

Marginalized Women, Technology, COVID-19, and Intimate Partner Violence

February 9, 2021

- Hello, I'm Roslyn Satchel. I'm a fellow at the Berkman Klein Center for Internet and Society at Harvard University. I'm also the Blanche Seaver professor of communication at Pepperdine University. Today I welcome you to a conversation on an interesting topic that apparently, you're interested in too. Over 25 years, I have worked with victims and survivors of violence as a community organizer, a pastor a church, elder, a guardian ad litem, a policy advocate, and now as a scholar, researcher and professor. Today I invite you to join us in an ongoing conversation with marginalized women about their experiences with technology under COVID-19 policies in the context of intimate partner violence. Thank you to all who made this fellowship possible. I've been able to use my sabbatical to advance not only my scholarship, but also, and more importantly, practical community-based interventions intended to disrupt systemic violence against the most vulnerable among us. Speaking of which, we begin by acknowledging that Harvard University is situated on the traditional and ancestral homelands of the Massachusetts people. We pay respects to our and their elders past and present. We extend that respect to the Massachusetts Nipmuck and Wampanoags Nations peoples who may be with us today. As many of us know too well, when a person loves another deeply, the last thing she wants to do is call in a firing line on her loved one even if they are hurting her. Systemic violence is as much a concern for her as her own life, because she's likely seen her community over-policed, surveilled, and at least heard about Breonna Taylor, Sandra Bland, Wakiesha Wilson, George Floyd, Alton Sterling, Trayvon Martin, Tamir Rice, names and lists that go on and on back to Emmett Till as Alyssa Richardson and Apryl Williams reminded us last week. And even those whose names we do not know, whose cries we never heard as they were wrongly imprisoned and executed for more than 25 years. I stood on both sides of these issues in the tensions like the ones we're discussing today because I reject false dichotomies and dualistic thinking. We can have accountability and justice while also extending compassion and restoration. Human dignity is the goal of human rights conventions and nation states ratify those to be the supreme laws of the land. The The Universal Declaration of Human Rights calls for us to ensure human dignity for all people. This framework has animated much of my work in underserved communities and so, today I welcome you to join Thema Bryant-Davis, a professor of psychology at Graduate School of Education and Psychology and director of the Culture and Trauma Research Lab at Pepperdine University. She is a licensed psychologist and ordained minister in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, as am I. Dr. Bryant-Davis completed her Master of Divinity degree at Pepperdine, and she has a clinical psychology doctorate, and really does represent marginalized women in this work in such an important way as an extension of even her postdoctoral training, which occurred here at Harvard Medical Center with the Victims of Violence program. Dr. Thema Bryant, would you care to share with us now?

- Have to unmute myself. Thank you so much for having me and for that warm introduction. I am so grateful for all of you being here on today. It says a lot for you to see a flyer, to see a

posting about intimate partner abuse and choose to show up. That they are many who would close their eyes, that would shift their gaze would focus on any other thing. And so, I am grateful for this community and for whatever it is that gave you the capacity and the desire to sit with those who have been marginalized, those who have been victimized, and those who are so much more than what they have lived through. As a clinical psychologist, I come to you from a framework of decolonizing psychology and that requires us to look at the context and not just the individual. And so we recognize that there are different factors that increase our risk to intimate partner abuse. Those who are racially and ethnically marginalized experience greater risks, particularly Native American, American Indian and Black American survivors are at increased risk. Those who are LGBTQ face increased risk, those who are impoverished and battling homelessness and lack of resources are also facing increased risk. We are living in a trauma within a trauma. And so, I invite you in this moment to take sacred pause because I know this is not merely an academic exercise of how can we serve those who are struggling and those who have been marginalized, but we ourselves are all living through a global pandemic which is a medical trauma. The reality is that COVID-19 has also increased the risk of intimate partner violence when we see the large number of people who are practicing physical distancing and social distancing. And so, there has been less of a buffer, less of an opportunity to come outside of the home and to seek services. And so we are mindful of the urgency of this work, as well as the additional barriers that make help-seeking difficult. And so not only do we come from a decolonizing psychology perspective, but also in indigenizing psychology, in a liberation psychology perspective which means that there are multiple ways of healing, there are multiple pathways to restoration and we want to look at the ways in which our culture provides medicine. And what that means is, psychology, when we look at human history, is a young tradition. But way before Western psychology was created, there were ways in which communities would rally together to support each other, to protect each other, to restore and to heal. And so, we want to respect those and integrate those as we look at ways that we can interrupt the cycles of intimate partner abuse. We also want to name the very real realities of intimate partner abuse happening across religious traditions and happening across age, from dating violence among the youth all the way to intimate partner violence occurring within our elders. Partner abuse is not only physical. It is emotional, psychological, it can be verbal, financial, sexual, even spiritual. And so we want to really dismantle this false hierarchy around what counts and who really deserves our services or our compassion. We want to be mindful of also the realities that there are barriers that infringe upon the rights of marginalized survivors and a part of that is the ways in which we have been mistreated, stigmatized, discriminated against by those who are supposed to help us. And we often think about police officers and that is important, but I also want to name judges and medical doctors, lawyers and mental health professionals, even case managers who are supposed to be in a position of advocate are coming with their own biases. And so, we really want to promote a liberation perspective that recognizes a part of our healing requires social justice, a part of our healing is in a commitment to anti-oppression that is in all of its forms. And so for us to combat transphobia, combat racism, sexism, for us to combat heterosexism and able bodyism in all of our systems and institutions, recognizing that intersectionality, belonging to multiple oppressed groups continues to silence that and segregate even our healing process. And so, a part of what we are mindful of in the midst of COVID is the need for technology to be utilized in order to reach

survivors, and in order to protect survivors and help us to heal and restore. And so many clinicians like me are currently practicing tele-health solely. And so, working with people in their healing journey by phone and by internet, which has benefits and challenges. A benefit is people can reach us any time and anywhere, whatever location we are in and they are in, so it removes that barrier of transportation. A challenge becomes if someone is trying to do their session and the perpetrator, the offender is in the house. And so we have the additional challenges, where we think about confidentiality, safety and seeking those resources that can benefit survivors and their children as we try to really interrupt these cycles of partner abuse. There have also been a push toward creating communities online where survivors can connect and really push against this idea that they are alone, that they are by themselves. Because a part of what partner abusers do is to give you a message that no one will be there for you and that no one cares. And so, we rise on today with a collective agenda of creating safe spaces for survivors to be restored and to heal, for us to also recognize the importance of empowerment. Because one of the differences between liberation psychology or social justice oriented psychology, is we want to help people to not just cope, but to resist. And so, our healing is an act of resistance, our joy is an act of resistance, community is an act of resistance and eradicating and transforming racist and oppressive policies are also a part of resistance. And so I would just leave with you in conclusion and echo from the beautiful groups, Sweet Honey In The Rock. ♪ We are the ones, we are the ones ♪ ♪ We've been waiting for. ♪ Thank you so much for being here. I'm excited for the conversation.

- Thank you, Dr. Thema. Absolutely, we are the ones we have been waiting for and that is why we're here today, right? We're not waiting for someone else to do the work for us. We are here as a part of a clarion call to action. Intersectionality, as Dr. Thema pointed us to is a lot like interdisciplinarity. It has a way of broadening our perspectives, broadening our understanding. And so today's conversation brings together experts in psychology like Dr. Thema, but also experts in law like Tanya Asim Cooper and Kendra Albert. Tanya will be here talking to us as one of my research partners as well. And she'll be talking to us about what it's like for her representing clients in court rooms where the environment has totally shifted. How has the pandemic changed the way that indigent clients or even those who have economic means are represented in courtrooms around this country? Tanya Asin Cooper from Pepperdine University is the director of The Restoration and Justice Clinic at Pepperdine's Caruso School of Law. She is an associate clinical professor of law practicing with clients daily. She and her students represent survivors of domestic violence and human trafficking. Professor Cooper's research focuses on domestic violence in the Christian church and she has represented survivors from a variety of religious and faith traditions. Professor Cooper, will you please tell us a little bit about how the COVID-19 policies and practices have changed the experiences in courtrooms around this country, in the United States for intimate partner violence survivors and victims?

- Hello. Yes, thank you so much for that wonderful introduction. Thank you all for being here, thank you to the organizers of this amazing event. So at Pepperdine Law where I direct a student-run clinic, we represent victims of domestic violence and human trafficking and I have personally observed how COVID-19 has impacted the most vulnerable victims of domestic violence, black and brown women especially. Study show racial disparities in domestic violence

for victims of color, predominantly women and they are in the greatest danger. From my experience and based on my research, victims of color generally are perceived as less credible victims, suffer more serious violence and require more concrete evidence of abuse, especially physical violence. They need photographs, they need not just medical records, they need medical professional live testimony. Victims of color face stereotypes like angry black women, or welfare queens among others. Victims of color are expected to be the perfect victims with no evidence that they fought back, even if they were defending themselves. Victims of color are less likely to call 911 and to seek traditional law enforcement sources. Victims of color are more likely to be treated as the abuser and arrested when they do call 911. Victims of color face scrutiny from courts then, why they didn't call police or press charges. Victims of color are less able to access resources. Victims of color tend to lose restraining order hearings when child custody is in dispute. Victims of color are often offered less secure and not legally enforceable remedies like mutual restraining orders or temporary orders that lapse without a finding of domestic violence. And, these have few legal consequences for future domestic violence incidents between the same parties as well as future custody determinations. This pandemic has made everything worse. And to illustrate, I wanna tell you one of the stories from my cases, my former client whom I'll call Hope. Hope is a young black woman in her 20s. She was dating her boyfriend and they got engaged, a Latino man in his 30s and he began controlling her actions and then steadily got more violent. He made her quit her job then made her get another job, made her cut off ties with her father, supervised her phone calls with her mother, locked her out of the apartment at night, so she had to sleep in her car, scared her with episodes of erratic driving while texting, once crashing the car and causing her to hit her head against the dashboard, pressured her to get an abortion when she got pregnant, which she refused, then pushed her in the stomach so hard she fell to the ground and was hospitalized for premature labor on two occasions, called the police after a fight in their apartment, telling police she was the primary abuser and she would have been arrested if the police officer had not found her in premature labor and called an ambulance instead. All this led Hope to file a domestic violence restraining order request in December, 2019. And by the time her case was ready for a hearing a few weeks later, COVID-19 had shut down the L.A. courthouses. For several months and throughout this spring of 2020, her case was automatically continued by the courts. And when we finally appeared for a hearing, it was August, 2020. At that point, the judge, who was white, was asking why there wasn't a pending criminal case and why hope hadn't allowed her abuser to visit the child, now a few months old, although these were beyond the scope of the domestic violence restraining order matter. This is what the judge previewed before hearing Hope's testimony, which she stopped immediately upon learning that Hope had snatched her fiance's phone during one episode of his erratic driving. The judge said her actions, which she called aggressive, could negate his actions towards her. The best result we could hope for that day was to continue the case, keep the temporary order in place, move the case to a different L.A. courthouse and a different judge, which we did. But a few months later, a different judge told Hope that her allegations were now stale and she ultimately settled the case with her abuser. The story illustrates how COVID-19 now adds to the inequities that marginalized women face. Hope had few safe options to bring her case to court. She had to wait until the courts reopened and even when they did for essential matters like domestic violence, she wasn't able to timely bring her evidence forward and overcome the baked in

prejudices that survivors of color all too often face. Once, while her case was pending, someone showed up at her mother's apartment where she had been hiding with her newborn, premature baby, and banged on the front door for 15 minutes. She hid in the closet with the baby assuming it was her abuser. And even after that episode, she was reluctant to go to a shelter because of COVID-19. Because of the corona virus, my clinic has had to pivot our legal services online. We met with Hope on Zoom, where we prepared her for trial, made safety plans and reviewed exhibits. We use secured servers and tools like DocuSign to prepare court forms. And twice, I left paperwork outside of her mother's apartment and then immediately texted her so that she was able to retrieve them and we could remain socially distant. Because Hope was technologically competent, she was able to pivot with us to move our work to virtual platforms, but I worry for those survivors, especially black and brown women who have little to no access to technology, or share that technology with their abusers, or are under greater surveillance because of COVID lockdown orders. Because of all of that, I wonder too whether greater outreach and accessibility of technology to these victims will help if they are understandably reluctant to engage law enforcement and courts for help. COVID-19 has shattered the physical, mental and emotional health of many and the effects of the pandemic demonstrate poor outcomes for marginalized women. We need to think more broadly about how to help these victims. Last month, I participated in a four-part series on Zoom, training my local church on domestic violence, definitions, dynamics, warning signs, problematic faith responses and how faith communities can literally save survivors. I've seen how faith communities can come together to shelter a victim from her abuser, give her safety and time to gather resources, to safely and then permanently leave her abuser. If law enforcement and courts can't or won't as assessed, especially during the pandemic, let's equip faith communities and other online communities where marginalized women go and let's equip them to help. Thank you.

- Thank you, Tanya. Thank you so much. It's so helpful to get some real life information, before we have to wait through actually getting the studies and the data back, right? We can actually go to the experts. And fortunately, we've had an opportunity to hear from a psychologist, a clergy person, as well as a lay leader and a lawyer who's representing clients. Now, we have the opportunity to hear from Kendra Albert, who is one of our experts here at the Berkman Klein Center as an associate. They are also the clinical instructor at the Cyberlaw Clinic at Harvard Law School where they teach students to practice technology law. They serve as the director for Initiative for a Representative First Amendment which provides funding and support to law students from backgrounds traditionally underrepresented in First Amendment law. Kendra has served as a lecturer at both Harvard Law School and Harvard College. This is an important conversation for all of us to engage in as we look at this pandemic environment, 'cause different questions are arising, Kendra, about what is appropriate and what is not in this environment? What is safe and what is secure? Is a church setting a Facebook group for domestic violence, victims and survivors actually safe or is it dangerous? We may not resolve all these issues in this webinar today, of course, but we're welcoming you to join the dialogue and Kendra is going to lead us in this part.

- Thank you so much. I'm really honored to be here, especially with this incredible panel. I think Roslyn sort of gave my bio, but just sort of as kind of a background for this topic, I've worked with survivors of intimate partner violence as well as sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence and served as a peer crisis line operator. And so, part of what I'm bringing to bear is both my sort of knowledge of technology and computer security and sort of its interaction with high-risk populations, but also sort of from my experiences as a trans person, as a bisexual person and someone who is often working with folks who've experienced all different forms of sexual violence, including intimate partner violence. So I think it's just sort of tee up the answer to Roslyn's question about, is setting up a Facebook group safe? I wanna talk about sort of two categories of problems I see about using sort of off the shelf technologies for high risk populations, including folks who are experiencing intimate partner violence, and I'm both talking about folks who are potentially in a home with an abuser, but also folks who have left and might now have safety concerns about their abuse or finding out where they are. And so, I'm gonna divide by sort off two concerns and then one sort of reason for hope. And the first concern I wanna flag is kind of that insiders often in intimate partner violence, such situations aren't safe people, and I'll come back to that. And the second concern I wanna flag is sort of that more connection isn't always better. And then I'll talk at the end just to make sure I'm not the most depressing about some reasons that I actually do think that there's really positive developments in building tech that is more responsive to the needs of intimate partner violence victims. So the sort of first category of problem that I wanna articulate around using traditional technology solutions for intimate partner violence victims and survivors is as Karen Levy and Bruce Schneier had pointed out in their paper, Privacy Threats in Intimate Relationships and many other folks before them. They just summarize it really succinctly the model that often people use to talk about securing digital technologies assumes that the threat is kind of to use a really terrible metaphor, coming from outside the house, right? And this can be kind of very literal, whether it's not flagging suspicious activity, because it comes from the IP address, the same IP address as the normal user, which would mean that they're- And if you're co located with your abuser, you may be on the same network and have the same or a similar IP address. And when I say IP, I mean internet protocol, it's basically the number that you send to Google to say where you are, for example. But I think the example that I want to draw on that I think for me, was sort of most evocative and understanding how systems as a whole, not just the literal technologies have to change to understand the risks of intimate partner violence comes from Emily Tseng et al paper where she and a number of co-authors looked at the tools and tactics used in intimate partner surveillance, and I'll throw some links in chat. One of the things that she and previous researchers have found is that one tool of surveillance is often used against the intimate partner violence victims is actually information that comes from a shared phone plan. So, we're not even talking about people sharing devices, although obviously, that's a threat that people may experience or getting physical access devices, but the fact that you're on a family plan with someone who's now abusive to you can get them information about sort of your usage and history and they even document some abuser suggesting calling the phone company to get a list of numbers dialed, which can result in someone potentially finding out that for example, you were contacting a shelter, you were contacting a domestic violence hotline. So that's enabled by the ways in which insiders are assumed to be safe. Someone who is also on the plan is assumed to be an okay person to release this information to, even if the

phone company wouldn't release call detail information to an outsider. Of course, for some phone companies, their security is bad enough that maybe they would, but that's a separate problem. So, thinking about how we model what safety looks like, and what security looks like and who we assume is sort of safe is one of the first, I think, components to centering victims and survivors of intimate partner violence in digital technologies and building safer digital technologies, because you can no longer assume the same sorts of things are safe or okay that people often do when they build these technologies. But, that's sort of the first point I wanna make about how technologies are built. The second goes to Roslyn's question about is Facebook safe, right? And of course, safety is relative, right? There are no safe places in person and there are no safe places online, but part of it is about the risks that people are running. And that brings me to a second point about using sort of large commercial platforms like Facebook. So one of the documented features of Facebook that you may have encountered is this thing called People You May Know. So, this is a feature that suggests friends for you. And, it uses basically contact triangulation. What it says is, "Oh, "if I'm friends with A and friends with C, "then maybe A and C should be friends." Right? And this has been shown to do things like potentially suggest connections between therapists' separate clients, because the therapist could be friends with or talking to both of them. And it often, if someone uploads their contacts, it uses contacts to sort of suggest friends. So, this has me concerned about the use of, for example, Facebook groups to bring together groups of domestic violence survivors, because there is the possibility that basically you could reveal, it's called sort of leaking information about who's within the group by friends suggestions and People You May Know. This research I'm drawing from is mostly from Kashmir Hills, a 2018 reporting, but it's just one example of these technologies that are often built on the assumption that more connection is better, that Facebook wants to connect to all of us or thinking about sort of sharing as a net good, while not considering the very real reasons that people's sharing or engagement with these platforms might be deeply contextual and they may have concerns about sort of this information getting shared more broadly. So, those are the two specific examples I wanted to bring in about the ways in which we can think of how technologies are built and how that can inform our responses to fill those folks very reasonably for reasons of safety moving to use these technologies as a primary means of connection during COVID. However, I do think that as Dr. Thema highlighted, I wanna be careful around sort of suggesting this kind of doom and gloom narrative where the creators of this technology control all of the systems and marginalized folks shouldn't use it because they're at risk. Because, the reality is marginalized folks have been using, thriving, and changing technologies that were built without them in mind forever, for as long as we've had technologies, right? And that we can think of examples of marginalized folks innovating and actually driving these technologies forward as the things that create change and in some cases, create money for these platforms. So I think while still keeping in mind that domestic violence victims and survivors, especially domestic violence victims and survivors that are women of color, black and brown women could be much better served by these platforms and that their needs for contextual controls and control over one's information. I think that the ways in which use them to provide support, whether it's providing mutual aid through something like Venmo or Cash Apps, or sort of sending each other support through sort of text message threads, all of these are incredible examples of using these platforms for actual

positive change, even if they're not what they were originally intended for. And, we just need to make the platforms serve those needs better. So with that, I'll stop. Thank you.

- Thanks, Kendra. I really appreciate that, because as we've talked about before, trying to create a safe space is always a challenge. So we're really talking about how do we create safer spaces? Right? I mean, this question of safety and security is really animating the very core of this discussion. And as a communication ethicist, as a person who actually studies communication in a variety of contexts, I really value interdisciplinarity. Why? Because it allows for conversations like this to happen. The beauty is that we're coming back to a common core, marginalized women. Women who are marginalized by race, socioeconomic status, ability, gender, sexual orientation, language, ethnicity, immigration status, and many more caste markers have very unique experiences, unique experiences that may very well cause them to call for different solutions and different options for justice. Teresa Fry Brown points us to the way that womanist thought uniquely grapples with what it means to place a black women's experience at the center of disciplinary activity and scholarly reflection. That is what we're doing here today. In the domestic violence or intimate partner violence context, in particular, for example, what does it mean when a black woman chooses to identify communally rather than solely individualistically? It means that she may never call the police. She made perjure herself, she may even endanger herself to place the needs of the community before her own safety. We are not encouraging that. That we're just pointing out that it's a reality for many women. It's a reality that often our feminist sisters slam us for. As black feminists and womanists however, we still place black women's experiences and the experiences of all women marginalized at the center of intellectual activity and the center of scholarship. And when we look in this context at the fact that increasingly, marginalized women are opting against calling the police in response to their abuse. Many report going to faith communities and online platforms to seek help, especially since the implementation of COVID-19 policies. As experts in law, theology, ethics, psychology, technology, religion, communication, we're asking, is there potential for a public sphere online that could be safer and assist victims and surviving their unique suffering? Since 1964, scholars have been wrestling with Marshall McLuhan's famous quote, the medium is the message. And now here we are in 2021, finding ourselves in this changing digital public sphere of emerging media to which access is not equal. Democratic theorists argue that truth emerges as the marketplace of the ideas flourishes, and then we gotta ask. Does tyranny emerge when certain voices are excluded? Today we use our privilege to bring this virtual table into the space of those marginalized. The women. My theoretical orientation is womanist. My methods are often participatory, critical, and historical and I have an extensive list of research that I've done on this topic and others that talk about how we can prevent harm through right actions. This is my objective as an ethicist. Ultimately, our research shows that domestic violence is more than an interpersonal offense in marginalized communities. It is also a systemic violation. Nearly 30 years ago, Dorothy Roberts chronicled in "Killing the Black Body," the systemic intersections that historically have muted and abused black women. She concludes liberty guards against government intrusion but it does not guarantee social justice. Today, we offer a snapshot, a critical juncture, a beginning point for many of you to join the conversation, a conversation that all too often omits the voices and agency of those most effected. We are calling for better options. Victims and survivors want community-based alternatives to 911 that lead to

deescalation, not murder. Survivors see how healthcare, and court and indigent defense systems interrelate. Survivors see the way that mental health treatment providers and structures intersect with court room systems and lawyers. They see the systems and the intersections between them in very distinctive ways. And yet, their voices are omitted often from the scholarship. Perpetrators deny victims their liberty, so let's not also deprive their contributions to the scholarship. Shouldn't be we hear from them? Together we aim to do something different in our research partnership. We are ultimately launching an archive of survivor stories. Depersonalized narratives that neither implicate the victim or the abuser, but do help current victims to understand how the systems work from the perspective of those who've actually gone through it. In my book, I argue that storytellers are cultural leaders. There, I show how content creators perpetuate ideologies of victim blaming, anti-female bias and even white male impunity. Here, we argue that survivors stories matter too. If we want to end violence against women, then let the women speak. Let women speak safely, honestly, transparently about their experiences. With media's ubiquity and influence, technology now presents new opportunities for censoring perspectives previously marginalized and silenced. Marginalized women are choosing to trust abusers, often over abusive systems. And we're saying that this is not a choice that they should have to make. They're making these choices though, with harmful, often fatal consequences. So, we're about to enter into the conversation part, where we're looking to connect the dots between human rights and social justice, feminist thought and womanist thoughts, looking to talk about how do we create safer environments informed by what we know, informed by what we know happens in in-person environments, but definitely that could inform the potential of this public sphere for victims and survivors. Coming back to you, Kendra, if you don't mind, I want to come back to an issue that you raised about safer environments and how they might look. How do we make online, a digital online public sphere safer for victims and survivors?

- Well, I was gonna ask Dr. Thema basically that question. So, I'm happy. I think that ultimately I'll do a beat and then I'll move to Dr. Thema, which is to say that I think that ultimately, I'm really struck, Roslyn, by what you said about people picking abusers over abusive systems and you think that you really articulated how the police or child protective services, many of these systems can be the abusive systems that people are responding against. But I think sometimes the technologies are actually part of the abusive systems, right? Whether it's some things like stalkerware, which is the term for tools that abusers use to spy on victims or survivors, or even sort of the ways in which everyday tech platforms obviate or just ignore user's consent and sort of set up models where people don't feel like they have control over what they're doing online or feel like they don't understand what their options are. And I think that going in with a really sort of survivor centric informed consent mindset into building these tools and understanding how they relate to users feels to me like an important first step. But, I wanna turn to Dr. Thema and ask, just in your experience, what are the characteristics that define successful spaces for domestic violence victims or survivors to share their stories and get help whether online or off?

- Absolutely. I'd love to jump into that dialogue and I would lean to you for the technology expertise, which I don't know, but I'll answer it from a mental health perspective. And, I would just say that the H in name is silent, so it's Thema, but no worries. Okay, so the kind of pieces

that stand out for me about what makes it safer psychologically is if a space is affirming, if a space allows for connection, and if a space allows for empowerment. So the part about affirming is, if people are going to share and others are going to be able to respond, in a lot of ways I think there has to be a moderated conversation because there would need to be stops or interruptions to keep people from coming on and saying victim blaming responses. One of the qualitative studies with black women who have survived partner abuse, they were interviewed about how do you believe your community sees you as a survivor? And all of them that were interviewed separately, the first word they said was weak or a synonym for weak. And so there is a lot of that messaging out there about, "Why were you stupid?" Or, "Why did you cause it?" Or from a religious standpoint, "If you would submit and pray, things will be better." So, that clearly is not a safe space. That even if you don't identify me personally, the response is not affirming. So we would want the responses to be a supportive, one. The second part is connection. People are looking for the recognition, "I'm not in it by myself." And so, a part of that connection can just be in seeing stories that are similar to your own. Another one is if people are able to be in dialogue with each other as they are in different stages that you mentioned. Some people are in it right now, and some people are in the recovery mode and they're wondering, "Can it get any better than this?" "Are there stories of survivors who have now found love "and it's good and safe?" Right? And so, wherever people are in that dynamic, creating community is helpful. And then, the next way is empowerment. When I was talking about this notion of liberation is where are the resources, right? That, yes, I like to feel good. And especially as a psychologist, we're all in our feelings, but then it's about like transforming my light, right? So what are the places that can connect me to What are the places that can give me information about wraparound services? And so, resources and empowerment are important. And the last thing I'll mention that just muddies the waters a little bit is around moderating the conversation. In some ways, for it to be safe, we need to not have super graphic stories for the reader, because people who go to that site could be triggered by really horrific stories or stories where people are currently in crisis and we've all seen these on social media where people are like, "Help me." And then everyone's like, "Where did they go? "Are they okay?" And then you're worried and you don't know how to find them. And, so that can create a lot of anxiety. And then on the other side, as I said just to muddy the water, you'll have some survivors who will say, "Do not moderate "my voice, do not censor me. "Why is what happened to me unacceptable? "How come you won't post what happened to me? "It's graphic, but that's what happened, right?" So, it's a hard line to find. Is it safe for the reader? And then for the storyteller, the narrative giver, how do we respond to their story in a way that's affirming, even if it's going to be limiting what it is that is shared in this space. So, thank you for the question and I wanna turn it over to Tanya and ask, you touched on this some in your narrative, but what are some of the myths that you have discovered judges. or police officers, or the general public believe about partner abuse which many people refer to as domestic violence? What are some of those myths that need to be debunked?

- It's still the single biggest myth is, "Why didn't she just leave? "And if she didn't leave, it must not be that bad, "or she must be lying or she must be exaggerating." And so, it's that underlying myth which for people of color, for marginalized women especially, stereotype types are layered on. And these prevent judges, jurors, police officers, faith community leaders, the

general public from really, fully, and truly listening to survivor stories. How can we address this? I think we need to point out when we see these stereotypes occurring. So for example, when the police officers showed up to Hope's apartment and he saw her in labor, that was the time to say, "Really? "She is the primary abuser? "She's obviously in labor. "You're calling an ambulance and you're here to testify "that she was the primary aggressor?" So, bringing these inconsistencies to light and this means a little bit of a different practice perhaps, and this could be hard. I haven't tried this before, but I would like to write sort of a bench memo and to try provide the client's story along with their allegations of abuse, so we can create a record and build from it that she was not prevented from fully being able to tell her story. This is why she didn't call the police. This is why she didn't want to press charges, for example. So, also in faith communities, I think it's really important to distinguish between those that are affirming, connecting and empowering with those that are not and those that perpetuate abuse as well, because we know that survivors go to family and friends first if they're going to report and then faith victims go to members of their faith communities second. So, we need to make sure that these faith communities are going to be safe spaces for them to go to in addition to some of the online communities. I wanna actually toss it back to Kendra, if I may, and ask, especially now during this pandemic, how can we improve our outreach to survivors who may be trapped with their abusers who may be reluctant to call 911 or to go to court?

- Oh, really hard question and I'm honored to even try it and answer. And again, you'll see me leaning heavily on some of the fantastic research that folks have done because there are so many experts in this space including the other folks on this panel and I wanna honor their expertise. One thing I think that many folks have been doing during COVID that I think it can help do with outreach to folks who are marginalized upon any number of axes is creating ways to show up that were not the norm before. Right? There's a lot of people who can be reached effectively by in-person services and there're definitely are populations where that's just the most effective way to reach people, there's not really a contest. But I think one thing also is that there are folks who are for whatever reason, maybe more comfortable doing just phone calls, or just a Zoom, or not sharing an image of themselves, or sort of doing something in a space where if they're not currently living with an abuser, right? They have control over, right? A space where they may feel safer. And so, this is an opportunity for all of us to consider what if our practices need to be tied to these particular locations? And just like, you've talked about, Tanya, with your clinic, how can we use these technological tools to bring this work to folks who might not have previously had access? There's a really amazing paper by the team at Cornell, including Emily Tseng and Nicola Dell, who talk about their experience doing computer security interventions with victims of intimate partner violence during COVID and sort of the difficulties they've encountered. And I think part of it is that we also need to be willing to have these conversations around safe communication and what folks risks look like. And I think folks who do intimate partner violence advocacy and lawyers who work with victims of intimate partner violence and survivors often are very accustomed to having those conversations. But sometimes folks aren't and they need to sort of be starting with that. And with that, I'll kick it back over to Roslyn to wrap us up.

- Absolutely, 'cause I really appreciate it though, Kendra and Tanya, and Thema, because there's so much, right? There are so many questions, there are so many ideas. We are clear that we're participating in a shift in the discourse. We're not claiming to be starting it or founding it. It is a shift that is occurring and we wanna be a part of it. And so we invite you too to be a part of the conversation. This does not end today, it's just the beginning, in fact. Because ultimately, what we've unearthed here today is the variety of systemic issues that are influencing outcomes afore the most vulnerable in our society. Implicit bias in the judicial system, as well as in our university systems, or in psychology, or in hospitals and medical treatment. Implicit bias often leads to disastrous consequences for those who are most marginalized in our society. Whether you are leading a faith community or leading a psychology practice, whether you are a lawyer in the courtrooms or one who really focuses on transactional work, there's an opportunity here for all of us to make a difference. One of the things that I'm most proud of is that I get an opportunity to work with a lot of survivors who like me, are struggling to piece their lives back together. One of the things I did recently was write a character witness letter for a survivor of partner abuse who also was charged with the crimes committed by her partner. In this case, the ultimate ethical quandary I had was how do we avoid more harm? How do we prevent additional harm, secondary and tertiary traumas to this family? How do we make sure that the community and systems that rely on this woman and this family are not left in a quandary? We're asking questions about how we support, how do we affirm? How do we stand in solidarity with and how do we empower victims and survivors with systemic remedies instead of simply individualized culpability? whether in community journalism, policy advocacy or ethical public shaming, my work has centered protections for marginalized girls, women and their communities, just like many of you. I want to thank those marginalized. I wanna thank the victims and survivors who shared so openly their stories of violation and humiliation and often received scorn and condemnation for it. I thank you for allowing us to work with you and not just on your behalf. Thank you to the men and women who organize and activate communities to end violence against women. Thanks also, finally to the Cross-School Collaborative Research Program at Pepperdine University that has funded our research over the past five years. Thanks also to the Berkman Klein Center, finally and the board of directors, and all of those at Harvard University Seaver College. We wanna thank Valerie Smith, Priyanka Harania, and his colleagues and the many students who have worked as our research assistants over the years and advancing this project. Thanks again to Kendra Albert, Tanya Asim Cooper, and Thema Bryant-Davis. I'm sincerely grateful and I am certain that we are starting, well, no, we're being a part of joining a movement that will prevent harm to the most vulnerable among us. Thank you for this beginning.