

Executive Summary: Evaluation of CRDVN Final Report

In 2014, Blue Shield of California Foundation (BSCF), in partnership with the domestic violence (DV) field, launched the Culturally Responsive Domestic Violence Network (CRDVN, or the Network), a group of leaders throughout California who are teaming up to share strategies and best practices for better reaching DV survivors from immigrant communities and communities of color. CRDVN is a unique community-driven approach to building the overall capacity of the DV field to prevent and address domestic violence among all Californians.

In 2014, building on lessons from an earlier phase of work, BSCF provided grants to 13 community partners to participate in CRDVN. The objectives of these grants were to support:

- Innovation and outcomes in culturally responsive services;
- Sustainability of culturally responsive practices;
- Capacity and reach of alternative DV providers; and
- CRDVN network formation and effectiveness.

BSCF funded Jemmott Rollins Group (JRG) to coordinate peer learning and convenings to foster meaningful exchanges across the community partners participating in CRDVN grants. BSCF contracted with SPR for the CRDVN evaluation.

Culturally Responsive Approaches and Outcomes

Community partners were exceedingly positive in discussing their relationship with BSCF and the Network's impact on the DV field. Respondents consistently noted that CRDVN represents a tipping point in that it has the potential to generate paradigm-shifting breakthroughs in policies and practices that shape the DV field in coming years.

Speaking at the organizational level, community partners were also positive about the impact of CRDVN participation—particularly in terms of nurturing innovation, promoting sustainability of culturally responsive practices, and expanding the capacity of alternative DV providers.

To test innovative approaches in the field, Network partners used three primary approaches:

- Partner with communities/margins-to-center approach;
- Promote survivor and community leadership; and
- Engage faith-based leaders.

According to a networking and outcomes survey, all community partners felt that culturally specific organizations have become more central to California's DV field because of CRDVN participation. Key strategies within the margins-to-center approach included broadening social networks and leveraging the resources of social justice allies.

Five CRDVN partners made the promotion of survivor leadership the primary focus of their grant work through technical assistance as well as direct leadership and training opportunities. This has resulted in significant life changes for survivor-participants, as well as new service provider partnerships and changes in community perceptions of violence.

Engaging influential leaders and organizations, such as clergy and churches, is a powerful step towards shifting community norms around domestic violence. Three CRDVN partners focused on engagement of faith-based leaders—e.g., by adopting a humble approach to partnership, training faith leaders as first responders to DV, and developing alliances across different faith communities.

CRDVN partners have demonstrated that the work of CRDVN can be sustained through policy-level engagement and through the expansion of access to alternative funding streams. For example, four Network partners discussed involvement in advocacy at the state and federal levels in some capacity, while another directly contributed to an improvement in cultural responsiveness at the federal level through policy development.

Although many Network partners have expressed concerns about diminishing funds for DV services given a new federal administration, there is a sense that BSCF initiatives have begun to change the funding landscape by demonstrating the value of collaboration and investment in alternative approaches to DV.

In the networking and outcomes survey, community partners (both alternative and tradition DV providers) unanimously agreed that participation in CRDVN has increased the capacity to prevent and address DV for diverse cultural groups.

Network Formation and Effectiveness

CRDVN placed great emphasis on forming peer networks in California's DV field and increasing their effectiveness, making it one of the Network's four core objectives. Major vehicles for CRDVN's network formation and activities goals were: regional and grantee convenings; a peer-led institute; and peer learning exchanges (PLEs).

Effectiveness of Regional and Grantee Convenings

JRG coordinated seven convenings aimed at providing community partners with opportunities to gather, build trust and connections with peer organizations, and facilitate sharing of innovative, promising, culturally responsive practices in the DV field. Attendees agreed that the goals of the convenings were met, and that they were useful, relevant, and well-facilitated.

Peer networking opportunities continued to be singled out as a valuable convening component. Attendees also highlighted opportunities to plan for the November 2016 peer-led institute. This helped attendees better understand the purpose of the Network and their individual organization's specific place within it.

Effectiveness of the Peer-Led Institute

In November 2016, CRDVN supported a convening in Berkeley entitled “Communities Empowered for Systems Change, a Peer-Led Institute.” The two-day institute included concurrent workshop sessions on topics such as empowering immigrant survivors and breakout group strategy sessions for sustaining the Network

CRDVN members played key planning and facilitation roles for the Institute, which served as important leadership development opportunities.

Institute participants overwhelmingly agreed or strongly agreed that the institute’s objectives had been met. The highest-rated components of the institute were those that provided for informal peer networking opportunities. A large majority agreed or strongly agreed that the institute was conducive to peer networking—a priority articulated in earlier convening feedback.

Effectiveness of Peer-Learning Exchanges

Like the grantee and regional convenings, PLEs aimed to provide community partners with opportunities for in-depth learning, exploration, and adoption of innovative, promising, culturally responsive approaches and service delivery models that benefit high-need, underserved populations. The four primary objectives of the PLEs were to: foster a community of practice; generate new knowledge for providing culturally responsive services; expand implementation of best practices; and deepen expertise within the Network.

Ultimately nine community partners took advantage of this opportunity and self-organized to create six PLEs. While all the PLEs shared the same overarching goals, each also had its own unique set of learning objectives. For example, three were designed so that the community partners could learn how to engage new stakeholders or better serve particular populations as a way of broadening their services (e.g., how to engage faith leaders as DV partners, or how to serve a growing Latina clientele). Four PLEs explored how certain approaches, such as a workforce development model, could be adapted and integrated into their existing service delivery models.

All Network partners agreed or strongly agreed that, because of PLE activities, their organizations:

- Had established or further developed partnerships with system partners to refer or offer culturally-responsive services to high-need groups, and
- Felt strongly connected to a network of providers working together to expand the availability of culturally-responsive DV services.

Other key PLE outcomes reported by community partners were:

- Recognition of commonalities across different approaches in working with diverse populations.
- A crystallized vision for change.

- Leadership development experience.
 - Establishment of trust and deepened relationships.

On an initiative level, staff from BSCF felt that PLEs were a particularly effective tool for learning as well as engaging some of the less involved Network partners.

Social Network Analysis (SNA)

SNA allows us to see how the number and nature of connections between organizations change over time. For the CRDVN evaluation, SPR was interested in understanding how connections changed among the 13 current partners of the CRDVN between the beginning and end of the initiative.

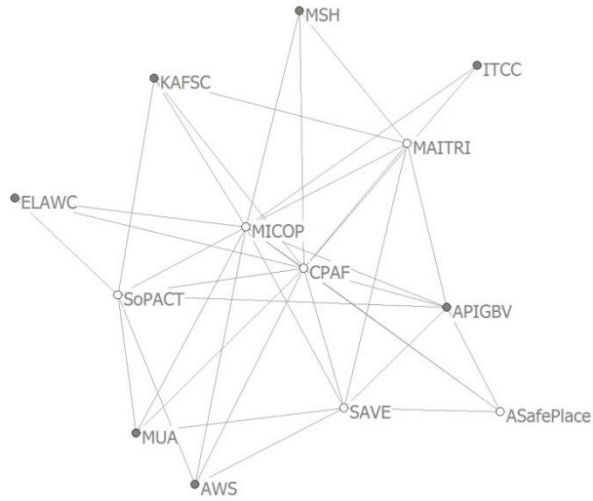
To track change over time, partners were asked to categorize their connections with each other on a scale from *no interaction* to *networking* to *coordination* to *collaboration*. At the beginning of CRDVN, all Network partners were connected to each other at the networking level and above. Coordination-level ties were most common, accounting for 39% of connections, followed by networking (33%), and collaboration (29%).

By the end of CRDVN, the number of connections had increased by 61%, with the largest growth at the networking level (+138%), followed by collaboration (+36%), and coordination (+16%). These patterns suggest that a strong foundation of informal connections was laid during CRDVN with room for continued and deepened connections going forward.

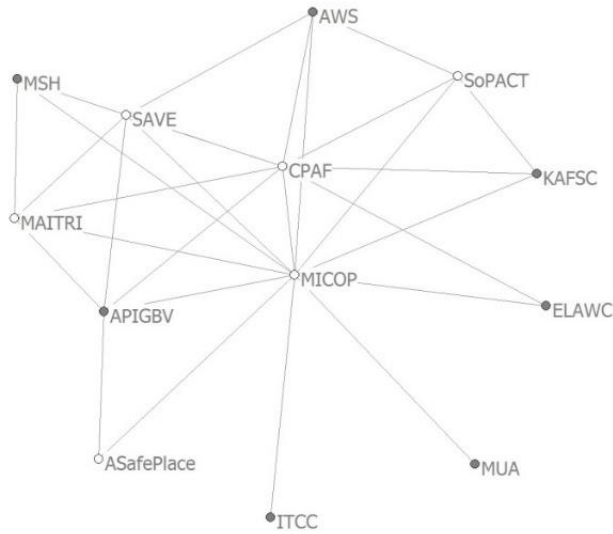
In addition to the growth in number of connections within the network, the shape of the network evolved and strengthened over time. At the beginning of CRDVN, the partners were connected in a hub-and-spoke network that was dependent on a handful of partners to connect others. By the end of CRDVN, the network developed and matured, becoming more stable and resilient, with partners connected to each other in multiple ways, particularly at the coordination level. However, at the highest level of partnership (collaboration), a number of community partners were still only loosely connected to the network via one other partner or were not connected at all.

Connections Among Network Partners at Beginning of CRDVN

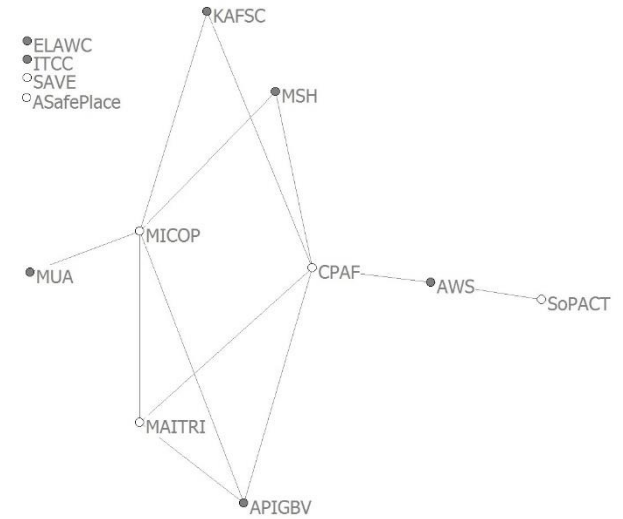
Networking and Above



Coordination and Above



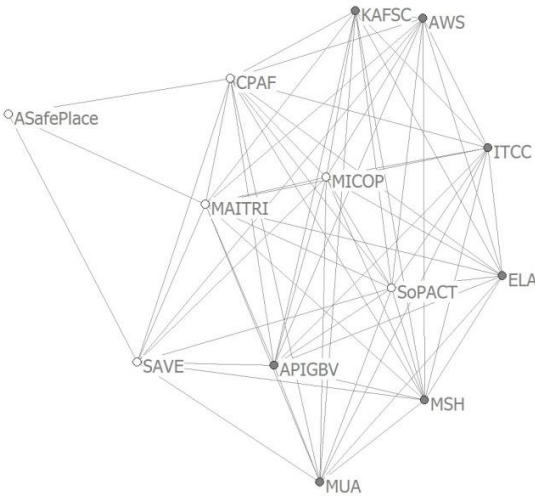
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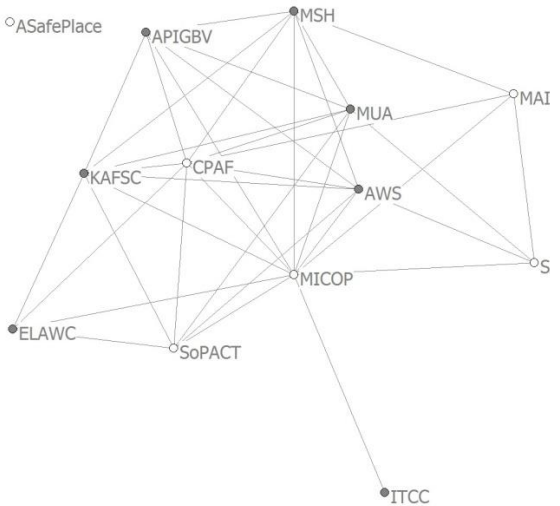
- Continuing Partners
- Non-Continuing Partners

Connections Among Network Partners at End of CRDVN

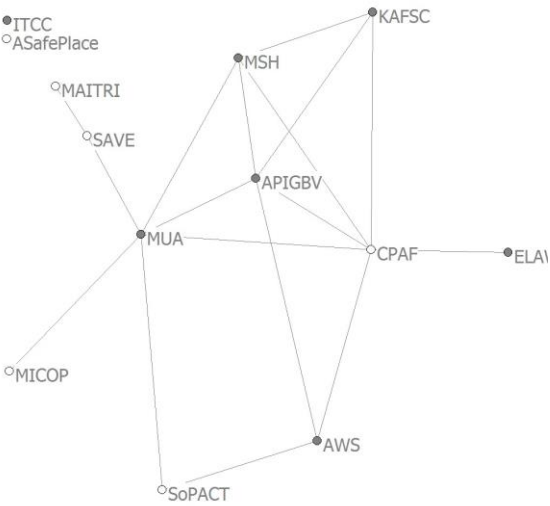
Networking and Above



Coordination and Above



Collaboration Only



- Continuing Partners
- Non-Continuing Partners

Reflections on Broader Network Outcomes

Because of CRDVN activities overall, most or all partners felt that the following network-related outcomes had been accomplished for their organizations:

- Shared culturally responsive practices with organizations beyond CRDVN.
- Strengthened network of organizations devoted to culturally responsive DV service delivery.
- Increased partnerships with system partners to refer or offer culturally responsive services.
- Increased centrality of culturally specific organizations in California DV field.

With regard to a state-level network and progress on the policy front, Network partners were positive, but a bit more circumspect about CRDVN's impact.

Many of the results above speak to CRDVN partners feeling a greater sense of community and a reduced sense of isolation.

Network partners also described how the CRDVN experience had allowed them to share approaches, practices, and frameworks with the network. At a deeper level, exchanges allowed for a cross-fertilization of approaches.

From the perspective of some partners, BSCF, and JRG, another important but somewhat unexpected outcome was a shift to a network mindset. The Network was initially grounded in learning objectives and the service delivery orientation of its members, but the potential for organizing and system change became more apparent over time. The Network now appears poised—with a new member-driven leadership team—to harness its collective power for a more ambitious systems-change mindset and agenda.

The CRDVN leadership team and members have begun to think strategically about which organizations should be invited to join the Network and why. For example, at least one member flagged the need to “pilot cross-field collaboration” with the health sector.

While the next phase of CRDVN is an opportunity for members to self-lead and self-organize, many expressed the wish for ongoing BSCF support and investment in CRDVN, promotion of the Network among BSCF's philanthropic networks, and BSCF maintenance of a platform of annual CRDVN events to showcase activities and policy advocacy efforts.