

Meeting the Needs of Immigrant Survivors with Disabilities

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Objectives

- ▶ Understanding of the needs of immigrant survivors of with disabilities
- ▶ Reviewing barriers to appropriate, affirming, and accessible services for these survivors
- ▶ Discuss strategies for serving immigrant survivors with disabilities
- ▶ Lessons learned

The story of Marta



Immigrant Survivors with Disabilities: What We Know

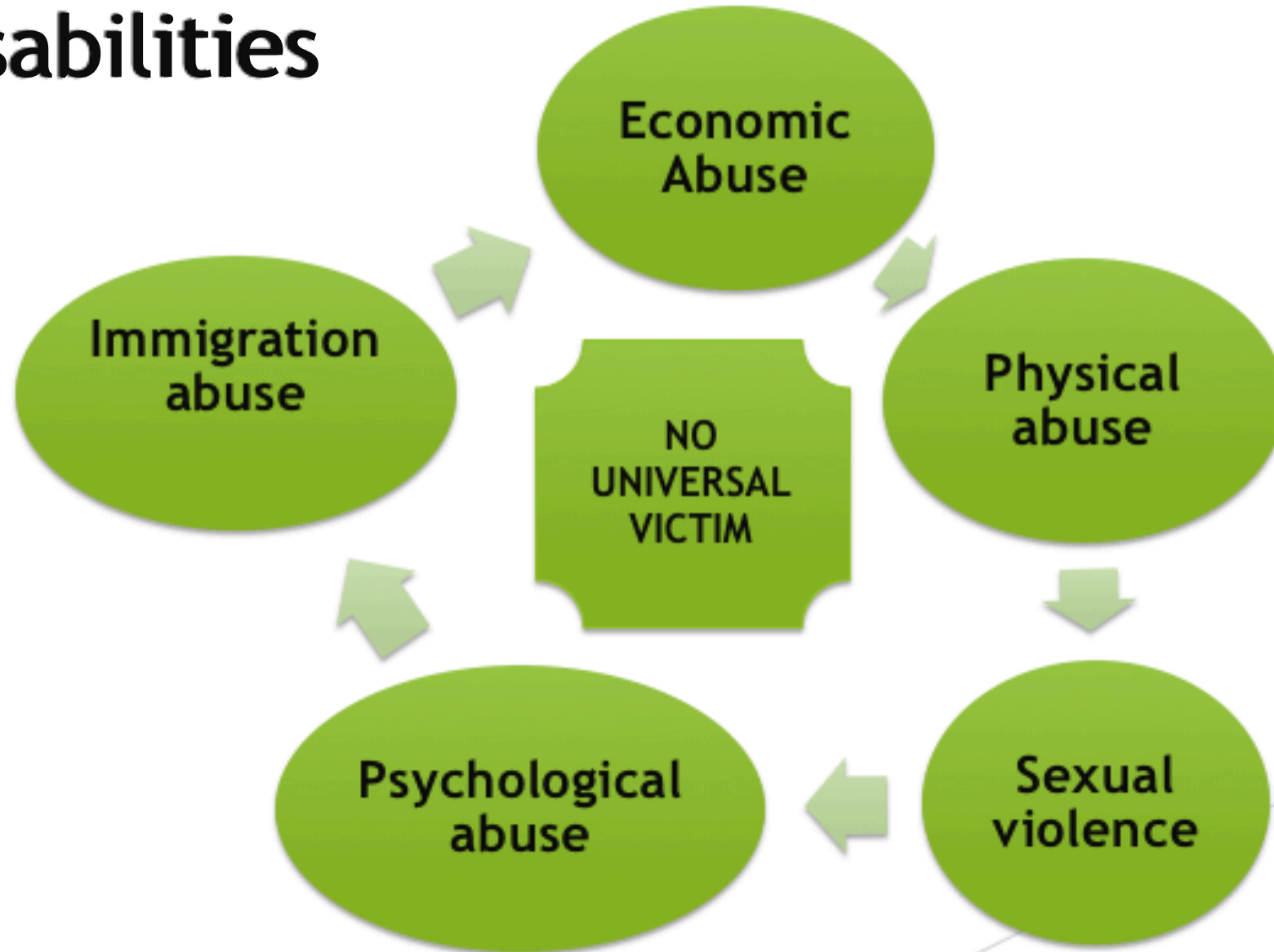
Why are we talking about immigrant survivors with disabilities?

- ▶ People with disabilities are more likely to experience sexual violence.
 - ▶ NPR - people with intellectual disabilities are up to 12x more likely to experience SV
 - ▶ Department of Justice estimates between 2009-2015 that the rate of sexual assault and rape against people with disabilities was 3 times of people without disabilities.
- ▶ Research has demonstrated a strong linkage of risk factors for sexual violence and other forms of violence with systemic, structural oppression (such as racism, ableism, xenophobia, queer and transphobia, classism, etc.) in underserved and historically marginalized populations.

Why are we talking about immigrant survivors with disabilities? (2)

- ▶ Immigrant women are particularly vulnerable to sexual assault and other violent crimes.
- ▶ Abusers often use immigration status to intimidate and control victims, ensuring that they will be too afraid to seek help or call police.
- ▶ Ever-increasing immigrant populations in the United States 1 in 4 people has a disability - that includes in immigrant communities.
 - ▶ This could include physical, mental, intellectual disabilities

Immigrant survivors with disabilities



Discrimination against immigrant survivors with disabilities



Types of abuse/exploitation:

- ▶ Rape
- ▶ Sexual assault
- ▶ Sexual Harassment
- ▶ Retaliation
- ▶ Sex Trafficking
- ▶ Stalking
- ▶ Domestic Violence
- ▶ Pregnancies/
Ownership
- ▶ Revenge Pornography
- ▶ Threats with physical harm
- ▶ Voyeurism
- ▶ Hostility
- ▶ Intimidation, Verbal abuse
- ▶ Black-listing
- ▶ Family members as targets
- ▶ Recruitment under false pretenses-Fraud Recruitment
- ▶ Use of legal systems to control

What places immigrant survivors with disabilities at risk?

- ▶ Lack of access to protection by legal or other systems of accountability
- ▶ Communication challenges
- ▶ Economic instability/poverty, creating lack of ability to change housing or job
- ▶ Dependency on individual/system with power to create abuse
- ▶ Ableism - less likely to be believed, hidden experiences

What places immigrant survivors with disabilities at risk? (2)

- ▶ Immigrant status - foreigner, guest worker, undocumented worker, etc.
- ▶ National origin, religion, race, age, etc.
- ▶ Socio-economic status - poverty, limited education, etc.
- ▶ Traditional attitudes concerning women in society in general and in work
- ▶ Limited English proficient (LEP) - Almost half (46%) of all foreign-born workers in the U.S. are LEP. (Nearly 73% of LEP workers speak Spanish.)
- ▶ Domestic violence at home
- ▶ Continuum of violence

A single incident of SV can destabilize....

- ▶ Impact of trauma
- ▶ Economic and education
- ▶ Immigration status
- ▶ Physical safety
- ▶ Sense of well-being
- ▶ Victimization can lead to or exacerbate a disability

Needs of immigrant survivors with disabilities

General Needs

- ▶ Physical safety
- ▶ Medical care
- ▶ Emotional well-being
- ▶ Economic security
- ▶ Educational stability
- ▶ Accessible services

Specific to Immigration Status

- ▶ Sense of economic threat
- ▶ Safety: Immigration retaliation
- ▶ Physical safety
- ▶ Emotional well-being
- ▶ Accessible services



Barriers for Immigrant Survivors with Disabilities

Barriers to reporting for immigrant survivors with disabilities

- ▶ Cultural barriers
- ▶ Language barriers
- ▶ Denial of of education/rights awareness
- ▶ Shame/embarrassment over traumatic event
- ▶ Fear of retaliation
- ▶ Poverty
- ▶ Isolation
- ▶ Fear of court and government system
- ▶ Confidentiality concerns/mandatory reporting



Challenges to accessing services for immigrant survivors with disabilities

- ▶ No comprehensive services
 - ▶ Lack of cultural consideration in provision of services
 - ▶ One advocate for several counties
 - ▶ Non-compliance with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) guidance
 - ▶ No culturally responsive, trauma-informed services from disability service providers
 - ▶ No accessible services at culturally specific services or victim services

Internal challenges

- ❑ Cultural stigma
- ❑ Lack of support system
- ❑ Sexual Assault Prevention education
- ❑ Immigration status
- ❑ Isolation

External challenges

- ❑ Language access
- ❑ Traditional service model inaccessible
- ❑ Barriers to health care
- ❑ Lack of information on assistance & rights
- ❑ Transportation
- ❑ Anti-immigration sentiments
- ❑ Discrimination
- ❑ Lack of coordination among systems
- ❑ Lack of investigations/prosecutions
- ❑ Limits on victim's compensation

Additional challenges

- Guest
- Undocumented

**Immigrant
status**

- Attitudes towards women's rights, reproductive health, etc

**Age
Race
Religion**

**Socio
economic
status**

- Poverty
- Limited education

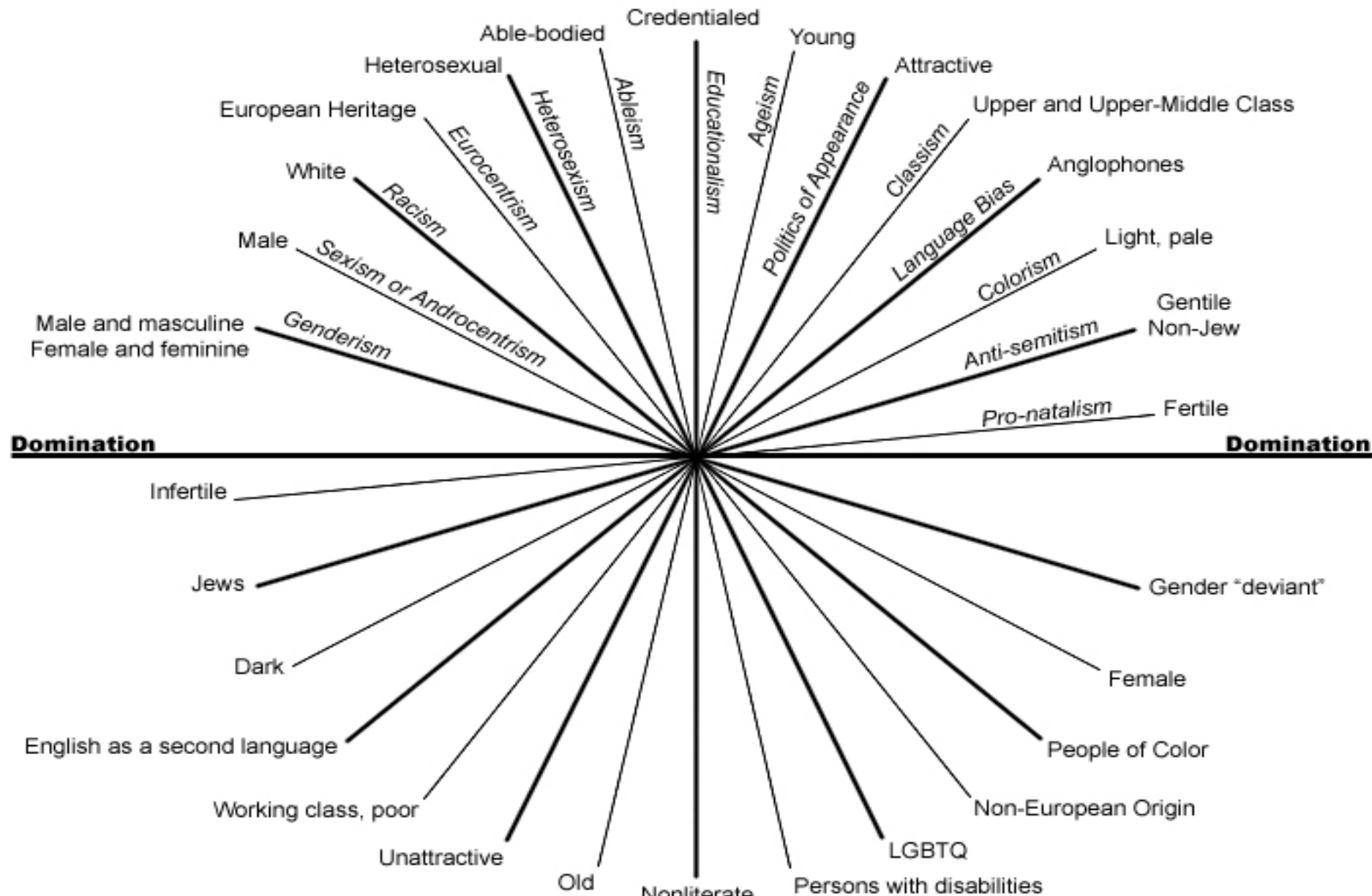
**Continuum
of
violence**

- Domestic violence
- Border rape
- Rape at home country

Intersecting Axes of Privilege, Domination, and Oppression

Adapted from Kathryn Pauly Morgan, "Describing the Emperor's New Clothes: Three Myths of Educational (In)Equality."

The Gender Question in Education: Theory, Pedagogy & Politics, Ann Diller et al., Boulder, CO: Westview, 1996.



Eligibility for services



Language barriers

- ▶ Dialect
- ▶ Acculturation
- ▶ Attitude
- ▶ Awareness
- ▶ **Language Barriers are more than just words**

Distrust of the system



Approach to help seeking/health



Lack of culturally/linguistically appropriate services and programs



Overcoming Barriers

Understand and address layers of identity

- ▶ Examine the layered process to developing rapport for the immigrant survivor with disabilities
 - ▶ Person with disability
 - ▶ Immigrant
 - ▶ Individuals

Create community connections

- ▶ Have connections ever been made with Immigrant or culturally relevant organizations?
- ▶ Disability Rights Groups or Service Providers
- ▶ Victim Service Providers
- ▶ Cultural Relevance regarding Role of Food

Provide language access

- ▶ Bilingual direct service staff
- ▶ Bilingual trainers
- ▶ Interpretation services (ASL, other sign language, and spoken language)
- ▶ Accessible print resources

- ▶ Education
- ▶ Community Mobilization
- ▶ Develop Allies



How are You Framing the Issue?

Framing the issue

- ▶ How are you framing the issue? Are you using a culturally relevant framework?
- ▶ What does a safe space look like this survivor?
- ▶ What accessibility needs are there for this survivor?

Use of arts: poetry, theater, visual arts

- ★ Cultural history of using art as a form of expression
- ★ Stress relief
- ★ Facilitates dialogue

Questions/Discussion

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