation, low self-esteem, substance abuse, and high-risk sexual activity.¹⁵

Lack of resources and funding

Movement Building Committee members consistently discussed how limited resources and funding for transgender, LGBTQ people of color, LGBTQ youth, LGBTQ people with disabilities led organizations and strategies inhibited innovative and effective programs to address these root causes that lead to violence. Currently both LGBTQ funding and anti-violence funding are among the smallest percentage of issues supported by philanthropy, and specific funding for transgender, LGBTQ people of color, LGBTQ people with disabilities organizations in particular has historically been very limited.¹⁶ When funding is available, it often does not allow the flexibility that is needed to do survivor driven work. Members described the need to refocus how funding is awarded away from being deliverable-driven to building infrastructure for programs and focusing on impact and changes that occur as a result of the program.

15 Internalized homophobia ([Canadian Journal of Community Mental Health](#))

16 Government and Philanthropic Support for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex Communities ([Funders for LGBTQ Issues](#)) — pg. 35

STRATEGIES LED BY DIRECTLY AFFECTED COMMUNITIES

Traditional anti-violence programming has focused on violence response services, such as crisis counseling, emergency housing, and access to criminal and civil legal options. While sometimes important, Movement Building Committee members discussed how these services often do not meet the needs of and are not accessible to LGBTQ youth, LGBTQ people of color, transgender and gender non-conforming people, and LGBTQ people with disabilities, and at times place these communities at more risk of violence. Movement Building Committee members discussed the importance and impact of community led programs and work that addresses the core factors and causes, highlighted above, that increase these communities' risk of experiencing violence.

“Self-determination is a person’s innate ability to choose how to live their life. When a person experiences violence, often their ability to practice self-determination is diminished because of trauma. CUAV supports the self-determination of LGBTQ survivors to help them live the lives they see for themselves, rather than a life shaped by the fear of experiencing further violence.”

– Essex Lordes, Community United Against Violence

The work of Movement Building Committee members focuses on:

- Leadership development and opportunities for survivors to take on leadership roles.
- Building of individual and community power to challenge racism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, ableism, ageism and other systems of oppression in services provision, policies, and overall societal beliefs.
- Peer led empowerment and abuse prevention education for youth with disabilities that uplifts self determination, consent, cultural knowledge, and self esteem as key components, with curricula that is developed and delivered by people with disabilities, pulls from cross disability organizing knowledge, and is rooted in multi-issue, anti-oppression politics.
- Developing communities' skills to challenge and address violence as it happens and to create and support community accountability mechanisms.

- Creating and supporting community and individual support mechanisms for LGBTQ youth, LGBTQ people of color, transgender and gender nonconforming people, and LGBTQ people with disabilities with a focus on understanding impacts of systemic oppression, internalized oppression, decreasing isolation, healing, and self-determination.

MOVING FROM EVALUATION OF WORK TO REFLECTION

In recent years, there has been a shift in focus of how to understand the success of anti-violence work away from solely looking at the actions and activities of programs to assessing the impact of these programs. The process of assessing the impact and results of programs and projects is traditionally called “evaluation”. However, the Movement Building Committee felt that the word and traditional processes of “evaluation” has negative connotations for many LGBTQ youth, LGBTQ people of color, and transgender and gender non-conforming people. The term itself connotes experiences of psychiatric evaluations or other medical type evaluations that have been historically used against LGBTQ, particularly transgender and gender non-conforming communities and people of color, as a way of saying that they need to be “fixed”.

In addition to the historical medical connotations, Movement Building Committee members felt that conventional evaluation processes often were not useful to them in ways that provided meaningful insights and changes to their work. Evaluation processes felt too reductive in the way that they defined and measured success and impact. However, many Movement Building Committee members noted that they go through “reflection” processes with both other staff and those who they are working with. For Movement Building Committee members, reflection was important in that it allowed time to reflect on the goals of the project, allowed space for those who were participating in the program to provide meaningful feedback, and created opportunities to adjust the work to meet the changing needs of communities and realign with the core values of each organization.

The Values Underlying the Success of the Work

In traditional evaluation processes, often times the values and principles of a project or organization are not included as factors that lead to the success of those programs. However, Movement Building Committee members discussed how underlying values and principles guided all of their work and were imperative to the success of the work in that they directly addressed the root causes of violence against LGBTQ Youth, LGBTQ people of color, and transgender and gender nonconforming people. In creating evaluations or “reflections” of anti-violence work, it’s vital that these values and principles are not only noted, but understood to be necessary components of the success of the work.

Some examples of these values and principles include:

- A core focus of the work needs to be on the redistribution of power. The work needs to focus on building and centering the power of community over the state, organizations, and institutions.
- Survivors need access to affirming services and care and political education to transform their individual lives and their communities.
- People should be meaningfully compensated for their work.
- Those who are most impacted should have meaningful decision making and leadership roles.
- No one is disposable and spaces must be affirming and flexible, but also hold people accountable.
- There needs to be specific outreach to disability communities as these communities have been systematically estranged from LGBTQ anti-violence work and still often unable to access even live saving direct service resources.

The values and principles are at the core of all of the work, including project planning and development, implementation, and reflection and assessment. These values and principles act as guiding posts to ensure that the root causes are being addressed in the work. In order to center and uplift the work of LGBTQ people of color, LGBTQ youth, transgender and gender nonconforming people, and LGBTQ people with disabilities these core tenants must be recognized and valued as being integral to the work.

Additional Resources:

Creative Interventions Toolkit

<http://www.creative-interventions.org/tools/>

Southerners On New Ground

<http://southernersonnewground.org/>

El/La Para Translatina

<http://ellaparatranslatinas.yolasite.com/>

Streetwise and Safe

<http://streetwiseandsafe.org/>

Familia

Trans Queer Liberation Movement

<http://famiatqlm.org/>

TGIJP

<http://www.tgijp.org/>

Trans Justice Funding Project

<http://www.transjusticefundingproject.org/>

Breakout! And Streetwise and Safe “Get Your Rights!”

Curriculum and toolkit for LGBTQ youth

<http://getyrrights.org/curriculum-and-toolkits/>

Disability communities, marginalization and violence

<http://www.gradientlair.com/post/102861580173/tanisha-anderson-killed-by-policepolice-death-of-Tanisha-Anderson:disability,ableismpolicingandanti-blackracism>

<http://poormagazine.org/node/5510>

police training/ disability training not the answer Kerima Çevik

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AstF5kMaH_w

Deaf and incarcerated AI –Jezzra America mini documentary Why racial justice needs to include mental health “...I see mental health, suicide and police violence as very connected...” Oliver Glass 2