

Closing Session

The closing session of the Atlanta meeting afforded participants an opportunity to reflect on the forum sessions and evaluate the overall usefulness of the event. Many of the participants expressed appreciation of the wealth of information presented, the relevancy of the agenda topics, the expertise of the presenters, and the adequacy of the dialogue exchange. Many participants also shared their feelings of connectedness, noting the isolation they often feel when doing work in the field of domestic violence.

The group also made favorable comments about the theme of the forum, *Assembling the Pieces: Leadership in Addressing Domestic Violence in the African American Community*. Among other comments, forum attendees remarked that the theme was relevant to the function and purpose of the forum, as the presentations provided critical research components needed to begin addressing the issue of domestic violence in the African American community from a holistic perspective. Participants undoubtedly found value in hearing about study findings not yet advanced by dominant or established research bodies. Of equal value was information provided regarding the implications of welfare reform on African Americans and its link to domestic violence; analyses that examine the historical construction of stereotypes in attempts to understand the responses to, and perhaps the causes of, violence; the interplay between domestic violence and other destructive behaviors; the roles that institutions are and are not playing in African American communities to reduce domestic violence; and intervention models that are effective for African American populations. The interaction between the presenters and participants and the knowledge promulgated at the forum reflect the inspiring vision of the leadership that the Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community was designed to exude.

The session ended with William Riley, Federal Project Officer, thanking the participants, the presenters, and the Steering Committee for their hard work and dedication to reducing domestic violence in the African American community. Forum attendees then applauded the foresight and support of the Office of Community Services in funding the Institute and its work.