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NEW PERSPECTIVES ON BATTERED WOMEN

Articles from a conference entitled
"Community Based Skill Development"
held for transition services in
British Columbia and the Yukon
in February 1984

1986-27

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**NEW PERSPECTIVES ON
BATTERED WOMEN**

**Connie Chapman
Editor**

**for
Society of Transition Houses(B.C./Yukon)**

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INTRODUCTION

The articles in this book came out of a conference entitled Community Based Skill Development held for transition services in British Columbia and the Yukon in February, 1984. This was the annual conference of the Society of Transition Houses (B.C./Yukon) and was designed to meet some special needs of the members. The first need was for in-depth skill building and the second was for permanent skill development.

By 1984, transition services for battered women, the battered women's movement and the public acknowledgement of wife battering had existed in Canada and British Columbia/Yukon for eleven years. This has been time for a body of knowledge about battering and a core of skilled, well-experienced, knowledgeable workers in the field to develop. This meant the needs of transition services was different. The Society had received a clear message from its members that they wanted a forum where transition service personnel could go into depth on important topics and leave with some concrete, new skills to help them better meet the needs of battered women.

Since the area of working with battered women is still fairly new compared to other social service fields, is undervalued and is stressful, staff and Board turnover in a service may be high. Because of this turnover and because most services cannot afford to send many people to the conferences, it has been the experience of the services that too often the material from the conferences has not been integrated into the workplace as completely as they would like. The articles, most of which are based on transcripts and notes of the one and two day workshops, are a way of making sure that the individual and collective knowledge is retained and available to others.

The topics came out of the member's answers to the question, "What barriers exist to providing the best service for victims of wife abuse?" The answers (excluding the one of inadequate funding and resources which always tops the list) fell into three main areas:

1. Barriers exist because coordination and cooperation between groups and institutions providing services to victims of wife assault remains inconsistent and problematic;
2. Barriers exist because services are not reaching certain groups of victims (e.g., native women, older women, ethnic women, etc.);
3. Barriers exist because societal laws and cultural norms conflict when transition services strive to prevent inter-generational conflict.

Based on these areas, a questionnaire was devised and answered by member groups concerning their needs in these three areas. From the results, topics were chosen and workshops set up.

The articles fall into two sections. The first section contains articles which deal with new views and new perspectives on battering. The keynote address, by Ginny NiCarthy, brings together new research on battering with new research in the area of moral development to provide an exciting perspective on battered women which has many implications for the way work is done. The article by Margo Buck, on working with child abuse, presents material from an innovative program for parents and children which ran in Vancouver for several years. As well, she suggests ways in which transition services can begin to work with the delicate issue of child abuse. The last article, by Marie Fortune, provides a theological perspective on wife battering.

The second section contains articles which speak directly to outreach and coordination of services. The section starts with an outline of a workshop on reaching out to "invisible" groups of women. There are articles on working with native women and on working with christian women. The final article talks to the need to have a coordinated approach to wife assault with the justice system and suggests ways to begin to make this approach happen.

MORAL ANDROGENY: A NEW LOOK AT OLD ISSUES

KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY GINNY NICARTHY

PROLOGUE

I'm going to start this talk by doing something and I don't know whether to categorize this as a public flagellation or humiliation or maybe I'm just being accountable. I think that I should model something and I think being accountable is the appropriate thing.

At this conference, we've been talking about dealing with all the particular populations to whom we have not done any good. We've been looking at which groups we haven't been doing outreach with, not because we don't care or in some cases because we can't do everything all the time.

I have been acutely aware of all of the different populations that I don't know enough about. I try to attend to my biases and I think I'm fairly good at noticing them. When I was writing Talking It Out with my two colleagues we spent a lot of time worrying because we did deal with a lot of controversial issues in the book - homophobia and racism and differently abled, etc. In trying to decide on the phrase to use to describe the population in general, we tried to be very sensitive. Yet we knew that we would probably offend somebody just because we were trying to bring these things up.

So the book came out and I was sort of waiting in trepidation for feedback, and the first few weeks it was just fine. Nothing happened. Then Connie came down to talk to me about coming to this conference. The book had just been out about two weeks and I hadn't heard anything about it. We sat down and had coffee and she had just bought it at the neighbourhood book store and had had time to read I think three pages and she said, "I want to give you a little feedback here," and I thought, "Aha!"

Well I had used a phrase, and I have to take responsibility because it was my phrase and not our collective phrase, saying something about the movement starting in England and then five or ten years later moving across the Atlantic. As Connie pointed out, before it got to the United States in the middle to late 70's, there were Transition Houses in Canada. So there I was being an Imperialist which was not one of the things that I worried about when I wrote the book.

I think I behaved appropriately. I just went, "Oh, that's terrible Connie, I shouldn't have done that" and then, of course, I went away and tried to weasle out privately. "Oh well, it was just a turn of phrase, it was an unfortunate turn of phrase," and then I was faced with the fact that really when I envisioned this great idea coming across the ocean, I envisioned them coming to this continent which is the United States. O.K..! (uproar) So, I've been found wanting and humble.

When I got here I thought, at least I'm not going to be Canadianist again. Then in a workshop somebody mentioned I had said something about native Americans and she sort of said, "Huh?" and then she said, "Oh, you mean natives." And I realized that what I had been saying for two days in referring to natives, was native Americans which to me is just a word that means Indians. You know, I didn't even hear myself saying American at all, and I should have been saying "natives, or native Canadians" or something, so again I am found wanting.

That's supposed to be a model and I'm doing this in a kind of a humorous way. Actually I think that this is just another example of a serious problem of how the United States relates to Canada and how all people who have power normally identify with institutions that have power and tend, with the best of intentions, to just overlook certain kinds of biases and status superiority. I just hope that we will keep catching each other up on these things, knowing that we will all keep slipping, ignoring, forgetting and bypassing.

INTRODUCTION

Now I want to talk about what I call moral androgyny. I'm going to talk about a few, maybe seemingly disconnected ideas that will fit together. First, we'll say something about why women leave abusive men and stay away from them as if we didn't know a lot about that. Second, we'll talk about the relationship of those reasons to the development of women's moral standards and how those standards differ from men's ideas of moral principles. Third, I'll also touch on how we as a culture, as cultures, evaluate male and female moral principles differentially and last, I want to connect all that to the stimulating and valuable and caring work that has gone on here today.

WHY WOMEN STAY

Why do women stay? The question continues to plague us in spite of the many reasons offered during the past ten years for women staying with violent men. First it was masochism and that unholy trio: they deserve it; they ask for it; they like it. In other words there's something sick about her. She's inadequate or she's beyond the pale by virtue of ethnicity, class or lifestyle, or she may not actually like it but she is the other, she belongs to a class of people who are defective in some way.

Then feminists developed some other ideas about the answers to that question. Women were said to stay because of the external forces acting upon them; patriarchy, economics, traditional roles, religions, social institutions and the lack of safe alternatives that forced them to stay with violent partners. Many feminists saw bad woman as having little or no choice. Other feminists began to see that there were some powerful internal forces as well; addiction, learned helplessness, the denial inherent in the cycle of violence or depression, dependency, fear, and low self esteem. The characteristics were not inherent in each woman but developed as a result of brainwashing and injury.

What all those answers have in common is a negative characteristic or condition; a fault, an omission or a crucial trait of failure or evil. These are externally imposed or internally developed. There's something wrong with the social institutions or the women they affect, and of course there's truth in that. There are wrongs to be set right. But it's not the whole truth. There are other factors that most of us have neglected that are equally important. Whether socially imposed or personally developed, those characteristics that cause women to stay with abusive men are not only the negative aspects of women's lives but also exemplify the best of womanhood.

MORAL DEVELOPMENT

To explain what I mean about women staying because of the best of themselves, I need to discuss the innovative work on the moral development of women of a Harvard professor, Carol Gilligan. Perhaps some of you have read her work. In a Different Voice is the name of her book. Probably most of you know, or can guess if you don't have precise information, that the most important work on how children develop the ability to make moral judgements as they grow into maturity has been done with male subjects. What else is new?

Traditional Views:

To quote from Gilligan, "Freud considered women to be deprived by nature of a clear cut Oedipal resolution. Consequently, women's superego... was compromised." (Gilligan:1982;page 7) Therefore, women show less sense of justice than men and are more influenced in their judgements by feelings of affection and hostility, which of course is a flaw. Feelings are not to enter into moral judgements and they discount them. So women can't figure out what is right or wrong.

This criticism that Freud makes of women's sense of justice, seen as compromise in its refusal of blind impartiality, reappears in the works of Piaget and Colberg, who studied the child's moral development (meaning mostly the male child). They essentially omitted the females from their studies. In Colberg's six stages of moral development, women's judgements exemplify the third stage of helping and pleasing others. Of course that's very low grade moral judgement. The very traits that traditionally defines the goodness of women-their care for and sensitivity to the needs of others-are those that mark them as deficient in moral judgement.

NEW RESEARCH

So recognizing the limitations in the existing research on the subject, Carol Gilligan decided to see how women in various stages of life would solve problems requiring moral decisions. She was particularly interested in how women would answer ethical questions if they were encouraged to do so on their own terms. She asked women to say how they would resolve moral dilemmas but also asked them to answer the fundamental question, "How would you define moral problems?" She conducted three studies. One was of women interviewed as college seniors, and again five years later. Another was of women who were in the third trimester of pregnancy, trying to decide whether or not to have an abortion. She interviewed them again one year later. She wanted to get at how they were working through that decision. The third study was of males and females from age 6 to 60, asking questions about their conceptions of self and morality and asking about their experiences of moral conflict and their judgements of hypothetical moral dilemmas.

WOMEN'S MORALITY

Gilligan found that women not only define themselves in a context of human relationships, but they judge themselves in terms of their ability to care. There was what she called a morality of responsibility which focuses on connections, relationships and concerns and on helping others and not overlooking opportunities to help. This morality of responsibility is a concern with how to exercise a moral life which includes obligations to self and family and people in general.

This moral framework contrasts with a characteristically male morality of rights which focusses on issues of separation and the individual as well as fairness, justice and the golden rule. It's core is the right to do as one wishes so long as it doesn't interfere with the rights of others. Men worry about people interfering with each other's rights and the highest stage of morality is one of abstract principles which are objectively fair or just resolutions to moral dilemmas and upon which all rational persons could agree. Men would somehow lift morality above our complex concerns.

In contrast the current interest in female morality and responsibility recognizes the limitations of moral principles. It allows for exceptions to principles, and for the fact that even though the best moral decisions have been made, there will be remaining conflicts. Some people think it is kind of mushy when a woman makes a decision that this is the right thing to do but then there is this tag end over here; there is this person who is going to suffer; there's another problem that's going to cause pain. It seems like an inability to make precise decisions.

These perspectives are reflected in two different moral ideologies. Separation is justified by men in an ethic of rights while attachment is supported by women in an ethic of care. Men protect separate individuals while women protect attachment and accept responsibility for others. I want to give an example from Gilligan's interviews, and some quotes from Colburg's interviews of boys and girls who are 11.

The dilemma that these 11 year olds were asked to resolve was one of a series devised by Colburg to measure moral development in adolescence. He did this by presenting a conflict between moral norms and exploring the logic of its resolution. In this particular dilemma a man named Heinz considered whether or not to steal a drug which he cannot afford to buy in order to save the life of his wife. In the standard format of Colburg's interviewing procedure the description of the dilemma itself, Heinz's predicament, the wife's disease, the druggist's refusal to lower his price is followed by the question, "Should Heinz steal the drug?"

The reasons for and against stealing are then stored through a series of questions that vary and extend the perimeters of the dilemma and are designed to reveal the underlying structure of the moral plot. Jake at 11 is clear from the outset that Heinz should steal the drug. Constructing a dilemma as Colburg did as a conflict between the values of property and life, he discerns the logical priority of life and uses that logic to justify his choice. Quoting Jake (Gilligan; 1982,26):

For one thing, a human life is worth more than money, and if the druggist only makes \$1,000, he is still going to live, but if Heinz doesn't steal the drug, his wife is going to die. (*Why is life worth more than money?*) Because the druggist can get a thousand dollars later from rich people with cancer, but Heinz can't get his wife again. (*Why not?*) Because people are all different and so you couldn't get Heinz's wife again.

Now, Amy's response, in contrast, conveys a very different impression, an image of development stunted by a failure of logic and an inability to think for herself. When asked if Heinz should steal the drug she replied in a way that seems evasive and unsure (Guilligan; 1982, 28).

Well, I don't think so. I think there might be other ways besides stealing it, like if he could borrow the money or make a loan or something, but he really shouldn't steal the drug - but his wife shouldn't die either.

Asked why he should not steal the drug, she considers neither property nor law, but rather the effect that that could have on the relationship between Heinz and his wife (Guilligan; 1982, 28).

If he stole the drug, he might save his wife then, but if he did, he might have to go to jail, and then his wife might get sicker again, and he couldn't get more of the drug, and it might not be good. So, they should really just talk it out and find some other way to make the money.

She's seeing in the dilemma not a math problem with humans but a narrative of relationships that extends over time, Amy envisions the wife's continuing need for her husband, her husband's continuing concern for his wife and seeks to respond to the druggist's need in a way that would sustain rather than sever connection. Seeing a world comprised of relationships rather than people standing alone, a world that coheres through human connections, rather than through systems of rules, she finds the puzzle of the dilemma to lie in the failure of the druggist to respond to the wife.

This is very complex stuff. I think this meandering female decision making is fascinating and you can see how people have dismissed it as not nice and clear cut and concise and so therefore muddy. But I think we can also see that Jake is lacking somehow too.

One more series here (Gulligan; 1982, 35-36). Asking Jake and Amy again "When responsibility to oneself and responsibility to others conflict, how should one choose?" Jake says:

You grant about one fourth to the others and three fourths to yourself.

Amy says:

"Well, it really depends on the situation. If you have a responsibility with somebody else, then you should keep it to a certain extent, but to the extent that it is really going to hurt you or stop you from doing something that you really, really want, then I think maybe you should put yourself first, but, if it is your responsibility to somebody really close to you, you've just got to decide in that situation, which is more important, yourself or that person. And like I say it really depends on what kind of person you are, how you feel about the other person or persons involved."

The interviewer asked them each why? Jake says:

Because the most important things in your decision should be yourself. Don't let yourself be battered totally by other people, but you have to take them into consideration. So if what you want to do is blow yourself up with an atom bomb, you should maybe blow yourself up with a hand grenade, because you're thinking about your neighbours and they would also die.

And Amy says:

Well, like some people put themselves, and things for themselves, before they put other people. And some people really care about other people. Like I don't think your job is as important as somebody that you really love, like a husband or your parents or a very close friend. Somebody that you really care for or if it's just your responsibility to your job or somebody that you barely know then maybe you go first, but if it's somebody that you really love and love as much or even more than you love yourself, you've got to decide which you really love more, that person or that thing, or yourself.

(How do you do that?) "Well, you've got to think about it, you've got to think about both sides, and you've got to think

which would be better for everybody or better for yourself, which is more important and which will make everybody happier. Like if the other people can get somebody else to do it, whoever it is, or don't really need you specifically, maybe it's better to do what you want because the other people will be just fine with somebody else, so they'll still be happy and then you'll be happy too, because you've done what you want."

Does this have a familiar ring? It really made me think of women who maybe want to leave or maybe want to stay, but they want to do whatever they're going to do without having anybody suffer from it, and of course that's the big problem.

MORALITY AND BATTERING

It's apparent that women's moral attitudes as they develop at an early age has something to do with why they stay in brutalizing relationships. They may focus on attachment and care to the exclusion of rights and abstract principles or justice. As women grow older they tend to incorporate some of the ideas of the morality of rights, and men also tend to move towards the female morality of responsibility. But even when the women are able to recognize that their rights are violated they still must wrestle with the conflict between their rights and their concerns about hurting someone.

For many years it was thought that women who married alcoholic men and stayed with them, did so because of some neurotic need. I suppose lots of people still think that. The investigators who have made those judgements failed to consider two things. First there were far more male alcoholics than female which is not so true today. So a woman's likelihood of marrying an alcoholic man was just simply really high. Secondly, a woman married in innocence and stayed out of loyalty, duty, moral commitment. In Gilligan's terms she stayed because of attachment, connection or concern for helping others, and that of valuing the relationship.

Only ten percent of women married to men who are alcoholics leave them. Ninety percent of men married to alcoholic women leave them. Perhaps men leave because they believe it is their right not to have their lives interfered with by an alcoholic wife. There is reason to believe that similar patterns of separation and divorce prevail for other illnesses as well. Anybody who finds statistics about males and females who have divorced spouses who have illnesses or children who have illnesses, please send them to me because I know that this is so and I'm trying to collect them.

The importance of all this for us is that many women stay with abusive men as well as other men who are sick or at fault, not because the women have a defect or are lacking or are sick, but because they are operating on their highest ethical principles—those of caring and attachment.

It might be instructive to look at how Gilligan's ideas tie into Lenore Walker's latest work as reported in The Battered Woman Syndrome. (I think this second book of hers is really wonderful. It's much more explicit than the first one, and she has these long interviews with hundreds of women that she asks almost everything in the world, I think, that she could think of. So she's finally collected the data and it probably is more complete than anybody that's done this kind of work.) In her interviews with women who'd been battered, she poses several hypotheses that seem quite reasonable, or even obvious, which however were not supported by the evidence. She predicted that battered women would evidence low self esteem but that prediction did not hold out. The women surveyed perceive themselves as stronger and more independent and more sensitive than women in general and than men in general. The highest scores they gave themselves were for being sensitive and just. The greatest gap between the women's relatively high scores for themselves compared to their evaluations of men in general were for the traits sensitive, warm, moral, mature and just. The most pronounced cluster of high scores could be said to describe a better moral person. Seems that a large number of women in relationships with men that batter feel a sense of high esteem, and part of that esteem may stem from a conviction of relative moral superiority or righteousness. I think some of us have seen this but not placed appropriate importance on it. So a woman's conviction to stay in a battering relationship may be based on a willingness to sacrifice autonomy in favour of attachment to the man, in order to adhere to a moral principle and the primary importance of family and of the children's need of a father. Again we know that but I think we don't place it in the moral context in quite the way we should.

When they do consider separation, women may be overwhelmed, not just by the threat of loss, but also by the moral responsibility for the potential loss through separation of the partner, the family, the ethnic community, social circle or even that community of married people in nuclear families. In addition, they may experience the projected loss of moral stature and self esteem. They may feel guilt when accused of failing to care enough and may fear that those who accuse them of not caring enough will disengage from them. They may feel hopelessness and a sense

of moral failure about the dubious possibilities for attachment to other people if they leave.

So my concern is that sometimes we may almost dismiss these concerns as irrational guilt or as traditional ideas that we must fight against rather than appreciating the reality that women have played a major and valuable role in enabling children, men and other women to make and deepen attachments to each other. This capacity and its value for women has enriched the world and it's going to continue to do so.

A related factor that perhaps we don't attend to enough is the response to the question, "Why do they leave?" Researchers haven't really asked this question much. I was surprised recently when I did a computer search to find articles on this subject and found there's essentially nothing. Then I noticed the flyer over here today from a researcher who is trying to answer that question which I am extremely pleased to see. When researchers do get to answering it, my fear is that they won't get sufficient answers until they go beyond the reasons that the women give for leaving. They also need to ask about experiences women have after they left for the last time.

My experience in interviewing women about staying away after they left the man for the last time indicates that a major reason they didn't return was that they were able to experience or see the possibility of new attachments and new ways of expressing care to people who in turn cared for them. It might be a new man in the offing, and these may be planned attachments and concerns and caring or they may be happy accidents. Then a new man turns up or even some man notices them so they imaginatively realise, "I can make another connection." It may be a Minister who is supportive, or a Counsellor, and of course very often it's the nurturing caring women at a Transition House or safe home, who renew certain feelings of attachment and connections. And those feelings may help her feel like a good and worthy person once again—not just not lonely, but good.

MORALITY AND WORK WITH BATTERED WOMEN

So what do these speculations tell us about our work? The women's movement or the movement against battering, has worked for women's rights to equality and specifically the right not to be dominated, intimidated, threatened and beaten by male partners. Those rights are good and important principles. They are essential messages to transmit to women relating to abusive men. They are also essentially the male morality of rights. It is very interesting that that's what this movement has

focussed on. So the other part of our movement that's equally important and that we've worked hard at, and maybe we haven't talked about enough, or given enough of a prominent place in our public presentations, is the peculiarly female ethic based on connectiveness, attachment and caring. Perhaps we could reach even more women than we have by drawing a clearer and more moving picture of how we are not just helping women exercise their rights, which often necessitates separating from their men, but that we are a community of women striving to live by ethical standards to support and promote attachment and connectiveness and caring. We're ready to give. Not only housing and food for a short period of time but emotional support, trust, exchanges of feelings and ideas, in other words most of the things offered by an intimate relationship with a man, or a family, or a community.

Even while we want women to separate from dangerous men if necessary, we also respect and honour the moral strength they demonstrate in caring for those they love. We want them to extend that caring to themselves and in some instances to reevaluate the ways that they care for their children in staying with abusive men. But we admire their determination to foster attachment.

Perhaps the most compelling message we have to offer women in relationships with abusive men is one of moral androgyny. That is our recognition that attachment and caring are essential and that includes each of us caring for other women and ourselves as well as for intimate family members, and their recognition that the right to make decisions and to define one's limits and values is also essential, even if it sometimes necessitates separation from loved ones.

As women grow older, they understand that, in Gilligan's words "The absolute of care defined initially as not hurting anyone becomes complicated by the need for personal integrity." Most of us in this movement wrestle with these two conflicts ourselves--realising the limits of our care and our ability to meet the needs of every woman, as we face the need to respect our own rights and integrity. Thus we recognize the importance of rights for all women. In our quest for community we permit no barriers of race, class, ethnicity, age, lifestyle, disability or sexual orientation. We recognize the difficulties of overcoming institutional barriers that inhibit our reaching out to each other but we're determined to overcome them. We persuade women of every imaginable sort to work with this and to reach out to others who are like them and not like them. We educate ourselves to learn about all kinds of women and then we find the ways we can become

emotionally attached so that women who exercise their rights to leave damaging and dangerous men will not find themselves without connections but will be in a position to develop more of those woman to woman connections. It is this important part of our movement that we put in place one more time this week. Everyone here has a commitment to reach out, not just to some women but to all women who are being abused. We all know it's difficult in terms of best ways to stretch our hands out to women who are new to our movement and to do it in ways that will not look to them like a fist directed against them. Women who most of society views as "other" may view us with distrust at first, but we're willing to make the best effort to bridge the institutionally imposed separation. And if it fails we're willing to come back and analyse and try again. Because of that commitment to connect to all women, this has been an extremely exciting conference for me. It's been an inspiration to be part of such a large group who are not just speaking fine sounding words but who are putting into action plans for helping every women who wants to exercise her rights as well as define or create a new community.

At the same time I hope that each of us will leave here with a commitment to do what is possible without abusing ourselves. We must allow time to connect with each other and to remember to be as caring toward ourselves as we are toward the women we work with. That's the message I just want to leave with you today. Thank you.

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EMPOWERING MOTHERS AND CHILDREN: IDENTIFYING, UNDERSTANDING AND DEVELOPING PROGRAMS FOR WORKING WITH CHILD ABUSE

BY MARGO BUCK

INTRODUCTION

In Victorian texts, there are horrendous stories of sexual and physical abuse. However, it wasn't until the 1940's in Canada that abuse was identified as a problem. This was due mostly to the work of medical people who started following up on children who had one fracture after another. It was found that between 60-90% of these children who had been thought to have "fragile" bones were dead by the time the follow-up study was done. These findings prompted the term "Battered Child Syndrome."

Today, we know that the children who fall into the category of the Battered Child Syndrome are only on one end of the the child abuse continuum. In the 1940's, it was thought that children with multiple fractures were what child abuse was all about. As researchers began to look at the phenomena in larger and larger numbers, what became clear was that most children who were physically abused suffered bruising only. Children with multiple fractures were only a small percentage of all battered children. Today the Battered Child syndrome is mainly a rural problem.

Expanded research and knowledge also prompted researchers to look at the emotional aspects of child abuse. What became clear was that regardless of the severity of the injuries afflicted on the child, the emotional damage was great in all cases. This has led researchers to look at different types of physical abuse.

CATEGORIES OF ABUSE

Today, it is known that abuse happens for different reasons. The three main types of abuse are stress related, intergenerational abuse, and drug and alcohol related abuse. The material in this paper will discuss mostly the syndrome of intergenerational abuse.

To the child, abuse is abuse and it has all the results that we know will be disastrous, but in terms of helping abusive families, it is often very important to know, if one can, what is the precipitating cause of physical abuse.

STRESS RELATED ABUSE:

In some families, there is evidence that parenting was once adequate to meet the child's physical and emotional needs. However, some stress, such as unemployment, marriage breakdown, housing problems, has impinged on the family to the point where the child is abused due to environmental or relationship stress factors.

Although stress related abuse is very real, it is often seen as a blanket cause by Mental Health and other workers. The problem with this happening is that the help the family needs may not be forthcoming. If the abuse is the result of stress in the family, then the logical helping mode would be to try to relieve the stress. With true stress related abuse families, this would work. The problem comes when this is seen as the cause in all cases. Then families who fall in other categories will not be getting adequate help and the children will continue to be abused.

INTERGENERATIONAL ABUSE:

Intergenerational abuse is continuous in the home. This does not mean that the child has always been physically abused. Rather, it means that there is a pattern of child rearing where 1) there is high unrealistic or bizarre expectations for the child; 2) the parents are basically not child oriented and are not able to perceive the child's needs; 3) the child is there to meet the parent's needs.

One of the things that may make it difficult to determine the cause of the abuse is that intergenerational families may also be under a lot of stress. Intergenerational abuse families may abuse more when they are

under stress. The difference, however, is that the history is different from stress related abuse. Intergenerational abuse parents will have a history of being raised in an abusive family themselves and there will be no evidence that their parenting was adequate before the stressor was introduced.

ABUSE RELATED TO DRUGS, ALCOHOL OR MENTAL ILLNESS

The other group of precipitating qualities or categories of physical abuse are the ones that are related to drugs, alcohol or mental illness. The thing that is the same for all of them is that they often require specialized treatment before one can really know what the parenting patterns are. For example, there are some people whose parenting appears adequate except when they have a drink. They may be intermittent drinkers, drinking maybe every three months and then there is an incident with the child. On the other hand, there are people who drink in order to abuse. This is more common in sexual abusers. These people get drunk in order to act out behavior which they feel would be unacceptable if they were not drunk.

This group of characteristics is put together simply to indicate that before one can really assess what is the parenting pattern in a family, one needs to deal with either the drinking, the drug abuse or mental illness.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

The core that runs through all physical or sexual abuse of children is emotional abuse. It is possible, of course, to have emotional abuse without the physical or sexual. It is not possible to have physical or sexual abuse without emotional abuse.

Emotional abuse is when a parent does not respect that the child is an individual and does not encourage the development of self or self esteem within that child. What the parent does do, in what appears as a deliberate manner, is to reduce the natural instinct which exists in every person to develop their individual potential. The parent does this by restricting the environment, by verbal put-downs, by physical abuse. This results in the child not developing their individual potential.

CONDITIONAL BONDING

ATTACHMENT PATTERNS IN ABUSIVE FAMILIES:

When you look at how attachment performs in abusive families, we're often confronted with what seems to be a very difficult social phenomena. It's a phenomena you see in battered women, in kidnap victims and in cultural groups who have had their powers stripped away. What we see is

that the attachment to the abuser or to the abusers is often stronger than to the non-abusive people in the person's life. The attachment is also stronger in abusive families than in a family where there was a different form of child rearing. This is what is called conditional bonding.

Parental expectations of child: The term conditional bonding was used for several reasons, one of which is that the conditions for bonding are often set down prior to the birth of the child. For example, if you ask an abusive parent (intergenerational abuse) their reasons for having a child, at least 95% would say, "So somebody could love me." A neglectful parent will often give this same answer, although their way of putting the statement into practice is quite different.

What happens with abusive parents is that the parent sees the child as being able to make them into a good person or make them into a worthy person. That is what love often means to an abusive parent. In other words, they are people without a complete sense of self. This does not mean that at the time most people become parents, they necessarily know completely who they are. However, in a normal attachment pattern, the parent is starting out with the idea that they are in some sense a complete person.

The abusive parent is starting out looking to a child to make them a complete or whole person. They feel very conscious that they are not a whole person and they feel conscious that whatever they are as a person, or whatever they can feel of themselves, is bad. Furthermore, they see the child as being the person that will complete them and make them a good person. Therefore, they have a tremendous amount invested in the child and in the child being a good child.

The definition that abusive parents give the child will vary from family to family. They will tend to focus around good behavior. Good behavior can mean anything from being polite to adults (which is often a key definition), to being clean, to being neat, to being tidy, to being bright. Some abusive parents go beyond high expectations to actually having bizarre expectations of the child.

So parents start out with very mixed up ideas on what are the roles of parents and children. One of the ways that the expectation that the child will care for the parents is carried out is in infancy the child will want to be cuddled when the parent needs to be cuddled. It will not be the parent responding to the child's need but it will be the child who, when the parent needs some comfort, will cuddle into the parent and make them feel warm and wanted. As the children get older, these expectations will broaden into

other areas. The child may be expected to share responsibility around anxieties about money or whatever has gone wrong with the household or within the marital relationship. In any case, the idea is that the child should be the adult and care for the parent.

If expectations are set for children which their development will not allow them to meet, children are always going to be failures. So children in this sort of home are always failing. There is never any way that they can actually be right. They get frequent verbal putdowns, being called stupid and other derogatory names. Sometimes children do not even know they have a name since they are always called by "come here stupid."

Consequences for the self: Sometimes these high and unrealistic expectations are very overt and sometimes they are very subtle and may not be detected unless the family is observed over a long period of time. The results for the child are several. First, the child is not getting nurtured and is not learning that the world is a safe place. Second, they are getting a set of situations in which they cannot really meet the demands. They are constantly being put down. The price that the child pays for this, as well as any physical injuries that they may get, is that they cannot develop self. The put downs leave the child feeling worthless. Thus, there is a loss of self identity which precedes self esteem and which is the core of self power.

When you talk with people who have been raised in a setting where they have not been able to develop a sense of self, particularly if they have experienced sexual abuse as well, they will describe very clearly what it is like to not have a sense of self. They will say things like, "I don't really know whether I exist" or "I feel I'm always faking it" or "I feel anxious" or "I feel I have a cancer inside." Many adult survivors have dreams which revolve around self identity. One woman reported dreaming that she was on a ship and she and somebody else were trying to protect children from danger. In this dream she found herself in a toilet with some other person and she was not able to find her identity papers. Just as she found them, this other person, who was like some sort of God to her, flushed them down the toilet. The woman reported that of everything she had dreamed, the thing that had hurt, bothered and upset her the most was having her identity flushed down the toilet. The critical point here is that self identity is the key issue in all abusive situations.

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in all abusive situations.**

The fact that the emphasis is on self identity issues does not mean that self esteem issues are not important. However, in terms of working with a survivor, be it a child or an adult, we are really looking at building self and building self develops self esteem. The two concepts are often confused and for treatment, they need to be separate and clear.

Effects of "Nice" times on conditional bonding: As with battered women, abused children may experience times when their parent is kind and nice to them. The parent may buy them gifts, make nice remarks about them, etc. What these periods do is to attach the child even more strongly to the abusing parent. These indulgences may appear to the child as a reward, increasing their motivation to stay attached to their parent. So that a part of the pathological bonding that happens may be the occasional buying of gifts and other nice events. When this behavior is intermittent with abuse, the pathological bonding between the victim and the abuser becomes stronger.

POWER OF PATHOLOGICAL BONDING:

The burden of being in an abusive situation is intolerable for the child. We may have all experienced situations where for some reason or another we have experienced a loss of self esteem and how painful that is and the amount of anxiety it produces. Even if we have good self esteem and we are facing an abusive situation, we know how quickly, unless we take hold of the situation, we can move to feeling that we are to blame. This is the sort of hook which exists for children in pathological bonding. As one's sense of self diminishes, as one feels less and less of a person, and as the other person becomes more and more powerful in one's eyes, then one, particularly as a child but in other situations as well, feels one is to blame. Since the person feels they must be to blame for not being lovable, then the person feels they must try to be something else for the abusing person. They may feel they must behave in some way that will prove they are lovable and, of course, that attaches and attaches the bonding.

Therapists who see adults who have been raised in abusive situations often report that, even though they are out of their parent's home, adult survivors will spend the whole of their time going back and back, trying to get love from a parent who have never done anything except put them down.

There seems to be a strong pull to prove that our parents love us, because unless they love us, we must be unlovable. If we can't prove we're lovable to those persons who are our primary bonding contact, then we can't be lovable to or trust anybody else. This doesn't mean that adult survivors never deal with their families and move on in their lives. However, there are still numbers of adults who are trying and trying to prove to their parents that they are alright people. All of this demonstrates how powerful a bond may be formed between a child and the abusing parent.

The child is in a very real way dependent on their parents for their physical and emotional survival, which makes the child's dependence on the parents very real. In some abusive homes, this dependency is increased in an almost deliberate way by the parents. The child is told, over and over again, how much worse the outside world is compared to the family. Children end up thinking that they may as well stay where they are since a foster home or some other place will be a hundred times worse than their present situation.

There are only a few exceptions to the formation of this bond. The pathological bond will form when the nurturing and abuse is coming from the same parent. There are and have been situations where the nurturing parent has satisfactory parenting skills and the abuse is coming from the other parent. In this situation, the pathological bond may not form. In this situation, the child may grow up hating or being indifferent to the abusing parent.

SEPARATION ANXIETY:

Separation anxiety in children is a striking phenomena because it occurs even when the children are not separated from their parents. For example, at the PACT (Parent and Child Therapy) project in Vancouver, which was a treatment program for abusive families, there was a large room where the children played at one end and the parents would be with adults, getting their own needs met, at the other end. If the child did something which normally would precipitate abuse, the child would see what the parent was going to do about it. Because the parent was actually getting their needs met by an adult, they didn't do anything. At this point, the children would go into separation anxiety.

In some senses, the children are never psychologically separated from their parents. Since the child represents to the parent a part of self, the child becomes a part of that symbiotic relationship and the parent ends up being part of the self for the child. The children become so acutely tuned

into the parent that if the parent doesn't respond in the way the child feels they should, it feels like a psychological separation to the child.

This separation anxiety can be very powerful and needs to be understood in order to be worked with. For example, foster parents can be devastated by it in a very personal way. They may feel that they are giving the child a nice home, clean clothes, a non-abusive atmosphere and the child still wants to go away and live with the parents who have been abusing her/him. The same thing is often seen in Transition Houses where children will greatly miss their father who has been abusing them.

DEVELOPMENT OF GUILT AND SHAME

One of the by-products of pathological bonding is the development of guilt and /or shame in the child. Shame is more often experienced by children who have been sexually abused. They end up feeling that there is something defective (and shameful) about them. Guilt, on the other hand, is produced when the person does something wrong. Guilt can be alleviated by correcting the mistake. Shame is harder to get rid of.

For children whose parents have had high or unrealistic expectations and for whom failure is the inevitable conclusion, they will feel continually guilty. They will have no chance to correct their mistakes since they will not be able to meet their parent's expectation. So they will feel guilty that they can't do things right and then will feel guilty again because they can't correct what was done wrong. By the time they reach adulthood, guilt may be an everpresent entity in their lives.

While shame is more prevalent in survivors of sexual abuse, it can also exist in survivor's of physical and emotional abuse. The shame is not being lovable. With sexual abuse, the shame can come as well from all sorts of sexual things. Some people feel they made a bargain with their abuser. They feel that in order to get attention, they agreed to sex. There may also be shame around the pleasure they may have had. However, the basic sense of shame for most people is the thought, "I'm unlovable." As adults, they may have had people help them deal with the guilt and still be left with the shame. Shame is more elusive. It's not always something the survivor can put her/his finger on and find a way of dealing with it. Even when a person is doing fine at work, in their home life, etc, they still have the feeling that inside they are rotten and when the other people in their life find out, then they won't love them. When talking to people who grew up in abusive situations, it is important to distinguish between guilt and shame, although on the surface, they may present in much the same way.

CONDITIONAL BONDING AND PHYSICAL ABUSE

BIRTH TO YEAR ONE:

During the first year of a child's life, many factors are significant in determining whether or not physical abuse will take place. These factors relate, of course, to families where there is a predisposition to abuse. The two most significant factors are: 1) the child's natural temperament and state of health, and 2) the degree of pathology in the parental expectations of the child.

Temperament and state of health: If a child is able to fulfil the conditions of sleeping, eating at regular times and being comforted easily, the risk of physical abuse is lowered during the first year of life. If the child can do these things, the parent will see themselves as a "good" parent. This means that the part of themselves that they are looking for in the child will be fulfilled. If they have an infant like that, there may be no evidence of physical injury. The child who doesn't cry a lot and who is able to readily modify mood will be able to meet the parent's needs. For example, if the mother is feeling depressed or feeling badly about something, she can go to the crib, pick the baby up and have the baby snuggle to her and she will feel gratified. Therefore the likelihood of abuse is lowered.

Parental expectations: If the parent's have bizarre expectations in the sense that the parent hates the child because she/he looks like a relative who is disliked or if the child has certain characteristics which the parent has decided should not be there (like being female), there is no way the child can do anything about this. Definitely, the chances of that child being abused are high. If the child's crying or refusal to be comforted is viewed by the parent as being directed against them, it is almost certain she/he will be abused. Parental expectations of children commonly increase in accordance with the child's increased powers of comprehension and independence. Therefore, those children who have avoided physical abuse in the first year of life, may be abused for the first time in the second or third year, or even at a later date.

Parent/Child Interactions: Although many parents do not abuse their children during the first year of life, at the PACT treatment centre, we had the opportunity of observing parents who had infant children and were in treatment for abusing their older children. 1) The first thing we noticed was that the parents rarely sought out interaction with the infant unless the infant indicated distress or the parent was experiencing loneliness, boredom or other personal stress. The first part, that the parent rarely

sought out interaction unless the infant indicated distress, may sound like a child or infant behavior. However, the more we came to understand conditional bonding, the more we came to see that it wasn't child oriented. In other words, the parent's response to distress was not concerned with what was happening to the child. What the parent was concerned with was their own worth as a parent. They were concerned with what sort of parent they would be if something happened to their child.

2) The second thing that we noticed was that if the child responded in a positive way to the parent's comforting behavior, then the parent indicated approval by smiles, relaxed body and verbal exchanges. What was indicated again was that the parents were very strongly influenced by the response of the child. When they first responded to the child's distress, they were rewarded by feeling that they were a good person. Then when the child responded warmly to them, they felt a sense of gratification that they were doing the right thing.

3) The parent ceased interaction with the child shortly after the distress signals stopped, unless the parent had personal stress, in which case she/he would continue to interact with the infant. 4) Some parents would wake the infant up or interfere with the child's play in order for the parent to receive comfort if she was distressed. The first time we really noticed this was when the parents were in groups. Occasionally something would happen that distressed the parents and they would simply disappear. Later, we found out they went to the nursery or to the day care to seek comfort from their children.

5) The parent often did not respond accurately to child related clues. For example, if a child was crying in a heart-rendering manner presumably from fear, the mother would use a distraction technique rather than a comforting technique. Again, this indicates that they were not child oriented, did not understand that humans and individuals have views of their own and that as an adult and a parent their responsibility was to meet those needs of the child.

6) Spontaneous interchange of babbling, talking, singing, playing games was only rarely initiated by the parent. When such behavior was initiated by the infant the parent either participated briefly, misinterpreted the behavior or participated in a disinterested manner.

7) When the infant did not respond to the parent's comforting or diversionary behavior, the parent reacted initially with anxiety, sometimes panic and then later with anger and sometimes with absolute disgust. This

display of disgust, particularly, has disastrous sorts of effects on the emerging personality of the child. We found that the parents we were not successful with and who had had that sort of parenting and who were modeling that parenting with their own children could not improve their self identity or self esteem in an accumulative manner. Each time the parents were given support or encouragement, their self esteem would improve, only to be at the beginning level again when we saw them next. They saw themselves to be bad in a way that seem different from the other parents we worked with. Most parents thought of themselves as being bad in terms of things they did or actions they took. However, the parents who had experienced their parents disgust had a sense of themselves as morally bad and tainted. They felt that this feeling permeated the whole of their being and that they would never be rid of it.

What these parent/child interactions demonstrate is the absolute need for early intervention. As the above points show, the interactions can be very subtle and often need observations over a long period of time to determine if it is the parent's or the child's needs that take priority, since on the surface the relationship can look like a happy one.

B) A small group of parents were over anxious about distress signals, frequently thinking they could hear their infant cry, choke, etc. when the infant was fine. Also, it is not uncommon in taking histories to get abusive parents to describe the first year of life with their child as being wonderful. They often say things like, "I was the best parent in the world to my infant. I never let them cry for a minute. I was always there." While not all overprotective parenting is abusive, some is and it is because it's parent oriented. They are going and looking for the needs of their child because they fear they will be considered a bad parent if they don't. Non-abusive overprotective parents know they are overprotective and will try to deal with that behavior. They will say things like, "I know my child has to learn to do this and it makes me nervous." They see the child's needs and they see the problem as their own anxiety. The overprotective parent who is abusive does not see that at all.

School phobia is an example of abusive overprotectiveness played out with older children. Some children will not attend school because they can't separate from their parents. On the surface, the parent may appear protective because the child is fragile, or the child has got a cold or can't cross the road or whatever. It looks to be child oriented behavior when in fact the parent is keeping the child at home in order to meet the parent's needs.

AGE ONE TO THREE YEARS

If that first year of life has passed for a child in an abusive environment with no physical abuse and perhaps even no screaming and shouting or verbal abuse, it's invariable that as you get into the second year of life that abuse is going to occur. The second year, of course, is the developmental stage characterized by increased autonomy or independence in the child. It's the time when the child moves from crawling to walking, to talking, to gaining bladder and bowel control. These skills the child is gaining are really in conflict with a parent who needs to have a child do what they want them to do in order for the parent to feel themselves a good person. It is not that the parent does not want the child to gain maturity. In fact, they often want them to be more mature than their chronological age would allow. They want them to be mature in ways that the parent defines as being mature and appropriate. So the behavior of a child from eighteen months to three years, give or take a few months, can be very frightening to an abusive parent. The parent feels as though they are out of control. The child now has a point of view and can explore the world on their own. The child can say no. The child can retain their bowel movements or pee on the carpet. The child can comprehend in a different way and can be defiant and be stubborn.

The average parent gets through that period of power struggle which is there for every parent and child by being flexible and having certain limitations for the child. They are flexible in the sense of the child's needs. For example, if the child is sick, they don't demand as much of the child. They will help the child see that there are choices so that they can cut down some of the power struggle.

Abusive parents, since they do not recognize children's needs, do not recognize that independence is a healthy stage and is essential to future maturity. They want to keep the child bound to them in a pathological way. So they often become more rigid as the child starts to defy. There can be horrendous battles between this type of parent and child where they will actually struggle for three hours to make the child put on a coat or something like that. The verbal abuse is often continuous about how stupid the child is, etc. Very often that ends in physical abuse, either a slap or some more severe punishment. Children often get injuries around toilet training and many of the injuries are burns. There may be burns of the buttocks or burns to the feet, etc. A child may have been tied onto a potty, sometimes for hours and then the child goes on the carpet. The parent then puts the child's buttocks in hot water, giving an explanation that the child will never go on the carpet again.

Hypermonitoring of children: At this age, the child obviously has very few alternatives. In spite of this, children often rebel against their treatment, although you do see rebellion being alternated with some pleasing, compliant behaviors that are their attempts to meet the parents needs and avoid abuse. They are starting to develop hypermonitoring at this point. They will be testing what is going to happen now. They are sort of trying to feel and anticipate with everything in their body and their senses what will happen next. Will they be hit across the head or are they going to get locked in a cupboard or are they going to be told they are stupid? They are always on the alert for all of those sorts of dangers in the environment.

TREATMENT

The treatment program at PACT had four parts. The first part was based on the premise that one can't really learn new parenting skills until one understands one's own abuse. The beginning part of the program, in a sense, had nothing to do with parenting. Parents were in groups and talked about what it is like to parent a child at various stages in the child's growth. They were in other groups as well where what they were doing was understanding their own abuse. This second group was where the second part of the program came in. 2) Parents were encouraged to mourn for their own childhood. This was based on the premise that a parent will not be able to empathize with his/her own child, as an abused child, until he/she recognizes what happened to him/her and mourns for it.

At the same time that the parents were in the two groups, they also attended a recreational social program. 3) Part of that program was designed to deal with the parent's longing to have things that one should have had as a child. They would get to play with toys and get to play with paints and go on picnics. They would get to do all sorts of things they had dreamt of doing as a child but couldn't do. Those activities are not the same to do as adults but they did help cut down on the competitiveness of needs with the children. They began to learn that children's toys are children's toys. They learned that it was ok for them to have toys of their own or to play with their children's toys when the children were in bed.

The key to abusive parents learning to empathize with their own children and to seeing them as separate individuals is to see what one has lost, to mourn for that and to empathize with one's self as an abused child. If an offender cannot be sad, they really cannot develop what is the underlying basis for teaching any parenting skills which is to have empathy for the child and to recognize the child as separate and individual.

As well as the structured program the parents learned through being nurtured themselves by staff, by seeing non-abusive role models and by seeing the difference in their children when the children were with non-abusive adults. They were then able to realize that half of the battles and struggles they had with their children were due to an abusive way of rearing.

4) The last part of the program was teaching parenting skills. Many of them, after they had developed a sense of who they were and what they wanted from life and had learned to change their communication patterns, did not need all that much teaching about parenting skills. If the basics around self had been picked up in the first half of the year, they learned the parenting skills very easily. However, if the parenting skills are taught without the parents first getting the nurturing and the understanding they need, the parenting skills will not be learned easily.

THE ABUSED CHILD

After a child has begun to be abused, he/she begins to develop certain behaviors. Many of these show up at preschool age, although the problems are there for other ages as well. For example, children who have been abused will often develop sleep disorders at preschool age. These disorders may follow them into their later life. The same problem may express itself differently at different ages.

DEVELOPMENT OF POLAR PERSONALITIES

Around preschool age, abused children will often start to be either angry and defiant or pleasing and compliant. This does not mean that these behaviors are exclusive. In fact the child who is often angry will also have some compliant behaviors and vice versa. At the preschool age, more of the children will fall into the angry and defiant category, although they may change at a later stage of development into the pleasing category. What this suggests is that at an early age, they are already forming the polarities of victim and offender in their personality. This is expressed as being either controlling of others or being controlled. Often people who have been abused are thinking only of these two poles. They feel that either they must control someone else or have someone else control them.

At PACT, there were children who were so passive they literally did nothing but sit, rock, masturbate and bang their heads. At this point their behavior had gone beyond that of the pleasing child who was always trying to say and do the right thing for the adult. Other children would save

everything for their parent, including their food. Children often couldn't concentrate on their own play because they were looking to see when their parent left and were running to open the door for the parent. Yet underneath all this pleasing and passive behavior was anger and defiance. For example, staff members would find the child doing something horrendous to an animal or a toy and as the staff came around the corner, the child would put on this smile and start to stroke the animal or toy.

With some children, their overall behavior was compliant with severe outbursts of anger and defiance. The children who were angry and defiant most of the time were destructive, not only of their own play materials, but of anything we had in the house. They were also very destructive in their relationships with other children. The way of resolving conflict for these children was to overpower others. Often we were struck with the similarity between the play of the children and the interactions of their parents, particularly if there was marital counselling going on. The dialogue was actually the same although at different levels and the behavior was very, very reminiscent.

ANXIETY

Although the term anxiety is most often applied to adults, at PACT it was found that often they could not work with children-until they have been able to lower their anxiety level in certain ways.

Water play: One of the ways this was done was through water play. Some children were simply so anxious that the first few months of their stay at PACT, they spent most of their time in the bathtub because the other water play that was available was not sufficient to get the soothing atmosphere that comes when one is entirely immersed in water.

Wrestling: For other children for whom physical contact with other people was anxiety producing, wrestling was the way the staff found to reduce their anxiety. These children found close nurturing and contact troublesome and were only able to stand touch in rough play. So they would allow it through wrestling on the floor which is an activity which happens in abusive homes, particularly between fathers and children. In an abusive home it's a poor activity since the parent does often not know the limit for the child and will go beyond the point where it's fun for the child. Because the wrestling had been an abusive activity for the child and yet was the only way they felt comfortable with physical activity, it had to be done very carefully in the program. Wrestling was allowed. However, the staff was very careful in the way they did it and cut it off at a certain period of time and would then transfer the contact to some other activity.

Rituals: The other thing we had to do with anxious children was to help establish rituals. The rituals were particularly important around eating and mealtimes. Mealtimes are high threat times in abusive families and very often abuse takes place around feeding. Some children were literally so anxious they would never go into a meal. Some parents will not give children certain food because it is messy or, if the child is allowed the food, they are not allowed to eat it independently. Even if they are capable of eating by themselves the parent will feed them just so there won't be any chocolate pudding left around.

To counteract this anxiety which had developed for the children, we had to develop rituals. We would take the child into the kitchen half an hour before the meal was being prepared, got the child involved with the preparation and with setting the table. The more we could prepare them for the event, the more relaxed they were. In spite of that, we had children who never ate a meal for months except on a staff member's knee. Even then, the child may have had to leave the dining room halfway through the meal.

The program was set up so that parents and children ate in different rooms. This was because of the immense stress that the parents felt with their children at mealtimes. Also, there were always new people coming into the program and there were new families who were in the very beginning stage and for whom the stress would have been too great.

While anxiety is particularly evident around food, it exists in other areas of the child's life. It exists around separation, around lots of regular social activities and around performance. There are some children who will not paint or who will not participate in an activity unless everything is perfect in the way they think it should be perfect. Children will not draw a horse unless they can draw it well and have nothing messy. The anxiety around performance relates to the high expectations they've had put on them.

PLEASURE

In abusive homes, the idea that one should have pleasure just for the sake of pleasure is unknown. Abusive parents will often choose the toys their children are going to have on the basis of how noisy they are, how clean or messy they are or how much they involve the child moving around. Abusive parents will tend to choose toys so that children can sit quietly and where spontaneity is diminished. So the whole idea that one should just take a paintbrush and have a good time with color and other materials and do whatever one wants is very difficult to give these small children. Not all abused children are affected this way. For the ones that are, there is a

sense that they will feel anxious until they figure out how the adults want them to do the activity and until they can do it perfectly.

DEVELOPMENTAL PROBLEMS

Large motor skills: Some studies have indicated that abused children have problems with their fine motor development. However, in PACT, we found that not to be true. Fine motor development in abused children was average or above average because they were encouraged to spend time in quiet activities which involves the use of the small muscles. The deficit came in large motor skills. Children who are abused are not usually encouraged to do things like ride tricycles, to swing on swings, to do things that use those large muscles.

Language: The area that is the most delayed is language. Not only is there a problem in expressing how one feels and knowing the language for that, there is also the idea that if one speaks one may be in trouble, so that it may be best not to say anything at all. At times, abused children are thought to be deaf. Some may have a hearing loss due to injury but many do not and yet appear to not hear easily. They may be so used to responding only to that tone of voice that screams at the child, that when they are spoken to in an average sort of voice, they don't respond. They may also be tuning out an environment that has become too overwhelming for them.

DEVELOPING A MODEL FOR WORKING WITH ABUSE IN TRANSITION HOUSES

INTRODUCTION

Transition house workers may see, on a daily basis, some or all of the behavior and dynamics which have been described above. And since the services have been set up primarily to respond to the needs of women who are being abused, most services want to keep that focus when working with child abuse. In other words, they want to be very sure they are not victimizing the mother themselves by talking with her about her parenting skills when she is concerned with her safety. Workers may feel in a quandry. They want to help the family, including the children without adding to the pressure and the victimization the mother may feel. Workers may feel that they have to take one side or the other. Either they support the mother and hope their support will allow her to improve how she feels about herself and therefore about her ability to parent her children or they feel they must support the children and risk adding to the mother's burden.

Child protection services are to protect children and we have to do everything we can to improve those services. That means that parents, too, are treated with respect and dignity.

In many services, there is a new understanding that the whole family unit - mother and her children - must be treated with respect and dignity before any real change will take place. In these services, workers are looking to improve their skills in working with the mother and children in order to empower both of them. Often this is seen in terms of improving the self esteem of the mothers.

While it is possible to buy books that give a whole set of exercises on working with self esteem, often the exercises will not be suited for the particular group or place or time. There are certain types of exercises which will be listed later which can then be adapted to meet the goals of the service and the women being served.

Developing skill in groups in terms of self esteem is really being able to adapt and create opportunities that meet the needs of your particular group of people.

The material on conditional bonding and abuse that has been presented above is skills in process. In that material, we were looking at abusive and neglectful patterns. If we understand the dynamics of those sorts of backgrounds, it tells us something about what sort of group we might need to use, what might be effective in the group and how to start to evaluate the results of the group. For example, if the people we were setting out to serve were neglectful parents, we would know that they may not be suffering from loss of power or self esteem in the same way that abusive parents might be. So that designing a group using a lot of self-esteem exercises for women who are neglectful parents will not be particularly effective, since the women will not feel that they are doing anything wrong. Therefore, their self esteem around parenting will probably not be very low. In the case of neglectful parents, some self awareness techniques are more appropriate. However, you have to be careful, since once a neglectful parent realizes (through self awareness) that their parenting style is not as good

as they thought, their self esteem may actually go down. This means that the way self awareness is done is very important. What all this points to is the importance of understanding and knowing the background of the people you are working with as well as understanding the dynamics involved in their parenting styles.

What will follow, therefore, is a model of how to design learning exercises that are seen as one part of learning opportunities in your service. The model will then be versatile in that exercises will be adaptable to the circumstances of the women. The exercises can be increased in complexity, they can be used in parts, they can be changed around if the women in the house have different needs.

LIST BEHAVIORS WHICH EQUAL SELF POWER

Since what we have been talking about deals with power issues, the first part of the model will be to list the behaviors which equal self power. This can also be done with any other issue as well. As a group, brainstorm on the behaviors you are striving for in your group. In this case, the question will be "If all the parents you work with had self power, what sorts of behaviors would they have?"

Their beliefs and values are congruent with their behavior most of the time. Therefore, they do not suffer constant guilt. In other words, what they believe, they act upon most of the time. Most of us will suffer less guilt if we can define what we believe in and what our values are and then be able to act according to them, providing that the circumstances allow us to do so. For a self powerful person, the standards for behavior will be appropriate to the particular task and the limitation of times and circumstances. The self powerful person can be flexible, has a set of standards which are high and appropriate and can also change the standards if limitations of time or circumstances demand it.

A self powerful person's sense of guilt about their behavior is appropriate to the action taken or not taken and is used to motivate change. People who have self power don't sit around and stew in their guilt. Rather, they are able to see that it's appropriate to feel badly if one has done something badly and the way to stop feeling badly is to do something about it. If it is not possible to do something about the particular situation, self powerful people will use that experience to learn and not do the same thing next time.

Self powerful people have a sense of the past and the future and they are rooted in the present. What this means is self powerful people have a

sense of belonging. They know where they come from. If that means they know that they came from an abusive background, they know it is better to know that and deal with the fact, then to hide and deny it. Self powerful people have a sense of the future while holding onto the idea that the future is always to some extent undetermined. They project themselves somewhat into the future while being firmly rooted in the present. This creates a sense of belonging and right to be here that is part of being a powerful and a self defined person.

A person who has a sense of their own power really believes they can have some impact and change their own lives and the lives of others. Some people might say they are optimistic and that may be the same thing in different words. One has to have the belief that one can make some difference in one's own life and in the life of others.

A self powerful person is willing to take some risks in order to achieve change. Sometimes it may be the sort of risk that one takes after one has weighed what may be the consequences of one's behavior and has then decided to take the risk anyway. Sometimes it may be very risky and may be a leap into the unknown. It is based on the faith that one is able to make good decisions and that one is in charge of one's life.

A person who has a sense of their own power can anticipate some consequences of certain actions, evaluate the actions and learn from hindsight. In other words, a person can imagine, prioritize and take action. The results of that action can then be evaluated and the person can learn from what happened. The skills that were learned in that action can then be transferred to other situations.

A self powerful person can communicate needs to others in a clear manner and can delay gratification of needs when necessary without feeling deprived.

A person who has a sense of their own power can recognize themselves as being unique and can also recognize that they are connected to others. In other words, they can recognize that they, like all human beings, have a basic need to be connected and will make those connections for themselves. At the same time, they see themselves as being different, special and unique and not just like everyone else.

A self powerful person can evaluate and give recognition to their own skills and talents and can also recognize their own limitations.

DEVELOP OBJECTIVES

After the list has been refined according to the philosophy of the service, what you will be developing are objectives. These objectives then form the basis for planning the program. While both the objectives and the philosophy are used in the planning stage of a program, they are also used in the implementation of the program. There is some fear on the part of some service providers that if women know exactly what the objectives of the transition program are they will modify their behavior while in the program to fit the objective. While some people may be able to do this for a short period of time, people do not modify their behavior over longer periods of time. More importantly, role modeling is one of the primary ways that people learn how to get power and if the role model is modeling secrecy and deviousness, then that is what the people in the program will be learning. This is why any program, after it is planned and written must be checked for congruency. By doing this, we will begin to see if there are things where we are saying one thing and doing another.

Objectives are also used to evaluate the program. For example, one of the objectives of the PACT program was to increase decision making and planning skills of parents. With this objective, we had the structure for evaluation. What we would do is to evaluate what the objectives are, how we met the, and what type of learning opportunity we created to meet those objectives.

DESIGN LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

After objectives have been decided upon, you design learning opportunities to meet the objectives. Anything can be a learning opportunity. For example, the total safe environment with its routines that provide a certain structure and safeness is a learning opportunity. Role models who are nurturing and who have a sense of their own power and who can interact with children to give them power are also learning opportunities. Groups can also be learning opportunities whether they are short term or long term and regardless of the exercises which are done in the group. You can devise as many learning opportunities or the type of learning opportunities that you feel are appropriate to your particular setting and that you have the time and staff to meet the objective.

After the flexibility on learning opportunities is explored, you will find that if you don't run a group, you can adapt a group technique to an individual technique. Therefore, you can get to the same place when you're talking to somebody on a one to one basis as in a group.

EXERCISES FOR INCREASING POWER

Following is a description of the type of group exercises you could do if you are interested in self esteem, self awareness and self identity. Again, these exercises can be adapted to use with individual women or to use with other objectives.

Third party onlooking: This is where you devise a situation where the participants are going to look at somebody else doing something. Then the participants will be asked to talk about how they would feel or what they would do if they were that person. In this exercise, little stories or vignettes can be written up and everyone can have a copy. The story can be as close or as far away from the participants' particular situation as you want. For instance, if you want to describe a situation relating to frustration or anger, you could devise a situation of people who are waiting in a line up and somebody comes and interferes with that line up. Someone in the line gets furious and hits another person. Or you could devise a situation that is closer to a marital battering situation. This is where you can have the flexibility to change the exercise depending on the needs of the people in the group. The questions which follow the vignette will also vary depending on how personal you want to get. For example, if you are going to ask, "How would you feel if the were a woman in the line up?" you are going to get a very different level of response than if you ask, "How would you act if you were the person involved in the violence?"

What the group leader does is to introduce the exercise to the group and then asks people to share their answers. She then helps the group to compare their answers and learn from one another. The leader will draw the exercise to a close by trying to indicate what was, if it wasn't already described by a group member, the most appropriate thing to do. The leader could also add another part to the exercise of asking the participants to talk about how they would apply what they learned from the exercise to parts of their lives. This is most appropriate in longer term groups. This may bring the issue to a more personal level than you want in a beginning group which is not ongoing.

This exercise is useful for looking at sensitive issues that people want to look at with some distance. It is also good for people who can learn from other's behaviors what they can't see in their own. Sometimes we are so close to our own behavior, we can't see it. Yet when the same behavior is described in another situation, the connection can be made.

Own Needs Assessment: Each group member is given a circle and the circle is divided up into segments. The leader asks the group members to write in each segment those roles that apply to their life, e.g., mother,

student, wife, employee, etc. The leader then asks them to look at each of those roles and try to say what satisfactions they get from each of the roles.

This exercise can be used in all sorts of different ways. Groups members can be asked to compare the satisfactions they are getting now to the satisfactions they would like to be getting. They can look at the circle in terms of which of the roles are giving them the greatest satisfaction. In more ongoing, more indepth groups, the leader may ask them to look at that part of self which is not taken up by any particular role and what satisfactions they get from that part of self. This input could cause people with problems with self identity the most pain. When they are in a clearly defined role with structures and rules for behavior, etc, they feel more self defined. It is when they find themselves in a situation that is looser and that doesn't have a particular role definition and a set of ways of behaving, that they feel depressed or abandoned or feel they don't belong. This may not be something one wants to look at unless one has ongoing ways of working with the group members.

Self Fantasy: There are many of these exercises and one is described here. You can have a set of small index cards and each one of them has written on it some sort of occupation people might do. The occupations will range from the most outrageous pop singer to very ordinary jobs like waitressing. The leader asks the members of the group to take a card in turn and to keep going until they find one to three cards which describe jobs which in their fantasy they would like to have. The leader will then have them individually on a separate piece of paper describe the characteristics of that employment role or occupation. In other words, the leader will ask them to describe why they would like to be that person.

The purpose of the exercise is to help with self identity. This is an exercise which helps people to start thinking about what makes me. This exercise only touches a very small part of self identity. Yet, sometimes people have great difficulty in trying to look at self identity and to even know what self is. This can be done through the roles one plays and it can also be done through fantasy about who one would be if one was not oneself.

Positive Visualization: This is where the group leader asks people to close their eyes and think of a situation where they have great fear or anxiety. Then the group leader helps them to visualize going into that situation in a more positive way or with a different sort of attitude or with a sense that they are going to accomplish something. The leader will then help the group develop ways of accessing that new attitude for real life

situations. This exercise, of course, is not useful for situations where there is real danger or violence. It is best used in situations where the group members have a fear that they will not perform well or are afraid of trying something new.

Role Play at Third Hand: This is similar to third party onlooking except that the group members take the parts in the vignette and play them out. This exercise has the benefit of allowing people to analyze and feel how they would respond in a certain situation that may be similar, yet removed, from their own. This can also be used with situations that are specific to a certain person or to several people in the group.

Sentence Completion: With this one the group leader has to decide whether to use it as a positive sort of reinforcement or whether to use it with subjects that are more threatening. In this exercise, the leader gives the group members a series of sentences with several endings, gets them to make choices and then talk about the choices they have made. For instance, there could be a sentence that would say, "When people speak to me in a loud voice, I feel like (a)disappearing (b) shouting back (c) as though I am helpless." The leader can put in some of the more negative feelings or she/he could use a sentence that would emphasize positive feelings and actions. However, as with other exercises, if the sentence leads the group members to look at more negative feelings or feelings that touch on deep seated problems of abandonment, rejection, the leader must be careful to be able to follow through on some of the responses that may come up.

If you're going to look at more negative sorts of feelings or feelings that touch on those deep seated problems of abandonment or rejection, you have to be careful that you're able to follow through on some of the responses that you may get.

Message Collage: The leader brings a pile of magazines, gives sheets of paper to all the participants and asks them to cut out any headlines or pictures that they feel represent who they are and then form them into a collage. After the collage is finished, each person is asked to explain the work they have done. With longer groups, participants can do two or three

collages titled, "Me As I Am," "Me As I Was," and "Me The Way I Will Be In The Future."

This exercise is used to develop self awareness. It may also give the leader a clue, particularly in a transition service, as to whether the problems and the issues the woman is experiencing are created by the crisis of her violent relationship and of being in an unfamiliar situation or whether they are of a more long standing disorder of the type that has been talked about previously in this paper. Again, the leader has to be able to handle feelings of depression or alienation that may come up if participants do the three part collage, particularly around their childhood. In the experience of PACT, most of the collages that describe "Who I Am" deal with a lot of anger.

Positive Characteristic Enforcer: The leader asks a third person to describe pleasing characteristics of their neighbor. This may be done in smaller groups or it may be done in the large group. The leader can also ask the participants to say positive things about themselves. This exercise seems to have more self esteem value when the participants describe positive characteristics about each other than when they do it for themselves. People seem constantly surprised that somebody thinks that they have an attractive hairdo or that they dress nicely or whatever. It often comes as a complete surprise when anybody thinks good things about a person's body, since body image is the last area of self to change.

Sequencing of Exercises: The more the group leader, in the beginning, introduces how other people feel about something or demonstrate that other people have the same problem, the more the egos of the group members will be flooded. In the same way, if the leader is using supportive techniques where the client is being encouraged and where the issues are being generalized, the self esteem of the participants will usually go up. It is usually best to use these sorts of techniques before dealing with issues that are more painful and more difficult to deal with, such as a confrontation technique. By confrontation is meant simply that the leader (or whomever) is clearly stating the problem. When people have low self esteem, it is often difficult to do that without further lowering their self esteem and raising their defenses. So supportive techniques will flood the ego so that people will not get as defensive as they might if a confrontation technique had been used initially.

REFERENCES

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APPENDIX I

SOME DIFFERENCES IN ATTACHMENT PATTERNS (NEGLECTFUL AND ABUSIVE FAMILIES)

Reasons for Having Child	Primarily self-oriented -to be loved -to be a good/worthy person	Primarily self-oriented -to be loved -connections between being loved and being a good person less predominant
Assumption of Parenting Role	Assumes the role with vigour and a clear agenda of expectations of child.	Abdication of parenting role or some role functions. Very few or unclear expectations of the child.
Parent/Child Relationship	Jealously guards the role of parent Relationship with child is symbiotic in nature. (Degree may vary from family to family.)	Allows friends, relatives(sometimes strangers) to care for child Relationship is usually intermittent - and dependent on how the parent feels. Child's needs ignored if parent stressed/depressed - may receive attention when parent is feeling better.
Child	Parent turns to child for major emotional satisfaction. Child gradually recognizes that there are conditions for attachment and usually attempts to fulfill them. May rebel/withdraw from the conditions of bond.	Parent turns to environment for major satisfactions.-Parties, friends, etc. Attachment rules unclear-Creates early pseudo-independence, without the nurture and structure necessary to support child's independent actions.
Role	Child pressured to achieve. Child identifies with a concept of world based on power/control. Child likely to form pathological attachments with small number of people.	Child rarely pressured to achieve. Child feels alienated, abandoned, has poor sense of direction, sees world as chaotic, uncertain. Child likely to form many short-term attachments or, if very damaged, no attachments to others.

ASSESSING PARENT/CHILD RELATIONSHIPS(CONDITIONAL BONDING)

1) PHYSICAL CARE OF CHILD

a) Does the parent feed the child food which are appropriate to the age and individual needs of the child and family budget?

or Does the parent determine what the child should eat, according to an idiosyncratic belief system which reveal the parent distaste for messy foods or high expectations of the child's development?

b) Does the parent attend to the physical needs of the child in a rough, hurried or disinterested manner?

c) Does the parent show disgust regarding bodily functions of the child either verbally or by rough or unusual punishment?

d) Does the parent dress the child in a manner which is appropriate to the normal activities of the child's age/stage of development?

e) Does the parent allow the child to explore indoor/outdoor environment - by the provisions of suitable toys/equipment, opportunity?

f) Is the child's bedtime appropriate to the age/development of the child or to serve the interest of the parent?

g) Is the child required to walk up stairs unaided or attempt other physical activities, e.g. toilet training, when the child does not have the developmental maturity to achieve the task without undue stress?

2) EMOTIONAL CARE OF THE CHILD

a) Does the parent seek out the child for the purpose of receiving comfort from the child?

b) How many comments does the parent make, which indicate a sense of being incomplete, for example, "cannot live without the child," "needs the child to give her a purpose in life", etc.

c) Does the parent describe the child in terms which clearly indicate the individual nature of the child? Can the interviewer get a picture of a unique individual from the parent's description?

- d) If the parent describes individual characteristics of the child, does the parent feel these are positive or do they mostly describe behaviors which are troublesome and /or behaviors which are in advance of the child's normal development and likely to cause undue stress to the child?
- e) In answer to the question, "what do you like most about children?" does the parent answer by describing polite, obedient children?
- f) Is the parent excessively attentive to the infant - if so, what are the parent's behaviors when the infant is distressed and does not comfort readily?
- g) If there is an older sibling in the family, does the parent compare the child unfavourably with the infant?
- h) If the parent receives positive attention from a nurturing adult, does she ignore the needs of the child?
- i) How many self determined (according to the age/stage of development) actions is the child allowed to make without interference or unnecessary guidance from the parent?
- j) Does the parent have an appropriate repertoire of child oriented skills?
 Can she comfort the child?
 Can she be consistent without rigidity?
 Can she avoid power struggles?
- k) How competitive is the parent with the child regarding
 1) play materials
 2) attention from others
- l) Does the parent frequently discuss adult problems with the child - money, sex, adult conflict, or does she assume appropriate adult responsibilities in these areas?

3) OBSERVATIONS OF THE CHILD'S RESPONSE TO THE PARENT

Is the child unduly attentive to the parent?

DOES THE CHILD

- a) interrupt own play to open the door, etc for the parent.

- b) comfort the parent when the parent is distressed?
- c) constantly follow the parent's movements - even in a safe setting where interesting toys are available?
- d) offer no resistance if the parent takes over the child's toys/play materials?
- e) frequently offer toys to parent - watch parent play with the toys, rather than actively participating in play?
- f) consistently save food gifts for the parent?
- g) remind parent of appointments, shopping to be done, etc.?
- h) offer no protest if the parent interrupts the child's play/sleep, in order to cuddle the child?

4) OBSERVATIONS OF THE CHILD (without parent present)

a) Is the child free to explore the environment, toys, etc according to the needs of age/stage of development?

or

- b) Does the child remain in a defined area and play with same toy in a repetitive manner?
- c) Does the child flit around the room picking up and putting down toys? but not show any real interest in one toy or piece of equipment?
- d) Is the child unusually aggressive/destructive with toys, other children, equipment?
- e) Is the child unusually passive, withdrawn or pleasing and compliant?
- f) Is the child's development age appropriate?

gross motor skills	self help skills	speech skills
fine motor skills	play skills	sense of self
sexual development	relationship with peers	

A Commentary on Religious Issues in Family Violence

A Commentary on Religious Issues in Family Violence was written by Rev. Marie M. Fortune, an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ and Director of the Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence. Substantial contributions were made by Judith Hertz from the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods.

The Importance of Religious Issues: Roadblocks or Resources?

The crisis of family violence affects people physically, psychologically, and spiritually. Each of these dimensions must be addressed, both for victims and for those in the family who abuse them. Approached from either a secular or religious perspective alone, certain needs and issues tend to be disregarded. This reflects a serious lack of understanding of the nature of family violence and its impact on people's lives. Treatment of families experiencing violence and abuse requires integrating the needs of the whole person. Thus, the importance of developing a shared understanding and co-operation between secular and religious helpers to deal with family violence cannot be emphasized too strongly.

Occasionally, a social worker, psycho-therapist, or other secular service provider will wonder, "why bother with religious concerns at all?" The answer is a very practical one: religious issues or concerns which surface for people in the midst of crisis are **primary issues**. If not addressed in some way, at some point, they will inevitably become roadblocks to the client's efforts to resolve the crisis and move on with her/his life. In addition, a person's religious beliefs and community of faith (church or synagogue) **can** provide a primary support system for an individual and her/his family in the midst of an experience of family violence.

For a pastor, priest, rabbi, lay counselor or other person approaching family violence from a religious perspective, there is little question about the relevance of religious concerns: these are primary for any religious person. Rather, they may doubt the importance of dealing with concerns for shelter, safety, intervention and treatment: "These people just need to get right with God and everything will be fine." This perspective overlooks the fact that these other issues are practical and

important as well. Family violence is complex and potentially lethal; these seemingly mundane concerns represent immediate and critical needs.

When confronted with a personal experience of family violence, like any other crisis whether chronic or sudden, most people also experience a crisis of meaning in their lives. Very basic life questions arise and are usually expressed in religious and/or philosophical terms. Questions like, "Why is this happening to me and my family?" or "Why did God let this happen?" or "What meaning does this have for my life?" are all indications of people's efforts to understand, to make sense out of experiences of suffering and to place the experiences in a context of meaning for their lives. These questions are to be seen as a healthy sign because they represent an effort to comprehend and contextualize the experience of family violence and thereby regain some control over their lives in the midst of crisis.

Thus for many individuals and families in crisis, the questions of meaning will be expressed in religious terms, and more specifically, in terms of the Jewish or Christian traditions, since the vast majority of people in the U.S. today grew up with some association with these traditions. Many continue as adults to be involved with a church or synagogue. In addition, Jewish and Christian values overlap with cultural values of the majority American culture, so most Americans carry a set of cultural values, consciously or unconsciously, which are primarily Jewish or Christian in nature.¹

Religious concerns can become roadblocks or resources for those dealing with experiences of family violence because these concerns are central to many people's lives. The outcome depends on **how** they are handled.

The misinterpretation and misuse of the Jewish and Christian traditions have often had a detrimental effect on families, particularly those dealing with family violence. Misinterpretation of the traditions can contribute substantially to the guilt, self-blame, and suffering which victims experience and to the rationalizations often used by those who abuse. "But the Bible says . . ." is frequently used to explain, excuse, or justify abuse between family members. This need not be the case. Re-examining and analyzing those Biblical references which have been misused

¹The discussion of religious issues included here reflects a Jewish and Christian perspective due to the background and experience of the authors and contributors. Although there are other religious traditions also present in the pluralistic American culture, the focus of this discussion is limited by the authors' perspectives and experiences.

can lead to reclaiming the traditions in a way which supports victims **and** those who abuse while clearly confronting and challenging abuse in the family.

A careful study of both Jewish and Christian scriptures makes it very clear that it **is not possible to use scripture to justify abuse of persons in the family.** However, it is also clear that it is possible to **misuse** scripture and other traditional religious literature for this purpose. This is a frequent practice (see below). Attempting to teach that there are very simple answers to the very complex issues which people face in their lives is another potential roadblock within contemporary teachings of some Jewish or Christian groups. Thus, religious groups have often not adequately prepared people for the traumas which they will face at some point in their lives: illness, death, abuse, divorce, and so forth.

- "Keep the commandments and everything will be fine."
- "Keep praying."
- "Just accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior and you will be healthy, prosperous, popular, and happy."
- "Go to services each week."
- "Pray harder."

While these teachings may be fundamental teachings of religious faith, alone they are inadequate to deal with the complexity of most experiences of human suffering like family violence. When offered as simple and complete answers to life's questions, they create in the hearer an illusion of simplicity which leaves the hearer vulnerable to becoming overwhelmed by an experience of suffering. In addition, the teachings set up a dynamic which blames the victims for their suffering.

"If you are a **good** Christian or a **good** Jew, God will treat you kindly, or take care of you, or make you prosper as a reward for your goodness."

"If you suffer, it is a sign that you **must not be** a good Christian or a good Jew and God is displeased with you."

If one accepts this simple formula (which makes a theological assumption that God's love is conditional), then when one experiences any form of suffering, one feels punished or abandoned by God. The simple answer alone cannot hold up in the face of personal or familial suffering. When people attempt to utilize the simple answer and it is insufficient, they feel that their faith has failed them or that God has abandoned them. In fact, it may be the teachings or actions of their particular congregation or denomination which have been inadequate to their needs. Thus they may be feeling abandoned.

The religious teachings of the Jewish and Christian traditions **are** adequate to address the experiences of contemporary persons when the traditions acknowledge the complexity, the paradox, and sometimes the incomprehensible nature of those experiences. The most important resource which the church or synagogue can provide is to be available to support those who are suffering, to be a sign of God's presence, and to be willing to struggle with the questions which the experiences may raise. Offering sweet words of advice to "solve" life's problems reduces the experience of the one who suffers to a mere slogan and denies the depth of the pain and the potential for healing and new life.

Cooperative Roles for Secular Counselor and Minister/Rabbi

Both the secular counselor and the minister or rabbi have important roles to play in response to family violence. Families in which there is abuse need the support and expertise of both in times of crisis. Sometimes the efforts of the two will come into conflict, as illustrated by the following situation:

We received a call at the Center from a local shelter for abused women. The shelter worker indicated that she had a badly beaten woman there whose minister had told her to go back home to her husband. The worker asked us to call the minister and "straighten him out." Ten minutes later we received a call from the minister. He said that the shelter had one of his parishioners there and the shelter worker had told her to get a divorce. He asked us to call the shelter and "straighten them out."

In the above case, both the shelter worker and the minister had the best interests of the victim in mind. Yet they were clearly at odds with each other because they did not understand the other's concerns which related to the needs of the victim. The shelter worker did not understand the minister's concern for maintaining the family and the minister did not understand that the woman's life was in danger. We arranged for the minister and the shelter worker to talk directly with each other, sharing their concerns in order to seek a solution in the best interest of the victim. This was accomplished successfully.

The need for cooperation and communication between counselors and ministers or rabbis is clear so that the needs of parishioners/congregants/clients are best served and the resources of both religious and secular helpers are utilized effectively.

Role of the Secular Counselor. In the secular setting, a social worker or mental

health provider may encounter a victim or abuser who raises religious questions or concerns. When this occurs, the following guidelines are helpful:

1. Pay attention to religious questions/comments/references.
2. Affirm these concerns as appropriate and check out their importance for the client.
3. Having identified and affirmed this area of concern, **if you are uncomfortable with it yourself or feel unqualified to pursue it**, refer to a pastor/priest/rabbi who is trained to help and whom you know and trust.
4. If you are comfortable and would like to pursue the concern, do so, emphasizing the ways in which the client's religious tradition can be a resource to her/him and can in no way be used to justify or allow abuse or violence to continue in the family. (See below.)

Role of Clergy. The minister, rabbi can most effectively help family abuse victims and offenders by co-operating with secular resources. Combined, these provide a balanced approach which deals with specific external, physical, and emotional needs while addressing the larger religious and philosophical issues.

When approached about family violence, the minister/rabbi can use the following guidelines:

1. Be aware of the dynamics of family violence and utilize this understanding in evaluating the situation.
2. Use your expertise as a religious authority and spiritual leader to illuminate the positive value of religious traditions while clarifying that they do not justify or condone family abuse. (See below).
3. Identify the parishioner/congregant's immediate needs and REFER to a secular resource (if available) to deal with the specifics of abuse, intervention and treatment.
4. If you are comfortable pursuing the matter, provide additional pastoral support and encouragement to help families dealing with violence to take full advantage of available resources.

Scriptural and Theological Issues

Suffering. The experience of physical or psychological pain or deprivation can generally be referred to as "suffering." When a person experiences suffering, often the first question is, "Why am I suffering?" This is really two questions: "Why is there suffering?" and "Why me?" These are classical theological questions to which there are no totally satisfactory answers.

Sometimes a person will answer these questions in terms of very specific cause-and-effect relationships:

"I am being abused by my husband as punishment from God for the fact that 20 years ago, when I was 17 years old, I had sexual relations with a guy I wasn't married to."

In this case, the victim of abuse sees her suffering as just punishment for an event which happened long ago and for which she has since felt guilty. This explanation has an almost superstitious quality. It reflects an effort on the part of the woman to make sense out of her experience of abuse by her husband. Her explanation takes the "effect" (the abuse), looks for a probable "cause" (her teenage "sin"), and directly connects the two. This conclusion is based on a set of theological assumptions which support her view: God is a stern judge who seeks retribution for her sins and God causes suffering to be inflicted on her as punishment.

Unfortunately, the woman's explanation neither focuses on the real nature of her suffering (i.e., the abuse by her husband), nor does it place responsibility for her suffering where it lies: on her abusive husband.

Sometimes, people try to explain suffering by saying that it is "God's will" or "part of God's plan for my life" or "God's way of teaching me a lesson." These explanations assume God to be stern, harsh, even cruel and arbitrary. This image of God runs counter to a Biblical image of a kind, merciful and loving God. The God of this Biblical teaching does not single out anyone to suffer for the sake of suffering, because suffering is not pleasing to God.

A distinction between voluntary and involuntary suffering is useful at this point. Someone may choose to suffer abuse or indignity in order to accomplish a greater good. For example, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. suffered greatly in order to change what he believed to be unjust, racist laws. Although the abuse he experienced was not justifiable, he chose voluntary suffering as a means to an end.

Involuntary suffering which occurs when a person is beaten, raped, or abused, especially in a family relationship also cannot be justified but is never chosen. It may, on occasion, be **endured** by a victim for a number of reasons, including a belief that such endurance will eventually "change" the person who is being abusive. However, this belief is unrealistic and generally only reinforces the abuse.

Christian tradition teaches that suffering happens to people because there is evil and sinfulness in the world. Unfortunately, when someone behaves in a hurtful way, someone else usually bears the brunt of that act and suffers as a result. Striving to live a righteous life does not guarantee that one will be

**NEW PERSPECTIVES ON
BATTERED WOMEN**

**Connie Chapman
Editor**

**for
Society of Transition Houses(B.C./Yukon)**

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protected from the sinfulness of another. A person may find that she/he suffers from having made a poor decision, (e.g. by marrying a spouse who is abusive). But this in no way means that the person either wants to suffer or deserves abuse from the spouse.

In Christian teaching, at no point does God promise that we will not suffer in this life. In scripture, God **does** promise to be present to us when we suffer. This is especially evident in the Psalms which give vivid testimony to people's experience of God's faithfulness in the midst of suffering (see Psalms 22 and 55).

One's fear of abandonment by God is often strong when experiencing suffering and abuse. This fear is usually experienced by victims of abuse who often feel they have been abandoned by almost everyone: friends, other family members, clergy, doctors, police, lawyers, counselors. Perhaps none of these believed the family members or were able to help. It is therefore very easy for victims to conclude that God has also abandoned them. For Christians, the promise to victims from God is that even though all others abandon them, God will be faithful. This is the message found in Romans:

"For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."
(Romans 8:38-39. RSV).

Often this reassurance is very helpful to victims of violence or to those who abuse them.

Sometimes, people who regard suffering as God's will for them believe that God is teaching them a lesson and/or that hardship builds character. Experiences of suffering can, in fact, be occasions for growth. People who suffer may realize in retrospect that they learned a great deal from the experience and grew more mature as a result. This often is the case, but only if the person who is suffering also receives support and affirmation throughout the experience. With the support of family, friends, and helpers, people who are confronted with violence in their family can end the abuse, possibly leave the situation, make major changes in their lives, and grow as mature adults. They will probably learn some difficult lessons: increased self-reliance; how to express anger; that they may survive better outside than inside abusive relationships; that they can be a whole person without being married; that they can exercise control over their actions with others; that family relationships need not be abusive and violent.

However, this awareness of suffering as the occasion for growth **must come from those**

who are suffering and at a time when they are well on their way to renewal. It is hardly appropriate when someone is feeling great pain to point out that things really are not so bad and that someday she/he will be glad that all of this happened. These words of "comfort and reassurance" are usually for the benefit of the minister/rabbi or counselor, not the parishioner/congregant or client. At a later time, it may be useful to point out the new growth which has taken place, and very simply to affirm the reality that this person has **survived** an extremely difficult situation. Suffering may present an occasion for growth, whether this potential is actualized depends on how the experience of suffering is managed.

Nature of the Marriage Relationship: A Jewish Perspective. The Jewish marriage ceremony is known as "Kiddushin" or sanctification. Through it a couple's relationship is sanctified or set apart before God. This sanctification reminds Jews to strive to express their holiness through marriage and the home in a covenantal relationship which is based on mutual love and respect.

Judaism views marriage as necessary for fulfillment. Marriage is part of God's plan. The first time God speaks to Adam, God says that it is not fitting that Adam should be alone. "Shalom Bayit," peace in the home, is a major family value in Judaism. "Shalom," which is simply translated as "peace," also signifies wholeness, completeness, fulfillment. Peace in the home, domestic harmony, encompasses the good and welfare of all the home's inhabitants.

The rabbis consider domestic tranquility as one of the most important ideals because it is the essential forerunner to peace on earth. "Peace will remain a distant vision until we do the work of peace ourselves. If peace is to be brought into the world we must bring it first to our families and communities."²

The concept of Shalom Bayit should not be misinterpreted as encouraging the preservation of an abusive marriage. When domestic harmony is impossible because of physical abuse, the only way for peace may be dissolution of marriage. Although marriage is viewed as permanent, divorce has always been an option according to the Jewish tradition.

In Judaism conjugal rights are obligatory upon the husband who must be available for his wife.

"A wife may restrict her husband in his business journey to nearby places only, so that he would not otherwise deprive

²Gates of Repentance. (High Holy Days Prayer Book) Central Conference of American Rabbis. 1978 p. 67

her of her conjugal rights. Hence he may not set out without her permission."³

While the husband is responsible for his wife's sexual fulfillment, the wife, in return, is expected to have sexual relations with her husband. Maimonides⁴ teaches us about the relationship between husband and wife in a Jewish marriage. He asserts that if the **wife** refuses sexual relations with her husband...

"she should be questioned as to the reason... If she says, 'I have come to loathe him, and I cannot willingly submit to his intercourse,' he must be compelled to divorce her immediately for she is not like a captive woman who must submit to a man that is hateful to her."⁵

This suggests that no wife is expected to submit to sexual activity with a husband she fears or hates. The arena of sexual sharing for Jewish couples is one of mutual responsibility and choice.

Nature of the Marriage Relationship: A Christian Perspective. Christian teaching about the model of the marriage relationship has traditionally focused heavily on Paul's letters to the Ephesians, Corinthians, and Colossians. Misinterpretations of or misplaced emphasis on these texts create substantial problems for many married couples. Most commonly, directives on marriage based on scripture are given to women and not to men, and state that wives must "submit" to their husbands. This often is interpreted to mean that the husband/father is the absolute head of the household and that the wife and children must obey him without question. Unfortunately, this idea has also been interpreted to mean that wives and children must submit to abuse from husbands and fathers. This rationalization is used by those who abuse, as well as by counselors, clergy, and the victims of the abuse themselves.

A closer look at the actual scriptural references reveals a different picture. For example, Ephesians 5: 21:

"Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ." (RSV, emphasis added)

This is the first and most important verse in the Ephesians passage on marriage and also the one most often overlooked. It clearly indicates that all Christians — husbands and wives — are to be **mutually subject** to one another. The word which is translated "be subject to" can more appropriately be translated "defer" or "accommodate" to.

"Wives **accommodate** to your husbands, as to the Lord." (Ephesians 5.22)

This teaching implies sensitivity, flexibility, and responsiveness to the husband. In no way can this verse be taken to mean that a wife must submit to abuse from her husband.

"For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the Church, his body, and is himself its savior. As the church is subject to Christ, so let wives also be subject in everything to their husbands." (Ephesians 5.23-24, RSV)

The model suggested here of husband-wife relationship is based on the Christ-church relationship. It is clear from Jesus' teaching and ministry that his relationship to his followers was not one of dominance or authoritarianism, but rather one of servanthood. For example, Jesus washed the feet of his disciples in an act of serving. He taught them that those who would be first must in fact be last. Therefore, a good husband will not dominate or control his wife but will serve and care for her, according to Ephesians.

"Even so husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no man ever hates his own flesh, but nourishes it and cherishes it, as Christ does the Church, because we are members of his body." (Ephesians 5.28-29, RSV)

This instruction to husbands is very clear and concrete. A husband is to nourish and cherish his own body **and** that of his wife. Physical battering which occurs between spouses is probably the most blatant violation of this teaching and a clear reflection of the self-hatred in the one who is abusive.

It is interesting that the passages quoted above from Ephesians (5.21-29) which are commonly used as instruction for marriage are instruction primarily for husbands; nine of the verses are directed toward husband's responsibilities in marriage; only three of the verses refer to wives' responsibilities and one refers to both. Yet, contemporary interpretation often focuses only on the wives and often misuses those passages to justify the abuse of the wives by their husbands. While spouse abuse may be a common pattern in marriage, it certainly cannot be legitimated by scripture.

In terms of sexuality in marriage, again this passage from Ephesians (see also Colossians 3.18-21) has been used to establish a relationship in which the husband has conjugal

³Yad. Ishut, XIV-2, Yale Judaica Series, p. 87

⁴Maimonides was a Jewish philosopher (1135-1204) whose *Mishneh Torah* became a standard work of Jewish law and a major source for all subsequent codification of Jewish law.

⁵Yad. Ishut XIV 8, p. 89

rights and the wife has conjugal **duties**. In fact, other scriptural passages are explicit on this issue:

"The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to the husband. For the wife does not rule over her own body, but the husband does; likewise, the husband does not rule over his own body, but the wife does." (1 Corinthians 7.3-4, RSV)

The rights and expectations between husband and wife in regard to sexual matters are explicitly equal and parallel, and include the right to refuse sexual contact. The expectation of equality of conjugal rights and sexual access and the need for mutual consideration in sexual activity is clear. The suggestion that both wife and husband "rule over" the other's body and not their own refers to the need for joint, mutual decisions about sexual activity rather than arbitrary, independent decisions. A husband does not have the right to act out of his own sexual needs without agreement from the wife; likewise, the wife also. This particular passage directly challenges the incidents of sexual abuse (rape) in marriage frequently reported by physically abused wives.

The Marriage Covenant and Divorce. A strong belief in the permanency of the marriage vows may prevent an abused spouse from considering separation or divorce as options for dealing with family violence. For the Christian, the promise of faithfulness "for better or for worse . . . 'til death do us part" is commonly taken to mean "stay in the marriage no matter what," even though death of one or more family members is a real possibility in abusive families. Jews view marriage as permanent, but "til death do us part" is not part of the ceremony. The Jewish attitude embodies a very delicate balance. Marriage is taken very seriously. It is a primary religious obligation and should not be entered into or discarded flippantly. Nevertheless, since the days of Deuteronomy, Jewish tradition has recognized the unfortunate reality that some couples are hopelessly incompatible and divorce may be a necessary option.

For some Christians, their denomination's strong doctrinal position against divorce may inhibit them from exercising this means of dealing with family violence. For others, a position against divorce is a personal belief often supported by their family and church. In either case, there is a common assumption that any marriage is better than no marriage at all and, therefore, should be maintained at any cost. This assumption arises from a superficial view of marriage which is concerned only with appearances and not with substance. In other

words, as long as marriage and family relationships maintain a facade of normalcy, there is a refusal by church and community to look any closer for fear of seeing abuse or violence in the home.

The covenant of Christian marriage is a life-long, sacred commitment made between two persons and witnessed by other persons and by God. Jews also regard marriage as sacred and intend that it be permanent. A covenant between marriage partners has the following elements:

1. It is made in full knowledge of the relationship.
2. It involves a **mutual** giving of self to the other.
3. It is assumed to be lasting.
4. It values mutuality, respect, and equality between persons.

A marriage covenant can be violated by one or both partners. It is common thinking in both Jewish and Christian traditions that adultery violates the marriage covenant and results in brokenness in the relationship. Likewise, violence or abuse in a marriage violates the covenant and fractures a relationship. In both cases the trust which was assumed between partners is shattered. Neither partner should be expected to remain in an abusive situation. Often, one marriage partner feels a heavy obligation to remain in the relationship and do everything possible to make it work. This is most often true for women. A covenant relationship only works if both partners are able and willing to work on it. In both traditions, it is clear that God does not expect anyone to stay in a situation that is abusive (i.e. to become a doormat). In the Christian tradition, just as Jesus did not expect his disciples to remain in a village that did not respect and care for them (Luke 9.1-6), neither does he expect persons to remain in a family relationship where they are abused and violated. In Jewish literature, the expectation is also clear:

" . . . if a man was found to be a wife-beater, he had to pay damages and provide her with separate maintenance. Failing that, the wife had valid grounds for compelling a divorce."⁶

If there is a genuine effort to change on the part of the one who is abusive, it is possible to renew the marriage covenant, including in it a clear commitment to non-violence in the relationship. With treatment for the family members, it **may** be possible to salvage the relationship. If the one who is being abusive is not willing or able to change

⁶Maurice Lamm, *Jewish Way in Love and Marriage*, p. 157

in the relationship, then the question of divorce arises. At this point in the marriage, divorce is really a matter of **public** statement: "Shall we make public the fact that our relationship has been broken by abuse?" The other option, of course, is to continue to **pretend** that the marriage is intact. (A woman reported that she divorced only a month ago but that her marriage ended ten years ago when the abuse began.)

In violent homes, divorce is not breaking up families. Violence and abuse are breaking up families. Divorce is often the painful, public acknowledgement of an already accomplished fact. While divorce is never easy, it is, in the case of family violence, the lesser evil. In many cases divorce may be a necessary intervention to generate healing and new life from a devastating and deadly situation.

Parents and Children. "Honor your Father and your Mother" is one of the Ten Commandments taught to all Jewish and Christian children. Unfortunately, some parents misuse this teaching in order to demand unquestioning obedience from their children. In a hierarchical, authoritarian household, a father may misuse his parental authority to coerce a child into abusive sexual activity, (incest). Parents may use this commandment to rationalize their physical abuse of a child in retaliation for a child's lack of obedience.

For Christians, the meaning of the third commandment is made very clear in Ephesians:

"Children, obey your parents **in the Lord**, for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother' (this is the first commandment with a promise) 'that it may be well with you and that you may live long on the earth.' Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up **in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.**" (Ephesians 6.1-4, RSV, emphasis added)

Children's obedience to their parents is to be "in the Lord;" it is not to be blind and unquestioning. In addition to instructions to children, instructions are also given to parents to guide and instruct their children in Christian values, i.e. love, mercy, compassion, and justice. Any discipline of a child must be for the child's best interest. The caution to the father not to provoke the child to anger is most appropriate. If there is anything which will certainly provoke a child to anger, it is physical or sexual abuse by a parent.

Jewish tradition deals with the same concern, making a distinction between children based on maturity.

"One is forbidden to beat his grownup son, the word 'grownup' in this regard,

refers not to age but to his maturity. If there is reason to believe that the son will rebel, and express that resentment by word or deed, even though he has not yet reached the age of Bar Mitzvah (13), it is forbidden to beat him. Instead he should reason with him. Anyone who beats his grownup children is to be excommunicated, because he transgresses the Divine Command (Lev. 19:14) 'Thou shalt not put a stumbling block before the blind' (for they are apt to bring sin and punishment upon their children.)"

Even though Jewish law gives great authority to the father in relationship to the children, the requirement for restraint is clearly indicated. Again, the priority is on the welfare of the child.

The other scriptural injunction which is commonly used to justify abusive discipline of children is the Proverb, "Spare the rod and spoil the child." This proverb is commonly interpreted to mean that if a parent does not use corporal punishment on a child, the child will become a spoiled brat. This is a good example of a misinterpretation based on a contemporary understanding. In fact, the image referred to in this Proverb is probably that of shepherd and the rod is the shepherd's staff (see Psalm 23.4: "thy rod and thy staff shall **comfort** me"). A shepherd uses his staff to guide the sheep where they should go. The staff is not used as a cudgel.

With this image of the shepherd guiding the sheep in mind, it is certainly clear that children need guidance and discipline from parents and other caring adults to grow to maturity. Children do not need to be physically beaten to receive guidance or discipline. Beating children as discipline teaches them very early that it is all right to hit those you love for their own good. This kind of lesson fosters early training for persons who grow up and subsequently physically abuse their spouses and children.

Confession and Forgiveness. The need to admit wrongdoing experienced by an abusive family member is a healthy sign that he/she is no longer denying the problem but is ready and willing to face it. The offender may seek out a minister or rabbi for the purpose of confessing.

Sometimes, however, an abusive father confesses, asks forgiveness, and promises never to sexually approach his daughter again, or a mother swears never to hit her child in anger again. The minister/rabbi is then put in a position of assuring forgiveness **and** evaluating the strength of the person's promise not to

abuse again. While the abuser may be genuinely contrite, he/she is seldom able to end the abuse without assistance and treatment.

The minister/rabbi needs to assure the person of God's forgiveness **and** must confront the person with the fact that he/she needs additional help in order to stop the abuse. For some people, a strong word from a minister/rabbi at this point is an effective deterrent: "The abuse **must** stop now." Sometimes this strong directive can provide an external framework for beginning to change the abusive behavior.

For the Jew the Hebrew term "teshuvah" is the word for repentance. "Teshuvah" literally means "return", clearly denoting a return to God after sin. In Judaism there is a distinction between sins against God and sins against people. For the former only regret or confession is necessary. For sins against people, "teshuvah" requires three steps: first, admission of wrongdoing; second, asking for forgiveness of the person wronged (here abused); third, reconciliation which can be accomplished only by a change in behavior.

The issue of forgiveness also arises for victims of abuse. A friend or family member may pressure the victim: "You should forgive him. He said he was sorry." Or it may arise internally: "I wish I could forgive him..." In either case, the victim feels guilty for not being able to forgive the abuser. In these cases, often forgiveness is interpreted to mean to forget or pretend the abuse never happened. Neither is possible. The abuse will never be forgotten — it becomes a part of the victim's history. Forgiveness is a matter of the victim's being able to say that she/he will no longer allow the experience to dominate her/his life — and will let go of it and move on. This is usually possible if there is some sense of justice in the situation, officially (through the legal system) or unofficially. Forgiveness by the victim is possible when there is repentance on the part of the abuser, and real repentance means a change in the abuser's behavior.

Another issue is timing. Too often the minister/rabbi or counselor's need for the victim to finish and resolve the abusive experience leads him/her to push a victim to forgive the abuser. Forgiveness in this case is seen as a means to hurry the victim's healing process along. Victims will move to forgive at their own pace and cannot be pushed by others' expectations of them. It may take years before they are ready to forgive; their timing needs to be respected. They will forgive when they are ready. Then the forgiveness becomes the final stage of letting go and enables them to move on with their lives.

Conclusion

This commentary addresses some of the common religious concerns raised by people dealing with family violence. It is an attempt to help the reader begin to see ways of converting potential roadblocks into valuable resources for those dealing with violence in their families.

Personal faith for a religious person can provide much needed strength and courage to face a very painful situation and make changes in it. Churches and synagogues can provide a much needed network of community support for victims, abusers, and their children.

It is clearly necessary for those involved in Jewish and Christian congregations and institutions to begin to address these concerns directly. In ignorance and oversight, we do much harm. In awareness and action, we can contribute a critical element to the efforts to respond to family violence in our communities.

INVISIBLE WOMEN: OUTREACH AND OUTLOOK

BY GINNY NICARTHY

INTRODUCTION

When battered women first started coming to women's centres asking for help in the early 1970's and Transition Houses for the most part were non-existent, the whole issue of abuse within the family and particularly battered women as a group were invisible within society. A decade and a half later, women working in services for battered women are realizing that certain groups of battered women within their communities are still invisible and are still isolated and without adequate help. It is these groups of women that this workshop addresses.

The workshop is designed to be run over two days of five hours each. However, the exercises are set out in such a way that it could be run over a number of consecutive weeks or days of shorter time periods. Although the original workshop was run with mostly staff present, it was clear from some of the problems that arose that a full service composition of staff, Board and volunteers will produce more viable results.

DEFINING THE PROBLEM

WHO ARE THE "INVISIBLE WOMEN"?

"Power"/"Other": In our culture, we often think of certain people or groups as being more powerful than other groups. The powerful are often more "visible" and the "other" groups are "invisible". For example, the media are much more inclined to do stories on world leaders than they are on ordinary citizens; rich, healthy looking models are used to the exclusion of poor, non-healthy ones; men are more often reported as being in positions of power than are women, etc.

As women and as workers in an underpaid, undervalued field, we may think of ourselves, without spelling it out, as having little or no power relative to men, grant givers, politicians, etc. It's difficult for many of us to recognize that others perceive us as having more power than they do, and that we do have relatively more power than some others. We tend to pay attention to those who have more power than we do and we simply don't "see" those "others". They are invisible to us. The following exercise is designed to help explore the ways in which we are, and are perceived by the dominant society and ourselves, to be relatively powerful or simply the "invisible" or uncounted "other".

"Power"/"Other" Exercise:¹ 1. Take a piece of flip chart paper and draw a line down the middle. On one side write the word "Power" and on the other write the work "Other". Go around the room and one at a time, have each person name a group which falls on the "power" side and then have them name the "other" which corresponds to it. For example, wealthy would fall on the side of "power" and poor would be the group which corresponds and falls on the "other" side.

POWER		OTHER
wealthy		poor

2. Take a couple of minutes for each person to list, for her own information, the categories that have placed her on the "power" side and the "other" side of the line at various times of her life, including the present.

Small Group Exercise: 1) Have participants form groups of four or five and discuss how they have viewed those on the opposite side of the chart. From the following questions, choose those that seem most pertinent:

A. When you have been on the "other" side, have you trusted those on the "power" side? Enough to tell them what you felt? Wanted? Needed? Enough to tell them what you resented about them?

B. What were the things that you thought enabled them to have power? How did you feel about having less power? What did you do about it?

C. Did the "powerful" give you what you wanted? What they promised? If so, did you feel grateful? Guilty? Resentful? Were you more often disappointed? Or did you more often expect, ask for or get nothing?

D. How well did you understand the powerful people? How well did they understand you? To answer these questions how much do you have to guess or assume, and how much was explicitly stated?

E. When you were on the powerful side, did you know what the others wanted? If so, how? What did you do to find out? Or did you just assume you knew? Did you ever assume you knew better than they did or what they wanted or needed?

F. What were the things that you thought kept them on the "other" side? How did you feel about having more power than they did? What did you do about it?

¹This exercise is adapted from an anti-racism workshop by Catlin Fullwood and Susan Pharr, Seattle, Washington, 1985.

G. Did you give them what they wanted? Why or why not? How did you feel about accommodating or not accommodating what they asked for? Did you believe you understood them? They understood you? If yes, was that because you guessed, assumed or actually discussed the issues with them?

2) Staying in the small group, ask participants to close their eyes and think about their co-workers and co-board members, picturing their styles, personalities and the impressions they give. Use the categories on the Power/Other chart, as well as other that come to mind. Take about a minute for this thinking and write the words or phrases that come to mind. You might find that there are two types of images, one that you see in the Transition House or Safe Home and one you visualize in a public speech. If so, make two lists.

Discussion: these impressions can then be used in a discussion of how they are received by certain groups. For instance, Transition House workers might give a general impression of being white, young, educated, feminist, smart, middle class. Or they might appear to be multi-ethnic, mature, motherly, nice, folksy, not very educated, politically left. Naturally, there will be individual differences, but there are usually clusters of characteristics or styles that predominate in a particular organization.

It's useful to remember that when you give a presentation for your group, whether it's on paper, tv, radio or in person, your audience makes certain assumptions about you and your program whether you like it or not. Most importantly, when you talk about the women you serve or want to serve, even if you emphasize all women, your audience may assume you mean women-like-you, that is as they perceive you to be. If group #1 above gives a talk to middle aged Indo-Canadians, they may assume the transition house people are talking about battered women who are white, young, etc. which doesn't have anything to do with many of them, if they are mostly not very formally educated, are in mid-life and who may see themselves as not very smart. If representatives of group #2 talk to a white university or high school faculty group, the university people may not think the program has anything to do with them - relatively privileged, educated career women.

Sometimes these biases can be overcome by words, but it is difficult. The more diverse your presenters, the more useful tension you can set up. Not everyone can go everywhere, but at least you'll have the option of sending a young/old/white/native, etc person. If you can't send more than one, descriptions of your varied staff can help. "Our counselor is Mary who is forty years old, has two children and has been battered. Our legal advisor,

Edna, is Indo-Canadian, graduated from Simon Fraser and is a show dog trainer in her spare time. Our newest volunteer, Sue, is nineteen and is especially interested in how teens can be helped not to get into abusive relationships. We're trying to find someone from the Pakistani community to work as a half-time advocate."

When we're working to reach out to new and formerly "invisible" groups, what may have seemed to be a negative quality can often be positive in the context of working with the new group. For instance, someone who may seem too young to work with the thirty or forty year olds may have a distinct advantage when working with adolescents. In the same way, it is important to look at the characteristics of the staff when planning an outreach program. If everyone on the staff is white, middle-class and articulate, it may be very difficult to be successful in reaching a group which sees those characteristics as "powerful" and feels powerless or uncomfortable around people who share those traits.

There are other ways of overcoming biases, some of which will be discussed later.

SETTING PRIORITIES

Braintraining (using statistical information: Compare your program statistics (e.g., what percentage of your clients/residents are elders, what percentage are recent immigrants and country of origin, what percentage handicapped, etc.) with the percentage of people in your community (or province) from those groups. This information may be available from the local library, local community college or by writing Statistics Canada. This comparison can then be used, in conjunction with your other prioritized list, to help decide your organizations' program needs in terms of outreach. An example.

GROUP	HOUSE STATISTICS	COMMUNITY STATISTICS
Indo-Canadian	1%	10%
Elderly	5%	10%
Young (less 19)	20%	25%
Native	8%	40%
Hearing Impaired	0%	10%

In this example, the statistics point to the largest deficit in services to hearing impaired and Indo-Canadian women, if judged by house statistics alone. However, when you compare the percentage of women in your house from a particular group with the percentage of people in the community

from that same group, Natives are the most underrepresented group. These are important considerations in setting priorities, but certainly not the only ones.

Note of caution: your house statistics and community statistics will not add up to 100% since women from one group may also be counted in another.

Brainstorming exercise: 1. With staff/board, one person act as scribe. Calling on the results of the "power/other" and the statistics exercise, as well as each persons' interests, biases and sense of what is needed, participants call out the groups they feel need special attention or resorces from the program. The scribe lists all suggestions, without any evaluation.

2. After invisible groups have been listed, your group may want to prioritize the list. Ask each person in the room to write on a piece of paper, the two groups which they feel are the most critical for your organization to reach out to. Go around the room, have each person read out their two names and mark next to the name on the flip chart. At the end, add up the scores and rewrite you list, putting the group with the most "votes" at the top, the one with the second largest number of "votes" second, etc. Your organization then may want to discuss this list briefly.

As your group discusses where to focus priorities, you may be surprised to find you're resisting a major outreach movè toward your statistically more under-represented group. There could be several reasons for that reaction. For instance, there may be a new administrator on the Native reserve and you prefer to wait until she and your group have had time to get slowly acquainted before you push your outreach program. Or there is a language difference or other immediate communication problem to overcome. You may be surprised to learn there are many hearing impaired in your community and are overwhelmed with the obstacles in talking with them, as well as your lack of information about their lives and needs. It might be that you know a particular group has a high incidence of battering or that some members of a group have been complaining that there is not much available to them.

Your group will not be able to set final priorities until you've considered the need, the potential for reaching the population and the obstacles in doing so.

3. Taking the top group on the list, go around room and have participants suggest, one at a time, things which have worked, either in this group or in another, to reach people in a particular group. At this point, the

ideas do not need to be discussed - just list them. You may want to continue this exercise with all the groups in your prioritized list.

FIVE YEAR PLANS

EXERCISE:

Divide the large group into small groups of no more than five people. Each group take one of the "invisible" groups defined in the first exercise and talk about what you could do with a five year plan with unlimited money, time, and resources. After you have come up with a list of things you will be doing (with unlimited money, time and resources), ask the following questions:

1. What do you need to know?(to accomplish your task)
2. How do you find out?(who can you contact, where will information come from)
3. What steps do you need to take to get the information?
4. What timeline is necessary to get all the information?

DISCUSSION:

As you start to discuss your five-year plans, you may realize that for certain groups of women (e.g., elderly, disabled, teens, etc.) there is very little current, good information written about the lives of battered women from these groups. This may mean you will have to do some research yourselves (see next section on Gathering Information).

You may also find that developing five year plans is difficult until you define exactly who you include in your group of "invisible" women (e.g., who is "older", who is "younger"?) Once this task has been completed, it is important to look at who is now serving these people in the community and what are they doing (Maybe they can do a better job of reaching the battered women in this group with a little input from your organization.)

Last, how do you know that what you think the women from the "invisible" group needs is what they think they need? For example, because so many people thought that battering was caused by alcohol, the battered women's movement has worked very hard to focus on battering as a separate problem from alcohol and one that is not "caused" by it. However, this emphasis may have kept us from seeing or even entertaining that idea that among some populations (natives in some villages) the two problems are very much intertwined. When alcohol abuse is stopped, the battering usually stops as well.

Before you become too overwhelmed by the preliminary steps and the complexities of doing outreach to many new communities, remember this is still a brainstorming session and you may not get to many of these plans for a few years. Your long range plan is simply a map, and it doesn't mean you have to take the trip. It will help you understand the best way to get there if you have the time and the energy. It will also let you know what short term "trips" will be good to take, whether or not you ever go farther. For instance, you might want eventually to set a goal of serving women in numbers near the proportion of their representation in the community. That doesn't mean you have to implement a complex, thorough outreach plan for each ethnic, age, class and religious group tomorrow morning. It may indicate that right now you just want to identify those who are not using your facilities and services and the major problems in reaching them. Just as women who are battered can't change everything over night, you need to first identify long range goals, then the small steps to get there, then begin taking those steps one at a time. Discovering what the obstacles are to letting each group know what you have to offer and how they can use it may in itself not be a quick or easy task.

GATHERING INFORMATION

When we are planning an outreach program to a new group, it is very important to find out what they want and need, rather than assuming we know. Before starting to gather the information, it is important for the group to identify their preconceived ideas about the new group and be willing to put aside those ideas or at least be willing to look at the ideas in the light of what information will be gathered. Some of the ways in which our organizations can gather this information are:

- establish one to one relationships with women from the new group.
- go to "them" and ask for information
- go to the people who work with "them", i.e., school counsellors, band social workers, etc.
- appoint a liaison to the Board from the new group
- exchange speakers

EXERCISE:

In your organization, brainstorm on other ways in which you can gather information from the "invisible" group. List these ideas on a flip chart without comment. When the list is made, go back and discuss the ideas to see which ones are usable and whether you have the resources to carry out the ideas.

DISCUSSION:

Open Atmosphere: No matter how you decide to gather the information you need, it is critical to create a discussion atmosphere that is open and accepting. Then, invisible women will be free to say why they avoid using the various services and systems which exist, including your organization. It is also important to be aware of a common pitfall of organizations: most groups have a tendency to describe and explain their services in the most positive terms and to explain away criticisms, complaints and misperceptions which exist. If we do a lot of listening before we explain, we'll be able to learn more and give better service. We may even realize that what "they" want is not something we have to give. We need to understand why "they" have the perceptions of us that they do. It may have something to do with the way we present ourselves, the language we use, the things we don't understand about them or conflicts in values. Once we do understand why the perceptions exist, we need to ask ourselves whether we are willing to make the necessary changes and whether we have the resources to make the changes.

Listening to others: In the discussion which took place in the February, 1984 workshop on how to get information from "others", the participants talked first about how to find older women who would talk with them about why they did or did not use the transition service. Some of the ideas which were generated were to listen to seniors in drop-in daycare centres, meals on wheels, homecare nurses, churches. Others thought seniors could be reached through political parties' list of shut-ins, through libraries, newspapers and in grocery store bulletin boards.

As the workshop looked at other "invisible" women, the focus shifted from how to get information from them to how to get information to the group. While it is very tempting to think we know what women need, particularly when we are feeling overwhelmed by the time and organizing efforts a "needs assessment" will take, skipping this step may very well result in failure. The "other" groups we are trying to reach may interpret this as arrogance on our part or simply may not be interested in our program because it does not meet their needs. It is important to note that the majority of people who attended the workshop in February, 1984 were staff in a transition house. It may very well be possible that staff, given all the other things they have to do, are not the best ones in the organization to conduct the needs assessment. This could be done either through a special grant application and a special staff or perhaps through the Board of Directors.

In terms of doing a needs assessment, it was suggested that asking questions indirectly about battering may be less threatening and produce more results. For example, in a given community, say Pakistani, you ask people questions about what they think are strengths and weaknesses of the schools, of family life, of discipline. You may want to ask them what are acceptable ways of solving family arguments (including violence). You may want to know what are the most commonly used ways of solving arguments. Social workers, medical and legal professionals who work with the Pakistani community can also be asked the same kinds of questions. This type of study is ideally done by someone from within the community - one of "them" and of course in their language. Language is equally important for groups which use the dominant language, ie teens, elderly, since each subgroup has its own special use of the language. When the study is complete, you transition service can then say to the people, "This is what you told us about your values and needs." For example, you may find that violence is not accepted by young women and is accepted by older women and men.

Giving Information/Story-telling: After the needs assessment has been completed and we know what the "invisible" group needs and wants from us, we can plan what information we want them to know about us. One particularly effective way of giving information is through story-telling. From the start of the battered women's movement we have used this technique where women who have left a violent relationship from a particular group tell their stories. Other women hear these stories and are stimulated and healed by knowing they are not alone. Story-telling is particularly important for "invisible" women, who may need to know other women have escaped and recovered. Story-telling can be done in person, on tape, written or videotaped.

In the same way that story-telling is important to women in battering relationships, it is important to look at who makes presentations to which particular groups. What this means is that if the groups you are addressing, say a fundamentalist church group, perceives that you are like them in important ways, they will hear you better. What this means for services for battered women is that ideally staff and/or Board should include people of various age groups, ethnic origins, religious backgrounds, sexual orientations, etc. The situation today is that most services do not have this representative base. And if they do, often there is only one native woman or one woman from an ethnic group or age group and that person may not want to be seen as representing only their particular group, nor should that person be burdened with that kind of responsibility.

One solution to this problem of representation is to make a videotape of your service, using staff and battered women of varying ethnicity, age, values, lifestyles, etc. talking about battering and life at your service. This will help create the impression that everyone can come and benefit from using the service. In this video, other professionals, e.g., police, social workers, lawyers can also be portrayed by "invisible" groups members.

Summary: After your organization has identified "invisible" groups you would like to reach, it is critical to do needs assessment. What this means is taking the time to create a space and an atmosphere in which members of the "invisible" groups tell you what they need and want in terms of service and taking the time to really understand differences and similarities between your organization and the "invisible" group. Only after this step is complete are you ready to know what to tell the group, since you will be feeding back information they have given you. The needs assessment is also a good opportunity to meet women from the "invisible" groups who have left violent relationships and who may be willing to share their stories with other women.

FACING STEREOTYPES

INTRODUCTION

Before any program or plan will work effectively; we must take time to look at our own ideas about "other" groups. The following set of exercises will help to uncover our own stereotypes as a way of understanding that there may be a reason for "invisible" women to stay away from us. They do so either because we somehow let them know our secret ideas of who they are or they think we have stereotypes because many people do. Either way, the responsibility is ours to bring positive and negative stereotypes "up front" where we can examine them and start to modify them.

One of the things which often happens for people when they do this sort of work is that they may feel guilty for having negative stereotypes or, in order to not feel guilty, they may modify their stereotypes to include only positive attributes. Either way, one does not need to feel they are "wrong" for doing what most everyone in the world does. Rather, the point of the exercise is to give ourselves an opportunity to hold up our ideas and beliefs (which we have learned from simply being in the world) to the light of reality. This allows us to begin to relate to people as they really are - a complex mixture of pleasant and unpleasant traits.

EXERCISE

1. Each person in the organization should do this exercise separately. For each of the groups listed below take a sheet of paper. Your organization may want to add or subtract from this list. Some of the groups may be done at different time periods as well. Take five minutes for each group and write down the words which you think describe someone from this group. Make sure you are only including words you yourself would use to describe the group, not the words you think the general population might use to describe the group. At the end of the five minutes, go around the room and list the word associations on a flip chart. As a group, decide which of the words listed are "true" ones and underline them.

2. Go back through the list and have the group decide which are the most important words on the list. Underline these in a different color from the ones the groups found to be "true". These may or may not be the same words. Take each important word and discuss what that word or phrase means to each person in the group.

"Invisible" Groups:

Differently abled

Teens

Elderly

Older Women

Rural/Isolated

Natives

Ethnic (use the name of the most important groups for your service)

Lesbians

DISCUSSION

The first part of the exercise is designed to allow people the opportunity to look honestly at the pre-conceived ideas they have about different groups of people. There is a tendency for people to want to write down the words which they think other people think about the group in question rather than looking at their own stereotypes.

The organization may find there is not an easy consensus when they have to agree on what words are "true" for a particular group. In our society, we are all taught stereotypes for a reason. Stereotypes are used to keep people apart and are used to maintain the hierarchy of groups which exist in our society. However, we may not learn the same ones. When we start to compare what we think is "true" of another group, this may be an

opportunity to begin to see that there may not be as much truth in the stereotype as we have been led to believe.

The last part of the exercise gives a chance to look at both the positive and negative emotions which may be attached to each word or phrase. For example, proud to one person may mean arrogant, standoffish and cold while to someone else the same word may mean strong and free.

END OF DAY ONE

DAY TWO

INTRODUCTION

The first day of the workshop was designed to have people who work in or with services for battered women identify groups of battered women whom they would like to be serving and who they are not presently serving as they would like. It was set up so that organizations could do some planning around how they would set up programs for "other" groups; how they would find out what the "other" groups wanted and needed in terms of services for battering. The first day was also set up to look at some of the changes an organization may need to make in order to be able to serve an "invisible" group- both in terms of structures and composition of staff and Boards and in terms of each person's own pre-conceived ideas about who members of the "other" group are.

There is a lot of material in this first day of the workshop. Participants may feel it is old material or too theoretical (particularly the five year plan). However, after participants have had time to digest the material and think about it, they will need a chance to talk about their reactions, their concerns and their feelings which arose. Therefore, the second day of the workshop is arranged as discussion time. The material which follows is some of the topics and discussions which arose in the February, 1984 workshop. In your own group, there may be totally different topics which arise. However, it is important that participants be given and encouraged to talk about what arose for them in the first day.

GENERALIZATIONS

Many of the workshop participants were surprised at the negative labels which had been applied to various groups of people and particularly were aware that some of those labels were self-applied. Ginny reminded the group how important it is to guard against making generalizations about

"invisible" groups and how important it is to listen to what people from other groups are telling us about their experience and lives. While it is best to do this through person to person contact, it is not the only way. As an example, many fine novels have been written which portray a fictionalized, yet accurate account of the experience of "another". The Stone Angel by Margaret Lawrence is one such book. In it Ms. Lawrence gives an account of what it may feel like to grow old, forgetful and senile. In This Sign by Hannah Green tells a story using deaf characters. Using this material which is readily available can help stop us from becoming indifferent and hard.

BEING "LIKE"

This discussion started with the statement that women are easier to work with than men because women are more open. This prompted a discussion of the importance of being "like" the people one is working with. In the first day, it had been mentioned several times that an organization may need to look at the composition of its staff and Board. "Other" groups may feel more trusting of the organization if they know others from their groups are working there or are on the Board of Directors. Representatives from various groups can be asked to sit on the Board of Directors, to apply for staff positions as they become available, and to volunteer in the service. It may be important to encourage more than one representative from a group to get involved since one person may feel isolated.

There was discussion on how to get representation in the service. The experience of most services is that blanket appeals for volunteers, staff and Board will not produce the representation that is desired. It was suggested that program projects can be used to get "others" involved. For example, if a service is making a grant application for a special program for older women, it would be a good opportunity to ask some older women to work on the grant with the service. Another idea was to appoint someone in the service as a "watchdog". That person (it could be a rotating responsibility) would play attention to whether particular groups are being taken into account whenever brochures are written, speeches given, grants written, volunteers and Board and staff recruited, etc. This person may also want to be aware of the language that is being used and may want to remind people to not use jargon.

Once the service has recruited some women from other groups, it is important to be aware that they are treated similarly to everyone else. In some services, representatives may be asked to work exclusively with the group they represent. This may not be their interest and even if it is, they may end up being isolated again from the service since they are spending all

their time in the "other" group. Also in some communities, women from the "other" group may feel more comfortable working with someone outside their own community. This is particularly true in small, close towns and areas where women may feel their privacy is being violated by working with someone who knows all her friends, relatives, etc. Again, if the needs assessment has been done well, many of these kinds of problems will have been avoided since the people from the "invisible" group may have given the information about who they would feel best talking with and what else they may need.

Representation is a very important part of any program designed for "invisible" groups. However, this does not mean that programs will automatically fail without it. Ginny spoke of an anger control group in Barrow, Alaska with native men and white men that was very successful in spite of its location in a small community where everyone knows everyone else and where the male Director is very different in style (not macho and tough) from the men in the group. According to everything that has been talked about in the workshop, this group shouldn't work and it has.

WHO WE DO NOT SEE

Ginny pointed out to participants that of all the "invisible" groups which had been mentioned and discussed, lesbians had not been mentioned. Yet the fact is that lesbians do get battered and do batter. She thought that perhaps social acceptance of gays and lesbians has been higher in the U.S.A. or at least that the visibility has been greater. Feminists have been reluctant to acknowledge the existence of lesbian battering, often because the majority culture has been so negative towards lesbians and they don't want to appear disloyal to their sisters. However, in some places, lesbian battering has started to be discussed and special services are being set up for battered lesbians.

This omission on the part of the February, 1984 workshop participants points up the need to be aware that we all have blinders. Whether they are there because we think it isn't "nice" to talk about a certain group or because we feel disloyal or for a host of other reasons, we may need other people to help us see what our blind spots are. After your organization has identified "invisible" groups, it may be important to take the list to others outside your group for their comments. They may be able to suggest groups you have missed.

KEEPING THE MOMENTUM

Once the exercises have been completed, participants have had a chance to think about and talk about the material, it is important to make sure you know who is going to do what and by when. Often in our groups, we get enthused with new material and new ideas, thinking that our enthusiasm will carry us through. Then when the reality of day to day work presents itself, the enthusiasm wanes and so does the project. This can be combated by taking little steps. When we work with battered women, we often encourage them to make commitments, to do "little" things, e.g., one phone call to the lawyer; a visit to a friend. We know how overwhelmed battered women can become by the amount of work that has to be done. We also know that a stay at a transition house can fill a battered woman with enthusiasm so that she may feel like she can take on the world and get everything done immediately. We also know that most women will fail in this task because they have taken on too much and have set too high a standard for themselves. And yet, in our own work, we do the same and think either that the task is impossible and give up or think it can't be done until we get more money, staff, Board members, etc. The reality is that we have all accomplished a great deal already and have the ability to accomplish a great deal more. However, we do need to break down what needs to be done into manageable steps and have patience with ourselves. The programs which we have envisioned through this workshop material may take two or three years for one of them to come into being. The exercises and the discussion in this two day workshop may help us to get a start to that task.

WORKING WITH BATTERED CHRISTIAN WOMEN

BY BARBARA BLAKELY AND LINDA ERVIN

INTRODUCTION

When the problem of battering first came to the public attention some ten years ago, all of the major institutions in society were not only ignorant of the issue but in their own way were contributing to it. For the most part, social workers, doctors, lawyers, politicians, clergy, etc. all believed that battering was a family problem and should be handled in the family. Most people believed that a woman somehow brought on the problem herself and that it was possible and desirable to keep the family together, primarily by the woman changing her actions.

Today, most institutions no longer hold these beliefs as policy. For example, most mainline churches, e.g., United, Anglican, no longer believe that a woman should stay with her husband regardless of the circumstances. While they may believe that family counselling is worthwhile in violent situations, they do not condone violence and will support a woman if she decides to leave her husband. The church as a whole will say violence is wrong. This does not mean that individual clergy all believe violence is wrong. Some may still believe the old myths and may still counsel a woman to remain in a violent situation. Even with the changes that have taken place, women who work with battered women have become increasingly frustrated by the lack of an appropriate response by some of the churches and by some of the clergy. This is due in part to the rise of the fundamentalist right within the Christian religion, due in part to the fact that the battered women's movement has concentrated its energies on other sectors of society, such as the legal and welfare systems, and due in part to the fact that change is slow and people resist changing their ideas.

This paper will be looking at some of the religious, Christian issues which come up for battered women. A framework for understanding will be presented and some tools for helping Christian women will be discussed.

PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

What Battered Women Say

When a woman comes into a Transition House or to another service which helps battered women, she has many issues which she must work through for herself before she can make a decision about what she is going to do about her marriage/relationship. Some of the issues which come up and which are particularly hard for some Christian women to work through are:

1. Women must forgive.
2. My child needs a father, and I can't deprive my child.
3. The Bible says I must submit to my husband.
4. Regardless of violence or anything else the family must stay together.
5. She sees "family" as only viable unit. You can't make it without a husband.
6. Marriage vows are "for better for worse".
7. God will open husband's eyes and he'll change.
8. God is supreme.
9. One must believe in the Power of prayer. Prayer will heal all.
10. She feels strong guilt and feels she has a moral obligation to stay.
11. She feels she will be seen as abandoning him.

Some, but not all of these issues have a biblical base. When a woman's faith is strong and important for her and when she believes that to leave a violent relationship will jeopardize her faith, she is in quite a moral bind.

What Transition House/Safe Home Workers Feel and Say

One of the jobs of women and men who work with battered women is to help them come to some resolution of the binds they find themselves in. In order to do that we have to have an understanding of that bind and empathy for the position the woman is in. Some workers have reported that they find the Christian issues difficult to work with: they may feel ignorant of the Bible and not know how to respond to what the woman is saying; they may be afraid of offending the woman's beliefs; they may lose patience and get frustrated when a woman is clinging so desperately to a belief which is, in the eyes of the worker, pushing the woman into a dangerous situation. All these

feelings leave the worker feeling powerless and unable to help the woman out of her dilemma.

How Women Resolve Their Dilemma

In spite of the bind women find themselves in when they first reach out for help and in spite of the lack of knowledge and frustration workers sometimes feel, Christian women do resolve their issues and do make changes for themselves and their children. Transition House/Safe Home workers report that women may find change frightening, since they feel they are challenging the basic concepts of marriage. They may start exploring the Bible more fully in order to give themselves a broader basis of knowledge. When the crisis in their life has passed, the battering has ceased and they are living on their own, they feel more freedom to rethink their Christian beliefs. Some women have found they needed to leave their church in order to solve the dilemma and later find they want to reconnect with a church so that they and their children can have a "home base", a place where they have a sense of community and shared beliefs. This may mean leaving their original church and joining with one which is more supportive of their new life. It may mean staying and challenging and helping change some of the beliefs which she found oppressive.

Summary

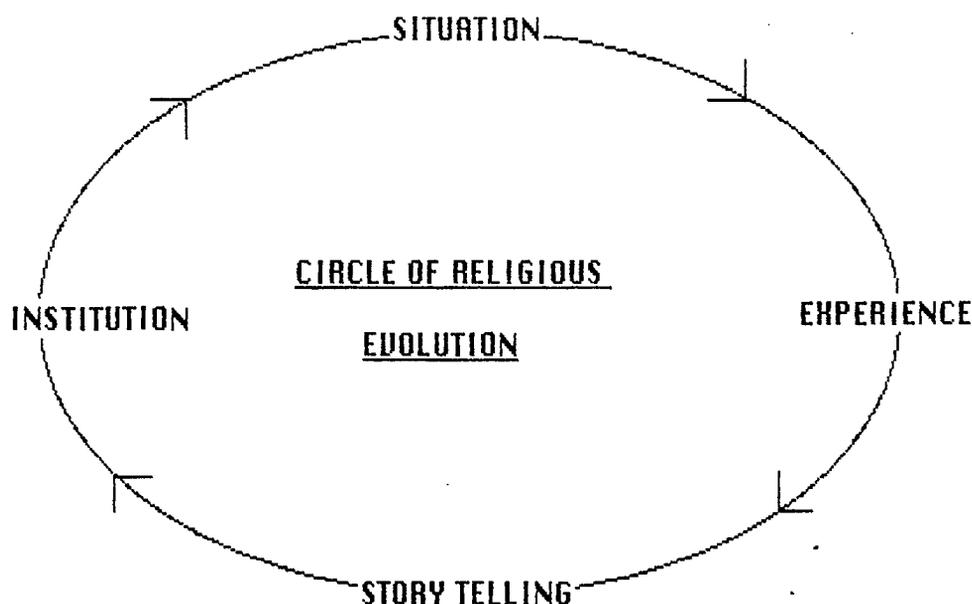
When some women first reach out for help with a battering situation, they may find themselves in a bind due to religious beliefs. The woman's desire to live a violence free life may seem in direct contradiction to what she believes is her duty to her husband, her church and to God. Some women may find their way out of this problem, although it may mean altering what they originally believed to be true. While workers are trained to help women work through such dilemmas, some workers have found the Christian dilemma to be particularly difficult for them. The following material is offered in the hopes that it will help some battered women resolve their religious questions and some workers with their frustrations.

CIRCLE OF RELIGIOUS EVOLUTION

Purpose

The following framework is presented as a tool for moving away from the authority of the church system without losing the faith and strength which has been gained from that system. The circle diagram can be very helpful in understanding an individual woman's religious

beliefs and religious membership. For most people, religious experience undergoes an evolution or a change. As they grow and mature, their understanding of the religious experience may also change and grow. This same kind of evolution can be applied also to religious communities and religious organizations. In order to illustrate the constantly changing nature of this evolution, this diagram takes the form of a circle.



These are the four components or four phases of religious evolution in individuals or in communities.

SITUATION

This refers to the present, the here and now. It refers to our situation: who we are; where we are; our class; our culture; our gender; our history. For each of us the situation is always changing. For example, a particular woman may have been raised in an affluent family, married a well-to-do business man and now is a single mother living on welfare. Time alone alters our situation for us. As we grow older and our history grows longer, our experiences either make us richer or more embittered; we either have families or stay single, etc. In any event, situation refers to where we are now - not where we want to be in ten years or where we were five years ago, but where and who we are now.

Institutions and societies are often portrayed as unchanging. The Church acts as if it is eternal and always the same. We all know that our experience, our own growth, our own history, undergoes constant change. So we can look at the situation of the Church and see that it is also historical. It is finite; it exists in a certain time and place and it will have a certain power base. All of these things which exist today about the church may also change. Therefore, we can ask, "What is the power base of the Church; whose interests does it serve; whose interests does it protect?" For most of history, churches have not allowed women in positions of power. Some churches still do not allow the ordination of women and the Anglican church has only done so in the last ten years. The women who have been accepted into the ministry of their church have, for the most part, been offered positions as assistants to other (male) clergy and have not risen through the church hierarchy as fast as their male counterparts.

In every institution, an ideology or a system of ideas develops which supports and defends the actions and policies of that institution. The church is no exception. In the case of the church, the ideology is said to be sacred, that is coming from God. The Bible is quoted to defend whatever position is being taken. The ideology also has a very definite secular or worldly aspect. This secular side is that throughout history the Church has been and still is patriarchal and that it has and still is protecting the rights and the interests of men.

So the situation of the Church is patriarchal and finite. While overall the Christian religion and church protects and promotes the interests of men, in individual religious communities this may be less so. We can examine the situation of particular women and particular men and then we will see that the form of a religious community will shift depending on whether it is orientated towards women or orientated towards men.

EXPERIENCE

What is meant by EXPERIENCE is the same kind of thing that the women's movement means when it talks about the authority of experience. In situation, we were examining the more external aspects of a person's life or of an institution's existence. In experience, we are talking about the internal conditions: what are your own feelings; what is your own sense of power; what in your own experience, in your own life, do you feel is sacred.

One can feel the sacredness of one's life in a variety of contexts. One can experience one's own power in a variety of situations and religion may give us ways and means of getting in touch with our own experience. In a religious context this is done through prayer and meditation. In more therapeutic language one would talk about being centered or grounded. In services for battered women, we work to help women gain this experience through sharing with other women, through talking, through counselling.

There are many experiences that all of us may know about like falling in love. Falling in love is similar to a religious experience. They both give us a feeling of power. They give us a high; they shake us up; they change us; they move us; they stir us.

Feminism or consciousness raising on feminist issues, can also be seen as a religious experience. It can be an experience of getting in touch with yourself, of experiencing things new and fresh for the first time, of intimacy, of vulnerability with other women, of sharing power as women. This can be similar to a religious experience and it can give us a sense of the sacredness of our own being as women.

Religion will touch on these kinds of experiences. Religion, in fact, will base itself in these kinds of experiences; self-power, intimacy, vulnerability, acceptance, belonging. When we think about religion in those terms, we can say, "Yes I know what that's like". We always need to look for the heart of that kind of experience, no matter what the language and no matter what the theological jargon.

In our work, we may hear religious terms like "being saved". This has to be understood as a sense of finally coming to belong in a group and of finally being ok. In working with women who have "been saved", it is crucial to be able to reach beyond the jargon to the emotional experience. It is on this level that relating will have meaning and significance.

STORYTELLING

Storytelling is really crucial because storytelling has to do with the framework of understanding an experience. Each one of us, when we have a high experience or a moving experience, will want to put that experience into words that make sense to us. We also want to

share it and communicate it to others in ways that will make sense to them.

Sometimes this is not easy to do. We may fall back on cliches, on our own favourite jargon phrases, or we'll find ourselves adapting and conforming to somebody else's framework, even if it's not quite our own, in an effort to have them understand.

So individually, we recognize this phase of articulating, interpreting and conceptualizing. We are also, in the storytelling, working to integrate our new experience with other aspects of our own and other's experience. We want the significant events in our life to make sense to others within their own framework of understanding. Religious organization and religious communities will go through this same kind of phase.

In Christianity, Jesus and the experiences of the disciples around him were the primary founding events for the Christian Church. Over the first 500 years the Church as a whole interpreted, articulated, and communicated this primary founding event. In doing so they developed a whole theological jargon system, which was in fact very alien to Jesus. The jargon system was based primarily on Greek philosophy and this philosophy became part and parcel of the Church institutionalizing itself.

There were women prominent in the community around Jesus. In Jesus' own relationships with women he seemed to respond warmly and openly to them. He entrusted them with key information and with informal rather than formalized authority. As the Church developed its theological jargon system, as it developed its power base and its structures, it systematically eliminated women.

The story that you hear will depend on who is telling it. The story that you hear will depend on whose interests are being served. Here again we refer back to the situation of the Church and we look at the situation of those who are doing the storytelling. Who are the teachers? Who are the authorities? Who are the Bishops? After the early Christians went through a phase of fluid experience and open ended community, after they went through a certain amount of milling around and uncertainty and unclarity about what the new religion meant, the Church moved to a process of storytelling which developed the Gospels and New Testament. For example, missionaries like Paul were writing letters. In that period of storytelling there was a lot of variations, of flexibility, of contradictions. In that period the authority

system was not entirely monolithic. However, the Church, like any large force, will institutionalize itself. It will establish its hierarchy, its teaching authorities, its truth and its doctrines. It will become increasingly monolithic as to who has power and what is truth. When this happens, we're moving around to that fourth quadrant called institution.

INSTITUTION

When people think about Church or religion, they probably will think of the visible manifestations: the Church on the corner; the ethical system; the moral codes. Perhaps these were learned as a child in Sunday School, perhaps they were taught by parents, perhaps they were learned in catechism class. Perhaps you learned to run down a checklist of confessions. These are aspects of the Church as institution. This is its public teaching face, its public authority structure, its geographical and financial location. That Church, that institution, will maintain that it's eternal and unchanging. It will maintain that it has always been like this. It will maintain that it will always be here and we will always teach these things.

We can see looking at this cycle and at this history, that is in fact not the case. Looking at any woman's individual membership in the Church, her jargon system, her moral beliefs, her sources of stability and security, we will probably see her plugging into the institution. Some authority figure has told her these things and she believes them. There are certain truths about herself as a woman, about her sexuality, her family, her marriage, her children, that she will have internalized and come to accept. They come to her with a great weight of authority. They offer stability, security, and belonging. However we must not take these things at face value but recognize that they are part of a power structure, part of an authority system which is not set up to serve the interests of that woman and which have probably manipulated her emotions and her vulnerabilities in order to coerce a loyalty and an obedience.

We need to reach back to her experience and to ask her "How does that feel?" We need to ask her about the events which she believes are religious, about those which have touched her emotionally, which have stirred her, drawn on her vulnerability and given her a sense of power. Ask, "What does that mean to you?", "How does that feel?", "Why is that good for you?", "How is that helpful to you?".

In counselling a woman we would reach for that level anyway. We would want to know "Who are you in this, and what is that to you?" Don't be put off by the face value of the religious statements and don't be put off the the jargon, by the seeming certainty, dependence and obedience, but plug in at the same level as you would in any other counselling and support situation and go for the feeling. Look for the heart of her experience and then you'll understand why her religion has power. Only then can you offer other kinds of religious experience like feminism, which gives power in very difference ways.

FEMINIST READINGS FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT

INTRODUCTION

In order to offset many of the negative images of women in the New Testament, it is important to have some alternative readings and some alternative interpretations of the Christian System. In this section, we will especially look at Jesus and his teachings.

FEMINIST AND LIBERATION THEOLOGY

Liberation and feminist theology look at Jesus, his relationships, his work, his teachings and try to discern a man who taught about liberation. (Feminist and liberation theology is talking about much more than salvation in some esoteric, spiritual sense.) Liberation is used in the political sense and freedom in the psychological sense.

Quality of Life: First of all Jesus proclaims the Kingdom of God. Jesus does not teach doctrine. He is not morally rigid. He does not lay out a set of ideas for us to believe and a sort of code for us to follow. Jesus proclaims the Kingdom of God and this is something which we can experience and know in our lives. That Kingdom is described as within us and among us now. The signs of life in the Kingdom are wholeness and abundant life. It's quality of life that he talks about. The Kingdom is generous, open and inclusive. Everyone is welcome and prostitutes and outcasts are welcomed first. Following is a series of texts which describe different aspects of the kingdom.

1. Jesus announces his ministry. At the very beginning, in his initial statements in public, the first time he ever preached a sermon, he uses words which describe an ideal social order of the Kingdom. This is found in Luke, Ch. 4 verses 18-22. A key phrase is "He has sent me to bring good news to the poor". It's the poor who are to listen to this, not the rich. The news is for the powerless, not the powerful.

2. The Kingdom is good news, especially for the hungry and the oppressed. The following passage is from the Gospel of Luke Ch. 6 verses 20-22: "Happy are you who are hungry, you shall be satisfied" Feminist and liberation theology interpret this as being very materially oriented. This is not only spiritual hunger. This is hunger for bread and survival hunger.

3. As a sign of God's gift of wholeness, Jesus heals people and he heals numerous women, including a woman with a menstrual disorder. She has been hemorrhaging for twelve years, which in the Jewish system would make her ritually unclean. Menstrual blood and other kinds of body discharges were an occasion of ritual uncleanness and yet Jesus speaks warmly to her in public. He touches her and he heals her. All of his actions would have been revolting to an orthodox Jew who would not want to make himself ritually unclean. The story is in Luke, Ch. 8 Verses 43-48.

4. Jesus emphasizes the generosity of God's Kingdom as opposed to the lack of generosity of the human order. Two stories found in the Gospel of Luke Ch II, verses 9-13, contain statements that the one who asks always receives. "Ask and you shall receive". "Seek and ye shall find". And in Luke, ch. 18 verses 1-8, there is a story about a widow who pesters an unjust judge to give her her rights and wins. She is described as so persistent that the judge finally gives in and she has won her case. These are not only teachings about the power of prayer as they are often interpreted. They are statements about the quality of life in God's Kingdom. The quality in that kingdom is generosity, which is available to everyone.

5. God promises us food, shelter and clothing such as the flowers and birds are provided with. Therefore if society denies us these things, we have God on our side if we protest. Luke Ch. 12 verses 22-30, contains statements about God knowing what we need; Luke Ch 14 verses 12-24, contains statements that the poor especially are fed at God's table, so we can do no less. Again this is not a teaching which suggests we get it all from God and don't bother the government. This is a teaching which says God has promised us these things and if the government is the agent which controls those things right now, the government is the one that we pester. We have God on our side when we do that. We have the right to do that.

Equality of Life: Secondly, in the Kingdom we are all equal. This has been separated out as a second series of teachings, parallel to the teachings about the Kingdom because it has a particular emphasis. We are all equal. No one has more power and authority than anyone else. No one lords it over another. We are all brothers and sisters. Only God is the head. No human authority has that kind of power and especially women and men are equal. Following are some examples of that teaching.

1. Mary the mother of God, a young Jewish woman, when she learns that she is pregnant with Jesus, sings a hymn about God's justice. They are very significant words for a woman. This is found in Luke, Ch I verses 46-55 and is usually called the Magnificat. The key phrase says that he has pulled down the oppressors from their thrones and lifted up the powerless. The language is in somewhat mystifying King James terms but that's the heart of the message- feeding the hungry and sending the well fed away.

2. Women were prominent among Jesus' disciples though they are seldom named. The tradition of the twelve male disciples did not originate with Jesus but was an organizational development of the later community. The twelve men are named to parallel with the twelve tribes of Israel, attempting to say that this is the New Israel. The church is following from the covenant which God made with the twelve tribes of Israel. So that's why there are twelve disciples named. In fact there were many. And many of them were women, largely unnamed by the time the Gospels were written but they are hinted at and they are mentioned by allusion if not by name. However, as the tradition of the twelve was developed, women were forgotten and their names were forgotten. It was thirty-five years or more after Jesus' death before the Gospels were consolidated. Luke Ch 8 verses 1-3 contains a list of the names of women. Luke Ch 10 verses 38-42 contains the notorious story of Mary and Martha. Martha is called from the kitchen, her typical woman's place, to study with Jesus, to study with the circle of students around the rabbi, where no women were admitted. Jesus says "come, study, learn, sit at my feet." Luke Ch 11 verses 27-28 contains a puzzling statement, the heart of which says it is not childbearing which saves a woman or gives a woman membership in a religious community and makes her closer and obedient to God. It is following Jesus to study, learn, carry the word and do the work. All these are catch phrases for participating in the experience of a community.

We see women here as part of the community and we see women taking power as equals, as disciples, as ministers and as students. In order to fully understand what this means we have to ask what exactly is it to have power and what sort of power is found in this community. The answer is that no one is to compete for power and prestige. In fact power, authority, prestige and membership in the community do not take the form that we see in the normal community institutions and especially the Church. To be a follower of Jesus is to be a servant. We are all to be servants to one another. For example look at Luke, Ch 14, verses 7-11. "He who exalts himself will be humbled." In Luke, Ch 22, verses 24-27, it is written, "The leader is among you as one who serves" and this includes Jesus. He describes himself as a servant and exemplifies that by washing the feet of his disciples.

Typically, women had the role of serving others at meals. Jesus is actually saying that he is taking the role of the women and so should all the of the disciples and all Christians. The model of power, belonging, discipleship, therefore, is the work of a woman. The serving work of a woman becomes the key symbol and the key image of membership in Jesus' community. Jesus says "I am among you as one you serves. I am among you as a woman." That is power. That is belonging. That is the way it is to be in the Christian community.

This is not the model of authority and power that we see in the Church now. However, it is part of the teaching of liberation theology and feminist theology, that the power structure in the church is not true to the gospel and it is not true to Jesus as the founder of the community. Therefore, we can freely suggest alternatives and women can freely come in and do all sorts of new things. Women can come in and simply dismantle the teachings and structure of the institutions which are not loyal to Jesus. This is a fairly radical position which gives us lots of room to move.

PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN TEACHINGS

KEY TEACHINGS:

Although the community Jesus built was one based on equality among men and women, and in fact, the model for community membership was based on female roles, the process of institutionalization of the church has suppressed that basic fact. In

order to keep power consolidated among the men at the top of the hierarchy, it was necessary to keep women dependent and insecure. Some of the key teaching which have developed in orthodox Christian communities are that women are subordinate and sexually dangerous. This leads to a practice of women being demeaned and trivialised. The creation story of Adam and Eve is often used to illustrate women's sexual nature, since if Eve had been able to control herself in the first place, women and men would never have fallen from grace. Many other parts of the Bible are used to teach women that they must be subordinate to men. In fact, the patriarchal nature of the culture when the Bible was being written is used to support the patriarchal nature of the Church today. In the following section, we will be looking at what kind of emotional and psychological response these teachings set up in women.

SUPPRESSION OF GROWTH

Because women are seen to be subordinate, any kind of initiative, energy, assertiveness and autonomy in a woman are suppressed and punished. She is devalued, so spontaneous surges of growth and autonomy that every human being experiences are systematically suppressed. A woman then has no chances to learn skills outside those considered appropriate for her. She is denied chances for growth and development, so she's denied the opportunity to gain competence in a variety of skills. She's left with no confidence in herself. She simply hasn't learnt from the full range of human adult skills. This leaves her in a situation of insecurity, anxiety, helplessness and with a fear of risk-taking. It leaves her vulnerable and dependent. So there's one kind of women's development which results in the suppression of her autonomy and the setback of her growth and development. This results in security in authority.

SUPPRESSION OF EMOTION

The teaching which says that women are sexually dangerous is enforced by making sure that any kind of needs, desires, feelings will be suppressed and punished. In particular, her sexual desires will be put down and this is soon expanded to include any kind of emotional intensity or any kind of strong feeling. Those will be seen as dangerous and they will be trivialized or punished. So she may feel that the best thing to do with strong feelings is to suppress them.

Since women are not allowed to present themselves as they really are to the world with the full range of human emotions, they often adopt (and are encouraged to adopt) a facade of niceness,

sweetness, tenderness and gentleness. However, this suppression of other emotions will ultimately result in a native surge of frustration and anger and rage. We have to remember, though, that feelings of anger, rage and frustration will be punished. This propels women into a cycle where first, their feelings are stirred. Second, they have a sense of anger at those being thwarted. Third, this is followed by guilt. Anger of course, will be very directly punished, so the guilt will come with any kind of stirring of needs and any kind of stirring of anger.

Cycle of Emotional Suppression: What we have just described is the beginning of the cycle of emotional suppression. (Refer to the diagram on page 84.) It starts with an experience of desires. Those desires are then frustrated, initially because the desires are not met and not allowed by those around her. Eventually, she will frustrate the desires herself. This frustration will produce a feeling of anger. However, since this anger is also unacceptable, she will feel guilt. The real catch is that the whole emotional cycle has to be suppressed and denied. Primarily it has to be kept invisible and secret to anyone outside. To live with this duplicity, she may hide it from herself. The mechanism that maintain this cycle of emotional repression is self-sacrifice. If you don't understand or don't like what you're feeling, you devote yourself to somebody else's needs. If you don't know how to feel your own feelings, you focus on somebody else's. Mothers traditionally have been wonderful at this. They think about everybody but themselves.

In Christian circles it is often said that women are supposed to be serene and calm. The Virgin Mary is cited often as one example of a woman who was perfectly serene and always smiling. Women may put on that kind of calm, serene face. Another version of the same thing is the woman who is always smiling. This leads women to maintain a false happiness within themselves as a way of denying and deflecting attention from the much maligned, volatile, negative feelings.

This cycle of emotional suppression exists which goes on and on, recycling and recycling. What women end up with is a wall of denied feeling. This cycle goes on and on and builds up and up. There is constant self suppression, so there will be this kind of well or wall of denied feeling and the woman must continue to keep the lid on. As feelings get built up it will become more and more terrifying to let some feelings out since letting some out may mean they will all come out. Women may describe themselves as feeling like they will explode.

So women keep the lid on. And this leads to the same things as we talked about when growth is suppressed and that is that dependence and anxiety will be produced.

SUMMARY

Orthodox Christian teachings can produce in a woman both dependence and anxiety. On the one hand, her autonomy has been thwarted; she has limited skills and she is insecure and hopeless, simply from not having developed as a full adult. On the other hand she is dependent and anxious because of the cycle of emotional suppression and the well of denied feelings that she carries with her. From both of these routes she ends up a ripe candidate for orthodox family counselling by her pastor. This is particularly dangerous if she is in a violent marriage.

Due to this lack of growth and of emotional suppression, she needs security and stability. She needs authority systems to tell her what to do, what to feel, what to think and how to do things because she is barren within herself and trapped in a volatile emotional denial system. She will be afraid of change, afraid of new rules, afraid of new ideas because that would threaten to take the lid off the whole system. So she must stay where she is and keep her mouth shut, submit to authority and let everyone else tell her what to do. Her pastor rushes right in, entirely too happy to do that.

SUMMARY

In this paper, we have looked at a framework for dismantling the authority of the Christian church; we have looked at the teaching of liberation and feminist theology and we have looked at the effects on a battered woman of orthodox Christian teachings. All of this has been done in order to help both battered women who find themselves in a religious dilemma and workers who find themselves in a counselling dilemma regain power in the situation and come to some satisfactory solution. Following is a list of points to remember when working with a battered Christian woman.

VALIDATE HER CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE:

Remember that her beliefs and her involvement in the church institution have given her much to help her cope with a violent partner. It is important to find out what, in particular, she has gained from her religion and to validate this for her.

USE HER RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE:

In the cycle of religious evolution, experience is where feelings of power originate. It is very important to find out what this experience has been for the woman and to use this experience to help her see she can have feelings of power in other situations. It can also be used to help her distinguish which situations she actually has some control over, and which she has no control over at all and in fact, are not her responsibility to try to control.

PERSONAL STORYTELLING:

Storytelling has been a very important part of the process of healing for all battered women. Being able to tell her own story and not be put down for it and being able to hear other women's stories and know she is not alone, have been a very important part of what goes on in transition houses, safe homes, women's centres and anywhere that women gather. When a woman is in a bind over religious issues, personal storytelling can be a very powerful way for her to start to sort through her conflicts and feelings.

DISCUSS HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE BIBLE:

Remember that a woman may have had a very real need for authority and security. She has believed what she has been told and it has been very important for her personal well-being. Once she has worked through some of the initial crisis, she may want to discuss other perspectives on the Bible than the one she has been given. Understanding some of the history and understanding that the church itself is a historical, changing institution may help her start to dismantle the authority of the system.

FORGIVENESS DEPENDS ON REPENTENCE:

Women are often told that they must forgive their violent partners without being told that the other party must truly understand and know the import of what they have done. We can help women start to understand the difference between repentance based on fear of loss ("I'm sorry dear. I'll never do it again. Please come home because I miss you.") and repentance based on understanding. The second is something which does not come easily and may take months of group therapy on the violent partner's part. Just as it has never helped an alcoholic to protect him/her from the consequences of their actions, it

does not help a violent partner to protect them by premature forgiveness.

INTRODUCE HER TO A NEW CHRISTIAN LIFESTYLE:

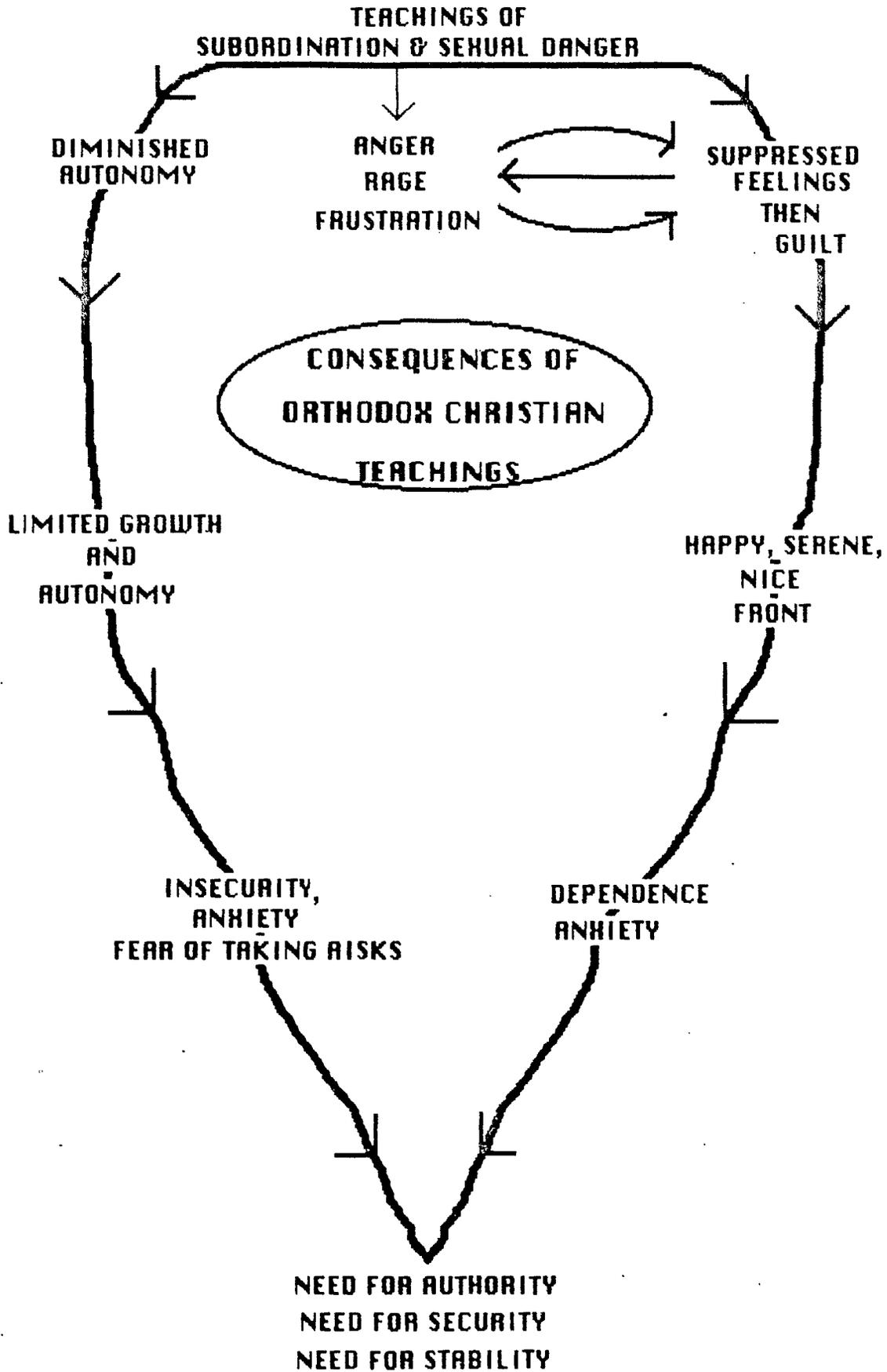
For many women, the church has provided a home base, a place where they feel part of a community with shared values and goals. It may be important to seek out Christian communities in your town which will support a woman and introduce her to that church.

THE BODY IS A TEMPLE AND SHOULD NOT BE DAMAGED:

Again, because women have been taught that they are sexually dangerous, they often end up feeling bad about their physical body and may feel that it doesn't count that the physical is being hurt. It is important for battered women to hear that their body is a temple and that it is not God's wishes for her body to be damaged.

SEPARATE OUT CHRISTIANITY AND RELIGION:

In the cycle of religious evolution, we have attempted to separate out the institution of the church and the trappings of the church from the religious experience of a higher being. It is crucial to help a woman separate out these two things for herself and, it goes without saying, that if the worker has not done the same, she will be of no help to the woman. Therefore, we must continue to encourage women to not confuse Christianity and religion and we must not do it ourselves.



INTRODUCTION WORKING WITH NATIVE INDIAN WOMEN IN TRANSITION
by Wendy Burton

Women who are fleeing battering situations require a number of services that transition houses provide. The most important service a transition house can provide is a non-judgemental, supportive atmosphere in which the woman, with her children, can assess her situation and begin to make some decisions about her life direction. During this period of crisis and transition, she must also attempt to live in close residential quarters with a variety of women from a variety of backgrounds and social situations. The only common ground women in a transition house have is that they have left a situation in which they feared for their safety. This significant common bond is often not strong enough to overcome the trials of living with and cooking for and putting up with several other often less-than-complementary life styles. Often the child care worker is trying to "counsel" her about her parenting skills while the person in charge of providing groceries is trying to explain the concept of eating nutritionally and cheaply (such discussion usually sparked by someone's request for chocolate-chocolate-chip ice cream), while a third woman is trying to direct her through the legal channels of no-contact and interim custody. All of the elements are in place for what could be a very trying situation. Into the middle of all this, often with blinding swiftness, comes a new intake who appears to have special needs: a woman who does not share the dominant culture, a woman whose tradition and background is apparently different, a woman who is a visible minority, to use the current phrase. Suddenly the workers in the House have to deal with the assumptions and behaviours that resemble nothing short of racism. There are several responses to this situation. Some women adopt the white liberal attitude that we're all sisters under the skin and proceed to ignore any

problems. Other women, citing ^{the} our aim to be non-judgemental, allow open discrimination to exist among residents in the house. And some few grapple with the awareness that this woman may not share any of the values we take as given, that we really don't know what, if anything, should be done differently, and that we are hopelessly ignorant about how to deal with a battered woman who is not from the dominant culture of British Columbia. ~~Idle~~ ^{Idle} questions float to the surface during intake, but are often dismissed as racist. Idle speculations based on the worker's media-shaped opinions about Native Indians mar an otherwise successful attempt to settle the new resident into the House. Unspoken curiosities are quashed because it's not nice, somehow, to notice that a person is a different colour and culture. All of these unsettled feelings begin to contribute to an atmosphere of caution that is seen less as caring and more as coolness. After a few days, the woman decides to call her family from up country, and she disappears. She may be back, ^{or} she may become one of the stories we tell ourselves for comfort when we appear to be losing the battle against violence against women. But we have failed often, to meet the needs of Native women who seek shelter with us. This section will provide us with the groundwork for discussion and dialogue with the Native women in our community who can help us to meet the needs of Native women in transition.

We are all aware of the syndrome of battering and the toll it can take on a woman's self esteem, decision making abilities, and coping strategies. This section assumes that the reader has a working knowledge of the prevailing theories of wife abuse. It is recognized that a battered woman has several needs when she arrives at a transition house. These needs ^{can be grouped as} are physical, social, legal and emotional. This section of the workbook is founded on another assumption: Indian women are women first and Indian second. That

assumption is personal, and underscores the complexity of many feminist issues. I believe that our womanhood cuts deeper than our race; that we share, as women, common goals and common problems. A Native Indian woman is beaten because she is a woman, not because of her race. This premise informs this section. I would be delighted to debate this premise but not within ^{here} this writing.

After working for several years in transition houses here and in Ontario, I am writing from the perspective of a feminist who works to empower women to make changes in life situations they find intolerable. I am writing from the perspective of a feminist who believes that I cannot make choices for other people, that I cannot presume to decide how another should live out her life, that I cannot evaluate another's life partners by my own definitions of commitment and compromise. Therefore, all of the information I present here is presented so that women who work in transition houses may become more aware of the complexities of working with women from other cultures and living experience. It is imperative that these statements be taken as possibilities, as guesses, as wonderments, but not as generalizations that should become fact. Every woman we encounter has her own story to tell, let the telling be part of the work we do. To codify the information here as the absolute last word (or even the first word) on working with Native women would violate the principles I work and write by. This a beginning. Any amendments, suggestions, revisions, would be gratefully received, not only by me but by the women I try to assist every day.

The services a transition house should provide are the following: The physical comfort and security of the women and children there, a social support

own childhood or in the lives of those around her. Sexual abuse and alcohol seem to combine to create some nightmarish stories. It is tempting to dismiss this situation as a culturally based ~~on~~, but reading any sensitive account of life for a Native person in the society will put the blame, if there is any, squarely where it belongs. Transition House workers are encouraged to read In Search for April Raintree by Beatrice Culleton (Pemmican Books) and A Poison Stronger than Love ^{by} Anastasia Shkilnyk (Yale University Press). It is also helpful to use the idea of the cycles of violence model as soon as possible when a woman comes into the House. See Figure 1.

One method used with success in a transition house and during on-reserve counselling is the journal. Often, Native women are excited by the idea of writing down their life history, or parts of their life history, and this writing has two benefits. First, woman can express things that she may not want to talk openly about. Secondly, the expression can be used to help her explore emerging patterns in her life situation. Guilt about supposed transgressions often cloud the work that needs to be done to stop the violence or get out of a violent situation. Simply explaining the reality of living and being raised in a violent situation helps the resident to understand that the cycle of violence creates more violence and that the cycle can be arrested. It is also useful for a mother to recognize that the pattern of life she has has been passed on to her children. Sometimes, the need to prevent the same life for the children has given the mother the motivation to make some life changes. But you can't change a cycle if you don't know you're ⁱⁿ ~~on~~ it.

During the last ten years, the myths about wife beating have died a hard death. There are still pockets of ignorance; people who believe that a woman creates the situation of abuse, that she asked for it, that only

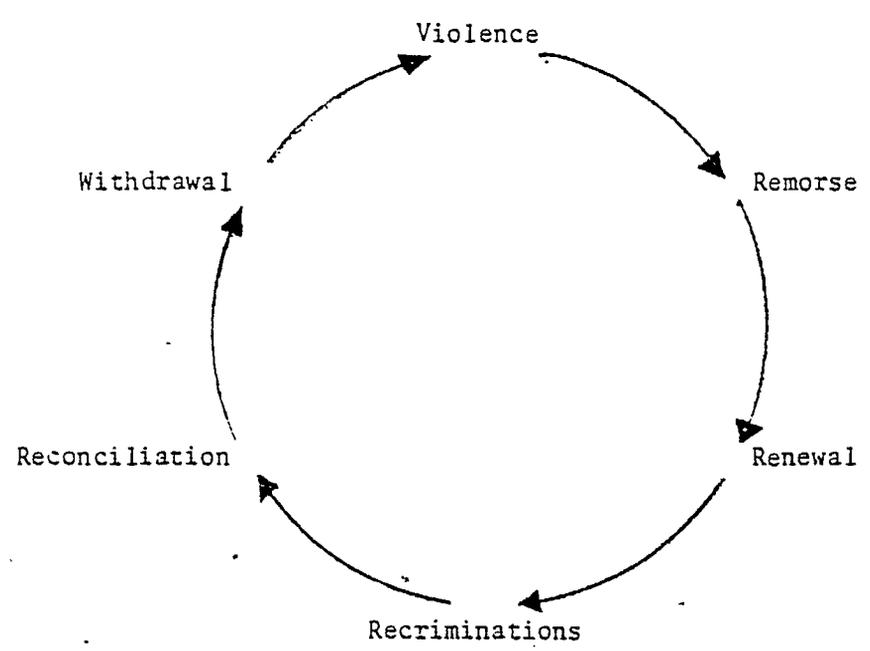
system that will buoy a woman, help with arranging shelter and support should a resident decide to set out on her own, and connecting women with agencies. The Native woman in transition, like anyone else, needs all those services. In order to provide those services, the transition house worker should understand the following things: the life situations the Native woman may be coming from, the track record of Native women with MHR, the legal system and Native women, her interpersonal skills and coping skills. The information in the following pages should help the transition house worker to be more sensitive to and more helpful with the Native woman in transition.

Life Situations

Native women, like any woman who is battered, are frequently caught in the cyclical nature of domestic violence. There is a pattern to the abuse, and the pattern often revolves around pay days, alcohol abuse and subsequent violence. Many Native women report that alcohol is the triggering factor in battering, and are convinced that "if he'd only get off the booze" things would improve. The woman herself may get into the same binge of alcohol and remorse, and then blame herself for the violence which follows. Often the relationship began with liquor dependency and is deepened with liquor dependency. We see this syndrome in many women who come to the transition house; they fail to see who's doing what to whom because they are themselves caught in a cycle of drinking. The worker in a transition house has to, therefore, help the woman to separate the alcohol and substance abuse from the violence she is the target for.

Some Native women are also caught in a generational cycle of violence. Tapping the life story of a Native woman will confront the worker with the harsh realities of poverty and violence. Nearly every Native woman in a transition house will talk, if allowed to, about scenes of violence in her

CYCLES OF VIOLENCE



- Violent actions are not always done by crazy people.
- Cycles of violence can be broken.
- Patterns of violence can be recognized.
- A person trapped in a cycle of violence needs help.

drunk or crazy men abuse women, etc. We all know the myths, and in the last few years we have so indoctrinated each other and the community around us that we have little patience or even awareness that people still believe ~~the myths~~. Many Native women live in situations where access to the information ~~we have been talking about~~ is extremely limited. Many Native women also have their own perceptions about the reasons why they get beaten up, and these reasons need to be heard and explored. Often, she has the advantage we don't have -- she lives in the life that creates the violence and she can see ways to solve it. Native-run awareness groups on and off reserve are the answer to defusing violence and educating women about the reasons for and the ways to cope with domestic violence.

Anyone who works with Native communities should be completely aware of the Indian Act and the recent changes to the Canadian Constitution. We need to be aware of the legal implications of the changes to the Indian Act, because these changes may profoundly affect the lives of Native women. The archaic law has been changed that states that an Indian woman loses her status as an Indian if she marries a non-status Indian or a non-Native, while the Indian man who does so does not lose his status and indeed passes his status to his wife. Workers in Transition Houses should be as familiar with this act and its implications as they are with recent changes in laying assault charges and family court and custody issues. Women who lost their status through marriage are now applying for and receiving their status and subsequent band membership. What this means to the lot of a woman who has been forced out of her home and marriage as a result of battery remains to be seen. A complete discussion of the changes to the Indian Act should be held with the staff and volunteers of every transition house; the resource person can be found in the community or at the Tribal or Area Council.

The Native woman who is non-Status also carries a burden that we may not completely understand. She will be discriminated against because of her colour and supposed culture, yet she shares none of the benefits that the Status card carries. She is not entitled to housing, medical, forgiveness of federal taxes, forgiveness of sales taxes, or other apparent benefits that can be accorded to someone who is carrying "the Card". Yet she is perceived as being and living the media-shaped life of a Native Indian in Canada. Often, the loss of status has been a bitter blow, Other times, the loss of status has been insignificant compared to other events in her life. Simply knowing the difference between status and non-status for the transition house worker is not enough--she must also find out what that means to the woman she is working with.

If there are bands in the area of the transition house, then the staff of the transition house should ask to be invited to visit the Band Office and have a tour of the reserve. There are many show-case reserves in any area, and to visit a reserve can put to rest whatever ideas the staff may have developed about life on reserve. In many cases, living on reserve is no different from living in a sub-division anywhere: there are problems with restless youths looking for something to do, women are confined to the house and feel isolated and housebound, men are looking for work, or doing work that does not interest them and everyone is worrying about bills. Some reserves are extremely isolated, and the life style resembles life 100 years ago. There is no electricity, no running water, and no reliable roads off reserve. This does not mean, however, that life is difficult. Many Native women have shared their joys at living in the natural way, accustomed to the hard work, and content to live in such conditions. The worst situations seem to be those reserves that combine the simple conditions ^{of rural life} and contact with the worst aspects of the dominant culture. This is

when the entire reserve seems to get into binge drinking (refer to A Poison Stronger Than Love for useful descriptions of this phenomenon), where children are neglected and the entire community is lost in a morass of poverty, despair, and the conditions of alcohol and substance abuse that deepen that morass. This is where violence of a cyclical and ever-deepening nature can occur; women will speak, finally, to us about life where all of the men seem determined to vent their rage and frustration in physical and sexual abuse on whatever female crosses their path. The first few times I heard these stories, I was overwhelmed by the pain and the seemingly hopelessness of the situation. ~~But~~ I have seen many communities turn themselves around, discover the Indian way to solving problems and bring about a renewal that is nothing short of miraculous. And if I can be forgiven some sexism of my own, women often seem to be the motivators to bring about this change. When the staff appears to be overwhelmed by the horror of life on some reserves, I recommend the Four Winds Project video about Alkali Lake.

What does this information mean to us when we work with a woman who is fleeing an abusive situation on reserve? It means we have to find out what her life was like on reserve, realize that she may have lived on it all her life, that she is part of a network of extended family and community that have been all around her always, and not assume that it will be easy to live in town, alone, unsupported, and attempting to make profound life changes. The support a woman needs who is trying to get away, not only from an abusive husband but also from an abusive reserve situation, is not to be underestimated. This is the time to assign a patient, attentive, assertive volunteer who can be available on a regular basis for listening, assisting, and helping her make the connections which will at least simulate the support system she has grown accustomed to.

When dealing with a woman who is from a reserve in the area, you have to realize that her community is extremely close knit, and the cliché that everyone knows everyone is often painfully true. Confidentiality is important in a transition house, of course, and it is even more important that the staff realize that a casual comment about a ^{Chilkotin} woman from up country with four kids who arrived today could lead to immediate identification and contact with the pursuing husband. Native women face exactly the same dangers from well-meaning relatives as a non-Native woman, and the network of friendship and relationship is even more intricate. When a woman takes her children and leaves the reserve she has married on to two things may happen. One, the parents and relatives of her husband may decide that the children are as much their children as hers and she could lose them in a custody battle very easily. Secondly, she will literally have nowhere to go if her own Band cannot or will not accept her back. Often, the woman cannot return to her own community because she has lost her band membership when she married. Her family may be willing to take her in, but getting a house and support from the Band may not be forthcoming. Leaving the abusive relationship may mean losing significant financial and emotional support from the Band. All of these factors should be completely understood by staff members at the transition house.

Life off reserve for the Native woman is like life in the city for all of us. She may be the target for sexual abuse because of her race, she will certainly be discriminated against in housing, and she will have to try to avoid the network of Native people in the community who could lead her back to her abusive situation or into a new one. She may be lonely, uncertain about her coping skills, and uncertain about such details as having a phone connected and managing money. These are problems that any woman faces who is trying to establish a new life for herself. Whenever we hold a workshop for ex-residents, we

are constantly dealing with the little life details that can make or break a woman's chance at a new life. One small example should illustrate this situation. One resident, who is from out of town, strikes up a supportive friendship with another resident who lives in town. They are both parenting small children who are displaying the symptoms of getting out of an abusive situation. The women decide, after numerous attempts to find housing individually, to move into a duplex together. After weeks of searching, accommodation is found. Furniture is acquired through donations and thrift shops, and the women make an ill-considered trip to the local woman's ex-husband's house to get some of her belongings back. Setting-up money from MHR provides the staples, and all the women need is a telephone to restore them to some resemblance of a normal life. After discovering that the out-of-town woman cannot get a phone in her name because she has no credit record, they decide to put the phone in the local woman's name. The phone is installed and about one hour later the local woman's husband arrives at the house. He has been calling B.C. Telephone since she left him, and when he finally got a response to his request for a new listing, he finessed the operator into giving him the address. Crisis time on the pager, and several staff members are called into action to protect these two women. In the midst of all of this, the ex-husband knows someone who knows someone who knows the cousin of the out-of-town woman's husband. He drives five hundred miles in one night to get to town to take his children away and administer a final assault on his wife. The idea of getting an unlisted phone number had not occurred to these two women who had lived most of their lives on reserve or in homes without telephones.

Many Native Indian women, like many of us, elect not to get married according to the law of the land. They live in committed, common-law relationships that last many years. Often, however, they harbour the belief that the common-

law relationship is somehow less valuable than the married relationship, and in the transition house the residents may feel shy to discuss the real nature of their relationship. I have discovered that referring to a woman's partner as anything else but husband leads to confusion and embarrassment. Most women who are living in a common-law relationship do not understand their rights and their responsibilities; often they do not realize that after a short time the very act of living common law becomes a legally recognized relationship. Some material on this subject should be easily available in the transition house. We also need to watch ^{the way we talk} our mouths. I am often aware that we use derogatory expressions, such as "she's living with some guy", "they're shackled up", or "that man she's been living with for a while", and we use these expressions when we are talking casually around the transition house. These expressions of dismissal and disdain can strike blows to the listening woman who takes the remark to heart.

Education and employment alternatives for Native women who want to get away from an abusive relationship are as limited as they are for anyone who has not had sufficient opportunities to be educated. The drop out rate for Native women in British Columbia continues to be very high, although for the first time the participation rate of adult Natives is higher ^{than non-Natives} at the post secondary level. Many regional colleges and universities have programs that help Native students gain access to education. The transition house should be visited by an educational advisor to keep the workers up to date on opportunities for continued education. Native women should be aware of entry programs designed specifically for the educational needs of Native people returning to learning. Two examples of such programs are the College Achievement Program at Fraser

Valley College and the College Achievement and Support Program at Capilano College. Many school boards and colleges offer night school for up-grading courses. Encouragement is the key here; one of the critical elements in re-shaping a life is education. Many of the employment alternatives that women consider lead to low-paying jobs with poor working conditions and not enough time to devote to sole-parenting. Often, women will talk about a job they want to get without considering what education is required, or what the employment opportunities are available in the community. Waitressing is a good place to start for a woman who is starting her life over, but she also needs to have enough information to evaluate other options. Inviting the educational advisor in your area to speak to the ex-resident's support group is one way to help women to match what education they need to get to what jobs they hope to have. Education is also a way for a woman to begin to take some control of her life if she chooses to return to her husband. Transition house workers could devote some time to being education pushers.

The life situation of the Native woman in transition will be a mixture of life style, her status, her family support system, whether she lives on or off reserve, whether she is familiar with her own culture, and what her attitudes are towards her situation. The intake form at the transition house is only the beginning to finding out where she is and where she's been and where she wants to go.

The Ministry of Human Resources and the Native Woman

The relationship between MHR and Native women is characterized by a long and bitter history of intervention. Every Native woman I have talked to has her story to tell about apparently vindictive social workers descending on unsuspecting families and removing the children. The newspapers lately have been

filled with the more sensational stories about this arm of the provincial government. ^{no} ~~There is really point in pursuing this avenue.~~ What the worker in a t-house needs to know is that in the 1950's over 90% of Native children in B.C. were apprehended or in the ^{care} ~~case~~ of someone other than their natural parents. Generally, Native women have a significant distrust and fear of the social worker or welfare worker. Most ^{transition} ~~and~~ house intake procedures involve filling out a special needs request, and this requirement can be very frightening. Some Native women have a difficult time communicating with the officialness of MHR offices, and often the outright briskness of the receptionist or intake worker can act as a barrier to the woman getting the assistance she needs. At times a woman will return from the MHR office with some questions unanswered and other information garbled. Whenever possible, particularly ^{are} when the personality styles of the MHR workers ^{are} known, a volunteer or staff member could accompany the woman to the appointment and possibly act as a buffer or advocate. Every t-house worker should be aware of the requirements for getting social assistance, particularly when the woman might be able to get assistance from her Band. Some bands have social workers who live and work on Reserves, and whenever possible, these people should be called in to assist.

Recently, some attention has been focused on the cycle of welfare syndrome. Some social theorists believe that by the 1990's we will have fourth and fifth generation welfare recipients. These people do not willingly accept the cycle, and many struggle to break the cycle, and others have developed an aversion to the idea of being on welfare, even as a temporary solution. Native women are very clear that welfare has seriously damaged the quality of

life and initiative on and off reserve; they are also under no illusion about the level of support they will receive if they have to go on social assistance. Allaying fears about social assistance as a trap is necessary if the worker is going to try to connect the resident to the agency.

Native women may be afraid to risk contact with a financial aid worker or to seek assistance if her children have also been abused by her husband. Transition-house workers are under directions to report suspected child abuse or children at risk; nevertheless, we need to evaluate how we determine the at-risk child in the care of a Native mother. Our own criteria for proper parenting may be culturally biased. We also don't know how to separate the symptoms of poverty and the symptoms of neglect due to negligence. Native parents have a variety of effective parenting techniques. In a no-violence transition house, the staff can learn a great deal about parenting by watching the non-intervention strategies of a Native mother. On the other hand, a Native woman may have completely ineffectual parenting skills because she herself as a child only experienced passive neglect or active abuse. She may have a history of child apprehensions behind her, so she is running a risk that as she restructures her life someone may report her for child abuse or child neglect, either out of concern or vengeance. One woman, attempting to establish a life of her own away from her abusive partner of nine years, was reported to the MHR social worker three times for child neglect. Intervention by the Band social worker revealed the husband's family were determined to keep her child in their family and so they were gossiping maliciously about her parenting. She was reported for "letting her son run about unsupervised."

In fact, she was allowing him to find his way to one of four homes who welcomed him and cared for him after school. These homes were in a two acre area on a reserve with a tradition of keeping an eye on the youngsters.

There are families in every community who are perennially at risk. The t-house worker needs to be able to separate her natural instinct to help keep mother and children together from her mandate to protect children from ongoing abuse. And there are times when a temporary separation of mother and child will give the mother the time she needs to establish herself and develop the skills to keep her children with her safely.

Fostering out has an uneven record in B.C. Most of us can come up with stories that reveal foster parents who are vicious, bigoted fanatics who see their task with an attitude that ^{near} ~~means~~ missionary zeal. They sit and tell racist jokes to show their tolerance, and proceed to attempt to reform the children in as short a time as possible, causing substantial abuse themselves. There are also foster parents who are sensitive, supportive people with all the love necessary for the task of harbouring a child until the parent can take over again. Native women fear the process of fostering because they have so many first hand experiences that were unpleasant. All that a t-house worker can do is try to be objective, keep a list of good foster parents, and report bad ones. To be cavalier about fostering out is as bad as being casual about the abuse the woman has suffered. Share the mother's fears and sorrows, and help her plan for the day when her children will be returned. Returning to the abusive relationship will not improve her chances of getting her children back. There is, however, nothing more devastating than when the threat 'You'll lose the kids if you leave me' comes true.

Most t-houses could use a workshop on child apprehensions and fostering

in the Native community because we do not know enough about this area. Dealing with the Ministry of Human Resources is part of the work we do at transition houses, so a solid relationship of trust and cooperation is critical if we are to be helpful to Native women in transition.

Native Women and the Legal System

Most Native women's experiences with police and the court system are coloured by negative experiences. The presence of police means trouble, not comfort; consequently, getting a Native woman to lay or press an assault charge is very difficult. The recent change in the law, which allows the police to lay the charge, does not seem to have improved the situation. In fact, the powerlessness she feels is only enforced by the bewildering array of actions which may follow her attempt to get away from an abusive situation. Laying an assault charge on reserve may create a situation where other people see the woman as unnecessarily calling outsiders into the situation.

Many Native women are confident and articulate, and they have no trouble dealing with lawyers and the legal system. Other Native women need the assistance of an advocate to guide them through, ^{helping like women to know what to expect} coaching and reviewing evidence is important for all women about to enter a courtroom. Training a worker or volunteer is one thing we can do to empower women in lawyers offices and courts. Often, a well-meaning judge will ask a series of questions, and many women have severe stage-fright. Go over the expected scenarios and play some "what will happen then" games. Equally useful is playing the "what's the very worst thing that could happen?", until you get into ludicrous scenes which finally provoke laughter.

The stereotype of the battered woman who lays an assault charge only to refuse to testify is based on behaviour well known to all of us. When you go through one complete experience of laying a charge with a resident you develop

a new perspective about the pressures brought to bear on a woman who seeks a legal remedy when her husband beats her. Explaining the intricacies of no-contact and restraining orders to a woman who does not have well developed assertiveness skills is very trying indeed. We have seen when a woman lives in a culture that views her children as not so much hers as everyone's it is very difficult to get into the right mind set for a legal battle for custody. The battered woman may have severely damaged self esteem, and her parenting skills may also be non-existent. Consequently, the legal adversarial system makes her a prime candidate for entering a custody battle and losing. Or she may win under a set of criteria that are nearly impossible for her to be successful. Any sign of alcohol or substance abuse, even a history of either of these, puts the battered woman in a double jeopardy situation. There is a systemic racism that operates as well, branding every Native women in transition an unfit mother. The answer to this attitude is not to trade fit and unfit stories but to train each other to evaluate each mother on her own, ^{not} allowing cultural bias to creep in. Once we train each other, we can start on the legal system. Most competent lawyers are extremely busy and often unable to take the time to evaluate and coach a woman about to enter a custody battle.

Native women have the same problems with maintenance orders as non-Native women. The problems of non-payment or lack of enforcement are frequently compounded by seasonal employment and feast or famine incomes. Many Native women are unfamiliar with the laws around support payments, and they may also be resigned to insufficient enforcement orders. Our experience with maintenance orders shows no difference from woman to woman.

The law is a mystery to many women, who see its process as a complex maze. The skills ^{to} ~~required~~ most women in crisis, who have already been worn

down by life with a battering man. Each transition house should be staffed by women who can act as advocates, supporters and interpreters for any woman who wishes to get the system to work for her.

Interpersonal and Coping Skills

This section contains a series of worksheets for staff and volunteer training sessions on the issues of integrating the transition house. Most of these work sheets are self-contained; working through one of these per weekly meeting should help the transition house to begin to examine its racist 'hotspots'.

Checklist: Test Your Perspective

- T F 1. N^o are passive.
- T F 2. N^o are slow to speak.
- T F 3. N^o have a markedly different communication style.
- T F 4. N^o are stoical.
- T F 5. N^o do not disclose easily.
- T F 6. N^o characteristic behaviour can be compared to a classic non-assertive stance.
- T F 7. N^o are usually involved in alcohol abuse.
- T F 8. N^o parents have non-active parenting skills.
- T F 9. N^o are always completely dominated by the men in their lives.
- T F 10. N^o do not like to be touched by friends or counsellors.

All of these statements are generalizations, and are therefore false. But most people, in a "testing" situation, are reluctant to answer false to every question, so this little test drives some interesting stereotypes out into the open. This test itself can provoke some interesting reactions, because we often don't like to even talk about this kind of subject.

ASSERTIVENESS SKILLS - RATE YOURSELF AGAINST THE CHART

When you have to speak out against someone, how do you act?

- a) Your voice is weak, soft and hesitant. _____
- b) Your voice is high, shrill and shaky. _____
- c) Your voice is clear, calm and firm. _____

When you have to look at someone who wants you to do something you don't want to do, how do you act?

- a) You look down almost all the time, your eyes fill with tears, and your hands get clammy. _____
- b) You have no expression in your eyes, or your eyes are narrowed with dislike, and you try not to see them. _____
- c) You look at the person carefully as you reply. _____

When someone asks you to do something and you want to say no, how do you say it?

- a) You apologize, stumble around for an excuse and say yes. _____
- b) You blame the other person, speak abruptly, and act snobbish. _____
- c) You honestly state what you want, and repeat yourself if necessary. _____

When you need some information, and you ask for it, what do you do if you don't understand what the person has said?

- a) You look for another way to get the information. _____
- b) You ask again in a sarcastic, hostile manner. _____
- c) You listen carefully, think over the response, and then ask again. _____

Do you get your own way?

- a) never
- b) always
- c) sometimes

ASSERTIVENESS SKILLS

Every resident at a transition house needs to be reminded of, or taught, assertiveness skills. It is also important for the staff to know and model appropriate assertiveness skills. Constant refresher workshops are useful. This sheet, if done with the woman alone or in a support group, can help her to pinpoint behaviours that may be standing in her way to shaping a new life.

The (a) answers are all classed as non-assertive, the (b) answers are all aggressive, and the (c) answers are all assertive.

In volunteer training sessions, after the section on communication skills, the group does some problem solving. Several exercises and situations are available, but a group staff session where new ones are created will bring relevance to the situation. Here are some exercises which can provoke good discussions with women about their assertiveness skills.

1. Everytime you go to visit your mother, she gives you advice and instructions about what to wear, how to raise the kids, how to deal with your husband, and what to do about the fact that he "knocks you around once in awhile." She doesn't seem to understand that your life is very difficult with your husband. She often tells you that a divorced woman would not be welcome in her house. You have begun to avoid seeing her, and you are not sure how she is going to react when she finds out that you are at the transition house. How will you tell her. With another person, practise a conversation with your mother where you tell her.
2. You have a good friend in town. You have known each other for several years. Lately, you have noticed that your friend has become addicted to gossip; in fact, you know that several things you have told your friend in confidence have been spread around. Every visit with your friend begins with a gossip session -- which you enjoy but feel guilty about. You are becoming concerned that your friend will lose all of her friends if she keeps it up. Practise telling her how you feel.
3. Your husband is constantly belittling you. This behaviour has grown worse and worse since you first tried to leave him. Sometimes you stand up for yourself, and then a fight starts. Sometimes you just accept the comments, and then you feel miserable. Often these comments are passed when your children are around, and you worry that this example of adult interaction is harmful to them. You decide to ask your husband to stop this behaviour.

VALUES CLARIFICATION WORK SHEET

Answering some of these questions may help you to understand more about your own values.

Fill in the blanks with the thoughts that occur to you first. Don't worry about finding the "right" answer. There isn't one. There are only right answers for you.

Your mother always told you that a woman should be _____

A good mother is always _____

A good father is always _____

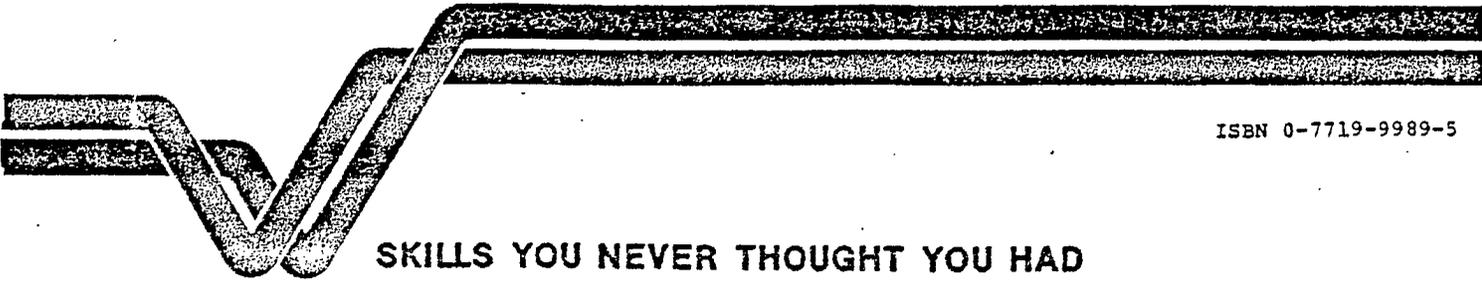
You think that a good husband is a man who _____

List five words that describe what a man should be in society today.

List five words that describe what a woman should be in society today.

If your best friend knew what was happening to you right now, what would she or he say? _____

BC Women's Programs



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SKILLS YOU NEVER THOUGHT YOU HAD

The struggle to identify our hidden talents or abilities becomes a blessing when we discover our many qualifications and skills, marketable in a wide variety of work areas.

Adapted from The Complete Job-Search Handbook
by H. Figler

Throughout our lives we acquire skills from our experiences and life activities. It is important that we credit our productive efforts and recognize the skills we possess. It will help us to prioritize and target our volunteer activities in a more effective way. It may also be helpful in obtaining paid employment. Employers are increasingly recognizing the validity of the voluntary experience. For example, an application for employment with the Public Service of Canada instructs that: "Volunteer work develops the same skills and abilities obtained through paid employment and is given full consideration if deemed relevant."

This pamphlet outlines the skills assessment process using a case study. It shows us how to assess our skills and determine the transferability of these skills to paid employment. It gives a choice of jobs and a list of skills required to perform them, making it easier for us to select a job we want and can do. Skills gained through life experiences such as volunteer work, homemaking, and community services are directly transferable to employment in the labour market. The key is to make the connection between skills and the job we desire.

What is a skill?

SKILL = Knowledge + Experience

A skill is something you can do. It is an ability which is manifested in performance. We all have some skills. It is important that we become aware of them and give ourselves a chance to improve old ones and develop new ones.

Understanding Ourselves: Self-study

The first step is to acquire an understanding of ourselves. This understanding comes from an examination of talents, aptitudes, hobbies and interests. Thus, we can learn what it is we do best. The example case study on the following page illustrates the skills assessment process. Read this example with the purpose of assessing Kathy's skills from all aspects of her life experiences: homemaking and housework, community work, volunteer work, and paid employment. Each activity involves a variety of different skills.

Kathy's Life Story

Skills

Kathy, aged 37, is married with 3 children aged 11, 13, and 15. Her husband has a steady job but his income is barely enough for an active family. Kathy decides she has to find a job after many years out of the work force during which she has been running the household and raising her children.

- financial planning
- budgeting
- directing procedures and activities
- preparing food
- decorating and landscaping
- keeping records and accounts
- communicating with others

She wonders what she can do. She quit school when she was in Grade 10. She worked as a grocery clerk for a while, a taxicab dispatcher, and a receptionist, but that was years ago.

- managing cash
- ordering stock
- remembering information/memory work
- meeting the public

When she got married she stayed home with the children. Five years ago she took a night course in basic typing skills and bookkeeping. She wants an office job but is uncertain if she has the necessary skills. She goes to see a counsellor at the community college. The counsellor asks her: "What experience do you have? What are your hobbies? Any special interests? What have you done since leaving school?" Kathy explains that she often helps out at the Community Club when babysitting is needed or when teenagers want help with a project. Kathy tells about her efforts at handicrafts, such as sewing, knitting, crocheting, and making stuffed toys. The counsellor tells her she could apply for several different jobs. She goes home and makes a list starting out with jobs she has had, hobbies, community work, machines she can operate, and things she likes to do.

- scheduling
- typing
- answering phone
- directing customers
- organizing people, projects and tasks
- operating cash register
- planning events
- working with precision
- displaying artistic ideas
- directing staff
- applying judgement
- working under pressure
- advising people
- counselling in groups
- solving problems
- teaching
- handling detailed work
- formulating new ideas/solutions

Through an examination and assessment of Kathy's life experiences which range from homemaking to paid employment, it is evident that she has acquired a wide range of skills. These skills are a combination of knowledge and experience and are demonstrated by effective action in different situations. Many of them are transferable to other work settings and tasks.

Below is a list of selected employment skills. Underline or circle those skills you possess to further expand awareness of your skills.

Employment Skills

CARPENTRY SKILLS: sanding, house painting, cabinet building, ornamental woodwork, building additions, house framing, paneling, furniture making, insulation installation, furniture refinishing.

COUNSELLING SKILLS: group counselling, individual counselling, teaching (adults and/or children, volunteer or paid), inter-agency work, interviewing, writing programs, investigating problems, supervising clients, directing procedures, scheduling, formulating new ideas, keeping records, public relations, researching, public speaking, writing reports, crisis work, supervision of people, keeping records.

GARDENING SKILLS: lawn care, flower gardening, landscaping, tree trimming, farming skills, transporting trees, vegetable gardening, pruning trees, grafting, green house work, sales, surveying, farm labour, public relations, money handling, directing customers, supervision of people.

MAINTENANCE/JANITORIAL/REPAIR SKILLS: dusting, sweeping floors, washing floors, waxing, washing windows, cleaning rugs or carpets, cleaning bathrooms, buffing, polishing furniture, plumbing repairs, electrical repairs, window repairs, carpentry work, relating to customers, money handling, supervision of people, servicing machines/equipment, keeping inventory.

FABRICATING SKILLS: soldering, assembly line work, operating machinery (such as grinder, lathe, drill press, milling machine, etc.), electrical wiring, stockroom work, unloading or loading, inventory, quality control, packing, filling orders, welding, box making, supervision of people, parts clerk, keeping records, stocking shelves, directing procedures.

TRUCKING SKILLS: driving small trucks, driving diesel trucks, hooking and unhooking trailer from tractor, backing large truck into small openings, city driving, over the road driving (long distance), mechanical repairs, diesel repairs, loading and unloading, changing truck tires, keeping records, money handling, keeping on schedule, customer relations, supervision of people.

HOUSEHOLD SKILLS: sewing, child care, money management, budgeting, ordering supplies, inventory control, directing procedures, teaching, decorating, laundry skills, food preparation, counselling others, relating to other people, keeping records, public relations, formulating new ideas, ironing, supervision of children and adults, handling complaints, taking care of old or handicapped people.

TEACHING SKILLS: writing lesson plans, formulating new ideas, writing and grading tests, keeping records, public relations, writing reports, supervision of adults and/or children within a school-type setting, scheduling, directing procedures, individual counselling, group counselling, decorating classroom, teaching various subjects or special events, organizing projects, relating to parents and people in community, working with different adult and/or child populations, making assignments, setting up classroom interest centers, art skills related to teaching, music skills related to teaching.

OFFICE SKILLS: bookkeeping, using adding machines, accounts payable, accounts receivable, payroll, income tax, billing, money handling, supervision of people, receptionist, typing, filing, answering phone, stenography, typing from dictating machines, making appointments, running office machines (such as, calculator, adding machine, duplicator, photocopier, printing, word processor, etc.) proofreading, sorting and delivering mail, greeting clients, order processing, calling clients, directing clients, public speaking, keeping records, public relations, researching ideas, writing reports, running meetings.

RESTAURANT SKILLS: cashier, waitress, waiter, bartender, bus-boy, directing customers, handling money, public relations, hostess/maitre de, dishwashing, budgeting, short order cook, main cook, cook's assistant, ordering supplies, inventory, hiring, supervision of people, correctly filling orders, employee relations, customer relations.

SALES: public relations, money handling, keeping records, promoting events, greeting customers, customer service, order processing, bookkeeping, directing customers, inventory, displaying samples, demonstrating products, writing reports, motivating others, persuading others, servicing goods, delivering goods, supervision of people.

CONSTRUCTION SKILLS: concrete work, electrical wiring, maintenance repairs, plumbing, heavy equipment operation, truck driving, brick laying, trenching, roofing, sheet-metal work, heating installation, refrigeration work, carpentry work, heavy labor, tools and machines you can use, money handling, public relations, directing customers, inventory, scheduling, supervision of people.

Although many skills are unique and useful only in one specific area, many others skills are generic and can be applied to many different jobs. Some of the most useful easily transferable skills are organizing/managing, sales, teaching, writing, supervision of people, public relations, and budget management. They can be successfully applied to a host of jobs in the voluntary sector or to paid employment.

Transferring Your Skills To Paid Work

The following chart illustrates the process of transferring skills to particular jobs. Using Kathy's life experience skills from the case study, it is evident that she possesses many of the skills required for managing an office. Other jobs have been listed to further demonstrate the skills transfer process.

<u>Life Experience Activity</u>	<u>Skills Acquired</u>	<u>Jobs That Use These Skills</u>
Home Management	- planning and scheduling work - supervising people - directing procedures and activities - purchasing supplies - applying judgement	Managing an Office
Babysitting and Work With Teens	- communicating effectively with others - solving problems - interpreting information - instructing others - working under pressure	Counselling
Organizing Community Activities	- planning and organizing events - formulating new ideas - applying creativity - persuading others - dispensing information	Project Management
Grocery Clerk	- managing cash - handling detailed work - pricing products - balancing accounts - calculating figures	Bookkeeping
Family Income Management	- developing budgets - controlling expenditures - applying judgement - maintaining financial records - advising people	Financial Planning and Management
Receptionist	- receiving clients - relating to the public - informing customers - processing orders - dispensing information	Public Relations

It is evident from this exercise that skills from a variety of experiences are transferable to many jobs. All experience counts and is acquired through a wide range of activities:

- volunteer work
- paid work
- hobbies/leisure activities
- courses/knowledge
- homemaking
- community interests

In order to examine the transferability of your skills, complete your own personal chart. The skill development process continues and expands throughout your lifetime. It is important that from time to time you update your skills inventory in order to assess what additional knowledge and experience you need to become more marketable.

Other services and programs that might be useful

The following ideas may inspire the staff at the transition house. There are workbooks available, and excellent resource people, to help the staff meet the needs of Native women in transition. Our experience has been that all women at the transition house respond well to workshops in the following areas:

- parenting skills
- alcohol dependency
- breaking out of the substance abuse syndrome
- pre-menstrual tension
- options for birth control
- stress management
- strengthening interpersonal communications
- exploring the alternatives

Compiling lists of volunteers who are Native women is particularly helpful for staff members who may feel at a loss to reach a Native woman who has been admitted to the transition house. Support groups on and off reserve would be a welcome addition to the work that we do in transition. Parenting groups on and off reserve are beginning to assist women who are in transition.

It is important to integrate the staff and directing boards of transition houses. It does no good to work towards meeting the needs of Native women in transition when Native women continue to be invisible at the House or on the governing board. Making connections in the Native community is as easy as lifting the phone and calling the local area council or tribal council. Finding out how many, what their names are, and where the local bands are would also assist the staff.

Conclusion

This information is presented as a beginning to providing better services to Native women in transition. The level of violence in the Native community is as high as the level of violence in the non-Native community, but we seem often to be very slow to meet the needs of the women caught up in this violence. Attempting to provide services without falling into the trap of brutal generalization is the task of the worker in a transition house. There is no them or they. We are all women first. We should be able to reach out to each other on those terms first.

WORKING WITH THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

BY CONNIE CHAPMAN BASED ON NOTES FROM A WORKSHOP LED BY
DEBORAH BRADLEY AND LINDA LIGHT

INTRODUCTION

In the past ten years, there have been many significant changes in the way different groups respond to women who are being assaulted by their husbands or partners. When Transition Houses and women's centres first started helping battered women, the police and the justice system often seemed to be as much of the problem as the violent partner. Many women related horror stories of their treatment at the hands of the justice system: women who told of police joking with their husbands while they lay in their own blood; women who told of cases not proceeding to court even after they had laid charges and stuck to them; women telling of police not responding to calls for help. In the early days of services for battered women, those stories were the rule. Today they are more often the exception, particularly in areas where services have existed for some time.

These changes have come about, in no small part, because of the efforts of front-line workers determination to make things better for battered women. In addition, in British Columbia, the Ministry of Attorney General has taken an active role in developing policy to protect assaulted women and in working with the various parts of the justice system to make sure the policy is implemented.

In areas where active, successful working relationships have developed between the justice system and services for battered women, the advantages for the service and for battered women have been great. First and foremost, it is easier for the woman that is served, whether she's a victim of sexual assault or of wife assault. She has a little better chance at not being so revictimized through the system when services for battered women are working with justice system. The second thing that may happen is that the public is better educated when all the systems concerned with wife assault are working together. Third, a good working relationship will make the work of police and workers easier and more enjoyable.

Regardless of the fact that agency policy and working relationships have improved in the last ten years, workers still report feeling frustrated and powerless to help battered women through the justice system. The following material is presented to help services develop a working

relationship with the justice system or to maintain and perhaps improve the one that already exists. Much of the material is based on the experience of Vancouver WAVAW (Women Against Violence Against Women), a sexual assault centre which has been operating in the greater Vancouver area for three years.

PLANNING

INTRODUCTION

Before beginning to set up any formal working relationships with the various parts of the Justice system, there are three steps which your service can take to increase your chances of success: doing an inventory of attitudes and time commitment; gathering information about the system (e.g., police, crown council, clerks, etc); and planning both short-term and long-term strategy.

ATTITUDE AND TIME INVENTORY

Attitudes play a large part in developing a successful working relationship with the justice system. This point cannot be emphasized enough. An open and cooperative attitude will certainly not guarantee an immediate open and cooperative attitude on the part of the justice people. However, an open and cooperative attitude will greatly increase the chances of a warm reception. A negative, antagonistic and self-righteous attitude will almost guarantee a similar reaction from the police or whatever group you are working with. For these reasons, it is imperative to decide who in your group will be making contact and who will not be making contact. This is particularly important if your groups already has a history with the justice system that is not as cooperative as you would like.

At WAVAW, one staff person was assigned to be the liaison with the police for a two year period. This allowed her a chance to develop a good working relationship, to get to know officers well and to make any changes that were necessary. This person was also given, within her job description; the time necessary to set up and maintain a good working relationship.

So your groups must first decide who is going to set up a working relationship. Will your representative be a staff or a board person? Will you decide to use one person or have several work together? Who in your service has the necessary open attitudes to be able to make the program work? Will this person or groups of people actually have enough time and commitment to be able to follow-through for several years? These are

some of the questions which your group as a whole should look at before any attempts are made to set up a formal working relationship.

A note on time is important here. Meaningful working relationships with police and other areas of the justice system may require time both to filter down through the system and may require more time to become accepted as part of their operating procedure. This may require a lot of patience and tenacity on the part of your service in order to see changes through the first stages into completion. Particularly if you already have an uncooperative history, you may run into a lot of resistance and hostility. You may run into chauvanistic attitudes on the part of some members within the justice system and you may run into a lack of understanding or sensitivity to your position and ideas. (Loving; 1982) What this means, of course, is that the person or persons who are doing the actual liaisoning must be able to work with the resistences they may encounter and must be able to continue to work on the relationship when it seems as if nothing has changed and must have the backing of the organization to spend the time, if necessary, working with the justice system.

UNDERSTANDING

Before beginning any program with the justice system, it is important to understand them both as an institution and as a local resource. First, it is important to understand the nature of the work that is done as well as the function that the group plays in wife assault. According to Loving(1982), one of the myths surrounding police work is that they spend most of their time fighting crime. In fact, their work is very diversified and includes accidents and emergency illnesses, stray and injured animals, drunk drivers and lost children. They may also spend considerable time directing traffic, controlling crowds at public events, testifying in court, writing reports and answering inquiries from citizens. Because most people are not aware of the complexity and diversity of police work, they are often expected to be different things to different people.

Officers are expected to be coercive and authoritarian one minute, and helpful and supportive the next. They must be at once suspicious, yet trusting; neutral, yet flexible; and attuned to the possibility of danger, yet ever-friendly. They are not expected to enforce all laws, yet to know which ones to enforce in which situations. Guidelines for these decisions are usually nonexistent or ambiguous. As a result, most members of the police force are left on their own to make decisions of enormous impact.(Loving;1982, 11)

She (Loving, 1982) goes on to say that these pressures effect police in two major ways. First, as a group, personal stress is very high. Divorce, suicide, alcoholism and depression often exist more in police populations than in society as a whole. Second, because they may feel unappreciated and misunderstood, police often withdraw, socializing only with their own and becoming suspicious and distrusting of the mainstream of the society. So when a new or established group in the community such as a transition house starts to demand changes and more accessability, the police may very well respond with hostility. They may perceive these demands as yet another community group asking them to do more work with little or no reward. They may feel that they can't win no matter what they do so why change.

In addition to understanding the nature of the work, it is important to understand the function of the group in relation to wife assault. Using the police as an example again, for years many women who worked with battered women were frustrated and angry because, in their eyes, the police were totally ignoring their job of upholding the law and arresting criminals. In fact, until the new Wife Assault Policy, police were taught to "keep the peace" in domestic situations, so they didn't see their job in the same way that the workers were seeing it. This has led over the years to many miscommunications, frustrations, distrust and hostility on both sides.

It is this kind of understanding and appreciation that is necessary before starting a program of cooperation. To start, your group should take time to list the ideas each of you have about the function and the nature of the work for various segments of the justice system (e.g., police, crown council, justice of the peace, clerks, probation and family court workers, judges). Second, among yourselves, try to sort out myths from fact. (This may also be a good time to identify those people who are most able to work with various segments. One person, for example, may have good knowledge and a good appreciation of the crown's job yet may have had terrible experiences with police. So this person may be a good person to work with crown and not with police.) Third, your group's ideas should be checked out for accuracy. You may want to ask a sympathetic person from the justice system to talk with your group about your ideas and about her/his knowledge of the nature and function of the system. Or you may want to check to see if there is any current, available material written about the justice system. You may also have other ways of checking your information based on your community and your situation. Whatever method you choose, the important factor is to make sure your information and understanding is correct before starting to build relationships, since a

group that feels understood will be more apt to be open than one that feels misperceived.

STRATEGY

The last stage that your group should go through before actually initiating a working program with the justice system is to plan strategy. This is a time when your group reaches consensus about your plan of action. An overall plan of action should be developed at least six weeks before your initial contact with the justice system. However, before you begin it is wise for you to make a preliminary contact with the members of the justice system and let them know of your desire to work together after you have completed some background work. This may keep them from being suspicious should they hear that your group is "investigating" them (Loving, 1982, 16).

You will want to make sure you are clear about your definitions of wife assault. You will want to decide what your goals are in working with the various segments of the justice system; you will want to prioritize the order in which you plan to work with the various people within the justice system; you will want to decide the style of approach you will be using; you will want to finalize who is going to do the liaisoning and how they are going to get the support they need in order to do the work.

DEFINITIONS: When you approach the justice system, you will want to be absolutely clear about the scope and nature of wife assault. In defining the problem, you will want to use a wide range of reliable sources, including anything you have been able to gather on a local level. Make sure everyone in your group agrees on what will be presented. As well make sure your terminology is precise, particularly when using terminology which is also used by the service you are approaching. For example, "domestic dispute" as used by the police often includes both violent and nonviolent calls. (Loving, 1982) Unless you are using terms such as this one correctly, your credibility will be lost immediately.

PRIORITIZE: First, you will want to decide the order in which your group will be approaching the segments of the justice system to set up a working relationship. This involves both identifying the segments and then deciding which are most important to work with first. WAVAW in Vancouver decided to concentrate their attentions first on the police. Several years later, they started an approach to the crown council and the following year, they plan on working with the judges. Other services have identified court clerks as being a group which wield a lot of informal power and who often need education on the needs of battered women.

Once you have prioritized the services, you will want to identify the problem areas with that service. For example, are you concerned that the crown is not spending enough time preparing the battered woman before she goes to court? Perhaps you are concerned that the crown is staying charges on the woman's request too often and without understanding the pressures on her. This needs to be done for each of the segments you have prioritized and then you need to document the practices you are concerned about. Once you get into a meeting with the top people, you will want to be able to give details about the issues you are raising if you want to be taken seriously.

GOALS: Your goals will come out of your needs and out of the problems which exist in your community. Your goal may be to influence attitudes. It may be to influence policy. It may be to influence behavior. Your goals may also be both short-term and long term. For example, your long-term goal may be that all members of the justice system follow the Wife Assault policy at all times. Your short-term goal may be to get police officers to tell battered women about transition house facilities in your community and transport them when they request it.

All goals which have been identified will need the support and cooperation of the justice system before it can be implemented. According to Loving(1982) this process has four stages. They are:

Recognition - the justice system recognizes the existence and scope of wife assault.

Adoption - the system agrees with your analysis of the serious nature and magnitude of the problem.

Allocation - the system is willing to give organizational resources and make operational changes to reduce the problem of wife assault.

Participation - the people within the system take action to reduce wife assault and give public support to your program.

This four phase process may not be accomplished overnight. It may take several years or longer depending what the history is between your groups and the justice system. It may be useful to identify goals for each of the stages, since a task often feels more manageable when broken into smaller components.

APPROACH: It is at this point that you will start to decide how to approach the group. This decision will be based on your research and knowledge of the group you will be approaching. The key question to ask in this research is, "How much agreement is there between our definition and understanding of the issue and their definition and understanding?" The

greater the agreement, the more cooperative the approach will be. According to Loving(1982, 17):

A cooperative and supportive approach... is possible if there is a similarity of beliefs and a common definition of the problem...Where there are some possible agreements, your style will involve efforts to change beliefs and exchange experiences. And, where there is little possibility for consensus or cooperation, you may adopt more of a confrontational style and consider the exercise of political pressure or court action to elicit a departmental response. These various approaches can be thought of as the following:

(Justice system) position	Your approach
Positive	Cooperate, enlist aid, and share resources
Flexible	Campaign, educate and share experiences
Negative	Confront, exercise power or attempt to neutralize.

Remember that at this point you are only developing preliminary strategy. Once you have met with the head people, you will want to reevaluate your strategy and position. Therefore, it is unwise to adopt a confrontational position until after the first meeting. It is also important to not interpret a negative response to your ideas as resistance to them. Institutions often do not embrace change easily and the department may need time to decide whether the program is workable or whether they have enough money to implement their part of it.

SUPPORT: Now that you have more information and a clearer idea of what you will be pursuing, your group can make its final decision about who will be responsible for contacting and following through with the agency. Again, remember that this person is going to need sufficient time away from other duties to successfully follow through and will also need the encouragement and support of your group at all times and particularly is things are not going as smoothly as you had planned.

Now is also the time to start to build support within the community. Identify potential supporters within the segment of the justice system you will be approaching. You may want to approach the mayor, other influential community people and the press who could bring pressure on

the group. It is important to make sure that these people are respected by the group you are approaching. (Loving, 1982)

After all these steps have been taken and your group is cohesive in its approach, then you are ready to begin working directly with the justice system.

ACTION

SETTING UP THE MEETING

The first thing you will want to do is to set up a meeting. At the first meeting it is important to make sure that the top people are able to be present. Timing here is important. Make sure you are not starting your program at a time when there are lots of other demands on the top people as well, such as when they are preparing the budget or at the beginning of the fiscal year when they are unsure about their budget for the coming year.

WAVAW set up their first meeting with the help of the Ministry of Attorney General. Because the Ministry of Attorney General funds the sexual assault centres, they have a stake in wanting them to succeed in their work. Their first meeting involved the Chief Superintendent of the RCMP as well as several officers under him and representatives from the sexual assault centres. At this meeting, the sexual assault centres were able to share with and inform the Chief Superintendent of the ways things were actually working in the field for sexual assault victims.

It is important to understand the structure of the group you are attempting to influence. In this case, the RCMP is very hierarchical and if someone senior enough attends the meeting, then this information will filter down quickly to others under him and will be taken very seriously. That is why with all hierarchical groups, it is important to make sure the top people attend your first meeting, at least. The trick with a hierarchy and particularly one as large as the RCMP is to know how high you need to go to get results. Other government ministries may be able to help with this decision and may be able to provide the official sanction necessary to get the top people to attend. In B.C., either the Ministry of Attorney General or Ministry of Human Resources may be able to help set up a meeting for services which serve battered women. This might be best done on a regional level, where several services meet at the same time with the top people in the region. In the case of the RCMP, this would be the Sub-Division Commander.

Once this first meeting has taken place, it should be easier to establish a program on a local level. Even without the regional meeting, work can proceed in your own community. The same guidelines apply: use whatever officials (Ministries, Mayor, etc.) are available to you to help set up the meeting and give it official sanction; and, get the most senior people possible to attend the meeting.

There are several other things to consider when setting up this meeting. First, all segments of the justice system are highly organized and will be most comfortable and will give the most credence to a meeting that is also highly organized. This means the goals of the meeting must be clear and should be in a printed agenda form which, preferably, is mailed out prior to the meeting. It means that whoever is running the meeting should make sure that conversation stays on topic and that the meeting moves in an orderly fashion. It means that someone should be taking minutes of the meeting and that these minutes should be typed and mailed to the participants within a week of the meeting. Again, this is where Ministry people may be able to help with secretarial and photocopying resources.

Another thing to check is your approach in this first and subsequent meetings. WAVAW and other groups have found it very useful to make sure the police or other group know that your intension is to make their work easier and not to add to their workload. They have also found that it works well to let the police feel that they are making the decisions. In fact, they do have the option of pulling out and not working with you, so the decision to work with you must come from them.

FORMALIZING & MAINTAINING LIAISON

One of the first objectives WAVAW had when they met with local police was to have a formal liaison person appointed from the police department. The police liaison and the WAVAW liaison then meet on a regular basis to discuss issues as they came up and to work out problems which arise. It is important to make sure that whomever is appointed liaison has the authority to make decisions should the need arise. This is equally true for your group as well as for the group with which you are working.

One of the major advantages of having a formal liaison is that your group can work with that person to come to a mutual understanding of the issues. Procedures can be worked out with that person and that person may actually act as an advocate and as a spokesperson for your group in their department. The disadvantages of having a liaison is that the person becomes a specialist, and unless they can be counted on to work on all wife

assault cases, there may not be as much change in the whole department as you would like. For that reason, it is important for your group to decide beforehand whether a liaison is appropriate for the group you are approaching. For example, it may be very useful to have a senior police officer as your liaison and at the same time, it may be better to concentrate on educating all crown councils rather than having a specialist.

Once the contact has been established, either in the form of a liaison or some other way, the work of maintaining the relationship begins. Due to many of the reasons previously cited in this paper, many people in the justice system are suspicious and distrustful of working with "outsiders". This is particularly true if there is an unpleasant history between your group and theirs or if they perceive you as being "radical" or making demands on them. Too often, both sides are looking for the other to make a mistake and slip up, thereby giving each an opportunity to return to their previous ideas about each other. On the part of your liaison and your group, patience, tact and a sense of humor will help to get you through times when you feel that all is lost. If the other party makes a mistake, there may be people in your group who are ready to interpret that as lack of commitment and betrayal. On the other hand, if you slip up, inadvertently or not, the others may see that as you setting them up. If these kinds of incidents happen (and they probably will), it is very important to start with your liaison to work things out. If she/he is not able to straighten things out, then perhaps another meeting of the top officials is in order. You may need to call in your support systems (Ministry people, politicians, etc) again to help smooth the way.

One of the ways to avoid this kind of miscommunication is to make sure that the information that your group gives out to women about the law and about procedure is absolutely correct and up to date. In the same way, it is important to understand your role in relationship to the legal system and not to step out of that role. For example, if workers in your service are accepted as supports for the woman in the courtroom, then it is important for all new staff to know exactly what that means and how to act. If the judge thinks you're trying to act as a lawyer or if the crown thinks you've coached the witness, your organization's credibility may be damaged permanently.

The liaison may be very useful to your group in avoiding any mistakes of this sort. She/he may be willing to look over your procedures to make sure they are correct. Also, you can request relevant policies from the group you are working with and, as a public group, they are obliged to give it to you. Your liaison may be able to speed up this process. Your liaison may

also be able to request an organizational chart for your use. The more information you have about the policies and procedures of the group and the more that information is accessible to everyone in your service, the less the chance that a serious mistake will be made.

USING OTHER GROUPS

At the same time that you are working to establish or maintain a formal working relationship, you may want to use or establish other groups. For example, in Vancouver, B.C., a committee was set up to work with the police and other areas of the justice system on the issue of violence against women. This group was composed of a variety of women's groups which worked with the issue of violence against women as well as representatives of various provincial ministries, the city and the city police force. One of the advantages of a broader based group such as this is that, when the police hear the same issues being raised by a number of groups, they may take them more seriously. As well, this group has acted to network the women's groups.

This group decided that it would be policy oriented and not be an advocacy group for specific cases. The original idea for the committee was to allow the police to tell the women's groups what problems they were encountering in dealing with violence against women. However, the women's groups found out quickly that the committee was not to function that way, since the police did not feel free or feel it proper to talk about problems they may have been having with other areas of the justice system. So, the women's groups talked to the police about the problems they were encountering. In retrospect, the committee may have been even more useful if other justice system people had been included in the beginning.

In communities that are too small for this type of committee, an inter-agency committee may work to your benefit. In many communities, an inter-agency group has developed out of a need to have a more coordinated approach to various social problems. If this group already exists, then it may give you access to many of the justice system people you want to work with. Working with them on other issues can often build trust and credibility which then can be called upon when setting up your formal working relationship. The group can also be a source of support. Other community groups may have had to build working relationships and may have suggestions which will be useful in your situation.

An inter-agency group is also a place where protocols may be developed and implemented. For example, a protocol involving the hospital, police and the service for battered women could result in more charges

being laid with better evidence and with more support for the woman. Protocols are very important and, even though it may be time consuming to get the various agencies to write and agree on them, the benefits for the victims and the services will be great. If a protocol or a policy is in place and a mistake is made, then how to proceed in getting the correction made is clear to all parties.

Third, you may be able to use the education arm of the justice system to help build a working relationship. In British Columbia, the Justice Institute has set up and run two day forums on "A Coordinated Approach to Wife Assault." Because they are a government training institute, justice people are more apt to attend than they might if your group was sponsoring the event. If no such body exists, a community college might be able to do the same. Then, of course, you would want to use your community supports to influence the justice people to attend.

USING YOUR WORKING RELATIONSHIP

PROCEDURES

Since for most groups, the reason for establishing a working relationship is to make things easier and safer for battered women, it comes as no surprise that groups want to make changes in the area of procedures. For example, when a woman calls WAVAW and wants to make a report but does not want to talk someone in uniform, they can now call and have a detective available to take the woman's statement. If there is a problem or even a question, the Crown is available on most occasions to meet with WAVAW and the woman.

Another area where changes have taken place for sexual assault victims is in the use of third party reports. As in wife assault, many women were embarrassed or afraid to make a report, particularly if the offender had been a close acquaintance. WAVAW has developed a form where the woman can provide information on the offender, without identifying herself, and the police will take the form and use it for intelligence purposes. When this was first set up, a Letter of Confidentiality was signed by the police which states that the information is confidential. This means that in a small town, even though the police may know who the victim is, they cannot approach her with the information. While third party reports may have no immediate application for wife assault victims, they do illustrate the kind of inventiveness which works to help the victim.

EDUCATION

One of the other ways that groups have used an established working relationship has been in the area of education, both internal and external.

Once some degree of trust has been established, there is the possibility of doing training with both new and old members of the justice system. you may want to request to do training with new police recruits; you may decide that you want to talk to police officers at roll call. If another area of the justice system is your target, you will want to find out about their in-service training and approach them about doing some of it. Again, getting the permission to be involved in the training and then doing the training may not be an easy task. there may be initial hesitancy at granting your request and another offer may be made. When WAVAW asked to be included in police training, they were offered instead to be part of a training film which would be shown to all detachments. In the long run, this may give them a greater opportunity than face to face training to influence police officer's behavior in sexual assault cases.

EXPANDED INFLUENCE

Once a liaison system and a formal working relationship is underway, you may find that overlapping areas of concern present themselves. In the case of sexual assault in Vancouver, hospital procedures and the availability of doctors to testify were areas that were both hampering criminal cases and increasing revictimization of the assaulted women. Two doctors, Dr. Carol Herbert and Dr. Liz Wynot, took it upon themselves to make the hospital experience better for assaulted women and set up the Sexual Assault Assessment Project. First, Dr. Herbert approached Shaughnessy Hospital in Vancouver and convinced them that there needed to be a separate room where sexual assault victims were treated. Before this happened, sexual assault victims did not have the necessary privacy, and in some other cities were examined in the corridors of the hospital. Second, they recruited a core of women doctors who were willing to be on call for the hospital and who were willing to be trained to take the forensic evidence. Last, a protocol was developed for the treatment of sexual assault victims which included both hospital and police procedures. Now, when the police respond to a sexual assault, their procedures is to take a woman to Shaughnessy.

What this project has done is first, to ensure that the correct medical evidence will be collected should the case go to court, second, to ensure that the doctor will be available and willing to give evidence in court and third, to decreased the trauma of the medical examination for the victim. This project has been so successful that other hospitals have set up similar procedures based on the one at Shaughnessy.

Another offshoot of this project is that Drs. Herbert and Whynot have been recognized as expert witnesses. In the past, it has often been difficult to get doctors to agree to take time from their practice to testify in court.

When they did testify, they were giving medical evidence and so were medical witnesses. Particularly in child sexual abuse, it is often difficult to get the necessary kind of evidence. Because of their work, Drs. Herbert and Whynot have been recognized by the courts as expert witnesses. What this means is that they can give evidence based on opinion not based on the facts of her own examination. This means that can give evidence on a child that neither of them has seen personally and they can give evidence on the nature and dynamics of child abuse. In other communities, having an understanding and sympathetic doctor or psychiatrist or psychologist classified as an expert witness could mean that information on the dynamics of wife abuse could be introduced into a court case.

IN CONCLUSION

Establishing good, solid working relationships with the various components of the justice system may be a five year or longer project for your group. Throughout the time, it is important to recognize that your attitudes and expectations will effect your success or failure in the project. Negative, hostile attitudes will guarantee that you will receive an identical response from the people and system you want to work with. On the other hand, an open, cooperative approach will not guarantee that all your objectives will be met. However, your chances of reaching some of them are much higher.

Because police and other members of the justice system are trained to be good observers and need to learn to make judgement of human behavior, they will be very sensitive to dishonesty or phoneyess on your part. It is important to remember that the justice system is under no obligation whatsoever to meet or work with your group. This makes your first and subsequent impressions on them critical. Since you are the least powerful partner in the relationship, you must demonstrate to them how working with you will benefit their organization and their personnel. According to Loving(1982,27):

Any changes the police department make will cost them something—in personnel resources and administrative time. It is to be expected, then that police administrators will be concerned about their department's legitimate self-interest in these ventures. Simply put, they will ask: "What's in this for us?" Your success will depend largely on your ability to answer this question to their satisfaction.

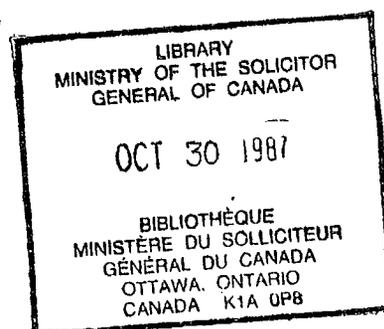
RESOURCES

Loving, Nancy, Working with Police: A Practical Guide for Battered Women's Advocates, Police Executive Research Forum, 1909 K Street N.W., Suite 400, Washington, D.C. 20006, 1982.

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