A photograph of four Black men standing in a row, each wearing a different colored beanie (yellow, dark grey, red, and white). They are looking in various directions, some towards the camera and others away. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. The image is watermarked with 'Unsplash+' repeatedly.

Engaging Black Men as Leaders in Domestic Violence Prevention Knowledge Hub: Transforming Practice Together Conference October 1, 2025

Workshop | Dr. Patrina Duhaney and Sheryl Thompson



presents:

Innovations in Addressing Gender-Based Violence and Trauma- and Violence-Informed Health Promotion

A NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Oct 1–2, 2025

Facilitators & Background

Dr. Patrina Duhaney

- Associate Professor, University of Calgary
- Principal Investigator of the Fostering Violence Prevention and Well-Being for Black Women, Families and Communities
- 20+ years experience in anti-Black racism, criminalization, and violence prevention

Sheryl Thompson

- Professor, Community leader and one of the two facilitators in the men's training program
- Experienced peer educator and mentor
- Grounded in relational work with Black men and families

Together, we bring both academic and community-based perspectives to this work.

Session Overview

Introduces a community-driven model for engaging Black men in DV prevention



Grounded in Africentric principles, Ubuntu, trauma-informed and anti-racist practice



Highlights systemic context, program model, and practical strategies

Workshop Objectives

- Identify trauma-informed and Africentric frameworks for engaging Black men in DV prevention
- Explore strategies for training and mobilizing Black men as peer mentors and community leaders
- Apply relational and healing-centred approaches to foster accountability and transformation



How Are Black Men Framed in Your Work?

Reflect

- Think about the ways Black men show up, or are made to show up in your policies, programs, or research

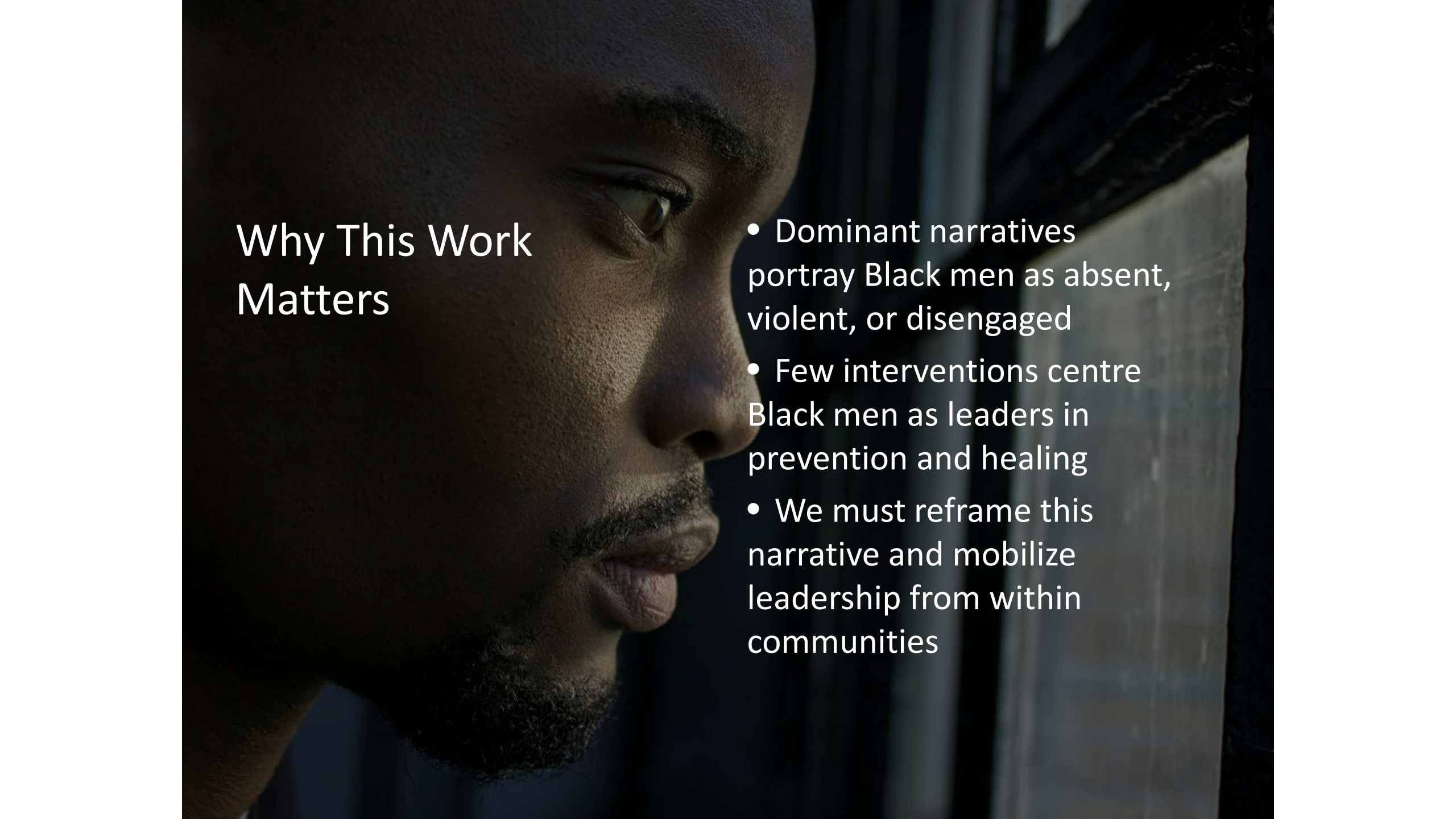
Write

- One dominant narrative (explicit or implicit) about Black men you have seen in your work
- One way that narrative has shaped practice or policy in your setting
- One missed opportunity for leadership, accountability, or healing you have observed

Debrief Questions

- Who gets framed as violent? As resilient? As redeemable?
- Where are Black men made visible, and where are they erased?
- How do those narratives impact DV prevention work?





Why This Work Matters

- Dominant narratives portray Black men as absent, violent, or disengaged
- Few interventions centre Black men as leaders in prevention and healing
- We must reframe this narrative and mobilize leadership from within communities

Systemic Context

Anti-Black racism in
justice, child welfare,
education, health
systems

Legacy of patriarchal
norms and structural
violence

Intergenerational
trauma and
community-level
exclusions



Guiding Frameworks

- Ubuntu: 'I am because we are'
- Africentric principles: community, healing, legacy
- Trauma- and violence-informed approaches
- Critical Race Theory and systemic analysis



Project Overview

- 4-year, PHAC-funded multi-phase initiative
- Train-the-trainer model for engaging Black men in Alberta and Ontario
- Community-rooted, research-informed, trauma-attuned

Program Purpose

01

Engage Black men
as peer mentors,
leaders, and
advocates

02

Support
intergenerational
healing, dialogue,
and accountability

03

Challenge systems
while building
community
capacity

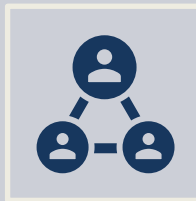
Program Design



8-session training model
with peer mentoring at the
core



Facilitated by trained Black
men using participatory
and reflective methods



Integrates healing,
learning, and leadership
development

Sample Session Topics

Black Masculinity
and Systemic
Stereotypes

Intergenerational
Trauma and
Accountability

Emotional Literacy
and Healthy
Relationships

Peer Leadership
and Legacy-
Building

Community
Transformation
Through Action

Core Strategies Used



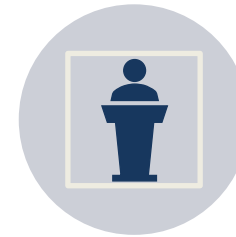
STORYTELLING
AND REFLECTION



SCENARIO-
BASED
LEARNING AND
ROLE-PLAY



GROUNDING
ACTIVITIES AND
EMPATHY MAPPING



LEADERSHIP
PRACTICE ROOTED IN
CARE, REPAIR, AND
ACCOUNTABILITY



Leadership Reimagined

- Leadership is not about dominance or status
- It is relational, responsive, and rooted in shared values
- Focus on transforming harm, not reproducing punishment

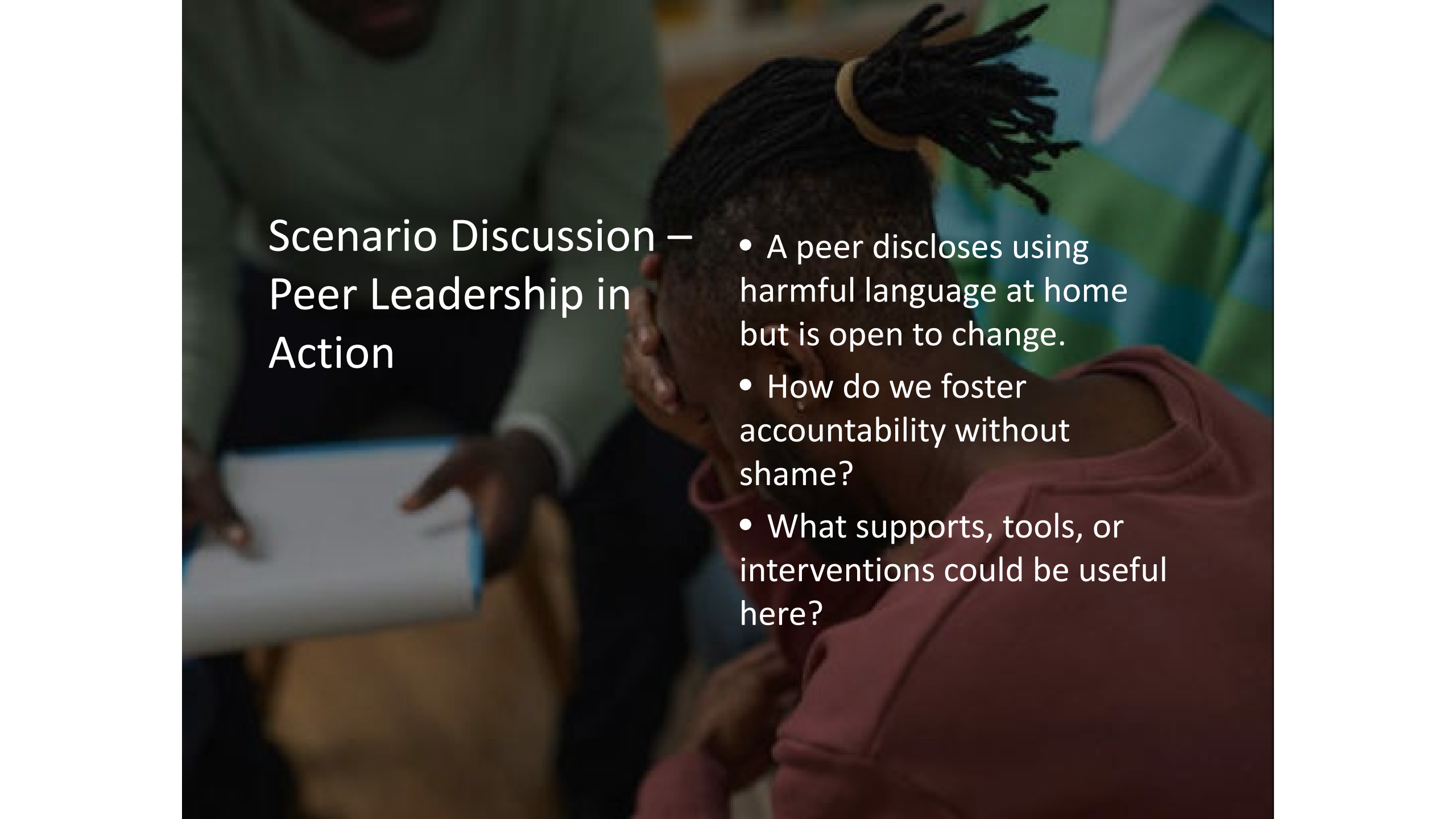
From Narrative to Practice: What Needs to Shift?



Based on our discussion earlier...

You've named dominant narratives and the missed opportunities they create. Now let's go deeper.

- What would it look like to intentionally reframe Black men's roles in your policies, programs, or research?
- Where is there room to create or scale leadership opportunities for Black men in DV prevention?
- What are the risks of doing nothing, of leaving those narratives unchallenged?

A young Black woman is shown from the chest up, her head tilted back and her right hand pressed against her forehead in a gesture of distress or frustration. She has short, dark hair styled in a bun. In the background, other people are partially visible, including a person in a green and blue striped shirt and another in a grey shirt holding a white folder. The overall scene suggests a moment of emotional difficulty or a challenging situation.

Scenario Discussion – Peer Leadership in Action

- A peer discloses using harmful language at home but is open to change.
- How do we foster accountability without shame?
- What supports, tools, or interventions could be useful here?

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY



Practicing Leadership Through Ubuntu and Accountability

- A fellow Black man in your peer group shares that he's been using harsh or demeaning language toward his partner. He doesn't make excuses and says: *"I know it's not right. I just didn't grow up seeing it handled differently. I want to change."*

Approach this through the lenses of:

- Ubuntu - *"I am because we are"*
- Africentric leadership - rooted in intergenerational healing, collective responsibility, and relational repair
- CRT - recognizing the systemic context of how Black masculinity, family, and violence are criminalized or pathologized
- TVI principles-centering emotional safety, avoiding shame, and fostering accountability

Small Group Exercise

1. How might Ubuntu shape how you respond to your peer? (*What does it mean to be in relationship with someone who has caused harm but is seeking growth?*)
2. How do you hold space for accountability while honouring his effort to unlearn harmful patterns? (*How do we disrupt without discarding?*)
3. Which tools or strategies from our leadership training might support him in making real change?

Examples may include:

- Reflective journaling or storytelling
- Empathy mapping
- Legacy-building exercises
- Peer mentoring circles
- Language and affirmation shifts



Observed Impacts

30 Black men trained across Alberta and Ontario

Formation of peer-led support and action circles

Improved emotional literacy, community accountability, and connection

Translating Into Practice



- How can your team support Black men's leadership in DV prevention?
- What are the barriers and openings in your context?
- Who are your allies in this work?

A photograph of two Black men sitting and talking in a modern office or public space. The man on the left is wearing a light-colored polo shirt and jeans, smiling. The man on the right is wearing a maroon sweater and grey trousers, gesturing with his hands while speaking. The background shows a staircase and indoor plants.

From Program to Policy

- Embed peer mentorship into DV prevention infrastructure
- Support leadership development outside punitive frameworks
- Resource identity-affirming, relationally grounded approaches



Final Reflections

- Black men are not the problem, they are essential to the solution
- Healing requires collective responsibility and systemic change
- Let's build systems that reflect the wisdom and leadership in our communities

QUESTIONS
or Comments?

