

# Violence Against Women



Facilitator's Manual

## THE WOMEN'S EDUCATION INSTITUTE

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The Women's Education Institute designs educational materials and offers technical assistance and training to organizations which are actively seeking to empower women. In our first three years we have produced **Violence Against Women: A Curriculum for Empowerment**; offered Leadership Training seminars for battered women's and anti rape coalitions around the country; completed a study of women's housing and job conditions in Essex County, New Jersey; and co-sponsored two feminist economic agenda meetings from which we developed a pamphlet on women and the economy, "Economic Facts of Life for Women."

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## INTRODUCTION

### Background & Philosophy

Over two years ago we began to develop a series of workshops for battered women in shelters and support groups. We had several goals in mind:

1. We wanted programs to involve battered women and help them raise their consciousness about violence and sexism.
2. We wanted battered women to support and comfort each other. We assumed that a curriculum would enable shelter staff to facilitate this empowering, self help process.
3. We wanted battered women to take a leadership role in the activities of the shelter movement.

Our method was to create workshops that are participatory, politicizing and, even, fun. In them we hoped that women would challenge themselves with questions like, "Why was I beaten?" and "Why did the police and courts treat me as a second class citizen?" At the same time, however, we did not want battered women to leave these discussions depressed and demoralized, nor did we want to deliver "politically correct" lectures to them.

Rather, our task was to design a format that allows women to share their experiences with other battered women, develop an analysis of violence, and, at the same time, find concrete solutions for their problems with abusive men and unsupportive institutions. The workshop format had to give participants a sense of involvement in the shelter as well as new information, ideas and hope.

For more than a year we worked with the staff and residents of Women Against Abuse, a large Philadelphia shelter, to develop useful and interesting workshop materials. Then we tested these in five other shelters and safe homes projects in urban, rural and suburban communities. The result is the workshop series, **Violence Against Women: A Curriculum for Empowerment**. It is our attempt to institutionalize consciousness raising within shelters. It offers tools to staff who may never have participated in or led groups.

### The Format for the Facilitator's Manual

The Facilitator's Manual and the Resident Workbook contain the same ten workshops. The first four of these discuss issues like—who are women abused; why do men get away with violence and why do women feel so guilty. The middle section, *Women and Society*, covers the question, "what are the roles women play in our society and what do we think about them." Here we are helping women understand that sexism is the basis for violence against women. The final section, *Advocacy*, explores problems like, "who should I share housing with," and "how do I evaluate whether a counselor will be helpful or harmful?"

All of the workshops are divided into three sections—the Problem, the Cause, and Empowerment (the order of the sections sometimes varies). In the first section,

the Problem, women share their problems and personal experiences. In the causal section we set up questions and exercises that help women see the power inequalities that operate within our society. We skip back and forth from general questions like, "How does society make it hard for women alone?" to more personal ones like, "What are your particular worries about living on your own?" In this section the facilitator should keep in mind that we are trying to raise consciousness by asking key questions. For example, we question "Why do certain experiences happen to women and not to men?" "Why is it different for women of different races?" "What are the messages we learn about women and men from our experiences with the police and courts?"

We close each workshop with Empowerment. Battered women most enjoy this section. In it the women usually design a plan to help each other. They role play a new solution to a problem or they brainstorm ways to change the police or welfare center in their town. The empowerment section embodies the goal of the curriculum—to build programs in which battered women help each other, participate actively and become spokeswomen and leaders for the movement. Here we assume that battered women are experts about violence and that they have good ideas for solving problems and negotiating with systems.

As the facilitator, you must insure that each session ends on an empowering experience. If one workshop takes you two or three meetings to complete, you must design additional empowering experiences to close each session. If not, the discussion may become too disheartening for the residents.

### How To Conduct Workshops

The Resident's Workbook contains the same questions and workshops as your Facilitator's Manual. However, in your manual you also will find the answers that battered women gave us during the testing phase of this work as well as instructions for leading discussions. These are included to ease your anxieties as a facilitator and to give you ideas. However, please remember that in this curriculum there are no right or wrong answers. The women in your group may answer the questions very differently and this is okay. Our goal is to encourage discussion and participation.

These are not lectures. Workshops should be conducted informally. If a question or exercise does not work, go on to the next one. If the women are not enjoying themselves, have something else planned. Or, if they are engaged in a good discussion, let it continue. Participants should not feel like they are in school. They do not have to have correct feminist answers. We tell battered women this in the Resident's Workbook. (It is essential that you take the time to read this Workbook carefully.)

In this curriculum the facilitator moves the discussion along, keeps it on course and insures that everyone has a chance to participate. The group may want to establish ground rules, like, "one person speaks at a time." In the Resident's and Facilitator's books you will find statements summarizing the major points of each exercise. We urge that the residents read these out loud and discuss them. At the end of each workshop you might read the goals out loud and ask the residents if these goals were met. A glossary of difficult words appears at the end of the Resident's Workbook—encourage women to use it.

You do not have to complete the workshops in any set order although you might want to begin with those on violence (Workshops 1-4). Use the workshops that make sense for your program and make up new ones if your needs are not met by those we included. Be flexible and imaginative. For example, when you use the advocacy workshops, hand out information sheets about legal rights, housing, jobs and schools that will help women in your community.

As the facilitator, it is your responsibility to find space for group discussion (ideally, groups should have no fewer than five and no more than twelve members). Childcare and transportation should be provided for participants. You will need a chalkboard and chalk or newsprint and marker to record the participants' responses for each exercise. The Resident's Workbook contains blank spaces so that women can fill in the responses, if they want to. They should do this at the end of the session, not during the discussion. Each resident should be given her own workbook.

### What the Facilitator Should Do

It is important that the facilitator allow the residents to share their experiences and learn from each other. In these workshops, staff must consider themselves as organizers of battered women rather than as providers of social services to "needy clients."

The facilitator helps motivate the participants to action. The facilitator must want to reclaim the battered women's movement for battered women.

We believe that meaningful work with other battered women is essential to the shelter experience. It allows women to bond with each other, disagree with and support each other, and it breaks the isolation which leaves them vulnerable to further violence. The facilitator's role is to support this self-help process.

### How We Can Help

This curriculum suggests new roles for shelter staff and new directions for some shelter programs. To help you make this transition, we suggest that you participate in our two day workshop entitled, **Empowering Battered Women**. In it we will provide many suggestions and techniques for facilitating the workshops in this curriculum and reconstructing shelter programs to involve and empower residents. We believe that this training is critical if you are to use the curriculum successfully. We suggest that state coalitions coordinate a training session for all the member shelters in their state.

Finally, we urge you to share the results of these workshops with us. Let us know what works and what fails so that we can make the second printing of the curriculum a better reflection of the collective needs and ideas of the battered women's movement.

# Violence Against Women

## WORKSHOP 1 Naming Our Experience

### GOALS

1. To name the forms of abuse we have experienced
2. To see that abuse is not our personal problem
3. To validate the courage and strength of battered women

### PROBLEM

#### EXERCISE 1

##### What abusive behavior have we experienced?

Ask each woman to give an example of an abusive behavior she has experienced. Point out that the abuse can be physical, emotional or sexual. List each response in the appropriate column. (This exercise can be done in a large group or in several small groups).

#### Some Possible Responses

<i>Physical</i>	<i>Emotional</i>	<i>Sexual</i>
1. Hitting	1. Withholding money	1. Forced sex
2. Slapping	2. Footing	2. Accusations about having affairs
3. Kicking	3. Ignoring you	3. Threat of violence if you didn't have sex
4. Holding a knife to your throat	4. Humiliating you in front of kids and friends	
5. Destroying a favorite object	5. Telling you that you were stupid	

### CAUSE

#### EXERCISE 2

##### What does abuse do to women?

Ask each woman to give an example of the impact abuse has on her life. For example, What does abuse do to you? How does it make you feel? How does your personality change? What have you lost emotionally and materially?

List the responses in one column or make separate lists for each question.

### Some Possible Responses

1. It frightens me.
2. It controls my life.
3. I lost my job and my home.
4. I feel down on all men.
5. I take my pain out on my kids.
6. I lose my self confidence.
7. I've lost touch with my family and friends.
8. I am nervous; get headaches, ulcers, high blood pressure.
9. I use alcohol and drugs.

### EXERCISE 3

#### What does he get from abuse?

Ask the women, "What does he get from the abuse," and make a list of their responses.

### Some Possible Responses

1. He got his way; he got control.
2. He didn't have to do anything at home.
3. He got taken care of.
4. He felt powerful because I was frightened.
5. He felt superior to me.
6. He got the house.
7. He gets pity from others and respect from the guys.

### SUMMARY STATEMENT

1. Abuse harms us in many ways. It is more than the actual slap or beating. It is a pattern of male control. It makes us feel bad about ourselves and it changes the way we act.

2. Abuse robs us of self-confidence and control. We feel powerless and he feels more powerful.
3. As a result, the abuser gains power and control and women are made to feel subordinate.

## EMPOWERMENT

### EXERCISE 4

#### What do women do to survive the abuse?

Even though the batterers had more power, what did the women do to empower them and survive? How did the women protect themselves and their kids? How did they say "no" to the violence in their own way? Ask each woman to share one example of how she survived. Make a list summarizing the women's responses. First the facilitator and then the group members should name the qualities that the behavior demonstrates.

### Some Possible Responses

#### What I did

1. I called around for safe places to go and then I hid money until I could escape.
2. I hid my belongings in the laundry bags and then went to do the laundry and didn't come back.
3. I had the locks changed.
4. I called the police.

#### Qualities I demonstrated

1. Resourcefulness, taking control
2. Creative planning
3. Being smart and cautious
4. Fight-back

### SUMMARY STATEMENT

Women become survivors because we fight for our lives and protect ourselves. We are not passive in the face of abuse. We try to stop it but the abuser has more power. We are often very creative, strong and resourceful in surviving the abuse.

### EXERCISE 5

#### What are some MYTHS & FACTS about abuse?

Here are some different ways to present this exercise. Pick one that's best for your group.

1. Together read the myths and then ask, "What seems true about this statement and what seems false?" Then read the facts.

2. Ask different women to volunteer to read the myths and facts. Then ask everyone if they had believed the myth. Do they think most people believe the myths -- why?
3. Read the newspaper clipping together and discuss it using the approach in 1. and 2. above.
4. If you're running short of time, schedule this exercise as another workshop.

## MYTHS & FACTS ABOUT BATTERING

### MYTH 1

Battering only affects a small percentage of the population.

#### FACT

Two to four million women of all races and classes are beaten every year.

### MYTH 2

Battering is only a momentary loss of control.

#### FACT

Battering can go on for hours. Many batterers plan their assault or foresee it.

### MYTH 3

Battered women are masochistic: they like the violence.

#### FACT

No one likes to be abused. We often stay because we have no options or because we hope our partners will change or because we want the kids to have a father. This does not mean that we like the violence.

### MYTH 4

Battering does not produce serious injuries. It is just a love pat.

#### FACT

Battered women are often severely injured. In one study of 100 women, 42 said a weapon had been used in the attack.

### MYTH 5

Drinking causes men to batter.

#### FACT

Men batter when sober and when drunk. They use the fact that they were drinking as an excuse. "I didn't know what I was doing." But in reality they get drunk in order to say that they are not responsible for their behavior.

### MYTH 6

Therapy will stop his violence. If he goes to therapy, I will be safe at home.

#### FACT

The best way to get your husband to stop his violence is to separate from him, at least for awhile. Unless he takes responsibility for his violence and sees violence is his fault and signs in counseling for 6-12 months to stop his abusive behavior, he will probably batter you again. We don't know yet if counseling is effective. If the batter blames you for his violence, he probably will batter you again. His violence is not your fault.

### MYTH 7

Religious faith will prevent him from beating you.

#### FACT

Even clergymen have beaten their wives. Religious faith does not stop men from believing that they have a right to beat their wives.

### MYTH 8

It is easy for battered women to leave their abuser.

#### FACT

It is often very hard to leave. It is hard to find shelter for yourself and children. Money is tight. He often promises to never batter again and so we give him one more chance. The kids and you don't want to uproot yourselves. The entire life is always scary.

### MYTH 9

Even if he is violent, it is better for the children to have a father.

#### FACT

Children are very upset and scared by violence. It is better for them to be without a father than to be frightened of their fathers.

## MYTH 10

If you are battered by one man, you'll be battered by the next, too. Once a battered woman, always a battered woman.

### FACT

Many battered women rebuild their lives and realize how strong and courageous they have been. Because you have been battered does not mean that you will be beaten again. Battering is the responsibility of the batterer and has nothing to do with your behavior.

## The New York Times

### Why Battered Wives Don't Leave Home.

Dear Editor:

Your Dec. 11 Week in Review article "When Battered Wives Kill," in suggesting stereotypes of which juries should be disabused, perpetuates another stereotype: that battered women stay with abusive men for such vague reasons as low self-esteem. Horwood.

You stay because:

Anywhere you can go, he can go. When he finds you, his rage will make former abuse seem mild.

He has told you that if you try to leave, he will hurt your child at school and take it out on her, or on your pet, or on your parents.

Your friends have become alienated, and you have nowhere to go. If you do know people who may abuse you, you inflict harm on them, and few people are altruistic enough to put up with that. I learned this the hard way, when a no-teenian told me that my violent husband was not a problem, that I had no right to inflict him on the police.

He lies convincingly. So you run away and the police bring you home, after he "resolves" that you are insane and must be returned to his custody.

Police officers find it hard to believe that a quiet, amiable and educated man would do such things, especially since he never does it with witnesses around.

You finally get him to go with you for counseling, and the counselor tells you that you both must trust and communicate. Over your frantic, suspicious protests, what you told the counselor in confidence is repeated to your husband, who reacts with quiet, intelligent concern. The satisfied counselor then tells you you had assumed he would react with anger and violence. The counselor sends you on your way with a paper to trust and communicate, and as soon as your husband lets you alone, he beats the air out of you.

You get into the fix because you never expected a quiet, amiable man to be abusive. The first time he did it, his tears afterward made you worry for him more than for yourself. Somehow it seemed to be your fault, because you didn't love or trust or support enough.

Later, when the counselor agrees it was your fault, all you know is you've tried everything and can't get away.

I was lucky. There are years and hundreds of miles between me and my ex-husband now, but I still remember with special bitterness the psychiatrist, doctors and policemen who told me that I must enjoy or need such treatment, or I would never have put up with it.

(Name withheld)

Meriden County, N.J., Dec. 12, 1983

12/29/83

## WORKSHOP 2

### Why Do Men Get Away With Violence Against Women?

#### GOALS

1. To show that social agencies, such as the police and courts, sometimes support violence against women.
2. To show that men have their violent behavior supported outside the family.
3. To clarify that abuse results from the unequal power men hold over women in the family and in the society.
4. To demonstrate that men have had experiences that tell them that nothing will happen to them when they beat women.
5. To clarify that battered women have worked actively to stop the violence and to get social agencies to help them.

#### PROBLEM

##### EXERCISE 1

**What response did you get from those you turned to?**

Ask women in the whole group, or in small groups, to recount their experiences when they went for help to the police, court, welfare, their clergymen, and their family.

1. What responses did they get?
2. What is the message they got about women and violence?

You might suggest that the women give 2-3 examples under each heading.

#### Some Possible Responses:

##### POLICE

##### What did the police say to you?

1. "This house is dirty."
2. "What did you do to him?"
3. "Violence is a crime. I'm arresting your husband."
4. "Calm down and go home. We don't like to deal with family problems."

##### Message about women and violence?

1. You got beaten because you are a bad wife. The violence is your fault. He is not responsible.
2. It's your fault. Women provoke the violence.
3. We take violence seriously. It must be stopped. He is committing a criminal act.
4. What goes on in the family is private. He will not have to take responsibility for his actions even though they are illegal.

**COURT**

*What did court personnel say to you? Message about women and violence?*

- |                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| 1. "Come back tomorrow."       | 1. This is not a serious problem. We don't care about this crime.  |
| 2. "Why didn't you leave him?" | 2. This assures that it is easy for women to leave and that we have adequate resources, money, and housing if we decide to leave. This blames the victim, rather than the one who committed the crime. |

**WELFARE**

*What did the welfare worker say to you? Message about women and violence?*

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. "Why are you leaving a good provider?"   | 1. Women should stay with the men who batter them no matter what.    |
| 2. "Why are you going to a shelter? It's expensive for us and costs tax payers' money." | 2. Women's personal safety is not important.                         |
| 3. "We understand that he destroyed all your documents. It is not your fault."          | 3. Battered women face unique circumstances and we will try to help. |

**CLERGYPERSON**

*What did your clergy person say to you? Message about women and violence?*

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. "It is your Christian duty to forgive him."  | 1. You can make it better and stop the violence. Women should not leave violent men.   |
| 2. "The Bible says to love, honor and obey."  | 2. A woman is secondary to her husband. She must do whatever he says. Don't complain about being battered. Women must just accept it.                |
| 3. "It's bad for the kids to not have a father. You, the woman, are destroying the family and the children's future." | 3. You can't be your own person within the family structure. You should sacrifice yourself for your family. Your feelings and pain aren't important. |

**FAMILY**

*What did your family say to you? Message about women and violence?*

- |                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 1. "You made your bed..."       | 1. We don't want to help you. Women must accept whatever their husband's do to them. You have no options. |
| 2. "Come home. We'll help you." | 2. You don't deserve to be beaten. His behavior is wrong. We care about you.                              |

**CAUSE****EXERCISE 2**

Ask the women to review the columns "Messages about women and violence" and summarize why they think men get away with abuse. Then, read and discuss the statements below.

**SUMMARY STATEMENT**

- When those we turn to don't help us, say are telling women that
  - we are second class citizens
  - they are supporting his power over his wife in the family
  - men have the right to batter, and
  - we have less power than men.
- The messages women often get from the agencies and people who are supposed to help them, make women feel responsible for the abuse and allow men to get away with violence. Often, men who batter and the police and social services we turn to make us feel crazy when they pretend the abuse never happened and isn't serious.
- We are not passive. Violence is not our fault. Women are often actively trying to stop the violence, but we can't stop it by ourselves.
- Although some social agencies have changed and now treat battered women better, these changes only came about over the last ten years because of women's struggles and hard work. For example, we opened 500 shelters and changed the laws in many states. (The Workshop, "Grandmothers, Mothers, and the Women's Movement," explores this topic)



## EMPOWERMENT

### EXERCISE 3

#### How can we help each other?

A. Ask if anybody in the group will have to deal with the court, police, welfare, clergy, or her family.

Ask the group what they can do to help the woman. If no one in the group responds, suggest a hypothetical problem such as going to court.

#### Some Possible Responses

1. If she is going to court we can go with her.
2. We can provide childcare.
3. We can help her find another resident who has already worked through this problem and who can provide advice.
4. We can help her get around in a new location—find the bus schedule, court location, and sympathetic people to ask for.

B. Then choose an agency with which everyone has had a problem and ask, "If the court, police or welfare is causing us a problem, what can we do together so that other women don't have to face this problem?" Again, suggest an example if no one responds.

#### Some Possible Responses

1. We can make an appointment with the chief judge to discuss our problem.
2. We can meet with the local welfare center to insist that they treat us better and learn more about battered women.
3. We can start a committee of shelter residents who will help other women who have to go to court, to welfare, or deal with the police.
4. We can write a guide about how to get help.

## WORKSHOP 3

### Understanding and Overcoming Guilt

#### GOALS

1. To help women see that abusers frequently use guilt to manipulate us.
2. To help women learn how we are socialized to feel guilty and responsible for men. Society tells us that women have responsibility for the family and women feel guilty when anything goes wrong in the family.
3. To help women overcome guilt.

#### PROBLEM

(You may need two sessions to complete this workshop—see plan ahead.)

#### EXERCISE 1

##### What made you feel guilty?

Ask the group what their family, friends and children said about them that made them feel guilty when they were leaving. List the answers. For women who have not left—ask them what comments they heard when they thought about or discussed leaving.

#### Some Possible Responses

##### Family/Friends

"You're the one who married him. Who is supposed to support these children?"

"Maybe if you kept the house neater and were home more he wouldn't do it."

"If you weren't such a fat he'd have more respect for you."

"Can't you work it out, he's a good husband otherwise."

##### Children

"Daddy says he's sorry, and I want to go back to my own room."

"What will happen to us? It's just you—if you didn't fight with Daddy he wouldn't be so mad."

"Other mothers wouldn't do this to their children. Grandma says you're selfish."

**EXERCISE 2****What's wrong with these statements?**

What's wrong with these statements and how can we respond to them in a way that supports battered women?

**Some Possible Responses****Responses to Family/Friends**

Realize it's a trap to be held responsible forever for marrying someone — "I didn't know he would be an abuser."

Realize I am not responsible for his behavior.

Realize he abused me on days the house was fine and he could always be jealous of anyone. Abuse is just a way of controlling me.

**Responses to children**

Recognize that I have tried and that it is his abuse that is causing me to leave the marriage.

Realize I have a right not to be abused.

Recognize that children's anger is normal and that they have a right to express it but they do not have a right to control what I do.

Realize I can live with some guilt rather than abuse. It is difficult to go against the way things have been.

**EXERCISE 3****What did he say when you left that made you feel guilty?**

Break the women into small groups. Ask them to list all the statements made to them when they were leaving or thinking of leaving him. Ask them to write down the statements that made them feel guilty and to analyze these statements by using the charts below. Each small group will share two examples with the whole group. The facilitator should illustrate the task by using one example below.

**Some Possible Responses****He said**

- I'll kill myself.
- You're not the same person I married. You've lost all your values.
- We have too much between us for you to give us. Look, we have these beautiful children. You're destroying any hope of putting our lives together.
- I'm sorry. Please forgive me.
- You're taking away my children. They need their father.
- You provoked me and now I'm the one to lose everything.

**It made me feel**

- Worried, angry, responsible
- Guilt, responsible, angry
- Guilt, like a bad mother, powerful, needed, hopeful
- Powerful, needed, angry
- Guilt, angry, scared to raise them alone
- Attacked, anxious

**What did I do**

- I went home. Tried to help him.
- I tried harder.
- I took him back.
- I took him back.
- I worried.
- I believed that I had to be perfect. I believed that if I did anything wrong I had no right to complain about the abuse.

**How else could I respond**

- Tell him where he can get counseling.
- Realize that the problem is not my values. The problem is his violence.
- He, not me, is destroying our lives.
- Realize this is manipulation.
- I'm protecting the children by removing them from violence.
- Realize a marriage is a relationship. If the he can't blame the victim for his violence.

## SUMMARY STATEMENT

1. Abusers frequently manipulate women by telling them they will never batter again, or they cannot survive without her. We have many fantasies that things will get better. We like to feel needed and important so we take him back. We care about him and want to believe him, but we are also frequently being manipulated.
2. Society tells us that it is much better to be with a man than to be alone so we keep hoping he will change—and we take him back.
3. There is a difference between being needed and being beaten. Beating is a way of exerting control, not expressing love.
4. Sometimes we feel better and feel like we have some control when he promises to never beat us again. In reality he has the greater amount of control because he can beat again if he chooses to.

## CAUSE

### EXERCISE 4

#### What else makes women feel guilty about leaving?

Ask the women to make a list of what women have learned about getting a man and staying with him from our cultures (family, churches, movies and music). How did these messages make them feel guilty and how did they affect their behavior with men?

## Some Possible Responses

### Culture

Family—“Your wedding will be the happiest day of our lives.”

Family—“I had to put up with your father for you kids. Do you think it was easy? Plenty of women do it. Who do you think you are?”

Music—“Stand by your man.” “He may be weak but he’s my guy.”

Church—“Til death do us part. To love honor and obey.”

### Message

Marriage is the highest goal for women.

Women have to accept violence in marriage. The family as a unit is more important than a woman’s safety.

Women can take more than men. We’re able to handle a little suffering. It’s worth it to be legal.

Marriage is forever, no matter what happens. I have to obey my husband.

*How it made me feel or behave*

Failing in marriage is the worst.

Angry, resentful, but guilty for being too proud.

Virtuous, and lowered my expectations.

I should try harder that he can walk all over me.

## EMPOWERMENT

### EXERCISE 5

#### How can we fight the guilt that hurts us?

Ask the women to list a few examples of situations that they will face in the future which may make them feel guilty.

### Some Possible Responses

1. He calls and says he has joined A.A. and wants to come home.
2. His mother tells me he is staying with her and is willing to change and that I have to give another try for the children’s sake.
3. My children want to see their father and I feel that he’ll take them away. They yell at me that I’ve ruined everything.
4. He offers me a new apartment and promises a new life.

**EXERCISE 6****How can we handle these situations?**

Break participants into small groups and have them role play the situations in EXERCISE 5 and come up with solutions. Ask each group to share their solutions with the whole group and ask other participants to add their ideas.

**Some Possible Responses****Role-play 1**

Tell him that just because he stopped drinking doesn't mean he will stop beating.

**Role-play 2**

It's too late; there's no evidence that he will change just because he promises.

**Role-play 3**

Point out to the children that you are sorry that the whole situation exists for them and you recognize that they are hurt and angry, but that you can't do anything else without risking safety and sanity.

**Role-play 4**

Imagine what life will be like in the new apartment without safety.

## WORKSHOP 4

### Grandmothers, Mothers and the Women's Movement

**GOALS**

1. To demonstrate that we have a different, more helpful societal response to violence against women because of the women's movement.
2. To show how important it is for women to organize together.

**PROBLEM****EXERCISE 1****Was it different for women in the past if they were abused?**

Ask participants to break into small groups and fill out the chart below by answering the question, "If our grandmothers, or mothers, or other women of their generation experienced sexual assault or battering in the family, what did they do? What were women's options in the past? What are our options?"

**Some Possible Responses****Grandmothers**

1. Kicked him out
2. Got her brothers to beat him up
3. Never told anyone
4. Left him and lived in poverty
5. Left him and got a job

**Mothers**

1. Kicked him out
2. Lived alone
3. She didn't believe in divorce or separation.
4. "Fought back"
5. Went home to her mother

**Ourselves**

1. Kicked him out
2. Lived alone
3. Moved to shelter
4. Got a protection order
5. Moved in with friends

**CAUSE****EXERCISE 2****Why is it different for us?**

Ask the group to discuss the questions:

1. Why might our mothers and grandmothers have been uncomfortable talking about their abuse?
2. What did they think the community's response would be?
3. Why did our mothers and grandmothers have no public solutions? Why were there no shelters and why couldn't they get effective protection orders?
4. Were the experiences with violence different for women of different racial, ethnic and class groups?

**SUMMARY STATEMENT**

1. It is only because of a women's movement that we now have more effective laws and shelters for battered women. Before the women's movement, violence against women was considered private, personal, humiliating, and we were to blame for it.
2. This women's movement first arose out of the civil rights movement led by black people in the late 1950s and 1960s. The civil rights movement showed that poor people and black people could and would fight for their rights and dignity. The civil rights movement raised a plea for justice, equality and dignity.

3. Women in this movement and women in general began to draw parallels between themselves and the civil rights movement. Women too were oppressed and treated as second class citizens by men and by the institutions of the society.
4. In the late 1960's and early 1970's women began to organize politically around women's rights and soon created the idea of a shelter.

## EMPOWERMENT

### EXERCISE 3

#### How can we affect the next generation?

Ask the group, "What are some things we could be doing individually and as a group so that our daughters will have more power to stop violence against women and so that our sons will also take a stand against violence against women?"

#### Some Possible Responses

##### Individual Actions:

1. I can tell my children what happened to me and condemn it.
2. Talk about the difference between respect and abuse.
3. Listen to my children's fears about their father.
4. Enroll daughters in self-defense courses.
5. Tell my son that men don't have to control women in order to be strong.

##### Community Actions:

1. Work with an organization that is doing public education about violence against women.
2. Join protests against abuse.
3. Become informed about legislation that might affect battered women.
4. Ask local public schools to start a course about violence.

### EXERCISE 4

#### What's our history?

Ask volunteers from the group to read the following:

1. In 1976 two formerly battered women, Chris Womendez and Chere Jimenez, opened their apartment to battered women in Boston. They shared their welfare checks to keep the doors open and to keep everyone fed.

Their apartment soon became too small and Cherie, Chris, other battered women and feminists worked hard to raise money to open Junction House, the first East coast shelter.

2. Many former battered women, neighborhood women, feminists, lesbians—women of all races and classes—united in their communities to begin programs for abused women. Many had no funding, but could not have to see another woman hurt and have no place to go.
3. In 1978, battered women and feminists started a national organization of grassroots shelters--- The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence. This organization lobbied for federal legislation to fund shelters and help shelters share information across the country. It's Women of Color Task Force supervised a grant to help shelters develop small businesses and generate income.
4. Today there are at least 700 shelters and safe homes projects around the country-- many of them sustained by the energy and courage of women in the community.

Invite a staff member or a founder to talk about the history of the shelter. Ask the guest to address the following questions:

- a. What year did the shelter open?
- b. Who started it?
- c. Why was the shelter started?

Or, if you can't get a speaker, prepare a fact sheet on the history of the shelter. Be sure to address the above questions.

After the speaker's presentation, or after reading together the fact sheet, ask the group to discuss the question, "What could the shelter do differently to include the residents more?"

# Women and Society

## WORKSHOP 5 Affirming Our Families

### GOALS

1. To challenge the myths about the nuclear family.
2. To acknowledge the strength of women as heads of families.

### PROBLEM

#### EXERCISE 1

##### What is family?

Ask the women, "What do we mean when we say family?" The women will probably give two types of answers: the composition of the family and the needs it fulfills. Separate the two kinds of responses by making two lists.

#### Some Possible Responses

##### What persons make up the family?

1. Man/woman/children
2. Husband/wife/children (#1 & #2 are forms of the **nuclear family**)
3. A group like a shelter
4. Woman/children
5. Lesbian couple
6. Gay couple
7. Church

##### What needs does the family fulfill?

1. Support
2. Advice
3. Love/consideration
4. Responsibilities
5. Co-operation
6. Care/trust/respect
7. Money/loans

### SUMMARY STATEMENT

"Family" can mean many different ways of living together with people. People who are committed to each other will provide for each other's needs and security. In order to be a "legitimate" family you don't have to stay in a situation where you suffer abuse from a man.

## CAUSE

### EXERCISE 2

#### What are the facts?

Point out that we probably think that most people live in “nuclear” families. Read the following statements together and then ask what they tell us about how people are living together.

1. The government, for the purposes of gathering statistics, defines “family” as a group of two or more persons living together who are related by blood, marriage or adoption.

Using this definition, there are:

- 62 million families in the U.S. today
- of these, 50 million are married couples,
- 10 million are families headed by women,
- 2 million are families headed by men.

2. The government definition of “family” leaves out the thousands of us who are living alone or with someone to whom we are not married—either a man or a woman.
3. Today, there are 20 million persons living alone and almost 2 million unmarried couple households.
4. The “traditional nuclear family” (working husband, homemaker wife and children) is disappearing. Only 10% of all households are of this form.

### SUMMARY STATEMENT

1. Today, roughly one fifth of all family households are headed by a single parent. Nine times out of ten it's a woman.
2. Many women do not live in nuclear families. Many of us head households and take care of our families without a husband.

### EXERCISE 3

#### Where do we get our ideas of what is a family?

If so many of us are living in different kinds of non-nuclear families, how come there is such a push to be in a nuclear family?

Ask the group to make a list of where we get our ideas of what is a family?

### Some Possible Responses

1. Advertising
2. TV shows and movies
3. Books
4. Church
5. School
6. Childhood and parents

Then discuss the questions:

“What is the message these different groups give about families?”

“How do these messages make us feel if we're not in a nuclear family?”

### EXERCISE 4

#### What do TV shows tell us about women in families?

Ask the group to focus on TV shows as an example. Make a list of TV shows which portray nuclear and non nuclear families and ask what are the messages we get about women from these shows?

For some ethnic groups—especially Hispanic and Asian—there are no TV programs depicting non-nuclear families, although these cultures have many women who head families alone. With so many women raising families by themselves why are we treated as if we were invisible? How does this make us feel?

### Some Possible Responses

#### Nuclear family shows:

#### Messages about women

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

#### Non-nuclear family shows:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Then ask the women:

1. How do these shows make us feel about ourselves and our families?
2. What are women's goals and dreams in these shows?
3. What do these shows leave out about our families?

### SUMMARY STATEMENT

1. In many of these shows women's goals are to catch a man. TV often glosses over the fact that some men treat women abusively. Instead we are presented with the view that the nuclear family is the ideal we should all seek.
2. This makes it more difficult for women who live alone or for those who want to create other kinds of family units. These shows give the message that the only way to be complete is with a man.
3. But many women are leading strong, productive lives without men, either in

## EMPOWERMENT

### EXERCISE 5

#### How could TV portray our lives accurately?

Ask the women to break into small groups and design a TV program about themselves, friends, and their children. What is it about your family and your friends' families that you would like to see included in a TV show? What needs to be portrayed that isn't?

Ask the women to come up with a title for their show and a couple of episodes.

Allow about 15-20 minutes of working time and then ask the groups to share their stories.

#### Some Possible Responses

##### Titles

1. Brenda
2. Life After the Shelter

##### Storylines

1. A woman has a difficult time finding housing which is close to all the things she needs like hospitals, daycare, laundries, public transportation. She finds it and feels much better.
2. A woman leaves the shelter, gets day care and goes to nursing school. Years later she settles down with a man and shares his wealth with him. She got her money from working and investing wisely.

3. A woman leaves the shelter and lives with her kids. She has lots of fun being with them. She finds out that she gets a great deal of emotional support from her children.

Suggestion: A good follow up for this workshop is the film, "Mamey's Janeu."

## WORKSHOP 6

### Growing Up Female: Our Similarities and Differences

#### GOALS

1. To clarify that women of different races, classes and ethnic groups have similar and different ways of coping with the pressures and joys of family work and community.
2. To affirm that our differences are valuable and make us all culturally, politically, and personally richer.
3. To clarify that our families and society have different expectations for women and for men.

#### PROBLEM

##### EXERCISE 1

#### What expectations and responsibilities are placed on girls?

Break the women into small groups and ask the following questions:

1. What did you want to be when you grew up? And, what did people tell you you could be?
2. What responsibilities did you have in taking care of your home and your brothers and sisters?
3. What were girls supposed to be interested in at school, and after school?

##### EXERCISE 2

#### How was it different for boys?

Ask the women to respond to how it was different for boys by answering the following questions:

1. What did the boys you knew want to be when they grew up? And, what did people tell them they could be?
2. What responsibilities did boys have around the house and in taking care of their brothers and sisters?
3. What were boys supposed to be interested in at school? What did they do after school?



**EXERCISE 3****What do we think of these roles?**

Ask the women to complete the following statements.

1. What I liked about the expectations and responsibilities for girls
2. What I disliked

**SUMMARY STATEMENT**

1. Girls are supervised more closely and told how to dress, how to behave, who they should be friends with.
2. Many boys don't have to take care of children or help out around the house. They have the freedom to play or hang out after school.
3. Usually, girls have different expectations and responsibilities than boys. These differences are not natural or biological—we weren't born with them. Rather, women have been expected throughout history to do certain kinds of work. For example, it is not "natural" that women do all the childcare. Men can take care of children just as well as women. Certain tasks are seen as "women's work" but it doesn't have to be this way.
4. In school, girls are not encouraged to be as interested as boys in math, science, or computers. Skills in these areas tend to lead to better paying jobs. Rather, girls are expected to want to be secretaries, nurses or teachers. To want a job as a mechanic or an electrician is seen as unfeminine—even though these jobs pay better.
5. But all boys can't do everything they would like to. Men and women who are victimized by racism or poverty can't be who they want to be.

**CAUSE****EXERCISE 4****How are we alike and different?**

Ask the group to look over their answers from the previous Exercises. Then discuss the similarities and differences of their experiences growing up female in their racial or ethnic group.

**Some Possible Responses**

1. Females are expected to take primary responsibility for the home and children.
2. Even when women have a job they are still expected to take care of the household when they come home.

3. In some racial or ethnic groups women are expected to marry and not to work.
4. In some groups, because of racism, men have been denied access to jobs. Black women, for example, never had the luxury to stay at home.

**SUMMARY STATEMENT**

1. There are many racial and ethnic differences among women, but there also may be many similarities. For example, all women tend to have different expectations and responsibilities than men.
2. Sexual discrimination makes it difficult for all women to achieve their dreams, but this is even more true for poor women and women of color.

For example, Black women have made big gains into service (clerical) and blue collar jobs. But because of racism and sexism they are under represented in professional and managerial jobs.

3. Women want choices. It's okay for us to like raising our kids and at the same time to want to be a carpenter.
4. Our racial and ethnic differences create diversity and open up new models and possibilities for women. We can learn from each other when we open ourselves to women of different racial and ethnic groups.

**EMPOWERMENT****EXERCISE 5****What women did you look up to?**

When you were growing up what woman did you look up to? Maybe it was a cousin or an aunt or some famous person?

Ask the women to name and describe a woman in their racial or ethnic group who most inspired them.

## WORKSHOP 7

### Independent Living

#### GOALS

1. To help women see that they are not to blame for their problems.
2. To identify where women can get support and resources.
3. To build confidence.
4. To build bonds among women.

#### CAUSE

##### EXERCISE 1

#### How does society make it hard for women alone?

Ask the group to make a list.

Included are some facts. Use them if you think they will be helpful.

##### Some Possible Responses

1. Women are underpaid and often only get low paying jobs.

While women who work full-time year-round can expect to get 51 cents for every dollar paid to white men, Black women can expect 56 cents and Hispanic women 52 cents.

Women are concentrated in 20 out of 420 occupational categories listed with the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 96% of typists are women. The average wage in 1982 for a typist was \$11,804. Compare this to the wages of mail carriers (\$21,840) or truck drivers (\$16,870) — predominantly male jobs.

2. Childcare is difficult to find and expensive.

In Europe, day care is available to poor and middle class families with fees on a sliding scale. In the United States there is very little public daycare—and funding continues to be cut.

3. Women are sexually harassed at jobs and on the street (Men feel that if you are alone you're available)

4. It is difficult to get child support

In 1981, only 43% of absent fathers paid child support. And only about one half of these paid the entire amount.

5. Welfare pays very little.

AIDC payments vary by state. For a three person household (usually headed by a woman) payments can range from \$116 per month to \$522/month. Usually payments fall in the \$200-\$300 range.

6. Women are constantly given the message that they need a man. We feel more frightened physically and emotionally when we are alone.

#### PROBLEM

##### EXERCISE 2

#### What are our particular worries about living on our own?

Ask the group to make a list of things that concern them about living alone. Ask each woman to list only one concern because it's easy for this list to get long and overwhelming.

Try to direct the answers toward "personal" issues. Other workshops (see Workshop 9 in Advocacy) focus on the "concrete" problems women face in dealing with social agencies.

##### Some Possible Responses

1. Loneliness
2. Living without a man
3. Responsibility for kids
4. Not enough money
5. Fear of batterer continuing to harass me

#### SUMMARY STATEMENT

These worries are real because society makes life hard for women alone. We shouldn't blame ourselves for setbacks when we're up against so much. To begin with

**EXERCISE 3****How can we deal with these concerns?**

A. Break into small groups and ask each group to choose one concern from Exercise 1 and answer the following three questions.

1. What can I do by myself and with others to make the situation easier to handle?
2. What kind of help do I need from others?
3. Where can I get this help?

**Some Possible Responses****Solution for loneliness**

1. I should figure out a way to talk with a friend every day.
2. I need people to help me make new friends.
3. I can get help from other women in the shelter.

**Solution for dealing with the continued harassment of the batterer**

1. I should have a plan of action ready like a code to inform the neighbors and up-to-date legal papers. I can call the police.
2. I need people I can call when I'm feeling scared. I need a safe place to go if necessary.
3. I can get help from friends, shelter and community groups.

Ask each group to share with the others their solutions and suggestions.

B. Ask the women to roleplay a situation in which they need to ask someone for help or support. Have the roleplay convey a positive response.

**Some Possible Roleplays**

1. I'm feeling lonely and I'm tempted to call the man who battered me. I know I should really call someone else because it won't be good for me to talk to him.
2. The batterer just called and threatened me. I'm scared to be alone. What should I do?

**SUMMARY STATEMENT**

All people go through crisis at some time in their lives. During these times we need to ask for help and support. Sometimes it feels humiliating, especially when we get negative responses. But we need to try again.

**EMPOWERMENT****EXERCISE 4****What will be exciting about the future?**

Ask each woman to answer the question, "What excites you about living on your own?" Then ask the group how we can help each other make sure these things can happen.

**Some Possible Responses****Exciting**

1. The chance to start over
2. Freedom
3. Make my life the way I want it
4. Become the person I know I can be
5. Start school
6. Financial independence
7. Making new friends
8. No sexual pressure

**Ways we can help each other**

(If the facilitator lives alone she should share how she gets along independently.)

1. Encouragement—exchange phone numbers so we can keep in touch.
2. Share information about jobs, childcare, bargains, housing.
3. Start a former residents group where we can share problems, help each other and have fun—group dinners, going to the movies, taking our kids to the zoo.

At this point hand out two kinds of information prepared by your shelter and ask the women to add to the list.

1. A listing of resources that women might need after they leave the shelter—doctors, childcare, after school programs, inexpensive family recreation stores and thrift shops, reliable car dealers, plumbers, electricians.
2. A description of basic safety and self-defense techniques (you might want to read the attached list aloud in the group). If there is a local group that teaches self defense, tell the women about it or invite the group to do a presentation.

## SUMMARY STATEMENT

1. Women have had to come up with all kinds of ways to survive a battering situation. Women have shown that they are clever, smart, creative and can fight back. Sometimes after we come out of battering we forget these strengths — but now we need them more than ever.
2. All women who live alone share worries about their safety and about being taken advantage of by repair people, landlords, lawyers, sex people, men. We have to learn and share strategies and skills to take care of ourselves and our families.

## PROTECTING YOURSELF AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT (From a Stranger) IN YOUR LIVING UNIT

### *Don't advertise living alone*

1. Use initials on mailbox, in phone book; add dummy name.
2. If alone and the doorbell rings, call out, "I'll get it later," as though someone is with you.
3. Draw shades, drapes at night.

### *House should always look and sound occupied*

1. Use timers to turn on lights at night.
2. Play radio.
3. Leave phone off hook if leaving home for considerable period during the day.
4. Notify neighbor if going away—ask to collect mail, papers, etc.

### *Essential hardware*

1. Change locks from former tenant.
2. If key is lost, change cylinder.
3. Never put address on keyring.

### *Use of phone*

1. Have emergency numbers near phone in big letters so you can read them without glasses.

2. Never reveal personal information on phone.
3. Report series of obscene calls to police.
  - a. blow whistle into receiver
  - b. tap mouthpiece and say, "Operator— this is the call I wanted you to trace."
  - c. have friend check on you at specific time; verbal code to indicate if something is wrong.

### *Never open door to stranger*

1. Require identification from everyone: utility men, maintenance men, police, repairmen, salesmen; ask them to pass ID under door; when in doubt, check with company by telephone.
2. If stranger requests use of phone, regardless of reason or emergency, offer to make call for him while he waits outside of locked door.

### *In a building*

1. Don't overload yourself with bundles. Be prepared to drop them quickly if being followed.
2. If you think you're being watched when leaving apartment, shout to neighborly companion, "Take the cake out in ten minutes, George!"
3. If accosted, yell "Fire," not "Help"—it will attract attention quickly.

## ON THE STREET

1. Walk near curb, facing traffic.
2. If car pulls next to you going the same way you are, reverse direction.
3. If insecure on sidewalk and traffic permits, walk down middle of street.
4. If approached, look for lighted windows; wave and shout upward as though someone at window is watching you.

### *Carry purse, papers, umbrella under arm or keep purse between body and bundles*

1. Carry money in two places—shoe, bra, or hidden pocket.
2. If you think someone might take purse, drop it in nearest mailbox; it will be returned to you.
3. Never wind purse strap around wrists (if grabbed, you can be pulled down and injured).

4. If someone tries for purse, throw it in street or turn it upside down and let contents fall out.
5. If purse is snatched, beware of phone call giving information where to retrieve it (call police for advice).

#### *While traveling*

1. At bus and subway stops, keep your back to the wall to avoid being approached from behind.
2. If suspect being followed, don't get off at normal stop; get off at busy stop; tell attendant in change booth.

This information is excerpted from **Rape and Older Women: A Guide to Prevention**, ADM 78-734, 1979, National Center for the Prevention and Control of Rape, National Institute of Mental Health, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

# Advocacy

## WORKSHOP 8

### How Do We Get What We Want From Counseling

#### GOALS

1. To help clarify that there are some kinds of counseling that are useful to women and some that are harmful.
2. To recognize that we can exercise control when we interact with professionals.
3. To help us see that we have many of the same skills that professionals have.
4. To help us clarify the context in which professionals may be useful to us.

#### PROBLEM

##### EXERCISE 1

##### Who should I turn to for help?

In small groups ask the residents to spend a few minutes thinking out each of the following questions:

- A. What kinds of people would you go to for help or counseling and in what situations?

#### Some Possible Responses

<i>Person</i>	<i>Situation</i>
1. Friend	1. Need advice about whether to leave.
2. Family	2. I'm depressed because I don't know what to do.
3. Resident	3. Advice about how to cope with guilt feelings.
4. Former battered woman	4. What did she do when she thought she just couldn't make it on her own.
5. Shelter advocate	5. What will court be like.
6. Professional	6. I'm worried because my kids are out of control. I thought I was going crazy.

- B. What would you expect a counselor to help you with?

#### Some Possible Responses

1. Shoulder to cry on.
  2. Get over a crisis.
  3. Go to court with you.
  4. Build self confidence by reassuring me that I'm doing the right thing.
  5. Referrals about services for me and my children.
- C. In what ways have you counseled someone?

#### Some Possible Responses

1. I've listened and cared.
2. I've shared experiences that were similar to the ones she is going through.
3. We've brainstormed together about how to solve a common problem.

#### CAUSE

##### EXERCISE 2

##### What are your experiences with counseling?

Ask the residents to list all the groups that women go to for help and counseling. Then ask "What kind of counseling have you gone to in the past and what about it was helpful and what wasn't so helpful?"

#### Some Possible Responses

##### Types of counseling

1. Alanon
2. Church
3. Marriage counselors
4. Mental Health Centers
5. Family & friends
6. School counselors

*What was helpful and what did you like?*

1. The counselor validated my experience and said it was real—that I wasn't going crazy.
2. I got some good referrals.
3. It made me feel good because I had taken a step toward dealing with the problem.

*What wasn't helpful, or what didn't you like?*

1. They didn't listen to my particular problem. They gave me pat answers.
2. I was told the violence was my fault as much as his.
3. I felt they were telling me how to run my life.

**SUMMARY STATEMENT**

1. It is very important for everyone to feel respected in the counseling situation.
2. It is important to feel in control.
3. Professionals who counsel often put themselves in a more powerful position than their clients. Sometimes they abuse this power. They can make us feel stupid or blame us for our problems. For example, battered women have been asked questions like, "What did you do to provoke your abuser?" Such a question blames us and absolves him of responsibility.
4. Professionals need to treat us with respect and learn from us. They do not know everything. This is why battered women are often more helpful to other battered women than some professionals are.
5. Often, counselors, like many professionals, may have a destructive attitude toward women. Some of them believe that women should keep their family together no matter what the cost to the women. This is a sexist attitude that assumes women are responsible for everything that happens in the family—including their husband's violence.
6. We have counseling skills to offer each other. Supportive friends and family members are often effective counselors.

**EMPOWERMENT****EXERCISE 3****How do we get what we want?**

Ask the women to pick a negative experience one of them has had with a professional counselor. Ask her to explain it and then ask for volunteers to roleplay it. Discuss what went wrong in the situation and then have the group strategize what the woman could have done differently. List the strategies. Then, using the strategies, roleplay the situation again and have it come out positively.

Use one of the two examples below if no one volunteers a situation.

**Some Possible Responses**

1. An alcoholism counselor calls you in for counseling. Instead, he lectures you about how you're not being supportive to your very abusive husband. He says your husband needs sympathy himself because he's under a lot of stress trying to remain sober. You don't know how to respond because you feel so blamed. The counselor suggests that you try harder and you agree.

**Strategies**

1. Challenge the counselor's idea that the abuse isn't serious.
  2. Assert that you have the right to be treated decently by anyone you're with.
  3. Leave the session.
  4. Take an advocate with you.
  5. Talk to other battered women for support.
- If You've been called in by your child's teacher to discuss why your child's grades have dropped and why she doesn't participate anymore in class activities. You go to the meeting, but, in addition to the teacher there is the Guidance Counselor and the Principal. They start on you by saying that your child is having difficulties because you've been moving around too much and don't seem to be giving enough time to your child's study habits.

**Strategies**

1. Say that it was your understanding that the meeting was between you and the teacher. You don't like being ganged up on by three people.
2. Tell them about your abuse and say that you would appreciate if they could give your child more attention during this stressful period.
3. Bring a friend or advocate from the shelter for support and to take notes.

## SUMMARY STATEMENT

1. In many situations every woman can be her own advocate. We should trust our feelings about a situation and not be bullied.
2. It is important that in a counseling session we are treated in a way we think is right.
3. It is okay to question authority.
4. Some counselors are not helpful. If we do not like what is happening, we can ask to speak to someone else or bring an advocate.

## WORKSHOP 9 Advocating For Ourselves

### GOALS

1. To help women develop strategies for dealing effectively with agencies like the police and welfare.
2. To understand what resources we need to get effective help.
3. To build confidence.
4. To show how battered women can help one another solve problems.

### PROBLEM

#### EXERCISE 1

#### What are the problems we are facing?

Choose a problem that one of the residents is facing with an agency. Or, pick a situation in which a woman does not get what she needs—such as a welfare emergency grant, a court protection order, an apartment. Then, roleplay the actual problem between the woman and the agency.

#### Some Possible Roleplays

1. You have a protection order; your abuser shows up and begins to harass you. You call the police and they refuse to do anything.
2. You go to court to get a protection order. You don't speak English and no one is helping you even though you were told an interpreter would be there.
3. You answer a newspaper ad for an apartment. The landlord asks you how many people are in your family and what's your source of income. When you tell him you have 3 teen-age children and are on welfare, the landlord decides that the place is not for you.

## CAUSE

### EXERCISE 2

#### What happened?

Ask women in the group what happened in the role play. How was the woman made to feel? Why didn't she get what she wanted?

#### Some Possible Responses

#### How was the woman made to feel?

1. She was made to feel stupid.
2. She lost confidence.
3. She was intimidated and gave up.

#### Why didn't she get what she wanted in each roleplay?

1. The police didn't enforce the law.
2. In some states the court is required to have an interpreter. In this case the court broke the law.
3. There is discrimination in housing especially against women on welfare with children.

### SUMMARY STATEMENT

1. Social agencies are supposed to serve us. Women are entitled to have their legal rights enforced by the police and courts.
2. But frequently these agencies want to maintain control. They do this by complicating the experience for us. When they make us wait for notes, or won't answer our questions or assume we can't understand, an issue they are depriving us of our rights and giving us the message that women are second class citizens.
3. Welfare is also an entitlement, a right. When the welfare center makes us feel bad for asking for our rights, we are frequently intimidated and give up. In this way they cut off people and save money. This is illegal and women have a right to fight against this.
4. We are not the problem—but often agencies make us feel as if we are. In blame.



## EMPOWERMENT

### EXERCISE 3

#### What can help us?

Ask residents to go around the group and suggest what information or approach could help solve the problems from Exercise 1?

#### Some Possible Responses

1. Know your rights and be assertive about them.
2. Call another woman, or organize a group of women, to go with you for support.
3. Figure out ahead of time what you might say and do.
4. Get advice and information from people you know—use your contacts.
5. Join and use a community group which helps women deal with welfare and housing problems.

### EXERCISE 4

#### How could we do it differently?

Ask the group to roleplay one (or all) of the situations from Exercise 1, but with a positive outcome. Include any new information or strategy suggested from Exercise 3 above.

### SUGGESTION

Lead our Fact Sheets on women's rights in the courts and with the police. Distribute Welfare Rights pamphlets. Read some sections together.

### EXERCISE 5

#### How can we help other battered women?

Have the group brainstorm about how we can help each other deal with these agency problems during and after our stay at the shelter.

#### Some Possible Responses

1. Start a former residents group.
2. Exchange addresses or phone numbers when residents leave.
3. Print a newsletter that describes actual problems and the different ways women have solved them.
4. Contact other shelters and find out how they handle similar problems.
5. Several residents might join a shelter committee or volunteer to work on the hotline.

## WORKSHOP 10

### Finding Housing

### GOALS

1. To help residents become aware of their options for housing.
2. To build confidence in women about finding resources.
3. To demonstrate how battered women can be resources for one another.

### PROBLEM

#### EXERCISE 1

#### What are our options?

Read out loud and discuss the situation below in which a shelter resident describes her housing problems and other residents help her decide what to do.

Dawn and her three children are staying at an emergency shelter. She has thirty days to stay there. Dawn is on welfare and she receives \$400 a month. Her mother is deceased, her father and brother live within two blocks of her husband. Dawn does not believe her husband would honor a protection order—in fact, the man fought the police when they intervened at the time of the abuse. What should Dawn do, and what steps will she need to take in order to reach her goals?

Ask the women in the group to list Dawn's options.

#### Some Possible Responses

1. Have the abuser evicted.
2. Move in with relatives.
3. Rent a room, apartment, or house.
4. Share a home with another resident.
5. Public housing.
6. Section 8.

### EXERCISE 2

#### What are the advantages and disadvantages of some housing options?

Break the whole group into three small groups. One group will do Exercise 2A, another group will do 2B and another 2C. The three groups will share their solutions after working independently.

### EXERCISE 2A Are relatives best?

In the small group each woman should name an advantage and disadvantage of moving in with relatives.

#### Some Possible Responses

##### Advantages

1. Low cost
2. Help with babysitting
3. Emotional support
4. Not alone

##### Disadvantages

1. Lack of privacy
2. Parents run your life
3. Feel like a child again
4. You become too dependent
5. Conflicts over kids and lifestyle
6. Talked into changing your mind

Make a list of some of the ways we can successfully deal with the disadvantages.

#### Some Possible Responses

1. Find women in the shelter who you can call for support and discuss problems you have when you are living with your family.
2. Write out a plan for working toward independence and a timetable for reaching some small goals.
3. Admit from the beginning that there are almost always conflicts when adult children move back home. Try to focus on concrete steps you can take to improve things in small ways.

### EXERCISE 2B What about shared housing?

The small group should list the advantages and disadvantages of sharing housing with another resident.

#### Some Possible Responses

##### Advantages

1. Save money
2. Childcare relief
3. Rotation of chores
4. Support and sharing
5. Safety
6. Save money on food
7. Company

##### Disadvantages

1. Conflict of interests
2. Lack of privacy
3. Limits your freedom
4. Children's battles
5. Limited space
6. Dependent on her rent
7. Conflicts over lifestyles
8. Depending on your state laws, you might lose your welfare

Then, make a list of the things women who plan on sharing housing need to negotiate in order for the experience to be successful.

#### Some Possible Responses

1. Type and size of apartment
2. How much space for children
3. Cost of apartment
4. How they feel about each other having men visit
5. Personal needs for privacy

6. How bills will be paid if one of you wants to move.
7. In whose name is the telephone, utilities, lease?
8. How to handle children's fights.

### EXERCISE 2C

#### What about getting our own apartment?

In the small group ask the women to list the advantages and disadvantages of getting their own apartment.

#### Some Possible Responses

##### Advantages

1. Freedom to come and go as you please.
2. Control over running and maintaining the home.
3. Plan how your money will be spent.
4. Friends can drop in whenever you want them to.
5. Privacy.
6. You've got a place — you don't have to go back to the abuser.

##### Disadvantages

1. Poor conditions.
2. Not a safe neighborhood.
3. Lack of security if abuser shows up.
4. Landlord won't accept children.
5. Large security deposits demanded.
6. Need references.
7. Long waiting lists in public housing.

Make a list of the ways we can deal successfully with the disadvantages.

#### Some Possible Responses

1. Ask tenant organizations in your neighborhood or city for information on your rights as a tenant.
2. Get in touch with community organizations in your neighborhood which are working on housing improvements and ask for help in solving your problems.
3. Find out where other women who have been at the shelter have found apartments. Ask another woman to be a reference for you with her landlord.
4. As a group go to your public housing office and demand that battered women be given priority status on waiting lists.

Now call the women back to the large group to share their lists and their solutions.

### CAUSE

#### SUMMARY STATEMENT

1. Whether or not to move in with relatives, share housing or get our own apartment are all tough choices. It's not our individual failures or mistakes that make these choices difficult.
2. The government is not providing enough low cost apartments for people. Very few new units are being built or rehabilitated. There were 750 thousand new units constructed in 1970 and 250 thousand in 1981.
3. Since 1970 the cost of construction has gone up 324% and the cost of renting a new apartment in inner cities is estimated at \$600 per month per unit.
4. Women with small children are often discriminated against when they look for housing.
5. We need to work together to demand more housing options.

### EMPOWERMENT

#### EXERCISE 3

#### What can we do together?

As a group, brainstorm how to go about finding a low-cost apartment. Ask if

anyone in the group has any experiences they can share with finding either private or public housing.

### Some Possible Responses

1. Talk to other residents.
2. Talk to your friends outside the shelter.
3. Find out from the shelter who are good, reliable realtors.
4. Call community organizations that deal with housing.

Suggest that as a group residents find out from the shelter how former residents have found housing. Or, suggest that women go as a group to the public housing offices and ask for priority housing for battered women.

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