

# How racism affects victims of sexual and intimate partner violence

## ...and why survivor advocacy must involve building racial justice

Racist policies and practices hinder survivor access to safety, justice, and health equity. That's why building racial justice is an essential part of effective victim advocacy.

### “BUILD THE WALL”

Anti-immigrant sentiments and policies...

- are used by controlling people to coerce their partners to remain silent about the abuse.
- heighten fear for survivors that they or their family members will be deported if they seek help.
- may focus concern among service providers toward potential risks in helping undocumented survivors, vs. focusing on the needs of survivors.

### Current Events

Current events and public discourse can shape public opinion as well as individual beliefs and choices.

### Societal factors

Social and cultural norms can promote racial inequality. This may include health, economic, educational and social policies that help maintain economic or social inequalities between groups in society.

### RACIST CULTURAL NARRATIVES

- Referring to young victims of police brutality as “thugs” blames the victim for being victimized.
- Using the term “terrorist” only when referring to people of color makes invisible the violence committed by white terrorists against people of color.

When society fails to take seriously the suffering of people of color who are victims of violence, we undermine the ability of people of color to access safety and justice.

### TRAUMA-TO-PRISON PIPELINE

In school, youth of color are disproportionately targeted for heavy-handed, punitive responses to vague and subjective infractions, such as “defiance of authority”, or “classroom disruption”.

Viewed from a trauma-informed lens, these same behaviors may signal youth who are suffering and struggling with ongoing effects of trauma...and who may need an advocate rather than suspension.

### Community practices

Community practices appear in settings such as schools, workplaces, and neighborhoods. Practices in these settings are shaped by and reinforce community norms.