

# The Role of Intersectionality in DHRs

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# The Role of Intersectionality in DHRs

## Part 2

- Why the need for intersectionality in DHRs
- How to approach intersectionality in DHRs
- Key areas for further exploration
- Adopting a holistic approach to Intersectionality



# The Role of Intersectionality in DHRs

## Part 1

*“There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because women do not live single-issue lives.” (Audre Lorde)*

- What is intersectionality?
- The origins of intersectionality
- ‘Over- inclusion ’ - racialising gender
- ‘Under-inclusion ’ - gendering race

# The Role of Intersectionality in DHRs

Intersectionality in the work of SBS

Part 1

Internal and external barriers

Internal:

- Shame and Honour
- Fear of reprisals
- Fear of escalating violence especially post-separation
- Women encouraged to problem solve within the community (e.g. through the use of mediation and reconciliation involving elders, relatives and religious councils/arbitration)

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Intersectionality in the work of SBS

Part 1

Internal and external barriers

Internal:

- Love or feelings of obligation/duty towards the perpetrator and maternal/paternal family and relatives
- Impact on children and siblings
- Isolation and social ostracism
- Fear of the unknown
- Lack of awareness of rights, services and lack of English language

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Intersectionality in the work of SBS

Part 1

Internal and external barriers

Internal:

- Financial dependency and worries
- Exhaustion and uncertainty
- Low self-esteem and self-confidence, depression
- Abandonment in countries of origin.



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Part 1

Internal and external barriers

External:

- Immigration/asylum laws and the hostile environment – fear of destitution and deportation
- Fear of hostility from outside society
- Institutional cultures of disbelief and indifference

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Part 1

Internal and external barriers

External:

- Racism and discrimination - harassment and unequal treatment, negative stereotyping and “over-policing”
- Cultural and religious sensitivity’ leading to non-intervention, mediation and reconciliation, religious arbitration or “under-policing” and “self-policing”.
- Lack of suitable facilities e.g. interpretation

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Intersectionality in the work of SBS

Part 1

Some examples:

- Gender-based violence and migration
- Gender-based violence and socio-economic status
- Gender based violence and religion and culture

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Intersectionality in the work of SBS

Part 1

- What intersectionality is not!

*“It’s not identity politics on steroids... It’s basically a lens, a prism, for seeing the way in which various forms of inequality often operate together and exacerbate each other “! (Crenshaw)*

# The Role of Intersectionality in DHRs

## Intersectionality in the work of SBS

### Part 2

- Why the need for intersectionality in DHRs?
- How to approach intersectionality in DHRs
- Equality Act 2010 – a good starting point
  - Protected Characteristics – age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership( in employment only), pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.
  - What is missing?

# The Role of Intersectionality in DHRs

## Part 2

### Key areas for further exploration

- Inter-racial relationships
  - Inability to turn to family for support

*South Asian woman married an African- Caribbean man who killed her following prolonged abuse and coercive control. She initially kept her relationship with her husband a secret and even endured a period of estrangement from her family although she did repair her relationship with them later on. She did not disclose the abuse she was facing to her family as she did not want to involve them.*

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## Part 2

### Key areas for further exploration

- Inter-racial relationships
  - Inability to turn to family for support

*"I chose it. I'm the one who, who got myself into this and it's my job to put up with it not everybody else's job to get me out."*

("Should I Stay, or Should I Go?": The Experiences of, and Choices Available to Women of South Asian Heritage Living in the UK When Leaving a Relationship of Choice Following Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) Kalwinder K. Sandhu and Hazel R. Barrett (2020) Social Sciences).

# The Role of Intersectionality in DHRs

## Part 2

### Key areas for further exploration

- Inter-racial relationships
  - Privileging the white male voice

*Highly professional South Asian woman married a white man who killed her in a frenzied attack after she threatened to leave him with their young child. Prior to the killing, she reported her experiences of extensive coercive control - involving financial and psychological abuse, manipulation and deception - to the police and social services but not her family. The police and social services dismissed her account of abuse, undertook no risk assessment and claimed that she was acting “bizarrely” and had exaggerated the abuse and her fears. It transpired that they had been talking to her abusive husband who had made counter-allegations against her suggesting that she was trying to take the house and the family’s savings.*



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## Part 2

### Key areas for further exploration

- Migrant status

*A Pakistani woman from a strict conservative background came to the UK to join her husband and was completely financially dependent on him for her stay in the UK. The NRPf condition was attached to her stay. She was kept in domestic servitude, isolated from the outside world and subject to physical, sexual, financial and psychological abuse. She had her documents taken away from her and was told that if she told anyone about what was happening to her, she would not be believed and instead would be deported. Eventually, after a particularly vicious assault, she managed to report the abuse to a domestic abuse agency who told her to contact the Home Office to find out about her status and signposted her to immigration solicitors for legal advice. She returned to her husband who killed her.*

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## Part 2

- Family dynamics

*S was subjected to considerable abuse and eventually killed by her husband. She didn't tell anyone about her abuse. Her family members, her father in particular, was asked what they knew of her experience of abuse. Her father talked about how S was someone who wanted to resolve her problems on her own and that she would have dealt with the abuse as a "family" problem because that is what the family did. Her father said that she would not have gone to an outside agency because it would be a "disgrace to the family."*

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## Part 2

### Key areas for further exploration

- Culture

*P, a white British female victim from a working class background was abused by her black (Caribbean) male boyfriend. She left him and obtained a non-molestation order against him. She continued to be harassed by him and was eventually killed. When interviewed, the perpetrator said that his father had been abusive towards his mother and had been strict towards him and his siblings as children, including using physical chastisement. He said that some of his father's behaviour reflected his upbringing, explaining that he had come to the United Kingdom from the Caribbean so had very traditional values. He expressed remorse and said that the killing was a result of his "pride".*

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## Part 2

### Key areas for further exploration

- Religion

*R was a university educated, disabled, Pakistani woman who was killed by her husband - an extremely abusive, controlling and manipulative man who led the police and social services to believe that it was R who was the perpetrator of abuse not only towards him but also their children. Both were regular attendees of their local mosque, whose leaders were aware of the abuse and problems between R and her husband . They even said that it was ‘a killing waiting to happen’. When questioned, the mosque leaders said that they did not intervene because they weren’t formally approached by the couple . They said that they knew that “people would not want to expose themselves by revealing their abusive situation”. They also said that marital advice from the mosque recommends “reconciliation, then arbitration and then family intervention.”*

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## Part 2

### Key areas for further exploration

- Religion
  - Religious bias in institutional responses
  - Religion as a marker of identity or structural and gendered form of discrimination?

# The Role of Intersectionality in DHRs

## Part 2

- Religion and culture
  - Referring to religious or faith based groups?

# The Role of Intersectionality in DHRs

## Part 3

- Suggestions for embedding Intersectionality in DHRs:
  - Embed an intersectional approach to DHRs by making it explicit at the outset that the review will be guided by such an approach. Explain what the approach means and how it can be applied to IMRs.
  - Panel members must ensure that an intersectional analysis is threaded throughout their IMR analysis rather than treated as an 'add on' when dealing with the section on equality and diversity.

# The Role of Intersectionality in DHRs

## Part 3

- Suggestions for embedding Intersectionality in DHRs:
  - Avoid a tick box approach to intersectionality and instead adopt a holistic approach. Services and professionals need to be very careful about not pre-judging cases or working according to assumptions and stereotypes. It is necessary to examine the contexts and circumstances that are presented in all their complexity so that multiple and overlapping issues are assessed and the compound risks that arise properly analysed.



# The Role of Intersectionality in DHRs

## Part 3

- Suggestions for embedding Intersectionality in DHRs:
  - Complicate religion and culture as risk factors so that it is not only understood as an identity marker but as a form of structural discrimination, especially towards women and sexual minorities and other vulnerable sub-groups within a minority group. Unpick cultural and religious contexts to understand family and community norms about gender inequality and abuse and their impact on victim and perpetrator behaviour and reflect on the kinds of interventions - policies and good practice - needed.

# The Role of Intersectionality in DHRs

## Part 3

- Suggestions for embedding Intersectionality in DHRs:
  - There is a need to get past the idea of not wishing to offend cultural and religious sensitivities - Avoid the uncritical use of family/community and religious members to explain cultural and religious values – need to locate what family say within a wider framework for understanding structural discrimination otherwise there is a danger that recommendations aimed at community in relation to prevention and awareness raising will be missed.

# The Role of Intersectionality in DHRs

## Part 3

- Suggestions for embedding Intersectionality in DHRs:
  - Try to involve appropriate specialist organisations with a track record in supporting VAWG in BME communities from a rights based approach throughout the DHR process if possible rather than asking an expert to comment on a report at the end of the review. Otherwise, IMRs will not be properly scrutinised using an intersectional lens and so mistakes and lessons that can be learnt may not be picked up.

# The Role of Intersectionality in DHRs

## Part 3

- Suggestions for embedding Intersectionality in DHRs:
  - Due diligence needs to be exercised when inviting BME experts to provide advice on DHRs. It is also critical to involve those who have a track record in supporting abused women and advocating on their behalf from a position of concern for gender equality rights and justice. The problem with simply understanding intersectionality as 'identity' is that it can facilitate an uncritical acceptance of anyone from the same 'faith' background as the victim or perpetrator and regard them as experts. Such an approach may actually promote solutions that reinforce rather than disrupt the religious and cultural values that create contexts conducive to gender based violence. For example, community and religious and faith organisations claiming to support or advocate on behalf of Asian women, may be more interested in maintaining culture and religious values that coerce and subjugate women rather than empower them to assert their right to protection and freedom.