

# The Women of Color Network, Inc. Building Multi- Cultural Alliances August 19, 2019

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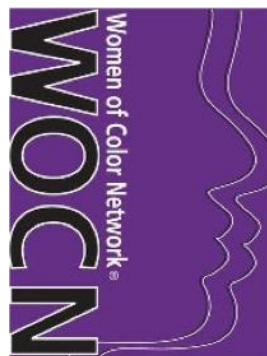
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# Welcome



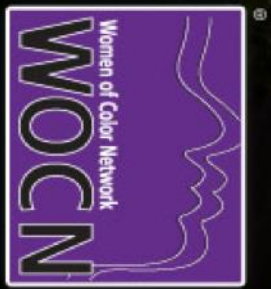
Beckie Masaki



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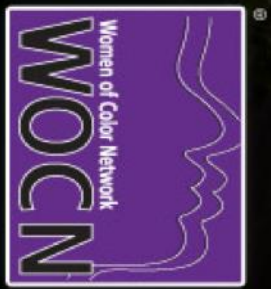


Addressing the Unique Challenges  
Facing Women of Color Since 1997



# Women of Color Network Mission

The mission of the **Women of Color Network, Inc. (WOCN, Inc.)** is to eliminate violence against ALL women and their communities by centralizing the voices, wellness and leadership of women of color across the Sovereign Nations, the United States and U.S. Territories.



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# Women of Color Network: Purpose

The purpose of WOCN, Inc. is to work in and beyond the fields of domestic violence and sexual assault to address a broad range of violence affecting communities of color such as human trafficking, police brutality, and over-incarceration. We accomplish this by examining and responding to a global context of colonialism, imperialism, capitalism, racism, sexism, heterosexism, transphobia, and other forms of oppression that intersect with violence against women of color and their communities.

...and we will sing and sing back into the  
mountains,  
if necessary even under the sea.

**We are the ones we have been waiting for.**

-June Jordan



# Guiding Principles

**We are the ones we have been waiting for.**

- Centering people and communities in the margins both broadens and deepens our work to end violence.
- Interdependence and Interconnection
- Respectful disagreements are opportunities to deepen, sharpen, and share learning, not shut down
- People do not have barriers but programs and services do!

# Butterfly Effect

We never know how our small activities will affect others through the invisible fabric of our connectedness. In this exquisitely connected world, it's never a question of "critical mass." It is always about **critical connections**.

-Grace Lee Boggs



# Key Learnings

- Collaboration creates opportunities to build trust, be open to learning, recognize our privileges, assumptions, bias.
- There is strength in numbers and collaboration helps marginalized communities centralize their power by joining voices, sharing resources, cross learning, cross sharing and expertise.
- Centering marginalized people and communities in deep collaboration deepens and broadens the ways we achieve our vision and goals.



# Critical Connections

What are they? How to do it. Where are they?



# What is deep collaboration?

Collaboration has always been important to movement building and strengthening communities. However, the negative rhetoric, misinformation and violence directed toward our historically marginalized communities makes building cross cultural/multi-disciplinary partnerships more critical than ever.

# What is deep collaboration? (2)

- Deep collaboration is when all voices are heard and members act in solidarity with passion and drive to dismantle all systems of oppression.
- Meaningful collaborative interactions build consensus and produce meaningful outcomes.

# Core Values of collaboration:

*“There are so many silos and barriers that need to be taken down. Alone, we cannot fight the fight. Together, we are united to fight for our justice, voice, and liberty.”*



# Core Values of collaboration (2):

- Deep collaboration is when all voices are heard and members act in solidarity with passion and drive to dismantle all systems of oppression.
- Meaningful collaborative interactions build consensus and produce meaningful outcomes.

# What are barriers to collaboration?

- Multi layered, intersecting oppressions and trauma throughout lifetimes and generations.
- Scarcity/ competition gets in the way of shared abundance/ collaboration, especially in funding and restrictions.
- Lack of space, time, and ways to know who we are as whole people, groups, and communities.
- Having 'Power Over' rather than 'Power With'.
- Unclear roles and processes.

# Why is collaboration important, meaningful and necessary?

Collaboration has always been important to movement building and strengthening communities. However, the negative rhetoric, misinformation and violence directed toward our historically marginalized communities makes building cross **cultural/multi-disciplinary partnerships** more critical than ever.



# Fostering Collaboration

- Recognize the link between the history of trauma, race, privilege, and oppression.
- Being able to put aside our bias, opinions, perspective, and viewpoint to really listen when coming together to have difficult conversations.
- Enable an environment of risk taking where people feel at liberty to speak their truth. We call environments such as these brave spaces.

**What else?**



# How to Create a Brave Space for Multi-Cultural Alliances

- A brave space is where we are willing to be “uncomfortable” as we unapologetically navigate, open communication and work across race, ethnicity, immigration status, age, gender, privilege, oppression and more.
- A brave space strives to acknowledge the equal value of our multiple identities without trying to privilege one over the other.

# What are the elements of a brave space?

- Listen. Recognize. Investigate your own knowledge, privilege, experiences, etc. to be able to engage with others.
- Accept each other's opinions.
- Know that you do have options to either be involved or not involved in conversations.

# What are the elements of a brave space? (2)

- Respect. Remember it is their/herstory/history and perspective.
- Define how we move through disagreements to understand, not shut down.

## What are the elements in your community?

# The Power of Love: Next Steps...

“We are living in a world of intersectional and systemic of oppression. Wearing the mask of ‘bravery’ can be problematic because we feel we do not have the liberty to do so. It can be transformative to practice leaning into this discomfort with respect, being vulnerable, and recognize our privileges and ability, because it shapes our strengths and character to find our freedom.”

# The Power of Love: Next Steps... (2)

To give and to receive...

**Aspiring Allies are always growing, they will never “graduate”.**

**What are the best ways to educate, share, and provide Aspiring Allies the tools to support us?**

# Historical Impacts- ReWriting Our Histories/Herstories Out Loud!



*“To tell the truth is to become beautiful, to begin to love yourself, value yourself. And that's political, in its most profound way.” - June Jordan*



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