Project 100 Manual

A "Womanist... Loves music. Loves dance. Loves the moon. Loves the Spirit. Loves love and food and roundness. Loves struggle. Loves the Folk. Loves herself. Regardless." - Alice Walker, *In Search of Our Mother's Gardens: Womanist Prose*

"'Sankofa' teaches us that we must go back to our roots in order to move forward. That is, we should reach back and gather the best of what our past has to teach us, so that we can achieve our full potential as we move forward." - University of Illinois, Springfield, Black Student Union

"A true womanist's journey of healing is her journal of life!
It's written with verbs of actions not reactions.
It's written with nouns known as grace and love
It whispers sweet words to her softly and lofty."- Suzette Shaw, "A True Womanist"

Contents

This manual is intended for service providers seeking to replicate the work of Project 100. It is dedicated to the Black and African American women of Los Angeles' Skid Row. We thank you for the wisdom, insight, and resilience that created this program.

Project 100 Introduction

Project 100 provides culturally responsive, multi-disciplinary wraparound services based on recommendations from Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority's (LAHSA) Ad Hoc Committees on Black People Experiencing Homelessness and Women Experiencing Homelessness. Project 100 acknowledges the systemic oppression that contributes to Black women's homelessness and provides programming informed by lived experience on every level, to meet their unique needs.

Sankofa, the guiding value of Project 100, is a concept from the Akan people of Ghana, which recognizes that we must learn from the past to grow into our brightest future (Karenga, 1995). It is represented by the symbol above (Tatadonits, n.d.), a bird whose feet are moving forward while it's head turns back to retrieve an egg, representing the future (University of Illinois Springfield, 2021). *Sankofa* focuses on historical healing from an Afrocentric lens (Karenga, 2001). To further integrate Afrocentric ideas, the seven Swahili principles of *Nguzo Saba* (detailed in Essential Definitions below) are combined with the wisdom of Womanist psychology and Trauma and Resiliency Informed Care, to create a program tailored to the needs of unhoused Black and African American women.

Project 100 integrates phased models of case management, psychotherapy, intersectional trauma recovery, employment services, and financial wellness into a wraparound model, which has been culturally adapted using Bernal's cultural and ecological validity framework[1]. In recognition of the value of each stage of healing and in keeping with the metaphors suggested by those with lived experience, Project 100 moves with the phases of the moon: New, Crescent, Quarter, and Full.

To provide a range of housing options based on the needs of the women served, Project 100 offers two tracks: (1) Permanent Supportive Housing, for individuals who need ongoing daily support; and (2) Rapid Rehousing, for those who can live independently. Project 100 not only works to heal individual survivors of poverty and injustice: in keeping with the principles of unity, mutuality, and community, it also works to address systemic issues as a community. Healthy partnerships with housing providers, landlords, employers, legal services, and community organizers are therefore essential for the success of this model.

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[1] Developed by Guillermo Bernal, Janet Bonilla, and Carmen Bellido in 1995, this model provides a framework for adapting existing treatment modalities to serve specific cultural populations using the concept of ecological validity, which examines the degree to which an intervention aligns with the real-world needs of the population it serves.

Ad Hoc Recommendations

Two documents led the program design, framework, and theory behind Project 100. In 2016, LAHSA formed the Ad Hoc Committee on Black People Experiencing Homelessness and the Ad Hoc Committee on Women Experiencing Homelessness to examine systemic issues in partnership with community stakeholders. In August 2017, the *Report and Recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee on Women Experiencing Homelessness* was published and in December 2018 the *Report and Recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee on Black People Experiencing Homeless* was published. Within these reports were, respectively, 59 recommendations to better address women's homelessness, and 67 recommendations for better serving Black people who interact with homeless services and addressing the systemic inequities that lead to their overrepresentation in the unhoused community in general.

Project 100 developed in answer to these recommendations, in calling for targeted, trauma and resilience informed services to recognize the specific needs of women and Black people. Although this manual represents the Project 100 service model, other aspects of Project 100 include reimagined data collection, training, and the development of a trauma-informed community.

History of Skid Row

As *Sankofa* teaches us, it is essential to understand the history of Los Angeles' Skid Row neighborhood to understand the community where Project 100 was born. Although women have been present in Skid Row since its inception, their stories and contributions to its history have remained largely invisible. The predominance of white male narratives in written history, combined with public controversy over whether women "should" be present in the Skid Row neighborhood has ultimately led to the erasure of women's stories. Appendix C contains a brief history of Skid Row, based largely on Don Spivack's oral history of Skid Row (2019) and the University of California, Los Angeles' *The Making of a Crisis: The History of Homelessness in Los Angeles* (2021). As part of the Womanist tradition of storytelling and, in recognition of the need to elevate voices that have traditionally been ignored in order to fully understand our community's present and future, part of this history is told through the words of each woman on the Project 100 Lived Experience Workgroup, including Adelene Bertha, Suzette Shaw, and Vikki Vickers.

Essential Definitions

Project 100 Principles

Sankofa

> Although *Sankofa* has ancient roots, over the past thirty years, *Sankofa* has become increasingly prevalent in Black and African-American community and culture. *Sankofa* is understood in relationship to the proverb "'Se wo were fin a wo Sankofa a yenkyi'" most often translated to 'It is not a taboo to return and fetch it when you forget'" (Temple, C., 2009, pg. 1). In practice and philosophy, modern use of *Sankofa* responds to the "internal desire for cultural definition and reacting to cultural casualties sustained in the experience of being involuntarily immersed in Western culture" (Temple, C., 2009, pg. 2). In *Counseling Persons of African*

Descent, Thomas A. Parham (2002) describes Sankofa as a ritual of rebirth and renewal, returning someone to spiritual peace.

Nguzo Saba

Swahili for "the "seven principles," *Nguzo Saba* deepens the Afrocentric approach of Project 100, replicating the work of Earlise C. Ward and Roger L. Brown, creators of Oh Happy Day! Classes,[2] a targeted intervention for Black and African American adults (Ward, E. and Brown, R., 2014, p. 13). The principles include *Umoja* (unity), *Kujichagulia* (self-determination), *Ujima* (collective work and responsibility), *Ujamaa* (cooperative economics), *Nia* (purpose), *Kuumba* (creativity) and *Imani* (faith) (Karenga, 1995). *Nguzo Saba* focuses "on recovery, reconstructing African culture, reappropriating it, and reaffirming it as a living tradition.(Karenga, 1995). Most commonly known for its role in the African American and Pan-African holiday, Kwanzaa, where a different principle is celebrated each night (Karenga, 2008), Nguzo Saba has long played a key role in the Black Power Movement and continues to evolve its role in current Black and African American studies (Karenga, 1995).

Trauma and Resiliency Informed Care

Trauma and Resiliency Informed Care is a service approach that acknowledges the widespread, long-term impacts of trauma, understands signs and symptoms of trauma, and responds by integrating knowledge of both trauma and the resiliency of those who have experienced it, into all policies and practices (Downtown Women's Center, 2018). Despite the harrowing experience of being unhoused, evidence of resiliency in the face of trauma, can be seen throughout Los Angeles' Skid Row neighborhood, in the music, dancing and laughter of its residents. Trauma and Resiliency Informed Care not only asks "What happened to you?" rather than, "What is wrong with you?" but also recognizes the deep strengths of trauma survivors (Menschner, C. and Maul, A., 2016).

Womanist Psychology

Womanist psychology is a liberation-based, strengths-focused framework for addressing holistic wellness, developed specifically by and for Black women (Vaz, K.M., 2006). At its core, Womanist psychology focuses on the inclusion of all Black women across sexual orientation, sex at birth, and all other facets of the Black identity. The six positive Womanist life principles are "extended ways of knowing, spirited and inspiring being, interconnected love, balance and flexibility, liberation and inclusion, and empowered authenticity" (Bryant-Davis & Comas-Díaz, 2016). Womanist principles assume that women of color "come from an amalgam of cultures that is unique, and they have a deep sense of what is important and should be valued." (Sanchez-Hucles, 2016).

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[2] Oh Happy Day! Classes are Cognitive Behavioral Therapy groups adapted to meet the specific cultural needs of African American adults. These classes are driven by the principles of *Nguzo Saba* and were adapted using Bernal's ecological validity framework (Ward, E. and Brown, R., 2014).

Table 1 - Crosswalk of Project 100 Principles

Nguzo Saba	Womanist Principles	Trauma and Resiliency Informed Care
Unity (Umoja)	Resistance Community and social support	Trustworthiness Peer support Cultural and historical context
Self-determination (Kujichagulia)	Survival Strategies Self-definition Agency	Peer Support
Collective Work/Responsibility (Ujima)	Community and social support Resistance	Peer Support Trustworthiness Collaboration and mutuality Safety
Cooperative Economics (Ufamaa)	Survival Strategies	Empowerment
Purpose (Nia)	Thriving Growth	Empowerment
Creativity (Kuumba)	Healing	Collaboration and mutuality Empowerment
Faith (Imani)	Spirituality	Safety

Core Concepts

Housing First

Housing First is a research-based solution to ending homelessness that prioritizes providing housing without preconditions to individuals experiencing homelessness as quickly as possible. This approach is based on the belief that people require their food, shelter, and safety needs to be met *first* before they can begin on the path to personal stability (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2016.)

In practice, this means that a housing program that operates with a Housing First model, like the Downtown Women's Center, would *not* require an individual to be employed, enrolled in substance use counseling, or to be receiving any kind of supportive services to be eligible for housing.

Harm Reduction

The practice of Harm Reduction does not require treatment or sobriety. Instead, it works with program participants to reduce the negative consequences of their substance use or other potentially dangerous involvements (Sakha, et.al, 2015). Programs utilizing a Harm Reduction approach do not terminate assistance based solely on a person's inability to achieve sobriety or lack of adherence to prescribed medication regimens. Efforts should include all possible approaches to assist the person in reducing or minimizing behaviors that endanger them, while at the same time helping them move into, and stabilize in, permanent housing.

Ecological Validity Framework

Bernal's ecological validity framework re-examines treatment interventions in eight domains to adapt existing treatment frameworks to provide culturally responsive intervention. This approach recognizes that research on the effectiveness of many treatment interventions is often not generalizable to all populations. Liberation Psychology, Womanist Psychology and Oh Happy Day! Classes have each pointed to this framework as an effective tool for adapting existing models to work for specific cultures (Comas-Díaz, L. and Rivera, E.T., 2020) (Ward, E. and Brown, R., 2014). Project 100 utilizes this model to adapt the integrated models of the program to serve the specific needs of Black and African American women. The eight domains examined for Project 100 with staff members and the Lived Experience Workgroup were "language, persons, metaphors, content, concepts, goals, methods, and context" (Bernal, 1995.) This method, in combination with lived experience feedback, should be utilized to assess the appropriateness of any future variations on the Project 100 model.

Treatment Models

Critical Time Intervention (CTI)

Critical Time Intervention (CTI) is a service model that recognizes the importance of timing when providing services to newly housed individuals. CTI harnesses the motivation that often accompanies large-scale life changes like moving (whether that means coming inside, finding permanent housing or just adjusting to a new neighborhood) to assure strong, early connections are made within each participant's community. During early phases of treatment, meetings are more frequent and focus on stabilization within housing. Over time, as participants identify and engage social, medical, mental health, food, vocational and other resources, the CTI team sees participants less frequently. This approach allows participants to test out their new supports with as much independence as possible while still tapping into the known resources and problem-solving partners of their CTI team when challenges arise. CTI is the driving model behind Project 100's case management approach, which utilizes a wraparound team to implement CTI interventions across four phases: Pre-Housing, Housing, Transition, and Transfer of Care.

Project 100 has altered the traditional CTI model to integrate culturally responsive practices by allowing for more flexibility in the time-limited model and renaming the four phases to assure the language resonates with participants, in line with Bernal's ecological validity framework. Housing location services are an additional layer of support integrated into the CTI model, which traditionally does not begin until a participant moves into housing. In the Project 100 CTI model, locating and supporting participants in the move-in process is seen an essential and tangible aspect of building trust between participants and the Project 100 team.

Wealth & Wellness

Guided by feedback from those with lived experience, Project 100 acknowledges the trauma inherent in financial planning for unhoused women. As a result, Project 100 is guided by the Survivor Financial Experience model presented by FreeFrom, an

organization working to liberate survivors of intimate partner violence from financial insecurity. FreeFrom's belief "in the creativity, resourcefulness, and power" of each participant aligns with the value of community care that Project 100 seeks to promote and practice (FreeFrom, 2021).

Intersectional Trauma Recovery

Guided by Dr. Thema Bryant-Davis' (2006) approach to healing racial trauma, intersectional trauma recovery works toward healing by acknowledging racial injustice and working toward "liberation" (Bryant-Davis and Moore-Lobban, 2020, p. 200). Judith Herman's stages of recovery focus on safety, claiming and sharing one's own trauma narrative and reconnecting with the world, while Bryant-Davis expands this linear process into a "themes-based approach" to include acknowledgment of racial trauma, anger, self-blame, and internalized racism before moving finally into resistance (Bryant-Davis and Moore-Lobban, 2020, p. 200). Intersectional trauma recovery in the context of Project 100 therefore acknowledges homelessness as a racial trauma and social justice issue, and integrates this perspective into multi-disciplinary case conceptualizations to achieve true trauma liberation for unhoused or formerly unhoused Black women.

Workforce Development

Workforce development services are designed to meet every woman's current needs, regardless of her background or level of experience. These services seek "to prepare women for long-term, sustainable employment, by building on women's existing skills and empowering them to realize personal and professional goals alike" (Downtown Women's Center, 2021).

Housing Options

Rapid Rehousing

The National Alliance to End Homelessness defines Rapid Rehousing as "an intervention designed to help individuals and families quickly exit homelessness, return to housing in the community, and not become homeless again in the near term. The core components of rapid re-housing are housing identification, move-in and rent assistance, and rapid re-housing case management and services" (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2016). Rapid Rehousing allows participants to identify market rate units in the area of their choice. In the context of Project 100, Rapid Rehousing is one of two housing tracks available and is a best fit for participants with higher levels of independence and the ability to build sufficient income to afford local market rate units.

Permanent Supportive Housing

Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) offers independent living through housing units or subsidies with supportive services attached (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2015). According to the Corporation for Supportive Housing, PSH is built on four organizing principles: affordability, safety and comfort, empowerment and independence, and the provision accessible, flexible supportive services that "target residential stability" (Corporation for Supportive Housing, 2006, pg 3). Permanent Supportive Housing offers an independent living option for individuals

who benefit from 24 hour, on-site supportive services. In the context of Project 100, Permanent Supportive Housing is one of two housing tracks available to participants based on their stated needs.