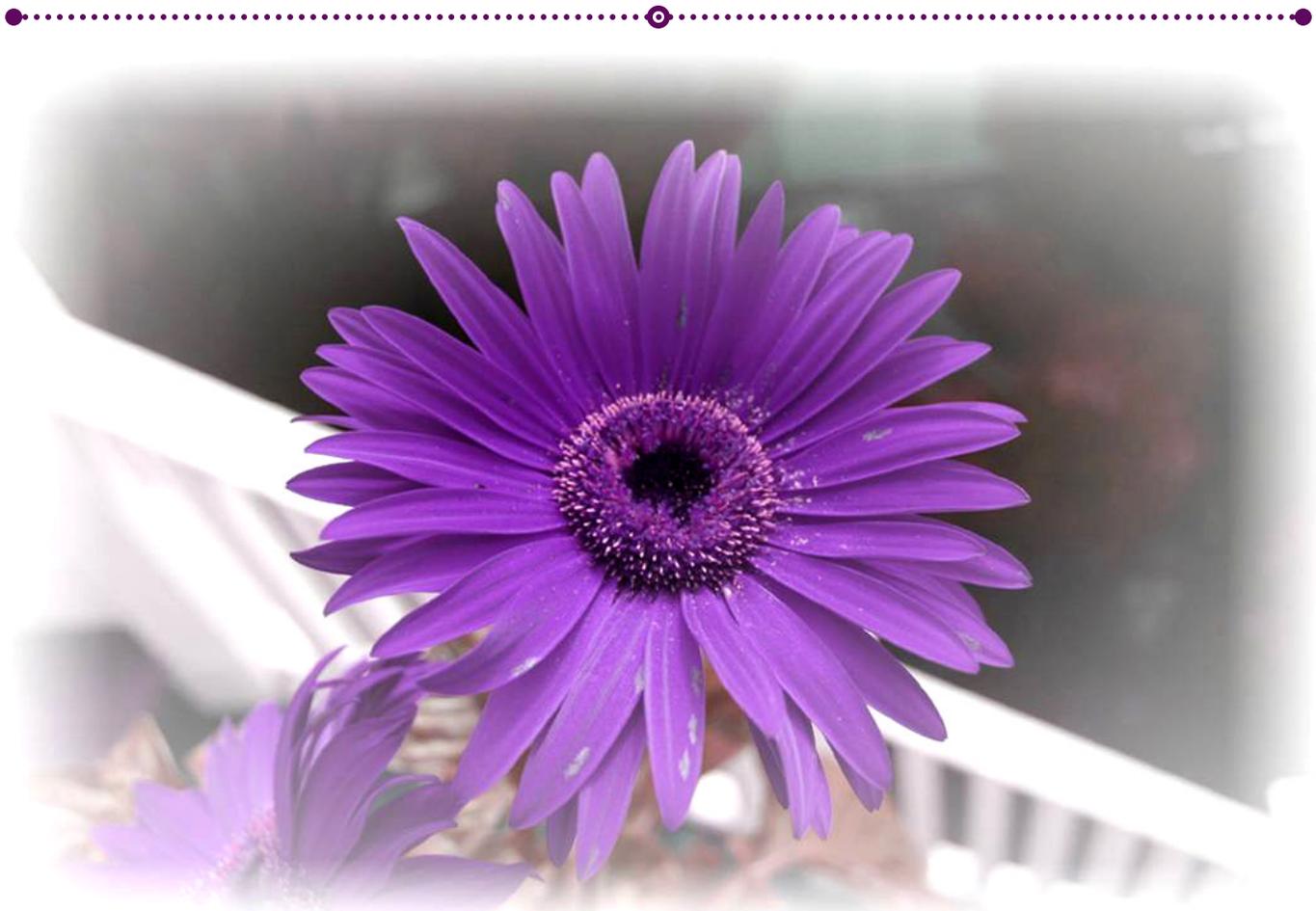


GETTING SAFE AND SOBER: REAL TOOLS YOU CAN USE

AN ADVOCACY TEACHING KIT FOR WORKING WITH WOMEN COPING WITH SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE



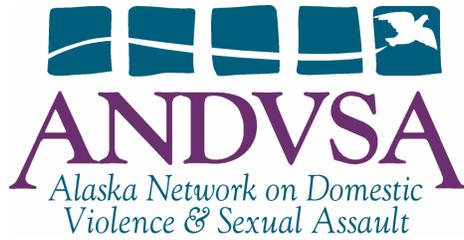
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services,
Office on Women's Health

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Getting Safe and Sober: Real Tools You Can Use
Support Group Manual and Supplementary Materials for Advocates



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services,
Office on Women's Health

(Portions of these materials were reprinted, excerpted or adapted from the manual entitled The Perinatal Partnership Against Domestic Violence Manual, 2001, Department of Health, Maternal-Child Health, principal author, Patricia J. Bland" and is provided here with permission from the Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence. Some portions of material pertaining to substance abuse were provided by the Domestic Violence Interdisciplinary Task Force of the Illinois Department of Human Services (2000). Safety and Sobriety: Best Practices in Domestic Violence and Substance Abuse, Springfield: IL. Other sources are noted on individual items).

SUPPORT GROUP MANUAL..... Part I

Getting Safe and Sober Real Tools You Can Use – A Teaching Kit for Use with Women who are Coping with Substance Abuse and Interpersonal Violence, by Debi Edmund, M.A. L.P.C. and Patricia J. Bland, M.A. CCDC CDP..... 4

OVERVIEW..... Part II

Advocates Ask Addiction Questions..... 27
Model Protocol for Working with Women Impacted by DV and Substance Abuse 45
Definitions and Abstract..... 69

SCREENING MATERIALS.....Part III

General Guidelines for Identifying Clients Who May Be Affected By Alcohol Or Other Drug Use..... 78
Common Signs/Symptoms of the Five Basic Abused Substances..... 79
Screening Tools: 4P's..... 80
Spouse Abuse Risk Assessment 82
Alcohol and Other Drug Use – From Abstinence to Recovery Wheel..... 83

Screening Chemically Dependent Battered Women IN...NOT OUT of our Programs

By Patricia J. Bland, M.A. CCDC (from The A Files, Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence Newsletter Vol. 3, No. 3, Pages 127-138, October 2001, reprinted with permission from the WSCADV).....84

TRAINING and GROUP EVALUATION TOOLS	Part IV
Substance Abuse Needs Assessment Tool for Advocates	100
DV/SA Needs Assessment Tool for Chemical Dependency Counselors	101
True /False Training Quiz	102
Answer Key for True /False Training Quiz	103
Understanding DV and Substance Abuse Pre-Test.....	107
Understanding DV and Substance Abuse in the Healthcare Setting Pre-Test	108
Understanding DV and Substance Abuse Post-Test	109
Understanding DV and Substance Abuse in the Healthcare Setting Post-Test.....	110
Training Evaluation Tool.....	111
Post -Training Survey.....	112
Group Evaluation Tool	113

Note: Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault program staff can provide training and technical assistance pertaining to the link between Substance Abuse and Violence Against Women. The following are examples of recent training offerings:

- 1) *Substance Abuse 101 for Advocates: Physiology and Pharmacology*
- 2) *Domestic Violence 101 for Substance Abuse Counselors: Advocacy and Empowerment*
- 3) *Addiction is an Empowerment Issue: Ending Addict Phobia in Our Programs*
- 4) *Chemical Dependency and Domestic Violence: Overview for Multidisciplinary Teams*
- 5) *Safety and Sobriety: Real Tools You Can Use - Screening In not Out*
- 6) *Safety and Sobriety: Real Tools You Can Use – Support Group Models*
- 7) *Working with Parenting Women Impacted by Substance Abuse and Domestic Violence*
- 8) *She’s Got All Kinds of Troubles – Working with Women with Co-Occurring DV/SA, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Issues*
- 9) *Advanced Substance Abuse Training for Shelter Advocates*
- 10) *Advanced Domestic Violence Training for Chemical Dependency Treatment Providers Policy and Protocol Development*

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SUPPORT GROUP MANUAL

Part I

GETTING SAFE AND SOBER: REAL TOOLS YOU CAN USE

**A TEACHING KIT FOR USE WITH WOMEN WHO ARE COPING
WITH SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE**

**By Debi Sue Edmund, L.P.C., C.A.D.C.
and Patricia J. Bland, M.A., CCDC CDP**

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Getting Safe and Sober: Real Tools You Can Use

4

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SUPPORT GROUP MANUAL

CONTENTS

Acknowledgements . . . 7

Preface . . . 8

- Background
- Objectives
- Rationale for Developing the Kit
- Components of the Kit

Guidelines for Organizing and Conducting Support Groups . . . 15

- Confidentiality
- Promoting Easy Access to the Group
- General Tips

Support Group Format . . . 18

- Overall Format
- Sample Topics for 12 Weeks

The Handouts . . . 23

- Woman Abuse, Substance Abuse: What Is the Relationship?
- Survivors of Chemical Dependence, Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault
- Naming the Problem
- Manifestations of Violence
- Merry-Go-Round of Addiction and Violence (With Instructions for Use)
- 1 + 1 = 10 Tons of Trouble (With Instructions for Use)
- Other Issues: What Else Impacts Safety and Sobriety?
- Getting Help
- Sorting Out Messages
- Safety and Sobriety: Risk Factors in Traditional Advocacy and Treatment Programs
- Safety at Support Group Meetings
- Etiquette in Groups
- Using 12 Step Groups
- Alternative Support Groups

Safety Plan

Mini-Safety/Sobriety Plan (With Instructions for Use)

Children Exposed to Domestic Violence and Substance Abuse

Safety Planning Interventions for Children

Personal Change, Social Change

Can One Person Make a Difference?

Women Talk About Substance Abuse and Violence

Power and Control Wheels . . . 24

Power and Control Wheel

Power and Control Model For Women's Substance Abuse

Lesbian/Gay Power and Control Wheel

Violence Against Native Women: Battering

Immigrant Power and Control Wheel

Children Coping With Family Violence Wheel

Three Circles Power and Control Wheel

Equality Wheel

Natural Life-Supporting Power Wheel

Community Accountability Wheel

About the Authors . . . 25

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The Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault offers sincere appreciation and respect to our member programs in Alaska who daily seek to alleviate and overcome the impact of domestic violence, sexual assault and chemical dependence in our communities. We thank you for your tireless efforts and ongoing commitment to safety, sobriety and wellness.

We offer grateful acknowledgements to the Office of Women's Health, Region X, and the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women, for their financial support of this project and their commitment to women's health and well-being. We would also like to thank the staff and volunteers of the Alcohol Drug Help Line Domestic Violence Outreach Project in Seattle, WA, for their pioneering work at Residence XII, Catherine Booth House, EDVP, DAWN, and everywhere else they could get their feet in the door throughout Washington, Alaska, Illinois and points around the globe.

Many of the tools provided in this manual were initially developed or inspired by women struggling to get free from violence and addiction. These women shared their experience, strength and hope with each other and with us at New Beginnings for Battered Women and their Children and other support groups in Seattle/Tacoma, WA, and in the Women's Gender Issues group at Heritage Behavioral Health Center in Decatur, IL. Programs across the United States, including the SISTR Program in Dillingham, AK, and support groups in Anchorage, Palmer, and Bethel, are directly linked to each other through their connection to these early pioneers seeking safety and sobriety.

Special thanks to the women from the New Beginnings Wednesday night support group addressing chemical dependency and domestic violence in Seattle, WA, and their sisters in Springfield, IL, who started it all by sitting down with the authors and allowing us to interview them about their personal experiences. To date, your voices have been heard in 30 states. Special thanks also to the Women in Recovery Caucus (WIRC) of the Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence and to the Steering Committee of the Washington State Coalition on Women's Substance Abuse Issues.

But most of all, thanks to every woman seeking safety and sobriety who shares her journey to freedom with others, one group at a time. You are our mother, sister, daughter, aunt, niece, cousin, co-worker, neighbor, inspiration, friend.



*U.S. Department of Health and Human Services,
Office on Women's Health*

PREFACE

Getting Safe and Sober: Real Tools You Can Use is a practical tool kit for use with women who have substance abuse or chemical dependence problems and who are, or have been, victims of domestic violence, sexual assault or sexual abuse. The kit also can be used to train service providers about the needs of women whose experience includes both substance abuse and victimization.

This manual is designed as a companion to the Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault *Model Protocol for Working with Women Impacted by DVSA and Substance Abuse* (2004). The protocol document includes model policies and procedures offered as creative approaches or current best practice for responding to co-occurring domestic violence/sexual assault and substance abuse. The Alaska Network on Domestic Violence (ANDVSA) has also developed a basic curriculum to help advocates and providers screen for domestic violence/sexual assault, alcohol, nicotine and other drug use.

There are very few programs providing discrete services for women impacted by multiple abuse issues including domestic violence, sexual assault and substance abuse. Women impacted by interpersonal violence and substance abuse are often invisible when in our programs or perceived as disruptive when their substance use becomes evident or unmanageable. Many times women with co-occurring issues are missing from community programs altogether. Yet battered women and survivors of sexual assault who struggle with substance abuse and chemical dependence often need our services the most.

Every domestic violence/sexual assault program has strengths and challenges impacting our ability to provide services. Unfortunately many advocacy programs are under-equipped to address co-occurring issues impacting women's safety and health. In order to better extend services and advocacy to battered women with separate issues of substance use, misuse or addiction we must expand our current practices and explore new strategies to address safety and support wellness.

The co-occurrence of domestic violence and substance abuse is associated with increased lethality rates and greater severity of injuries for women impacted by both these public health risks. Additionally, studies indicate domestic violence, alcohol, nicotine and other drug use are all factors associated with low birth weight and other negative health outcomes for both women and their children.

The primary goal of this support group manual is to help advocates and providers better meet the safety needs of battered women and survivors of sexual assault who are impacted by their own or another's substance use, misuse or addiction. Ideally, this manual will serve as a guide or "first step" for providing integrated information, education and support for those addressing co-occurring issues impacting safety, sobriety and wellness.

The manual is designed to supplement existing educational materials and group tools currently utilized by advocates, health care providers and chemical dependency professionals interested in

providing education and group support to women impacted by multi-abuse issues. It contains 'user-friendly' support group materials developed primarily to offer options and address safety for women impacted by multiple abuse issues.

Our group design is informed by evidence-based practice in addiction treatment and utilizes concepts including brief intervention and motivational enhancement. The manual also draws from promising practices in the domestic violence field rooted in the experience of formerly battered women, women in recovery and survivors of sexual assault.

BACKGROUND

While most women who have experienced intimate partner violence do not suffer from chemical dependence, it is important to acknowledge many women receiving services from domestic violence/sexual assault programs are dealing with addiction and recovery issues. One study of Illinois domestic violence shelters reveals that as many as 42% of service recipients abuse alcohol or other drugs (Bennett & Lawson, 1994). Researcher William Downs reports findings indicating one in four women in an Iowa shelter/safe home sample had a lifetime diagnosis of alcohol dependence and another one in four had alcohol or other drug problems (Downs, 2002).

The Women's Action Alliance experience with a domestic violence shelter program over a fifteen-month period of time indicated 60-75% of the women seeking shelter services had developed problems with their original coping mechanisms, alcohol and drugs (Roth, 1991). Preliminary data from a National Institute on Drug Abuse study noted 90% of women in drug treatment had experienced severe domestic violence from a partner during their lifetime (Miller, 1994). Similar findings have been noted on monthly client service reports from the Alcohol/Drug Help Line Domestic Violence Outreach Project in Washington State (Bland, 2003). Clearly, a significant number of women and children seen in domestic violence agencies and sexual assault victim service programs suffer from substance abuse problems (Kubbs, 2000).

As recently as fifteen years ago, Finkelstein reported alcoholism and drug abuse were still viewed primarily as "men's diseases" (Finkelstein, 1994). Substance abuse and addiction are women's issues. According to the Washington State Coalition on Women's Substance Issues, the physiological impact of substance abuse on women needs more attention. Women have higher blood alcohol levels than do males after consuming equal amounts of alcohol (LaGrange, 1994; Lieber, 1993). Research has documented women have a higher prevalence and greater severity of alcohol-related liver disease with shorter duration of alcohol use and lower consumption levels than men (Kubbs, 2000). Women also have higher death rates from alcohol-related damage (CSAT, 1994).

While using substances can initially serve as a survival strategy or coping mechanism anyone might use in the context of abuse, pain, illness or other trauma, studies indicate women are more likely to begin substance misuse in response to trauma. Women are likely to use prescription medication much more often than men. Seventy percent of prescriptions for tranquilizers, sedatives and stimulants are written for women (Roth, 1991). The Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women (1992) states that psychotropic medication is over-prescribed for battered

women. They also note that women who have been abused may also use alcohol or drugs for a variety of other reasons, including: coercion by an abusive partner, chemical dependence, cultural oppression, or—for women recently leaving a battering relationship—a new sense of freedom.

Unfortunately, using substances for any reason becomes problematic when misuse occurs or addiction is indicated. A significant number of battered women and survivors of sexual assault with substance abuse or addiction issues typically experience discrimination and barriers to services. Ability to maintain employment, housing, health insurance or child custody may be threatened by public disclosure of current or past substance abuse problems. Societal attitudes tend to view addiction as a moral failing rather than as a health problem. This can lead to isolation and shame, which may be compounded when domestic violence and/or sexual assault co-occur. Most alarming of all is the impact of multiple abuse issues on safety. Safety is strongly compromised when domestic violence and chemical dependence co-occur. While these problems frequently co-occur, there is little evidence that either problem causes the other. Individually, each can be chronic, progressive and lethal. Together, severity of injuries and lethality rates climb for chemically dependent battered women (Dutton, 1992). These problems are compounded when perpetrators include sexual assault and other forms of sexual abuse in their arsenal of violence.

OBJECTIVES

Objectives of this manual include helping women:

- Recognize signs of substance abuse and victimization.
- Understand the relationship between the two.
- Learn about resources that can help them ensure their personal safety, heal from abuse, and recover from addiction.
- Integrate the philosophies employed by most substance abuse counselors and women's advocates, so that women coping with both substance abuse and victimization can use both types of services without confusion.

RATIONALE FOR DEVELOPING THE KIT

While there is little credible evidence supporting a direct cause-and-effect link, substance abuse and violence against women often occur together. For women in substance abuse treatment, failure to address current or past victimization can interfere with treatment effectiveness and can lead to relapse. For victims of violence or abuse, active alcohol or drug abuse makes it harder to escape a violent situation or to heal from past abuse. Both issues pose serious public health consequences for women and their children.

The following are a few of the many reasons an individual who experiences domestic violence and/or sexual abuse and who also has a substance abuse problem, may be at increased risk for harm (Bland, 1997; Illinois Department of Human Services, 2000):

- Acute and chronic effects of alcohol and other drug use may prevent one from accurately assessing the level of danger posed by a perpetrator.
- Under the influence, one may feel a sense of increased power. Individuals may erroneously believe they can defend themselves against physical assaults and may not realize the impact of substances on their gross motor functioning and reflexes.
- Substance use and misuse can impair judgment and thought processes (including memory), making safety planning more difficult.
- Alcohol and other drug use may be encouraged or forced by an abusive partner as a mechanism of control. Abstinence and recovery efforts may be sabotaged. *For example, a domestic violence/sexual assault victim receiving methadone on a daily basis could easily be stalked.*
- There may be reluctance on the part of the crime victim to seek assistance or contact police for fear of arrest, deportation or referral to the Office of Children’s Services.
- The compulsion to use and withdrawal symptoms may make it difficult for substance-abusing or addicted victims of domestic violence/sexual assault to access services such as shelter, advocacy, or other forms of help.
- Additionally, a recovering woman may find the stress of securing safety leads to relapse.
- If she is using or has used in the past, she may not be believed.

Given the effect that each issue has on a woman’s ability to address the other, researchers have suggested the need for greater coordination of services among health care providers, substance abuse counselors and advocates addressing women’s victimization. It is hoped that this manual can serve as a “bridge-building” tool for providers, counselors and advocates whose work brings them in contact with women addressing both substance abuse and current or past victimization.

COMPONENTS OF THE KIT

This kit contains guidelines and sample topics to assist in the creation of support groups for women who have substance abuse or chemical dependence problems and who are, or have been, victims of domestic violence, sexual assault or sexual abuse. Also included are a variety of user-friendly handouts.

The materials in this manual are designed for maximum flexibility. It is hoped that providers, counselors and advocates can use the materials either in group or individual advocacy-based

counseling sessions. It is also hoped the materials can be used in a variety of settings: in domestic violence/sexual assault programs with women who also have substance abuse problems, in substance abuse treatment with women whose experience includes domestic violence or sexual assault/sexual abuse, and in health care settings as well.

The entire kit also can be used to educate service providers about the needs of women whose experience includes both substance abuse and victimization. Materials can also be presented in staff trainings as tools providers can use with program participants who have co-occurring issues.

Please note, this kit is not intended to replace referrals to other agencies for women who could benefit from the other services. Rather, it is designed to provide information that will encourage women to follow up on referrals and use needed services. It is also designed to help women integrate, for themselves, the different language and the different approaches used by women's advocates and substance abuse counselors so they can get the maximum benefit from whatever services they are receiving. Hopefully, this kit will also help counselors and advocates feel they can encourage the use of "cross services" without compromising the integrity of their own philosophies.

CONCLUSION

We can support women seeking safety and sobriety by reducing program service barriers and ending isolation for chemically dependent battered women and their children. Because women impacted by substance use, misuse or addiction may be at greater risk for injury and lethality, support groups addressing substance use as a safety issue are essential for women impacted by domestic violence and sexual assault. This manual is designed to serve as an important tool for helping program participants identify and overcome barriers to safety and sobriety.

RESOURCES

Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault *Model Protocol for Working with Women Impacted by DVSA and Substance Abuse* (2004).

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GUIDELINES FOR ORGANIZING AND CONDUCTING SUPPORT GROUPS

For women impacted by interpersonal violence and substance abuse, support groups can play an essential role in their safety, sobriety and recovery. Special support groups for women with these co-occurring issues provide opportunities for participants to discuss their daily struggle with sobriety and their compulsion to use as issues that affect both safety and empowerment.

Support groups can serve as a valuable adjunct to counseling or advocacy. Much of the power in these groups comes from the personal stories. People share their experience, strength and hope with each other. When one person breaks the silence about her experiences, others feel safer breaking *their* silence. Participants also hear success stories. They hear what others are doing to cope with problems similar to their own.

However, women with the co-occurring issues of interpersonal violence and substance abuse do have some special safety and access concerns. Support groups should have clear ground rules addressing confidentiality, a non-judgmental atmosphere and respect among group members. Following are some tips and general guidelines for these groups.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Most people in support groups respect confidentiality (or “anonymity,” as they say in 12-Step groups). However, women leaving an abuser should be advised not to share information in a group that could put their safety at risk. Here are some other tips to help ensure confidentiality:

- Use first names only.
- Limit notes. (Document topic covered and attendance only and require a signed release of information to disclose these.)
- Advise group participants about what you are mandated to report (Office of Children’s Services/Adult Protective Services issues, suicide threats etc.).
- Some group members don’t want to be greeted or acknowledged outside of the group due to safety constraints. Be sure to address this with the group. Some groups come up with a code.

PROMOTING EASY ACCESS TO THE GROUP

Some initial discomfort is normal for anyone who is new to support groups. It is natural to feel nervous in a roomful of strangers. First-time participants may have spent years avoiding the issues the group is discussing. If a woman’s experience includes violence or abuse, she also may have safety concerns. Here are some tips to help participants feel comfortable, stay safe – and hopefully, keep coming back:

- Have easy access to the group – don’t create barriers.

- There is no right way to conduct these groups. ... Be open to suggestions from participants.
- Prioritize child care.
- Have food, de-caffeinated coffee and tea available.
- Assist with transportation.
- Don't screen out. ... Prepare for arrival!
- Have enough staff or volunteers available to deal with unexpected issues.
- Have women create their own resource book of referrals.

GENERAL TIPS

It is extremely important for facilitators to provide a safe, non-judgmental environment to talk about safety, sobriety and justice. It is also very important for facilitators to acknowledge a woman's use, misuse or addiction to substances is not the cause of domestic violence or sexual assault. Offenders should always be held solely accountable for the violence they have directed towards their innocent victims. Here are some general tips for effective support groups:

- Support group facilitators need to be trained in domestic violence and sexual assault issues as well as knowledgeable about substance use, misuse and addiction.
- Use co-facilitators – if possible, one advocate and one chemical dependency counselor (the more the merrier, embrace diversity). Prioritize recruiting formerly battered women and recovering women as facilitators.
- Be flexible. Think kitchen-table; have a topic in mind but be willing to change. Let women own the group.
- Include time for women to address practical issues such as housing, legal or children's issues.
- Make it easy for participants to use the copy machine, telephone, fax etc. Access to these items can be vital.
- Adjust group guidelines and topics depending on setting (battered women's shelter or transitional housing program, community based domestic violence/sexual assault program, in-patient treatment facility, out-patient treatment facility, self help group or elsewhere).
- Remember, you may only see a group member once or you may have the member for three or more years. Be solution-based and friendly, but make the most of your interaction because it may be the only one you get.

- For drop-in groups, the average member comes about 12 times; make sure all participants understand they are welcome to return at any time.
- Stage 2 groups led by women themselves are good options for long-term group members.

GENERAL GOALS

Regardless of topic or setting, keep these overall goals for the group in mind:

- Safety and Sobriety

Safety requires more than a physical space away from an abuser and sobriety is not merely abstinence.

- Safe Space

Participants need a safe place to tell their story and be believed.

- Opportunity for Connection

Foster the notion of recovery partners, encourage women to support each other, and develop phone lists when it is safe to do so.

SUPPORT GROUP FORMAT AND TOPICS

In this section, you will find a sample overall support group format. We have also included some sample weekly group topics, along with suggestions for using the individual handouts. Please feel free to adapt either the overall format or the topics in whatever way works for your particular setting or time constraints.

OVERALL FORMAT FOR GROUPS

Participants in support groups may be more comfortable when group sessions have a predictable structure. Here is an example of an overall format that has been used successfully with women who have the co-occurring issues of substance abuse and interpersonal violence.

- **Check in.** Open the session by asking each group member to briefly state one thing she did right, or was proud of achieving during the previous week.
- **Identification of problems, challenges or goals and resources.** Ask participants if anyone is facing a special challenge, or has a particular goal she'd like to achieve. Identify resources currently utilized by group members and develop additional options to resolve problems, meet challenges and achieve goals.
- **Educational component.** Use a portion of the session to educate participants about some aspect of interpersonal violence or substance abuse. Topics may include power and control dynamics, safety issues, sobriety issues, children's issues, healthy boundaries, coping skills, etc. Below are 12 examples of possible topics, along with suggestions about how to use the handouts we've included in this kit.
- **Closure.** Close by asking each person to name one thing she can do to keep safe and sober for the coming week.

SAMPLE TOPICS FOR EDUCATIONAL COMPONENT

Here are some sample topics for use in the educational component of support groups, along with suggestions for handouts to use with each topic. Each of these topics could stand alone, so that women who only attend some group sessions won't need to rely on information from a previous session to understand the topic being discussed in the current one. The topics also may be used in any order. These are examples only! Nothing here is carved in stone – feel free to be creative with these topics and come up with some of your own.

Note about copyright: Group facilitators are free to photocopy as many of the handouts as they wish for educational use. However, please make sure the copyright notices appear on each of the handouts. We also request that the handouts not be altered in any way, especially the Power and Control Wheels. Please note that the Power and Control Wheels appear here courtesy of the National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence, which credits the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project in Duluth, MN, for inspiring the wheels.

TOPIC #1

The relationship between substance abuse and violence. Discuss commonly asked questions about the relationship between substance abuse and violence against women. Does substance abuse cause a perpetrator to get violent? Will treatment stop the violence? If the victim abuses alcohol or other drugs herself, does this mean she's asking for trouble? Does current or past abuse cause a woman to develop substance abuse problems? Also discuss why it is usually necessary to address both substance abuse and victimization if both are part of a woman's experience.

Handouts

Woman Abuse, Substance Abuse: What is the Relationship?

Survivors of Chemical Dependence, Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

TOPIC #2

Naming the problem. Discuss definitions of domestic violence, sexual assault/sexual abuse, and substance abuse, along with signs to look for. Encourage women to discuss signs or indicators they've experienced.

Handouts

Naming the Problem

Manifestations of Violence

TOPIC #3

Overlapping elements of abuse and addiction. Help participants identify overlapping elements of abuse and addiction. Review patterns of violence and signs/symptoms of chemical dependence, explore coercion and compulsion as barriers to safety and sobriety planning, and help participants develop tools to address accountability and avoid self-blame for both the violence and the addiction. Discuss other issues that impact on both safety and sobriety as well, such as mental health issues, poverty and oppression.

Handouts

Merry-Go-Round of Addiction

Merry-Go Round of Violence

1 + 1 = 10 Tons of Trouble

Other Issues: What Else Impacts Safety and Sobriety?

Power and Control Wheel for Women's Substance Abuse

TOPIC #4

Getting help. Discuss the services offered by domestic violence/sexual assault programs, substance abuse treatment providers and support groups, with an emphasis on resources in your own community. Counselors and advocates will want to have addresses and phone numbers

handy so they can make appropriate referrals, but also ask participants to share information about resources they are aware of.

Handouts

Getting Help

Note: You may also wish to provide brochures and meeting schedules from agencies/support groups in your community.

TOPIC #5

Sorting Out Messages. Women receiving services from both victims' advocates and substance abuse counselors may hear messages that seem to conflict or contradict each other. They may also face risks to their safety in traditional treatment problems and risks to sobriety in traditional advocacy programs. Discuss ways to overcome these risks and reconcile the philosophies commonly promoted by women's advocates and substance abuse counselors. Key to this, for both group facilitators and participants, may be understanding that substance abuse and violence are different problems requiring different approaches.

Handouts

Sorting Out Messages

Safety and Sobriety: Risk Factors in Traditional Advocacy and Treatment Programs

TOPIC #6

Using support groups. Discuss the benefits of support groups, and ways for women to feel more comfortable using them. Include safety tips – women may need to do the same “safety planning” when they use support groups as they do when going to work, visiting relatives or using public transportation. Because of the difficulty many abused women have with boundary issues, they may also need some extra assurance that they have the right to protect their boundaries when in groups.

Handouts

Safety at Support Group Meetings

Etiquette in Groups

TOPIC #7

Using the 12 Steps. Can a feminist empowerment model used by women's advocates be compatible with the 12 Steps? Discuss ways to interpret popular 12 Step concepts so they can be used in a way that is appropriate for survivors of violence or abuse. The handout “Using 12 Step Groups” makes numerous references to the “Big Book” of Alcoholics Anonymous and *The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, with page numbers, to provide support for survivors who use 12 Step groups and wish to use the suggested interpretations in that handout. Encourage participants who use 12 Step groups to discuss their own ways of interpreting the Steps as well. Also, if there are “alternative” support groups in your community such as Women For Sobriety or 16 Step Empowerment Groups, make sure participants are aware of all their options.

Handouts*Using 12 Step Groups**Alternative Support Groups***TOPIC #8**

Safety and sobriety planning. For women with co-occurring issues of substance abuse and interpersonal violence, both safety and sobriety must be priorities. Review the impact of safety on sobriety, and the impact of sobriety on safety. Women's advocates usually have clients develop a safety plan. Substance abuse counselors may have clients develop a relapse prevention plan. Discuss how participants can make relapse prevention part of their safety plan, and safety part of their relapse prevention plan.

Handouts*Safety Plan**Mini-Safety/Sobriety Plan***TOPIC #9**

• ***Children's issues.*** Children may not talk about problems they witness in the home, so it can be tempting to think they don't notice what's going on, or that it doesn't affect them that much. But research tells a different story. Help participants to recognize the impact of both substance abuse and violence on their children, and discuss how to create a more positive environment for children.

Handouts*Children Exposed to Domestic Violence and Substance Abuse**Children Coping With Family Violence Wheel**Safety Planning Interventions For Children***TOPIC #10**

Power and control dynamics. Use the Power and Control Wheels to illustrate all the various ways that power is used and abused in our society and in our personal relationships to dominate and control others. Then discuss what equality and respect would look like, both in our personal relationships and the larger society. Also make use of the power and control wheels when discussing any of the other topics suggested in this section.

Handouts*Power and Control Wheel**Power and Control Model For Women's Substance Abuse**Lesbian/Gay Power and Control Wheel**Violence Against Native Women: Battering**Immigrant Power and Control Wheel**Children Coping With Family Violence Wheel**Three Circles Power and Control Wheel**Equality Wheel**Natural Life-Supporting Power Wheel*

*Community Accountability Wheel***TOPIC #11**

Creating change. Many survivors of violence find that working for social change aids their own healing process. Many recovering alcoholics and addicts believe carrying their message to others helps them stay clean and sober. People may call their efforts *working for change*, *service to others* or *carrying the message*. Discuss contributions from both the women's movement and the recovery movement that have made it easier for people to get help with problems that were once denied or stigmatized. Then discuss simple things participants might do to make a difference in society. In a group setting, choosing an activity to do together as a group (such as making T-shirts for the Clothesline Project) may be an effective hands-on way to engage clients in the art of "making a difference."

Handouts

Personal Change, Social Change

Can One Person Make a Difference?

TOPIC #12

Sharing personal experience, strength and hope. The handout "Women Talk About Substance Abuse and Violence" is based on a series of interviews with 10 women. All 10 had experienced some form of abuse: battering, rape or sexual assault, incest or child sexual abuse. In addition to the violence, all of them had experience with alcohol or drug abuse, either on their own part, on the part of their partner, or both. At the time of the interviews, all of the women had left their abusive relationships, and those with chemical dependency problems were in recovery. They talked frankly about the impact of the substance abuse on their efforts to escape the violence and heal from abuse. They also discussed how their experiences with violence affected their efforts to recover from alcoholism or other drug addiction. Ask participants to take turns reading the parts aloud. Pause between questions on the handout for comments from participants. This particular exercise usually elicits a strong response from participants because they identify with other women who have "been there."

Handout

Women Talk About Substance Abuse and Violence

HANDOUTS

Group facilitators are free to photocopy as many of these handouts as they wish for educational use. However, please make sure the copyright notices appear on each of the handouts. We also request that the handouts not be altered in any way.

Woman Abuse, Substance Abuse: What is the Relationship?

When substance abuse and violence against women happen together, many people get confused about cause and effect. Does alcohol or drug use cause a perpetrator to get violent? Does being a victim of violence cause a woman to develop substance abuse problems? If a woman abuses alcohol or drugs, does this mean she asks for trouble? Here, based on research, are answers to some commonly asked questions.

Does alcohol or drug use cause violent behavior?

Studies show that people who get violent when intoxicated already have attitudes that support violence.¹ They believe they have the right to control another person. They believe violence and other abuse are acceptable ways to gain control. A perpetrator may use intoxication to excuse violent or abusive behavior. But substance abuse is no excuse for crimes such as domestic violence or sexual assault.

Will treatment help a perpetrator stop being violent?

If a woman leaves an abusive relationship, her partner may promise to get treatment or attend A.A. meetings. These promises may be a way to manipulate her into returning. Unfortunately, there is no guarantee that substance abuse treatment will stop violence.² If physical violence stops, other abusive and controlling behavior often replaces it.² A perpetrator must confront attitudes that support violence.

Does being a victim of violence cause substance abuse?

Not every abused woman uses alcohol or drugs. So there is not a direct cause-and-effect relationship. But trauma can increase a woman's risk for substance abuse.¹ Some women may use alcohol or drugs as an anesthetic, to relieve the pain caused by violence.¹ If the pain continues, and the "self-medicating" continues, conditions are perfect for addiction to develop.

If a woman abuses alcohol or drugs, does this mean she asks for trouble?

No woman deserves to be abused in any way, *no matter what else is going on*. If she is in a relationship, does this mean her partner must overlook substance abuse? No. Her partner has a right to ask that she get counseling or other help. Her partner has a right to end the relationship. But drinking or drug use never justifies violence.

Why is substance abuse risky in a violent situation?

While substance abuse does not cause violence, it can make a violent situation more dangerous. If the perpetrator is intoxicated, there is a greater risk the victim will be injured or killed.³ If the victim is intoxicated, she may find it harder to get safe.²

Women coping with violence and their own substance abuse may find themselves caught up on a merry-go-round. Substance abuse makes it harder to escape a violent situation, or to heal from past abuse.² Continuing violence or unresolved feelings about abuse make it harder to stay away from alcohol or drugs.²

How does substance abuse interfere with safety?

Substance abuse impairs judgment. This makes safety planning more difficult.² The victim may avoid calling police for fear of getting arrested or being reported to a child welfare agency.² She may be denied access to shelters or other services if she is intoxicated.²

How does substance abuse interfere with healing from violence?

If a woman is abusing alcohol or drugs, it is hard to heal the pain caused by violence. Counseling or therapy sessions can bring out strong emotions.¹ Alcohol and drugs cut off these emotions, and the feelings get pushed back down inside.¹ So the work cannot go forward. The healing doesn't happen. The pain continues.

How does violence interfere with recovery from addiction?

A woman may use alcohol or drugs to “stuff” her feelings about the abuse.¹ When she stops drinking alcohol or using drugs, buried emotions may come to the surface.¹ These feelings of pain, fear or shame can lead to relapse if not addressed.⁴

In an abusive relationship, a woman's recovery may threaten her partner's sense of control. To regain control, her partner may try to undermine her recovery.¹ Her partner may pressure her to use alcohol or drugs.¹ Her partner may discourage her from seeing her counselor, completing treatment, or attending meetings.¹ Her partner may escalate the violence.¹

How can a woman get off this merry-go-round?

Many women have found they will need to address both the substance abuse and the violence.² A domestic violence agency can help a woman who is in an abusive relationship. A rape crisis center can help if she has been sexually assaulted or sexually abused. Substance abuse treatment can help if she has problems with alcohol or other drugs. No matter where she goes for help first, her counselor or advocate can make referrals. This way, she can get all the services she needs.

¹ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Center for Substance Abuse Treatment. *Substance Abuse Treatment and Domestic Violence, Treatment Improvement Protocol Series 25*. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1997

² Domestic Violence/Substance Abuse Interdisciplinary Task Force. *Safety and Sobriety: Best Practices in Domestic Violence and Substance Abuse*. Springfield, IL: Illinois Department of Human Services, 2000

³ Bland, Patricia J. Strategies for improving women's safety and sobriety. *The Source, Reprint 50*, 1997

⁴ Simmons, Katherine P., Terry Sack and Geri Miller. Sexual Abuse and Chemical Dependency: Implications for Women in Recovery. *Women and Therapy 19 (2)*, 22

A Note to Survivors:

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT and SUBSTANCE USE

While not all people who drink or use drugs are alcoholics or addicts; substance use is often a safety issue for those experiencing domestic violence or sexual abuse. While there is little credible evidence indicating substance abuse alone causes domestic violence or sexual abuse; alcohol and drug use **is** associated with greater severity of injuries and increased lethality rates. These safety issues increase when addiction is present. Addiction, like domestic violence and sexual assault, causes great pain, shame, fear and isolation. Addiction (*also like DV and sexual assault*) is not your fault.

- People often believe their use of a substance means the violence directed against them is warranted. Always affirm no one has the right to hurt you. Sexual abuse, sexual assault and/or domestic violence directed against you are **never your fault** under any circumstance.
- Anyone might take a drink or use a drug to cope but there are usually safer ways to survive sexual assault, rape trauma, abuse, domestic violence and other forms of pain and oppression (*e.g. sexism, homophobia, racism, ageism, ableism, and classism*).
- Recognize euphoric recall and blackout make safety planning harder. Denial of use is not about lying; it's about surviving and it's about fear. Sometimes recall is hazy and people are confused or afraid. Facing the truth may be scary, painful or both. It may take a while but when it feels safe for you to seek help, please reach out. You are not alone.
- Both substance abusing and non-substance abusing victims of violence are victimized by perpetrators who may or may not be using themselves. You may have been introduced to drugs by a partner or an acquaintance who uses substances to gain and maintain power and control over others.
- A violent person may use alcohol or date rape drugs like rohypnol to more easily harm others. This is a form of physical, emotional, social, sexual and spiritual abuse. Recognizing this may help you understand how a perpetrator intentionally causes harm. This harm is never your fault; the perpetrator is solely responsible for any assault or resulting harm to others.
- Review options but recognize substance use impairs judgment, causing decision-making to be more challenging. It's ok to try 12-step or other programs if your circumstances make it reasonably safe to attend without fear of reprisal by the abuser. Each option has strengths and limitations. Be aware of alternatives, especially for gender-specific or culturally appropriate 12 step or other support groups and/or chemical dependency treatment.



- Being identified as either an alcoholic or an addict (even if you are in recovery) can impact your ability to get safe housing and gain or maintain child custody. This may affect careers, community standing, and/or support (or lack thereof). Increased insurance rates and legal difficulties may also be experienced. Service barriers also exist when you are actively using. Shelter space may be denied, detox may not be available immediately, and treatment may seem less urgent than getting SAFE. Getting help early can reduce some of this risk.
- If you are using to cope (*or for other reasons*), stopping drinking and drug use alone **cannot** ensure your safety. Substance mis-use and chemical dependence undermine both health and judgment. For those experiencing addiction, withdrawal symptoms can be painful and life threatening. Seek medical attention prior to detoxing.
- Treatment for substance abuse can pose many risks if either domestic violence or sexual assault is an issue. **Conjoint or couples counseling is not appropriate.** If you are enrolled in a methadone program you may be particularly vulnerable because you must appear daily at a set time for a dose and can be easily tracked or monitored by an abuser.
- Recovery may be accompanied by more danger. As sobriety increases a perpetrator may find the ability to control you is threatened. You may find your recovery efforts sabotaged as the abuser looks for new ways to regain control. Consider support groups addressing both the substance abuse as well as the domestic violence/sexual assault issues.
- Despite these barriers, people dealing with addiction, physical, emotional and sexual abuse/sexual assault or battering are not powerless. You are dealing with both a life threatening disease **and** violent crime. Empowerment involves **both** SAFETY and SOBRIETY. Help is available.
- If you are addressing chemical dependency and interpersonal violence issues you may find your local domestic violence/sexual assault program **and** your local substance abuse program helpful. The Alcohol Drug Help Domestic Violence Outreach Project at 206-722-3700 or 1-800-562-1240 (*WA and AK only*) is also a good resource.

Naming the Problem

Violence against women and girls takes many forms. These include domestic violence, sexual assault and sexual abuse. Substance abuse also takes many forms. The substance could be an illegal drug such as crack or heroin. The substance could also be alcohol or prescription drugs such as tranquilizers, painkillers or sedatives.

Put a check mark next to any of these signs you have experienced. Do any of your answers surprise you? Whether the issue is substance abuse or violence, it can be hard to face the situation. But the first step in addressing a situation is to recognize the situation for what it is.

What is domestic violence?

Domestic violence goes beyond normal disagreements to abuse. One person uses a pattern of abusive behavior to gain power and control over another. The abuse may be physical, sexual, psychological or economic. Examples of abuse range from putdowns and name-calling, to pushing and shoving, to severe beatings or murder. Could you be involved in an abusive relationship? Here are some warning signs. Does your partner:

- Slap, hit, push, punch or physically hurt you in other ways?
- Threaten to harm you or your children?
- Say things to you that are hurtful or demeaning?
- Discourage you from seeing or speaking to your family or friends?
- Prevent you from leaving the house, getting a job or returning to school?
- Force you to have sex, or pressure you to perform sexual acts you don't like?
- Express anger physically (throw things, hit walls, destroy your belongings)?
- Use alcohol or drugs as an excuse for saying hurtful things or abusing you?
- Make you feel as if you need to "walk on eggshells?" In other words, are you often afraid of your partner, or afraid to express your true feelings?

What is sexual assault or sexual abuse?

Sexual assault and sexual abuse refer to any sexual contact without your consent. Examples include rape, attempted rape, unwanted touching and child sexual abuse. The abuser could be a stranger, date, friend, lover or even a spouse or relative. Sexual abuse is often involved in domestic violence, and may be one way batterers abuse their partners. Here are some examples of sexual assault and sexual abuse. Has anyone:

- Forced you to have sex when you didn't want to?
- Forced you to perform sexual acts you didn't like?
- Touched you in ways you didn't like after you said no?
- Threatened to hurt you if you didn't cooperate?
- Behaved in ways that caused you to feel intimidated or afraid?
- Forced you to have sex with others, or engage in prostitution?
- Had sex with you while you were heavily intoxicated or passed out?

Any sexual behavior between a child and someone who has power over the child is sexual abuse. This is true even if the child agreed to participate. The difference in age and power between a child and an older person makes informed consent impossible. When you were a child, were you ever:

- Touched or fondled in a sexual way by an older person?
- Asked to touch an older person in a sexual way?
- Asked by an older person to look at pornographic movies or magazines?
- Asked by an older person to undress or pose in a sexual manner for a photo?
- Asked to keep any sexual activity a secret or warned not to tell anybody?

What is substance abuse?

Substance abuse is the continued use of drugs, including alcohol, even when such use causes problems. If a person experiences unusual tolerance or withdrawal, the substance abuse has probably progressed to addiction. Addiction is a chronic disease which is often progressive and fatal. Could you be in trouble with alcohol or other drugs? Here are some warning signs:

- Do you often use alcohol or drugs to relieve stress or escape problems?
- Do you use prescription drugs more often than directed, or for non-medical purposes?
- Do you need more and more of the substance to get the same effect?
- Do you often get drunk or high after promising yourself you wouldn't?
- Do you have blackouts (times when you don't remember what happened while you were intoxicated)?
- Do you have tremors, shakes or other uncomfortable symptoms when you can't get alcohol or another drug?
- Do you often fail to meet responsibilities because of drinking or drug use?
- Has your alcohol or drug use caused you to give up activities you enjoy?
- Have you had legal problems related to alcohol or drug use?
- Does the thought of running out of alcohol or drugs make you nervous?
- Does the thought of stopping feel overwhelming or even impossible?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you are not alone. Tell someone what is going on. Don't keep it a secret. Seek counseling. Try a support group. Please don't be afraid or embarrassed to seek this help and support. Your life is at stake. The sooner you ask for help, the sooner you can get safe, begin to recover, and heal.

Definition and warning signs of domestic violence adapted from "The Problem," National Coalition Against Domestic Violence [On-line]. Available: www.ncadv.org/problem

Definitions of sexual assault/sexual abuse and child sexual abuse, and some indicators, adapted from *By the numbers: Sexual violence statistics*, Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault, Springfield, IL, 2001. Indicators of sexual assault also adapted from *Types and signs of abuse*, Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault [On-line]. Available: <http://danenet.wiciv.org/dccrsa/saissues/types.html>.

Definition and warning signs of substance abuse or addiction adapted from *Diagnostic criteria from DSM-IV*, American Psychiatric Association, Washington, DC., 1994; and from the "The Definition of Alcoholism," American Society for Addiction Medicine [On-line]. Available: www.asam.org

Manifestations of Violence

Abuse can occur in different forms. It can be physical, emotional, sexual, spiritual, social and/or economic. The lists below describe some of the tactics of abuse batterers use as they attempt to gain or maintain power and control over their intimate partners. Abuse does not always progress in regular steps as shown here. Sometimes the abuse may advance from pushing or hitting directly to more severe physical violence such as use of weapons. Although each relationship is unique, any type of abuse must be considered a serious cause for concern. Despite different circumstances, it is important to remember abuse can escalate (especially if intervention fails to occur). A coordinated community response holding batterers accountable for these abusive behaviors is essential as is a response acknowledging and respecting the rights of DV victims. **EXERCISE:** It is helpful for people to be aware of the tactics of domestic violence. Circle the type(s) of abuse you are now experiencing, (or have experienced in the past). Notice if the violence is increasing in intensity, severity or frequency. Talk to an advocate to develop or review your current safety plan or explore your options. Remember, domestic violence or sexual abuse directed at you is never your fault (*even if you were drinking or using drugs*).

Emotional Abuse

insulting jokes	ignore feelings	jealousy	isolation	humiliation	harming pets	calls you 'crazy', 'drunk', or 'junkie'
silent treatment	insults	blaming/accusations	monitoring activities	threats	degradation	homicide/suicide

Physical Abuse

scratch	slap	push	hit	target hit	kick	choke-hold or strangle	beat	weapon use	murder
deny physical needs	bite	force drug use	punch	throw objects	burn	sleep deprivation	poison	disablement/disfigurement	

(Manifestations of Violence, continued)

Sexual Abuse

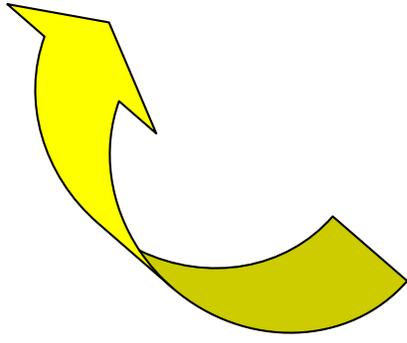
embarrassing comments	ignore sexual needs	forced to look at pornography	sex as duty	control contraceptives	forced prostitution for drugs	forced sex soon after pregnancy	death
sexual jokes	unwanted touching	treat like sex object, 13 th step	withhold sex as punishment	demand monogamy when abuser is promiscuous	sex after violence	rape	

Social / Environmental Abuse

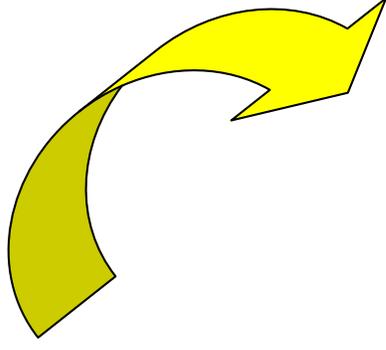
uses gender myths/roles	destroys property	controls major decisions	controls money or finances	threats to victim's family/friends	complete isolation	convinces victims they are hysterical/paranoid/suicidal	
degrades culture, religion, gender, profession, recovery from substance abuse, etc.		demonstration of strength	denies access to work	eliminates support system including access to health care or substance abuse treatment		child abuse/incest	suicide

Merry-Go-Round of Addiction

Use



Craving

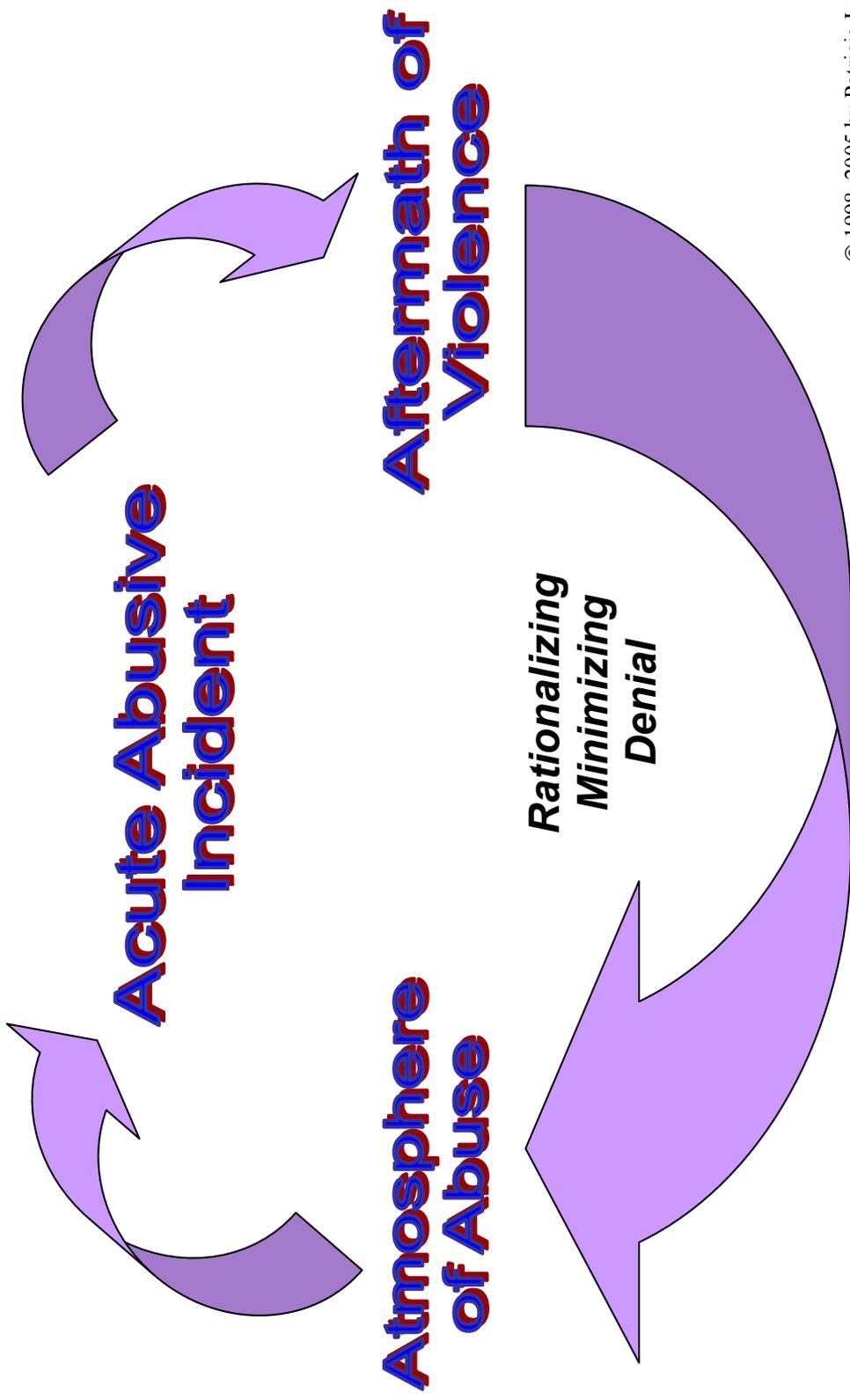


Sick/Sorry

*Rationalizing
Minimizing
Denial*



Merry-Go-Round of Violence



INSTRUCTIONS FOR MERRY-GO-ROUND EXERCISE

Group participants discuss both Merry-Go-Rounds and compare/contrast similarities and differences. Women in treatment use addiction diagram first; women in domestic violence programs use abuse diagram first.

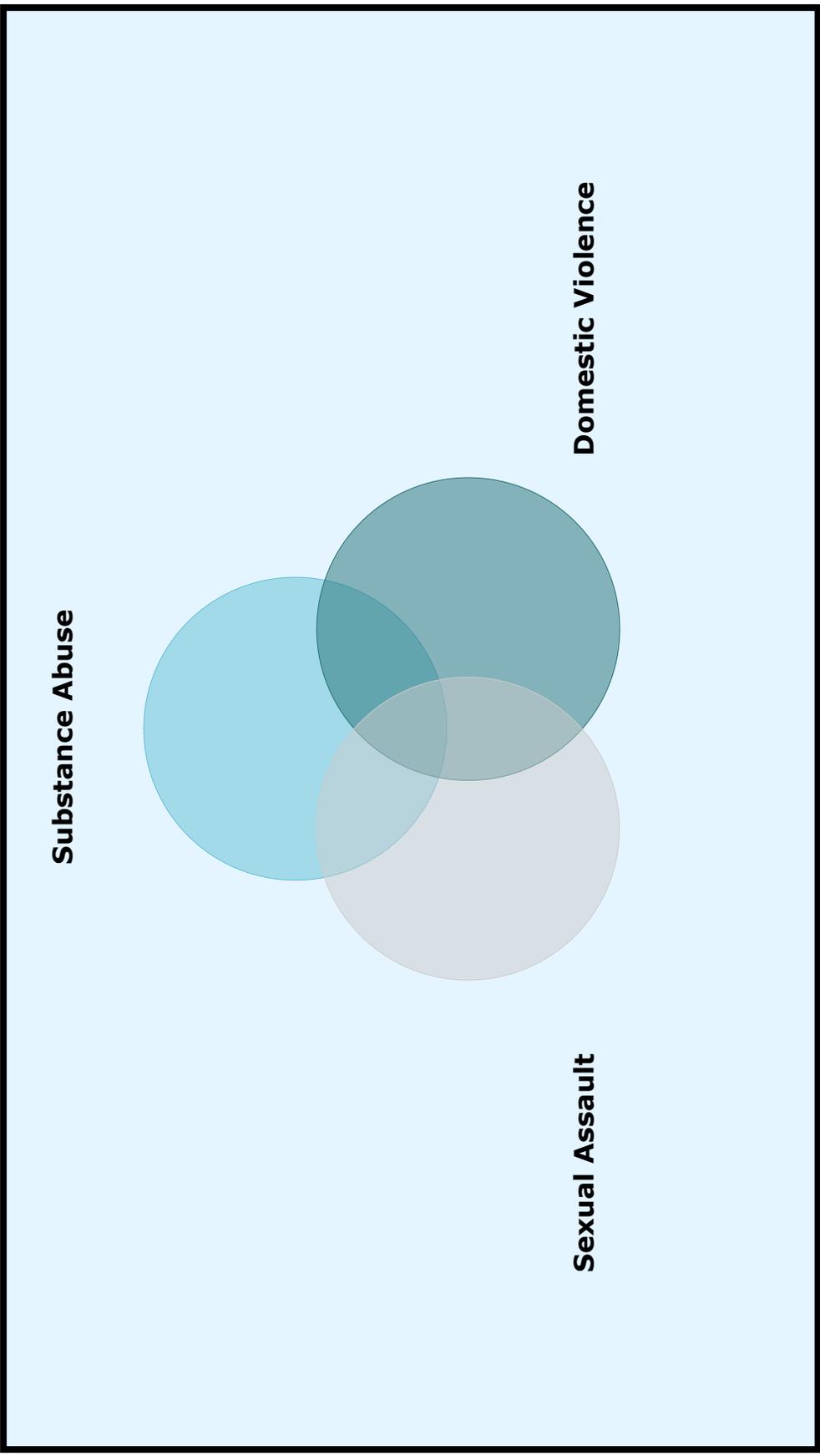
Merry-Go-Round of Addiction: Provide Merry-Go-Round diagram to group participants and draw copy on white board or flip chart. Discuss Craving, Use and Sick and Sorry with group participants. Brainstorm group responses to the questions below and write answers down on the board. Discuss role rationalizing, minimizing and denial plays to keep the merry-go-round in motion. (When discussing "Use," it's okay to be brief, look for initial feeling and move on to 'Sick and Sorry' to avoid euphoric recall.)

When I am craving:	When I am using:	When I am sick and sorry:
How do I feel emotionally?	How do I feel emotionally?	How do I feel emotionally?
What are my thoughts?		What are my thoughts?
What do I say?		What do I say?
How do I act?		How do I act?
What do I do?		What do I do?
Where am I spiritually?		Where am I spiritually?
Where am I economically?		Where am I economically?
Where am I socially?		Where am I socially?
Where am I sexually?		Where am I sexually?

Merry-Go-Round of Abuse: Provide diagram to group participants and draw copy on board. Discuss Atmosphere of Abuse, Acute Episode and Aftermath with group. Brainstorm group responses to the questions below and record answers on the board. Discuss role rationalizing, minimizing and denial plays to keep the merry-go-round in motion. (When discussing “acute episode,” it’s okay to be brief. Graphic details may re-traumatize.)

When I live in an atmosphere of abuse:	When I experience an acute episode of abuse: Note: Abuse is pervasive. Acute abusive incident may be physical, emotional, verbal, sexual, economic or any other form of harm, coercion or threat to gain or maintain power and control.	When I live in the aftermath of violence:
How do I feel emotionally?	How do I feel emotionally?	How do I feel emotionally?
What are my thoughts?		What are my thoughts?
What do I say?		What do I say?
How do I act?		How do I act?
What do I do?		What do I do?
Where am I spiritually?		Where am I spiritually?
Where am I economically?		Where am I economically?
Where am I socially?		Where am I socially?
Where am I sexually?		Where am I sexually?

1 + 1 = 10 Tons of Trouble



Other Issues: What Else Impacts Safety and Sobriety?



10 Tons of Trouble Exercise

Provide each group member with copies of the handouts “1 + 1 = 10 Tons of Trouble” and “Other Issues: What Else Impacts Safety and Sobriety.”

Using see-through plastic, draw and cut out a series of dinner plate sized plastic circles. Label each one with barriers and challenges individuals may face. Examples include substance abuse, sexual assault, domestic violence, poverty, homelessness, unemployment, mental health issues, oppression, etc. Leave a few circles blank for women to add their own challenges to.

Explain that these issues and challenges can seem like layers on an onion. As we look at one problem, many more are often revealed. Demonstrate how each problem compounds the other.

Have women identify which challenges they choose to ‘peel back’ or address first. Like peeling an onion, dealing with these challenges can cause tears.

Provide group members with additional circles. Ask the women to design circles of strength. Members can list the group itself, and add personal strengths, connections and supports that help them to survive and thrive.

Remind each woman that she possesses layers of strength, hope and connections to help her survive and thrive.

Getting Help

You can get support as you leave an abusive relationship, heal from sexual assault/sexual abuse, or recover from addiction. Here are some valuable resources in your community.

Domestic violence/sexual assault programs

Most domestic violence/sexual assault programs have a 24-hour hotline and provide emergency shelter. Services include counseling, safety planning and help getting an order of protection or appropriate medical attention. If you prosecute the offender, an advocate can go with you to court. If your experience happened in the past, you can still get counseling to help you heal from the abuse. Most programs also connect women with community services that help with housing, employment, therapy and other medical needs.

Name of agency _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Substance abuse treatment

Most treatment providers offer counseling and education about addiction. Clients learn skills for recovery and relapse prevention, and are connected with support groups in the community. Some programs offer gender-specific treatment, which is especially helpful for survivors of violence or abuse.

Name of agency _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Support groups

People recovering from alcohol or drug addiction can attend support groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous and Women for Sobriety. Many communities have women-only groups, often a safer option for abuse survivors.

Name of group _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Name of group _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Other resources: _____

Sorting Out Messages

If you are recovering from an addiction, you may be seeing a substance abuse counselor. If you are dealing with violence or abuse, you may be seeing a women's advocate. If you are seeing a women's advocate *and* a substance abuse counselor, you may be getting confused! These are some of the messages you may be hearing:

Substance abuse counselor: You have a disease. You need treatment.

Women's advocate: You are a victim of a crime. You need justice.

Substance abuse counselor: Your priority must be sobriety.

Women's advocate: Our priority is your safety.

Substance abuse counselor: You must accept your powerlessness.

Women's advocate: You need to be empowered.

Substance abuse counselor: You need to look for your part in your problems.

Women's advocate: You are not responsible for what happened. The perpetrator must be held accountable.

Substance abuse counselor: You need to change yourself and be of service to others.

Women's advocate: We need to change society.

Can these statements all be true? One way to reconcile the messages is to understand that substance abuse and violence are different problems. When people talk about different problems, they may need different words and different approaches. Here are some examples.

Disease or criminal behavior?

Addiction is a disease. It is not a crime. People do not choose how their bodies will respond to alcohol or drugs. People with addictions deserve treatment and recovery. Violence is a crime. It is not a disease. Perpetrators choose to commit domestic violence, sexual assault and sexual abuse. Their victims deserve justice.

Safety first or sobriety first?

For "recovering survivors," both safety and sobriety must be priorities. Women's advocates have clients develop a safety plan. Substance abuse counselors have clients develop a recovery plan. You can make recovery part of your safety plan, and safety part of your recovery plan.

Powerlessness or empowerment?

You are powerless over the impact of chemicals on your body. You are powerless over another person's behavior. But you can choose to seek help getting safe and sober. When you make personal choices, you become empowered.

Who is responsible?

You are responsible for recovery from addiction. The perpetrator is responsible for violence. You are responsible for your own choices and your own behavior. You are not responsible for another person's choices or behavior.

Social change or service to others?

Service to others is one way to achieve social change. Working for social change can be a way to serve others. When people in 12-Step groups take a meeting to a jail or hospital, they serve others. They also create social change by making recovery available to more people. When abuse survivors make a T-shirt for the Clothesline Project, they help change public attitudes about violence. This serves other victims of violence.

Of course, sometimes the same approach *can* work for different problems. People with addictions often take a “one day at a time” approach to recovery. This approach can also work well for women leaving a violent relationship or healing from abuse. Both recovering women and abused women can benefit by getting support from others.

When sorting out messages from helping professionals, be creative. Give yourself permission to reconcile the messages in a way that works for you. The most important thing is that you be able to benefit from both kinds of services.

Some examples of the differing words and approaches used by women’s advocates and substance abuse counselors are adapted from *Domestic Violence and Chemical Dependency: Different Languages*, developed by Theresa Zubretsky, New York State Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence. Available: www.thesafetyzone.org/alcohol/language.html

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Getting Safe and Sober: Real Tools You Can Use
Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

SAFETY AND SOBRIETY: RISK FACTORS IN TRADITIONAL TREATMENT AND ADVOCACY PROGRAMS

There are many risks facing individuals who seek both safety and sobriety from traditional helping sources. The following is a list of five risks to safety in traditional treatment and five risks to sobriety in traditional advocacy programs.

Review these lists and brainstorm how to address these risks to safety and sobriety. Then share your experience, strength and hope by identifying other risk factors you have encountered. How have you dealt with these risks? Who are your allies?

RISKS TO SAFETY IN TRADITIONAL TREATMENT

1. Safety may not be linked to sobriety.
2. The batterer may be included as part of conjoint, couples or family counseling.
3. The batterer may sabotage treatment efforts (e.g. prevent partner from attending group, get partner to leave against medical advice, mislead counseling team, etc.).
4. Poor understanding of domestic violence by others may lead to re-victimization. An individual may be mislabeled as 'not having hit bottom yet,' 'codependent,' 'professional victim,' 'resistant to treatment' or abusive. It may be difficult for others to understand immediate danger from a partner may be more life threatening than alcohol and other drugs at times.
5. Recovery and improved health and cognitive functioning can make it harder for an abuser to control a partner. The abuser may increase physical or other forms of violence to re-establish control. (For example, an individual receiving a daily dose at a methadone program could be stalked and threatened by their abuser).

RISKS TO SOBRIETY IN TRADITIONAL ADVOCACY PROGRAMS

1. Sobriety may not be linked with safety.
2. The batterer's use of alcohol and other drugs to control a partner may not be acknowledged as a risk factor in a safety plan.
3. Poor understanding of physiology and pharmacology and focus on options and choices may lead to re-victimization. It may be difficult for others to understand the impact of blackouts, brownouts, withdrawal, craving, etc., on program participants *and* their capacity to remember and utilize safety plans. Risks stemming from substances may be more life threatening than an abusive partner at times.
4. Others may not perceive the recovering person's need for structure as empowering. Easy access to night-time medications, alcohol-containing mouthwashes or cold preparations with pseudoephedrine may be a relapse issue.
5. Strict policies against use may make program participants feel unsafe to disclose recovery status for fear of being over-scrutinized. This can make it hard to ask for help for oneself or to disclose when another program participant is using substances.

Safety at Support Group Meetings

Support groups can serve as a valuable supplement to counseling or advocacy. Much of the power in these groups comes from the personal stories. People share their experience, strength and hope with each other. When one person breaks the silence about her experiences, others feel safer breaking *their* silence. You also hear success stories. You hear what others are doing to cope with problems similar to yours.

Some initial discomfort is normal if you're new to support groups. It is natural to feel nervous in a roomful of strangers. You may have spent years avoiding the issues the group is discussing. If your experience includes violence or abuse, you also may have safety concerns. Here are some tips to help you feel comfortable — and stay safe:

- ***Protect your safety.*** Most people in support groups respect confidentiality (anonymity). However, if you are leaving an abuser, don't share information that could put your safety at risk. Do carry your cell phone with you to 12 Step meetings if you have one. Tell your sponsor or someone else at the meeting what is going on.
- ***Find a home group.*** This is a group you attend regularly. You get to know other "regulars" and feel more comfortable talking at meetings. Some 12 Step veterans have two or three home groups. If you need to avoid being predictable to an abuser, have a back-up home group. Alternate between one meeting and the other one.
- ***Shop around.*** You will probably notice that each support group has a distinct personality, depending on who attends. Larger communities may have dozens of groups holding meetings in a given week. Sample several. Some abused women may feel more comfortable in small, intimate groups.
- ***Recognize the group's limitations.*** Support group meetings are not meant to be a substitute for professional help. Use sessions with a counselor or advocate for issues that are beyond the group's scope.
- ***Respect your own boundaries.*** Some people may try to sexually exploit others in the group. 12-Steppers call this practice "13th Stepping," and most consider such behavior unethical. You don't have to tolerate it! Also, don't feel compelled to talk about painful abuse issues in groups if this makes you uncomfortable.
- ***Try women-only groups.*** Survivors of domestic violence or sexual abuse may have difficulty setting healthy boundaries, especially with men. Many report that women's meetings feel safer than meetings where both men and women are present.

As a "recovering survivor," what if you feel the need to talk about the "other issue?" You can honor your own needs while respecting the group's primary purpose. Explain how sobriety, safety and healing are linked for you. Discuss how violence or past abuse issues make it harder for you to stay clean and sober. Discuss how relapse would make it harder for you to stay safe or heal from violence. Share how you've made safety part of your recovery plan, and recovery part of your safety plan.

Etiquette in Groups

No doubt about it, early recovery can be a stressful time. The same goes for the early days when we're freeing ourselves from an abusive relationship or healing from past trauma. Our relationships with others — whether in support groups, a rehab program, a shelter, or any close living quarters — can either be a source of support or a source of additional stress. We can make things easier on both ourselves and others if we observe a few basic courtesies:

- Focus on our own issues. We avoid taking the “inventory” of others in the group or telling them what to do.
- Remember why we're here. In-house group sessions and community support group meetings are not a place to vent about a personal conflict with another individual in the group. We need to focus on our own recovery and safety — “principles before personalities.”
- Respect other people's experiences. When someone is sharing, we focus on what we can identify with or agree with, rather than focusing on our differences. “Identify, don't compare.”
- Respect other people's ideas and beliefs. We have a right to our own religious beliefs, political views and philosophies. We do not have a right to force these beliefs and ideas on others, nor do others have a right to force their views on us.
- Avoid letting another person's behavior affect our progress. If someone else wants to have a Bad Attitude Day, we can resolve to let their attitudes be “their stuff” and understand that they may be experiencing a great deal of stress.
- Welcome newcomers. We can remember how we felt when we attended our first meeting or group session, or first came into a new program.
- Help other people feel like they “belong,” rather than finding reasons to exclude them. We may remember how we felt about those snotty junior high school cliques that seemed to exclude us. We avoid inflicting this kind of pain on others.
- No 13th Stepping! (For people in 12 Step groups, 13th Stepping is the practice of using meetings to initiate romantic relationships with someone else in the group.) Meetings and group sessions are not a dating service, and “hitting on” people is not fair to those who are attending groups to work on their issues. This applies whether we are a woman or a man, gay or straight. (Note: If you are the target of a 13th Stepper, keep in mind that healthy 12 Step groups consider this behavior unethical. Feel free to speak up about it. You do not have to put up with it.)
- Avoid gossip. Avoid gossip. Avoid gossip.
- Be considerate of the needs and feelings of others in the group. The Golden Rule applies here. If we treat others the way we want to be treated, we can go a long way toward avoiding needless conflict.

Using 12 Step Groups

People recovering from alcoholism or other addictions often participate in 12 Step groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous. Many find these groups a helpful source of support. A.A.'s 12 Steps, which appear on pages 59-60 of *Alcoholics Anonymous (4th Edition)*, have been adapted for use in a variety of 12-Step groups. If you have experienced violence or abuse, here are some ideas to consider while “working the Steps.” As they say in 12 Step groups, take what you need and leave the rest.

Step One: We admitted that we were powerless over alcohol [or other addiction] — that our lives had become unmanageable.

When 12 Step groups discuss powerlessness, it may be helpful to explore how power is defined. Some people view power as the ability to control other people, places and things. “The program” asks you to let go of attempts to have this kind of power.

However, power can also be defined as the ability to make choices and act on them. For example, you cannot control the impact of chemicals on your body. But you can choose to seek treatment for an addiction. If you are in an abusive relationship, you cannot control your partner’s behavior. But you can choose to seek help getting safe.

This step encourages you to break through denial and acknowledge that you are out of control with alcohol or another addiction. Before you can do something about a problem, you must acknowledge that the problem exists.

Step Two: Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

Some women feel more comfortable with feminine or gender-neutral images of God or “higher power.” This may be especially true for women who have been abused by a male parent or partner. Remember that 12 Step groups encourage you to interpret “higher power” in whatever way feels right for you. A.A. literature says, “When we speak of God, we mean your own conception of God.”¹ In fact, “You can, if you wish, make A.A. itself your ‘higher power.’ Here’s a very large group of people who have solved their alcohol problem.”²

This step encourages you to feel hope. There is a way out of your problems. Help is available. Recovery and healing are possible.

Step Three: Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

For some women, turning over our will to someone else may sound like a demand from an abuser. It may be helpful to remember that there is a difference between turning one’s will over to a deity (if that is what your religious or spiritual tradition teaches), and being asked to turn your will over to another human being.

It may also be helpful to think of “turning it over” as “letting go,” and willingness as being open to new ideas. Giving up an addiction (or a relationship) can feel pretty scary. You are letting go of something familiar without knowing what will replace it. The good news is you don’t have to do this alone.

This step encourages you to break your isolation by seeking help and accepting the support that is offered.

Step Four: Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

Keep in mind that Step Four is not an “immoral inventory.” A.A. literature points out that “assets can be noted with liabilities.”³ Listing your strengths can be especially helpful if your self-esteem has been battered by abuse.

A.A. literature suggests that you “consider carefully all personal relationships which bring continuous or recurring trouble. Appraising each situation fairly, can I see where I have been at fault? ... And if the actions of others are part of the cause, what can I do about that?”⁴ When looking at relationships, remember that you are not responsible for violence or abuse committed against you. However, exploring the impact abuse has had on your life can strengthen your resolve to break free of the abuse and heal from it.

This step encourages you to take a realistic look at your life. This allows you to discover your strengths and limitations, and identify your needs.

Step Five: Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

When you choose someone to hear your Fifth Step, A.A. literature cautions you to “take much care.”⁵ This care is especially important if you are a survivor of domestic violence, sexual assault or sexual abuse. Survivors may want to share this part of their experience with a qualified therapist or advocate. This person should understand that responsibility for violence belongs with the perpetrator.

This step encourages you to share your past with someone you trust. This can help you let go of the shame that comes with thinking you must keep parts of your life secret.

Step Six: Were entirely ready to have God remove these defects of character.

Nobody is perfect, so self-improvement is a worthy goal for everyone. But A.A. literature cautions you to “avoid extreme judgments” and “not exaggerate” your defects.⁶ This precaution is especially important for abused women. An abuser may have whittled away at your self-esteem by encouraging you to feel defective. A person who wants to control you is not the best judge of your character!

A.A. literature also reminds you to distinguish between societal expectations and your own values. For example, when the subject is sex, “we find human opinions running to extremes — absurd extremes, perhaps.”⁷ This can certainly be said about the messages our society directs toward women. Women also get mixed messages about everything from their roles to how they should look or act. Step Six can be a good place to examine what your own values are.

This step encourages you to prepare for change in your usual patterns of behavior. What behaviors do you want to let go of? What patterns do you want to stop repeating?

Step Seven: Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

A.A. literature says humility is “a word often misunderstood. ... It amounts to a clear recognition of what and who we really are, followed by a sincere attempt to become what we could be.”⁸ We should “be sensible, tactful, considerate and humble without being servile or scraping.”⁹ And, “we stand on our feet; we don’t crawl before anyone.”⁹ Humility does *not* mean seeing yourself as less important than others.

This step encourages you to begin letting go of the unhealthy patterns you identified in Step Six. If some of these patterns stem from your experience of violence or abuse, you may want to seek professional help from a person trained to work with abuse survivors.

Step Eight: Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.

People in recovery need to acknowledge how their drinking or drug use affected others. But recovery groups remind you to make amends to yourself as well. One such amend might be to stop blaming yourself for domestic violence, sexual assault or other abuse. You are only responsible for your own behavior, not someone else’s.

This step encourages you to identify what needs changing in your relationships with others. “Making amends” does *not* mean you must reconcile with an abuser. “Amend” simply means “to change or modify for the better.”¹⁰ With an abusive relationship, this may well mean ending it. According to the A.A. literature, “If there be divorce or separation, there should be no undue haste for the couple to get together. ... Sometimes it is to the best interests of all concerned that a couple remain apart.”¹¹

Step Nine: Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

If you have left an abusive relationship, it may be best to avoid your partner. This is true even if you believe you did something “wrong.” A.A. literature does not say you must contact everyone on your amends list. In some cases, “by the very nature of the situation, we shall never be able to make direct personal contact at all.”¹² If “making amends” to an abuser would put you or your children in danger, stay away!

Children often blame themselves for their parents’ problems. So this can be a good time to talk with your children about incidents they have witnessed. Explain that they are not responsible for your alcohol or drug use. Nor are they responsible for an abuser’s behavior toward you or them.

This step encourages you to settle with the past. “When this is done, we are really able to leave it behind us.”¹³

Step Ten: Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

When doing an inventory, remember to focus on strengths as well as weaknesses. A.A. literature points out that “inventory-taking is not always done in red ink. It’s a poor day indeed when we haven’t done something right.”¹⁴ This step encourages you to maintain the progress you have made in previous steps. Give yourself credit for things well done!

Step Eleven: Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

This step encourages you to develop emotional balance. For you, this could mean prayer and meditation. It could mean keeping a journal or taking daily walks. It could mean calling a friend to help you sort out your feelings. Do whatever helps you feel centered and at peace with yourself.

Step Twelve: Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics [or other addicts], and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

A.A. literature says “helping others is the foundation stone of your recovery.”¹⁵ You can do this by sharing your experience, strength and hope with other people like you. When you take back your life from addiction (or abuse), you carry a powerful message!

Many recovering alcoholics and addicts believe carrying their message to others helps them stay clean and sober. Many survivors of violence find that working for social change aids their own healing process. People may call their efforts *working for change, service to others* or *carrying the message*. This step encourages you to discover what you have to offer others, and to pass it on!

Please note: The opinions expressed in this article are the author’s only. The author makes no claim to speak for Alcoholics Anonymous or any other 12-Step group.

¹ *Alcoholics Anonymous*, 4th Edition, Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, New York, 2001, p. 47

² *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, New York, 1981, p. 27

³ *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, p. 52

⁴ *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, p. 6

⁵ *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, p. 61

⁶ *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, p. 82

⁷ *Alcoholics Anonymous*, p. 68

⁸ *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, p. 58

⁹ *Alcoholics Anonymous*, p. 83

¹⁰ *Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*, Merriam-Webster Inc., Springfield, MA, 1989

¹¹ *Alcoholics Anonymous*, p. 99

¹² *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, p. 83

¹³ *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, p. 89

¹⁴ *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, p. 93

¹⁵ *Alcoholics Anonymous*, p. 97

Alternative support groups

The following support groups provide options for recovering people who do not feel comfortable with 12 Step groups. Their main limitation is that “face-to-face” meetings tend to be available only in large metropolitan areas. However, all have Web sites and on-line meetings.

16 Steps of Discovery and Empowerment. Developed by Charlotte Kasl, Ph.D., alternative wording and alternative ways of interpreting the 12 Steps are featured in her book *Many Roads, One Journey: Moving Beyond the 12 Steps*. Her 16-step empowerment model brings a flexible, socially conscious approach to recovery and seeks to build self-esteem and empower people to find their own voice. Her version of the Steps encourages addicts and people with dependency issues to examine beliefs, addictions and dependent behavior in the context of living in a hierarchical, patriarchal culture. Dr. Kasl also suggests the “Internalized Oppression” concept vs. the term codependency. Web site: www.charlottekasl.com. E-mail: ckasl@charlottekasl.com or use the e-mail link at her Web site for information about on-line support groups. Address: Many Roads One Journey, Inc., P. O. Box 1302, Lolo, Montana 59847. Fax: 406-273-0111.

Women For Sobriety. WFS was founded with the belief that women alcoholics require a different kind of program in recovery than male alcoholics. The WFS “New Life” program is based on a Thirteen Statement Program designed to assist a woman in addressing her alcoholism and lifestyle by encouraging her emotional and spiritual growth. On-line chat groups can be accessed from their Web site: www.womenforsobriety.org. Address: Women For Sobriety, Inc., P.O. Box 618, Quakertown, PA 18951-0618. Phone: 215-536-8026. E-mail: NewLife@nni.com.

White Bison, Inc. Go to this nonprofit American Indian organization’s Web Site for information about the Wellbriety Movement. Wellbriety is sobriety and wellness combined. The Movement encourages American Indian and Alaska Native communities to find sobriety and recovery from alcohol and drugs, then go on to live lives of wellness and wholeness rooted both in their own tribal cultures and in the mainstream world. Some blend Alcoholics Anonymous principles with their own cultural traditions. On-line Talking Circles are available at the White Bison Web site: www.whitebison.org. Contact: White Bison, Inc., 6145 Lehman Drive, Suite 200, Colorado Springs, CO 80918. Email: info@whitebison.org. Phone: 719/548-1000. Fax: 719/548-9407.

Secular Organizations for Sobriety (Save Our Selves). SOS takes a secular approach to recovery and maintains that sobriety is a separate issue from all else. This abstinence-based organization encourages the use of the scientific method to understand alcoholism and other addictions. An on-line group, SOS Women, discusses “issues that affect a woman’s goal of sobriety and healthy living.” Web site: www.sossobriety.org. Address: SOS Clearinghouse, 4773 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood CA, 90027. Phone: 323-666-4295. E-mail: SOS@CFIWest.org. SOS Women Web site: <http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/SOSWomen>.

SMART Recovery. SMART Recovery (Self Management And Recovery Training) has a secular focus and helps individuals gain independence from addictive behaviors through a four-point program that includes enhancing and maintaining motivation to abstain, coping with urges, problem solving (managing thoughts, feelings and behaviors), and lifestyle balance (balancing momentary and enduring satisfactions). On-line meetings can be accessed from their Web site: www.smartrecovery.org. Address: SMART Recovery, 7537 Mentor Ave., Suite 306, Mentor, OH 44060. Phone: 440-951-5357. Toll free phone: 866-951-5357. E-mail: Srmail1@aol.com.

Safety Plan

A safety plan is unique for each individual and may need to be revised as your situation changes. A safety plan is a tool. Below are suggestions others have found helpful. You are the best expert on your own situation. Some suggestions here may be useful for you while others may not meet your needs. Feel free to add your own ideas. Take what you like and leave the rest!

The following steps will help you to prepare in advance for the possibility of future violence and will help keep you safer. Although you are not responsible for, nor do you have control over an abuser's violence, you do have a choice about how to respond to the abuser, and how best to get yourself (and your children) to safety.

Staff will support you in the decisions that you make for your life. Your physical safety will always be a priority for us. Hopefully, one or more of the following steps will help you in safety planning.

STEP 1: Safety During a Violent Incident

- If I feel the abuser is about to be violent, I will try to move to the _____. *(Try to avoid the bathroom, garage, kitchen, places near weapons or rooms without access to the front door.)*
- If it's not safe to stay, I will _____
(Practice how to get out safely. What doors, windows, elevators or stairwells will you use?)

- I will keep my bag ready and keep it _____ in order to leave quickly.
- I will tell _____ about the violence and ask them to call the police if they hear suspicious noises coming from my home.
- I will use _____ as my code word/phrase with my children or my friends so they can call for help.
- If I leave my home, I will go to _____
(Keep a list of emergency numbers in your purse or wallet.)
- I will remember that if I call 911 and leave the phone off the hook, the domestic violence incident will be tape-recorded and an officer should respond to the scene.
- Remember, you know your abusive partner best. You know how to protect yourself and your children better than anyone else.

STEP 2: Safety When Preparing to Leave

- I will leave money and an extra set of keys with _____ so I can leave quickly.

- If I own a car I will try to make sure that I keep a set of car keys with _____ and adequate gas in the car.
- I will open my own bank account by _____(date) to increase my independence.
- I can also begin to _____ as a way of increasing my safety and independence.
- I will memorize the 24-hour crisis line of the agency closest to me. That number is _____. I will keep the number in my wallet along with a quarter (if possible).
- I will check with _____ and _____ to see if I could stay with them in an emergency (*It is best if the abuser does not know them or where they live.*)
- I will review and update my safety plan.

STEP 3: Safety in My Own Home

- I will find a safe place to keep this plan.
- If my abuser has recently left, I will change the locks on my doors and secure locks on my windows as soon as possible.

- I will tell school and/or child care who has permission to pick up my children.
- I will tell my neighbors if my abusive partner no longer lives with me and ask them to call 911 if he/she is seen near my home.
If there are weapons (guns, knives, etc.) in my house, I will try to remember:
 - to make sure that the gun remains unloaded at all times (I will only unload the gun myself if I know how to do so safely!!!)
 - to encourage my partner to get rid of the gun if it is safe for me to do so.
 - to stay out of rooms where weapons are kept, especially during an explosive situation.
 - to move the knives out of their usual location so that my partner will have trouble finding a knife quickly.
 - that almost anything can be used as a weapon.
 - that cleaning a gun or knife in front of me is a threat and may imply that my partner is capable of taking my life or hurting my children.

STEP 4: Safety With a Protective Order (or other court order)

- I will keep an emergency copy _____.

- My children's teachers and baby-sitters will have copies of the order.
- If my partner violates the order I will call the police.
- If the police are not responsive I will _____.
- I will tell _____ that I have a valid Protective Order.
- Remember that in the State of Alaska, if your partner assaults you when you have a valid Protective Order, your partner can be charged with a crime.

STEP 5: Safety on the Job and in Public

- I will inform _____ at work of my situation, if I feel safe with this person. I will ask _____ to help screen my calls at work.
- When leaving work, I will _____ to help keep myself safe.
- If problems occur while I am driving home, I will _____.
- If I ride the bus and see my abuser, I will _____.

STEP 6: Safety and My Emotional Health

- When I have to talk to my (ex) partner, I will _____ to keep myself safe and take care of myself.
- I will read _____.
- I will call _____ for support.
- I will call my local crisis line or other support system if I need immediate help. That number is _____.
- I know that community support groups are available to help me take care of myself.

STEP 7: Safety and Sobriety

- I will remember it is easier to keep safe when I am sober.
- I know that alcohol and drug use can impair my judgment and make it harder for me to choose safe options and access services.
- I will call my local DV/SA advocate or the National Domestic Violence Hotline 1-800-799-7233 or the Rape Abuse Incest National Network (RAINN) 1-800-656-4673 when I need information, referrals or support.
- I will call a sober friend, sponsor, alcohol/drug counselor or the Alcohol Drug 24 Hour Help Line for support when I feel like drinking or drugging to cope. The number is 1-800-562-1240 (in WA and AK only) or 1-206-722-3700 (in Washington).

This safety plan is adapted from New Beginnings and Providence Health System safety plans.

PERSONAL SAFETY NOTES:

Mini-Safety/Sobriety Plan

You are not alone.

Remember, safety and sobriety plans will change as your situation does. Each day can bring new challenges as well as rewards. Know your resources and develop safety and survival strategies.

Components of Mini-Safety/Sobriety Plan:

Strategize: Secure and hide money, an extra house or car key, important documents, ID, receipts, pay stubs, passports, children's school and immunization records, immigration papers, social security cards, etc.

Develop: A code with family/friends to signal the need for help.

Identify: A safe neighbor to call, network of resources who can help.

Plan: Escape routes, places to hide and store clothing, jewelry, photos.

Discuss: Referral resources, local advocates, shelter, legal options, 911.

Avoid: Rooms where weapons or dangerous implements are present (e.g., kitchens and knives).

Tools: Recognize vulnerability cues such as **HALT** (be aware when you are **hungry, angry, lonely or tired**); deal with both safety and sobriety issues "one day at a time" to avoid being overwhelmed.

12 Strategies for Safety and Sobriety

Women attempting to get sober may develop a plan that may include but is not limited to:

- 1.) Identifying who to call for help (e.g. advocate, sponsor, counselor, Alcohol Drug Help Line), forming support systems, knowing about safe meetings.
- 2.) Knowing information and getting education about domestic violence, sexual assault and addiction.
- 3.) Removing substances and paraphernalia from the home. Removing weapons from their usual spot in the home.
- 4.) Recognizing unsafe persons, places and things.

- 5.) Understanding how to deal with legal and other problems stemming from domestic violence/sexual assault and addiction (e.g. health, CPS involvement, poor nutrition).
- 6.) Assembling paperwork to determine eligibility for assistance or to begin seeking employment, school, housing or other options.
- 7.) Knowing how domestic violence/sexual assault can be a relapse issue.
- 8.) Knowing how substance use can be a safety issue.
- 9.) Understanding physical, emotional, cognitive, environmental and other cues indicative of risk, and having a plan to deal with it. Recognizing the role of stress and craving, and having a plan to deal with it.
- 10.) Learning how to parent, engaging in relationships, developing sober friendships.
- 11.) Knowing when and where to run in a life-threatening situation that puts your sobriety and your safety at risk.
- 12.) Having a code word children will recognize to let them know it's time to call 911.

Mini Safety/Sobriety Plan At-A-Glance

- ★ Strategize Steps to reduce risk/use
- ★ Develop Options to keep safe/sober
- ★ Identify Trusted allies/safe sponsors
- ★ Plan Means to escape abuser/drugs
- ★ Discuss Referral resources
- ★ Avoid Danger/persons, places, things
- ★ Tools HALT/One day at a time

Children Exposed to Domestic Violence and Substance Abuse

1. Violence occurs against both women and children in the same family.
 - a. Severe and fatal cases of child abuse may occur in homes where domestic violence and/or substance abuse overlap.
 - b. Witnessing domestic violence and being exposed to substance abuse can put children at risk.
2. Many men who physically or sexually abuse or neglect children also abuse the children's mother.
3. Some children who witness domestic violence are affected the same way as children who are physically or sexually abused.
4. In spite of what perpetrators and non-offending parents say, children have often either directly witnessed the physical and psychological assaults or have indirectly witnessed them by overhearing the episodes or seeing the aftermath of injuries and property damage. They are often all too aware of the impact of substance abuse in their family as well.
5. Children exposed to interpersonal violence and/or substance abuse do not experience a carefree childhood and may act adult while they are children. They may be busy surviving, placating, picking up pieces, adjusting and adapting just to stay alive.

Tactics of Abuse

Domestic violence perpetrators pose the following risks to *children*. They may:

1. Harm children by coercing them into abusing their mothers or other adult caretakers.
2. Endanger children emotionally and physically by creating environments in which children witness assaults against their mothers.
3. Physically abuse children.
4. Sexually abuse children.
5. Endanger children through neglect.
6. Focus so much attention on controlling and abusing their adult partners they ignore and neglect children.
7. Prevent adult victims from caring for children resulting in neglect.

8. Endanger children by undermining the ability of providers to intervene and protect children.
9. Endanger children by exposing them to alcohol and other drugs.

Abusers also traumatize children in the process of battering their adult intimate partner. They do so by:

1. Intentionally injuring the children as a way of threatening and controlling the abused parent. *(For example, the child is thrown at the victim).*
2. Unintentionally injuring the children during an attack on the abused parent when the child gets caught in the fray. *(For example, the infant is injured when the mother is struck while holding the infant).*
3. Using children to coercively control the abused parent while living with or separated from the victim. The intent is to continue the abuser's control over the victim with little or no regard for the damage done to the children. *(For example, the child is asked to report who mommy talked to.)*
4. Creating an environment where children are forced to witness domestic violence and/or substance abuse and their effects.

Examples of a perpetrator's behavior that traumatizes children include:

1. Asserting that children's "bad" behavior is reason for drinking, drugging or violence directed at the adult victim by the perpetrator.
2. Threatening pets, loved objects, toys, etc.
3. Isolating children, banning friendships.
4. Interrogating children about the victim's activity.
5. Forcing the victim to always be accompanied by the children.
6. Holding the children hostage.
7. Using lengthy custody battles as a means to continue abusing the victim; demanding unlimited visitation or 24-hour access by phone; threatening to report the victim to the Office of Children's Services (OCS) for past alcohol or other drug use.

Adapted by P. Bland from Ganley, A., Schector, S. *Domestic Violence: A National Curriculum for Child Protective Services*. Family Violence Prevention Fund, 1996.

Safety Planning Interventions For Children

It's important to safety plan.

Children:

- Are at risk and need to be safe.
- Often blame themselves for both the violence and the substance abuse.
- Feel terrified and helpless; angry and sad.
- Wonder, “What can I do?” and “What should I do?”
- Need something to ease the negative impact of domestic violence and substance abuse on their lives.
- Need the power that comes from knowledge of how to keep safe.

Safety planning with children:

- Gives them skills to protect themselves.
- Helps them feel confident.
- Empowers them.
- Gives them a reality check.
- Breaks isolation.
- Helps keep them safe.

You can help develop a safety plan to protect your children.

A safety plan should include:

- How your child can escape from the house if an assault is in progress or drinking/other drug use is scaring them.
- Where to go in an emergency.
- How to call police (explain 911 – how to call and what happens when you call).
- How to call supportive family members, friends and community agencies for help.

You can help your children.

- Listen.
- Provide structure, consistency.
- Tell your children it is important for them to be safe. If you are being assaulted, they should not intervene or put themselves in harm's way.
- Reassure children that domestic violence and/or substance abuse is not their fault and that blaming themselves is a common reaction.
- If your child is called on to testify, develop a plan to support the child over issues of fear, anxiety, divided loyalties, painful memories.
- Call your local domestic violence/sexual assault victim service program and substance abuse treatment program to get information about services for children.
- Practice the safety plan with your children.
- Ensure at least one adult provides unconditional positive regard.
- Let your children know it is OK to talk about family violence and/or substance abuse.
- Provide positive messages as well as safety planning. (*For example: "Violence is not your fault. Neither is drinking or drug use."*) Let children know anger doesn't need to lead to violence or substance abuse.
- If your children are drinking, drugging, suicidal, homicidal or violent towards other family members, develop a plan for their safety and the safety of others. Set clear limits with children who are violent and abusive or using substances themselves. Refer them to appropriate services.
- Help kids be kids. Provide after school options, encourage them to participate in children's programs. If your community does not have one, explore forming an Alateen or Alateen program. Find out what children's resources are available at your local domestic violence/sexual assault program.

(Adapted by P. Bland from material originally provided by Candy Miller, Consultant, Alaska Family Violence Prevention Project, 1998.)

Personal Change, Social Change

People with alcohol or drug problems have often been stigmatized by our society. Victims of domestic violence, sexual assault or sexual abuse have also faced stigma. This social stigma can have unfortunate results. People who fear it are more likely to deny problems and less likely to get help.

Fortunately public attitudes about both addiction, and violence against women, have begun to change. This change is due in large part to the influence of two major social movements. The recovery movement and the women's movement have removed many barriers that keep people from getting help.

The recovery movement

The recovery movement has changed the way our society understands and treats alcoholism and other drug addictions. Before Alcoholics Anonymous began in 1935, the concept of alcoholism as a treatable illness was not widely accepted. Alcoholics were mostly condemned, ostracized and locked up in jails or mental institutions.¹

Then alcoholics began meeting together in groups to help each other stay sober. As word of their success spread, more alcoholics joined them. Some also began carrying their message of recovery to doctors, clergy, lawmakers, businesspeople and others.¹

Alcoholics Anonymous

A.A.'s message is simple. Alcoholism is a disease, and people can recover from it.² Alcoholics Anonymous was founded by "Bill W." and "Dr. Bob," a stockbroker and a doctor. The two men realized they needed mutual support to stay sober for any length of time.¹ The organization grew in just this way: one alcoholic sharing personal experience, strength and hope with another.²

Today there are nearly 2 million A.A. members worldwide.² Groups such as Narcotics Anonymous and Women For Sobriety also provide support for people recovering from addictions. They meet in a variety of places, from hospitals and treatment centers to church basements and college campuses.

But members of support groups often do more than keep themselves in recovery. They carry their message of hope to others like themselves.² Their activism has taken many forms. Some "sponsor" newly recovering people.³ Others staff hotlines or make personal visits to people who call for help.³ Still others take meetings to hospitals, treatment centers or jails.

³

Marty Mann and the NCADD

Marty Mann was the first woman to achieve long-term sobriety in A.A.¹ She understood that support for recovering people started with community understanding that alcoholism is a disease.⁴ Before Marty came to A.A., she was drinking around the clock. She was destitute and convinced she was insane.¹

Once she got into recovery, she had an ambition: to change public attitudes about alcoholism.¹ She founded what is now the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence.¹ NCADD fights social stigma by educating the public and encouraging scientific research on alcoholism and other addictions.⁴ The organization also encourages legislation to make treatment more widely available.⁴

Until she was 70 years old, Marty gave as many as 200 lectures a year.¹ She carried her message to nurses, doctors, and social service providers. She carried it to educators, judges, law enforcement personnel, the clergy and employers. She carried it to women's groups all over the country. She was also a skilled lobbyist who testified frequently before Congress and state legislatures.¹

Change happens

The pioneering efforts of people in the recovery movement have paid off. The American Medical Association now considers alcoholism and other drug addictions to be treatable illnesses.⁴ Corporations often refer alcoholics or drug addicts to employee assistance programs rather than simply firing them.⁴ Federal, state and local governments provide funds for treatment and scientific research.⁴

Today, help for alcoholism and drug addiction is available from treatment centers all over the country. Substance abuse treatment is often covered by medical insurance or public assistance. Support groups exist in nearly every community, and there are no dues or fees for membership. Many communities have groups exclusively for women. These are especially helpful for survivors of violence or abuse.

The women's movement

The women's movement has changed the way our society understands and treats violence against women and girls. Until recently, domestic violence was often considered "a private family matter" by the criminal justice system.⁵ Many people insisted that sexual assault didn't happen to "nice girls" or "good women."⁵ The existence of child sexual abuse was mostly denied.

During the 1960s, women began meeting in consciousness-raising groups. They told each other about their personal experiences with violence and abuse.⁶ They urged police officers and judges to arrest and prosecute offenders.⁶ They lobbied legislators for better laws.⁶ They educated the public about the reality of violence against women.⁶ Activities such as Take Back the Night, the Clothesline Project and Silent Witness helped them carry their message.

Take Back the Night

At Take Back the Night marches and rallies, people gather to protest violence against women and girls.⁷ Most events include a "speak-out," where people tell how violence has affected them or someone they know.

Other activities may include candlelight ceremonies, voter registration, self-defense demonstrations or poetry readings. Resource tables provide information about agencies that

serve victims and survivors. People are encouraged to educate themselves about violence and take direct action against it.

Since it began in the 1970s, Take Back the Night has been international. There are marches and rallies all over the U.S., Canada, and several European countries. Supporters have included churches, social service agencies and businesses, as well as women's groups.

The Clothesline Project

The Clothesline Project lets victims and survivors of violence speak out by telling their stories on T-shirts.⁸ Women who experience violence often keep their stories personal and private. Some survivors find that making a shirt helps them break the silence about their abuse. This allows them to begin or complete the healing process.

The project began in Massachusetts in 1990 with 31 shirts. It was a way to “air society’s dirty laundry.” Since then, the Clothesline has gathered “laundry” from women all over the world. T-shirts have come from universities, domestic violence shelters, rape crisis centers and substance abuse treatment centers.

More than a half million shirts now exist. If brought together, they would fill a clothesline at least 13 miles long. The shirts have appeared at hundreds of events that educate the public about violence against women.

Silent Witness

In 1990, a group of women decided to tell the world about domestic violence in a way that would not be forgotten. The Silent Witness memorial consists of life-sized female figures.⁹ Each represents a woman who was killed by her abuser. A story on each silhouette tells the woman’s name, age, where she’s from and how she died.

The figures have appeared in government buildings, shopping centers, colleges, hospitals, workplaces and other public settings. Together, the silhouettes serve as a stark visual reminder that domestic violence kills women.

Change happens

The women’s movement scored a major victory in 1994, with passage of the Violence Against Women Act.¹⁰ This federal law increases funding for domestic violence shelters and rape crisis centers. It encourages police to make arrests. It provides training for helping professionals who work with victims. Most importantly, it recognizes that domestic violence and sexual assault are criminal acts.

Today, domestic violence shelters and rape crisis centers exist all over the country. Services range from personal and group counseling to court advocacy and emergency shelter. These services are offered free of charge to victims and survivors.

¹ Brown, Sally. Marty Mann and the Evolution of Alcoholics Anonymous. *Paradigm*, Fall 1998.

² *Alcoholics Anonymous*. Alcoholics Anonymous World Services Inc., New York, 1976

³ *Narcotics Anonymous (5th Ed.)*. Narcotics Anonymous World Service Office, Inc. Van Nuys, CA, 1988

⁴ *For 50 years the voice of Americans fighting alcoholism*. National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc. New York, 1994

⁵ Walters, Catherine. *Violence against women*. Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault, Springfield, IL 1984

⁶ Poskin, Polly. The revolution continues. *Coalition Commentary*, newsletter of the Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault, Springfield, IL, Winter 1995-96

⁷ All information about Take Back the Night taken from Northern California Association for Women Take Back the Night web site. Available: www.metdesigns.com/takeback/history.html

⁸ Information about The Clothesline Project taken from "Airing Society's Dirty Laundry: The Clothesline Project" by Jennie Ruby, in *Off Our Backs*, v. 23, n. 11, 1998

⁹ Information about Silent Witness taken from Illinois Silent Witness exhibit fact sheet available from National Council of Jewish Women, North Shore Section, Wilmette, IL

¹⁰ Information about the Violence Against Women Act taken from Violence Against Women Act fact sheet, U.S. Department of Justice. Available: <http://www.usdoj.gov/vawo/vawafct.htm>

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Getting Safe and Sober: Real Tools You Can Use
Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

Can one person make a difference?

Many survivors of violence find that working for social change aids their own healing process. Many recovering alcoholics and addicts believe carrying their message to others helps them stay clean and sober. People may call their efforts *working for change*, *service to others* or *carrying the message*. Whichever words people choose, the key idea is that people often help themselves by helping others.

What can you do to make a difference? Here are 10 ideas to get you started:

- 1. *Take care of yourself.*** Working on your own issues is the first step toward working for change. As the saying goes, we must heal ourselves before we can heal the world.
- 2. *Break the silence.*** Going to a support group and sharing your story can be a radical act! Our society encourages people to stay quiet about certain issues. When you say “I’m an alcoholic” or “I’ve been abused,” others find it easier to break *their* silence.
- 3. *Contribute to your support group.*** Help set up tables, chairs and literature before the meeting. Help clean up afterward. Help a new person feel welcome.
- 4. *Get involved in your community.*** Join an organization that works for change. Attend a Take Back the Night rally. Make a T-shirt for the Clothesline Project.
- 5. *Be assertive in your conversations.*** Refuse to laugh at sexist or racist jokes. Express your opinions about issues you care about.
- 6. *Contact people who make decisions.*** Complain to TV stations about violent programs. Call radio stations that play music glorifying drug use. Write to advertisers who promote stereotypes or sponsor objectionable programs.
- 7. *Exercise your right to vote.*** Also write or call elected officials to tell them where you stand on issues that affect you.
- 8. *Talk to your children.*** Discuss the violence they see in TV shows, movies and video games. Help them understand what happens when people do these things in real life. Educate them about alcohol and drug abuse, dating violence and other dangers.
- 9. *Be a role model.*** Host a potluck or social gathering where no alcohol is served. Refuse to buy violent toys or video games for your children. And don’t hit your kids. Slapping or spanking shows them it’s okay to solve problems by hitting others.
- 10. *Resolve not to “look the other way.”*** Call police if you suspect someone is being abused. Report criminal activities that you observe in your neighborhood.

A final note: Start small. Recovery groups do not expect a newly sober person to chair a meeting. A woman staying in a domestic violence shelter need not organize a Take Back the Night rally. Begin by seeking help for yourself. Go to a support group. Share your story. Talk to your children. The longest journey begins with the first step.

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Getting Safe and Sober: Real Tools You Can Use
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Women Talk About Substance Abuse and Violence

Ten women were interviewed about their experiences with substance abuse and violence. All 10 were survivors of some form of abuse: battering, rape or sexual assault, incest or child sexual abuse. In addition to the violence, all of them had experience with alcohol or drug abuse, either on their own part, on the part of their partner, or both.

At the time of the interviews, all of the women had left their abusive relationships, and those with chemical dependency problems were in recovery. They talked frankly about the impact of the substance abuse on their efforts to escape the violence and heal from abuse. They also discussed the ways in which their experiences with violence affected their efforts to recover from alcohol or other drug addiction.

Q: What was your experience with physical or sexual abuse?

A: I was in my abusive relationship for 16 years. I couldn't eat or sleep or go to the bathroom without permission. I was beaten. I was repeatedly raped. I had guns in my ears, guns down my throat, guns at my neck, guns at my stomach. I couldn't tell anyone the truth because he said he'd kill me. I knew he would.

A: Our third date he moved in with me. And about a week later he punched me upside the head and knocked me out of a chair. One night he dragged me out of bed cause I wouldn't give him any money and beat me up. I said no one time and that was it. He just started beating me. Just cause I said no.

A: After six weeks of dating, this man tried to strangle me.

A: I was a 17-year-old unwed mother and 2 days after I found out I was pregnant, he made me pull the car over and when I got out of the car, he hit me with his fist in the stomach.

A: He raped me. And when the kids came home from school, he bought them a pizza. We all had pizza. He could come home and rape me, order a pizza like nothing happened.

A: I was sexually abused when I was 5 years old. He fondled me and I fondled him. I knew that something was wrong. He said not to tell anybody.

A: I had incest in my life. I remember being in my mother and father's bedroom. And I remember feeling real physical harm inside. I had severe vaginal pain. I don't know how long that went on, but I do know it all happened before I was 8 years old.

Q: What were your personal experiences with alcohol or drug use?

A: When I was a little kid, we all got shots of whiskey. And I loved it. You got that warm feeling and everything was going to be okay.

A: For as far as I can remember, I've had some sort of substance in me. I started using drugs when I was 10 years old.

A: I had my own little chair in a closet and I'd go sit in there, just me and my bong.

A: We used marijuana every day. I did a lot of cocaine. When I used cocaine, all I wanted to do was that next line. I didn't care about putting the kids on the bus or getting the kids to school. I lost my children.

A: I was a blackout drinker from the age of 15. My alcoholism was sitting home sipping wine all day. I could sip the whole gallon. I thought I was crazy. Not really thinking, well, it's the alcohol.

A: One day I didn't want to drink and I had to. It was the scariest feeling. I got the shakes. I was real nervous, and I knew a drink would fix that.

Q: Did you see your substance abuse and woman abuse as being connected in any way? For example, did you drink or use drugs to help you cope with your feelings about the woman abuse?

A: Whenever he'd get really angry and the fights would start, it was easier for me to just go in the back bedroom and get stoned and try to put it all away.

A: For me, the substance abuse when I first started using was over abuse, was over a rape, and so that's how I learned to cope with any type of abuse was to get high, and it made everything okay.

A: I was darned lonely. I had no friends. I had nobody to talk to. So I started smoking more, getting high more often, with every aspect of the abuse, between the isolation, the physical abuse, the sexual abuse. This way, I didn't feel any pain. I didn't feel any guilt. I didn't feel anything. I didn't want to feel.

A: I just didn't want to be conscious of my actions or his actions.

A: All I know is, when I was being abused, all I wanted was more and more. The marijuana wasn't enough. Then I started getting into the crack. It was easier just to stay stoned and numb and not have to deal with it. The drugs were what made me forget about all the abuse and set aside the fear and the terror I had from the abuse and that was my only escape. It was a way to get away from my husband and not feel trapped.

A: I've known for 10 years that I had a serious problem with drug use but I was not willing to give it up because that was my way of coping. The drug didn't hurt as bad as reality hurt.

Q: Did your partner abuse alcohol or other drugs? If so, did you see a connection between his substance abuse and the violence?

A: The basement was off-limits to me. I was never allowed in the basement. He was a drug addict and that was where he kept most of his drugs.

A: He drank, and he used marijuana heavily. He also used other drugs. The abuse kept going. Not even just when he drank. I mean stressful times. He really hurt me, and I remember just laying, pregnant, in a ball, sobbing, as he just drank himself into oblivion.

A: The abuse escalated, especially when he was coming down from coke, or if he had a hangover from coke.

A: He was violent when he wasn't drinking, but he was more violent when he was drinking. Any little thing would set him off. He'd wake up and want more alcohol. And then the cycle would start all over. I kept thinking in my heart that if he'd only quit drinking, then life would be a lot better. I've come to the understanding that a person is going to drink or not drink. It's their choice.

A: If you sober up a perpetrator and he doesn't have treatment for his issues, then what do you have? You have a sober perpetrator. And now he's more aware.

Q: Did you find that substance abuse got in the way of your efforts to cope with the battering or heal from other forms of abuse?

A: It got in the way a lot. I left the shelter because he bought a bag of cocaine. And so, here I was back in the same abusive relationship all over again. I wanted to be strong, and even though I wanted to be out of an abusive relationship, my addictions took me back.

A: I didn't have time to heal. Because every time you drink, then there's no emotional growth. Or you just start to look at an issue like alcoholism or domestic violence. You just start to look at the sexual assault and it's too painful. You drink to numb the pain. So it never really goes away. It's never dealt with. It just gets under the rug, and it resurfaces again and again.

A: It made it certainly harder for me to cope.

A: I first went looking for help to get away from the abuse. While I was in shelter, one of the things they very strongly enforced was no alcohol or drugs. And I was having a real hard time with the no drugs. So my pipe and all my goods and stuff stayed in my car. I'd get in my car and go down a couple of blocks, sit in a Safeway parking lot and get stoned.

A: The drugs are an element of control. If they can keep you on the drugs, using or addicted to the drugs, they're in control. And it's like strings on a puppet. They just keep you under control because you want that other hit. You want that other drink.

A: And drinking kept me in the relationship longer. When you're drinking and you're in that vicious circle, the other vicious circle doesn't matter. All I cared about was getting another drink.

A: Because of my drug use, I would not accept or see the violence. My head's not clear enough, or wasn't clear enough, to see the reality of the situation.

A: For me, once I pick up the alcohol or the other substances, it's like that safety plan goes out the window.

A: It kept me isolated, so I stayed at home in my room with the curtains drawn. On top of him keeping me isolated and not allowing me to go anywhere. But I think the biggest thing it did was kept me from getting out and getting that help I needed. Now, being clean and sober, I know it's so much easier for me to tap those resources.

Q: Did you find battering or other abuse got in the way of your efforts to recover from substance abuse? Was this ever a relapse issue?

A: Every time I thought about getting into a new relationship, I just wanted to drink.

A: I think the underlying shame that I felt, and not dealing with the sexual assaults. I didn't see that at first when I got sober. The connection didn't become clear to me until I'd been in recovery for some time.

A: Not being able to go to meetings. Not being able to get out around people who were sober.

A: Going to a meeting wouldn't be anything he would tolerate because there would be other men there. Something could happen. So his controlling made it real difficult for me to do what I needed to do for myself.

A: I made it for 30 days. The minute I got out of the safe environment I was right back with the man and by midnight, using.

A: I believe I needed more than just a 12-step program.

A: You can talk about all these wonderful spiritual things, but if you don't have any food and you don't know where you're going to sleep, and you're running for your life, you don't have time for any of that stuff. You're just stuck on survival.

A: This man tried to strangle me. After that happened, then I relapsed. And I was in relapse mode off and on for a whole year after that.

A: I think when you stop denying things that have happened in your life in the beginning, all that from the incest, then you can stop the denying of things that happened a couple of years ago. Sick relationships and the drug abuse, and the self-destruction. I think from that point on, I could start to recover.

Q: Did you get any messages from others that you were to blame for battering or other abuse?

A: Yes, I got that message from family, friends and my abuser. It was always my fault.

A: He said I was ugly. He said I was a bad wife. He said I was an unfit mother.

A: Well I told you to shut up and you wouldn't shut up. Or all you had to do was make me bacon. Or I didn't hit you that hard.

A: I chose to marry a man from the other side of the tracks. Deal with it.

A: My parents and my family, they liked him. They said it was my fault he started drinking, because I was nagging him. I wasn't treating him right. That was the reason he broke my face, broke my nose, broke my jaws. I was doing something to cause him to hit me. It was my fault.

Q: Did you believe this yourself?

A: He told me it was my fault that he hurt me. And I believed him. After all, he didn't rage at anyone else, and he didn't hit anyone else but me.

A: It just whittled away. I was told regularly if you hadn't done this, then I wouldn't have done that. Over a long period of time to the point where I thought I was crazy. And I really started to believe, if

I act just right, I can keep this from happening to me.

A: Part of his abuse was brainwashing, and he was very good at it.

Q: Did you get any messages from others that you were to blame for battering, sexual assault or other abuse because of your drinking or drug use?

A: He was always saying the reason he would abuse me was because of my drug use, even though he had his drug use that was not a problem, or he would bring the drugs to me.

A: He would not admit that he was abusing me. But he was like, you did the drugs. You deserve to get your ass kicked. My mom always took his side. She was aware of my marijuana use and my cocaine use, and she'd be like, what man is going to put up with the things you do? And I got that from a lot of people. All the time it was, I deserved it because I wasn't being a good mom, I was using drugs, running around to taverns and staying up all night, and sleeping all day. Oh, yeah. Big messages.

A: I had been raped, gang raped, when I was 17 and I had been using. I didn't even realize it was rape until a woman pointed that out to me. She said any time you have sex without your consent it's a form of rape. I think that the attitude about women, if you hadn't put yourself in that situation then that wouldn't have happened to you. What did you expect?

Q: Did you believe these messages yourself?

A: Yeah, I believed it for a long time. He kept telling me I was the one who was insane, and that I was always going to be that way as long as I used the drugs. So it was my fault that I made him angry. When I'd really get into the crack I would get to the point where I'd get suicidal. And then it was him not being able to cope with my mood changes and stuff like that.

Q: When you tried to seek help for the violence, did you run into any problems? How did people respond?

A: The cops would come and they'd say, you've been together how many years? Get over it. Kiss and make up.

A: We come from a very small town, and when I got my divorce, the judge told me, we do not mention the words domestic violence in this courtroom.

A: The first time he tried to kill me, we went and saw a psychiatrist, family counseling, and I actually did kick him out of the house. The psychiatrist wanted him back in the house, told us we should be able to work it out.

A: I went to the church and told them that I was in fear for my life, and if somebody would just go with me from the church, I could get my cat and I could get my belongings. People in the congregation patted me on the head and told me, "Oh, it's okay." Denying that there was any abuse going on. It made me turn my back on my faith.

A: People tend to look the other way. It's just not something they want to see. It's denial.

Q: Were there any personal barriers that stood in the way of your getting help for the battering or sexual abuse?

A: I never thought I'd have the strength to leave. I never knew I could. I didn't have the resources that we have now. I did not know domestic violence was against the law. I had absolutely no idea.

A: I was afraid of what life would be like alone, big time. Of the mom thing. Three children. And so finances kept me there too. I thought the only thing to do was to stay and keep on doing what I was doing. You know, domestic violence is barely out in society now. Until the police told me about the battered women's shelter, I didn't know there was help, and I think I was pretty unaware of substance abuse help too. I just didn't know.

Q: What kept you from getting help for the substance abuse?

A: The feeling of isolation both being a female alcoholic, that internalized shame, and then the internalized shame I had from the domestic violence.

A: Pretty much what people would think was the biggest thing. The shame pretty much kept me from getting any kind of help that I needed. I just stayed addicted.

A: I thought alcoholics were people in the gutters, the winos pushing their shopping carts with all their belongings in it. And I figured since I had a job, a car, the whole nine yards, that I was doing pretty good.

A: I didn't think marijuana was addictive.

A: How do you get up in the morning and not smoke a joint?

A: And denial is an awesome thing. It truly is. If you don't want to see it, or you can't handle it, then it simply is not happening.

Q: When you were trying to recover, did your partner ever try to put roadblocks in your way?

A: Oh yeah. Because it was really tough for me when I first quit. It was difficult the first 30, 60 days. When I talked to him on the phone, he'd always tell me, all you've got to do is tell me babe, and I'll go get you some more. He kept telling me that that's all I needed was a couple of bong hits or a couple of rocks and I'd be just fine.

A: I got clean and sober and started working, and putting money away to get out of the relationship. And I think he saw that. He became more demanding. Attempts to be controlling escalated. His abuse of the kids escalated as I was sober. His attempts seemed more desperate.

Q: What finally led you to get help for the woman abuse?

A: This man was just physically beating me up. My middle daughter was between us a lot of times, and while she was standing between us, he would reach around her and pull my hair. I walked into her bedroom to check on her, and she was hiding underneath the bed. I realized he was affecting the kids.

A: The nice periods were shorter and shorter, and the abuse got longer and longer. Just couldn't take it anymore.

A: When I was using, I didn't have the ability to reach out for help, nor did I feel I needed it. Not using made me feel again, and when I felt again, I knew I needed help, because the pain was there. And that's when I reached out. If I would continue using, I would never have reached out.

Q: What led you to get help for the substance abuse?

A: The choice of either stop using or live on the street. At this time, I was smoking crack cocaine. Because I was so devastated by the use of it, I just wanted to be really free from it.

A: Once I walked away from that abuse [violence], I knew the next thing I had to do was do something about the substance abuse. And then, when I made up my mind that I wanted to quit the drugs also, the advocates at the shelter were right there for me, and got me into a treatment program.

Q: Do you think it's important to address both violence and substance abuse together?

A: I don't think I could deal with one issue alone. It was critical that I deal with the domestic violence, to get away from it, because it was just getting worse and worse. But I couldn't deal with the domestic violence if I was still getting all drugged up.

A: You've got to be sober, at least a little bit, to be able to even look at the domestic violence. But if you get sober, and you don't look at those issues, you're not going to stay sober, not in the long run.

A: I couldn't recover from substance abuse if I was still being physically abused, mentally abused, because I would be right back to using. So they walk hand in hand. I would not recover from one unless I address the other, and vice versa.

A: Without being clean, I can't deal with the abuse issues, and without dealing with the abuse issues, I'll just go back to using.

A: Getting off the chemicals has made it much easier for me now to deal with the other situations I need to in order to get back on my feet.

Q: What has been most helpful to you in addressing both the substance abuse and the woman abuse?

A: I'm going to a domestic violence group that also addresses chemical dependency issues. The domestic violence and drug abuse have very similar qualities.

A: You have the minimizing. The denial. All that stuff that goes on with the chemical dependency, you have with domestic violence too.

A: I get a lot of support on both issues this time around.

A: Accepting suggestions and help from other people. Being clean and sober and seeing the potentials that I have.

A: Staying clean and being able to talk about what's going on really helps.

A: It helps to see that you aren't the only one. And that someone else did make it. And someone else has made a life for themselves.

A: They try to make you feel that you're not worthless or useless.

A: Somebody wanted to show me support, listen to me, not yell at me, not scream at me, just look at some options instead of that. Through them showing love to me, I began to love myself. I didn't deserve the punishment I was giving myself for all that had happened in my life. The continuous bad relationships, continuous abusing the drugs, and shame and the guilt I felt from all that. I deserved better. It was also OK to heal from all that.

A: The longer you're clean, the more you talk about it, the easier it gets. And it feels in the beginning like it's the end of the world, but it's actually the beginning of a new life.

Q: What has been your experience with support groups? Have you been encouraged to talk about both issues? How do you handle this?

A: I have a sponsor in a 12-Step program. And she is both a survivor of domestic violence, and in recovery for 14 years.

A: I'm very determined to live a violence-drug free life, so regardless of what kind of meeting I go to, I talk about what I feel I need to talk about. Anytime I talk about my domestic violence, I'm also speaking on my chemical dependency. I go to groups and I say what I feel I need to say. The meetings I go to deal with both.

A: For domestic violence survivors, women's meetings are probably safer.

A: Where it was safe to talk about both the chemical dependency and the domestic violence.

A: Especially with other women who have both issues, those who know the abuse, all aspects of the abuse.

A: The more you tell your story, the more you talk about what you did to get clean and sober, the stronger it makes you the more you hear it. And the longer we're away from the abuser, and the more education that we get, and the more we talk to other people about it, the stronger we become and the more aware.

Q: Many women have mentioned problems they encountered when they first tried to seek help. Have you done anything personally to try and change attitudes about chemical dependency or violence against women?

A: Being a sponsor in the A.A. program. Just talking with some of the new people that are coming in.

A: Just sharing it with other people in the meetings, my experience of how I am now, compared to where I was when I first realized I needed to start doing something about the problems.

A: When I'm helping other people, it's keeping me conscious of where I'm at in my program and what I'm doing to take the steps to keep myself clean and sober.

A: Because of all the stuff that I've been through, with personal journeys, the law, and the police and the court system, I want to get involved in effecting change.

A: Working with other addicts and abused women and homeless women, that's my healing every day.

A: And put DV information everywhere. I have put it everywhere I can think of. I've got it in the schools, in the libraries, in the grocery stores, in the movie theaters, in the dentist office, in the car dealerships, in the tourist information centers. You name it, I put it there.

Q: What would you say is the best thing about being both safe and sober today?

A: I've gained more confidence in myself and learned so much more about myself. It's still lonely. It's still quiet. But it's better than being drugged up and arguing and fighting all the time. I don't have to run and hide in a closet anymore.

A: I have my youngest daughter back. She lives with me. My oldest daughter is getting married, and my middle daughter is a college student. I was blessed with talking to 3,000 teenagers this fall at the convention center. No line of cocaine, no reefer, no drugs, no man, ever brought me to the feeling of being able to talk to those children.

A: I'm able to have clear thoughts. I have a sense of reality. I'm not easily swayed. It's easier for me to pick out unsafe situations and unsafe people. By being sober, I'm more aware of what's going on around me. I don't have to be in another abusive relationship and I don't have to let people treat me like that.

A: I'm a pretty intelligent person, and I never realized that. I never realized how really intelligent I was.

A: I am my own advocate, I realized.

A: I have a lot of women friends and I've never had women friends. Never.

A: I wouldn't trade where I'm at right now. I remember that feeling. I remember the withdrawals. I remember the cocaine dreams too vividly. Nightmares. Don't want to go back. Ever.

A: I am, for the first time in my 41 years dealing with life on life's terms without somebody telling me how to do it. I can actually talk to people now without being drunk. I can actually laugh without being high. And I can actually walk out a door without being paranoid. That feels good. That feels so good. Because I want to live.

Q: What would you tell other women who are experiencing substance abuse and violence?

A: That you can get out of an abusive relationship. That you can recover. That you're not alone.

A: No relationship is better than an abusive relationship.

A: And I don't think women should feel they need to make a man happy. That's a two-way street.

A: Just taking even baby steps toward asking for help. That was the biggest and most difficult thing for me to do.

A: It's hard picking up the phone, but both problems have hotline numbers. And once you do it, it just gets easier after that. And if you don't get help, it just gets worse. A lot worse. Both issues.

A: Please reach out. Talk to a peer. Talk to somebody you can talk to.

A: I can't go back. I can't truly ever return to that state of denial. I know too much now.

A: Knowledge is power. ... Knowledge is power.

Based on interviews conducted by
Debi Sue Edmund and Patricia J. Bland
in Springfield, IL, and Seattle, WA.
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Getting Safe and Sober: Real Tools You Can Use
Alaska Network on Domestic Violence And Sexual Assault

POWER AND CONTROL WHEELS

The Power and Control Wheels appear here courtesy of the National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence, which credits the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project in Duluth, MN, for inspiring the wheels. Group facilitators are free to photocopy as many of the handouts as they wish for educational use. However, please make sure the copyright notices appear on each of the handouts. We also request that the handouts not be altered in any way. For more Power and Control Wheels and articles that educate about various aspects of abuse, visit the National Center on Domestic Violence Web site at www.ncdsv.org.

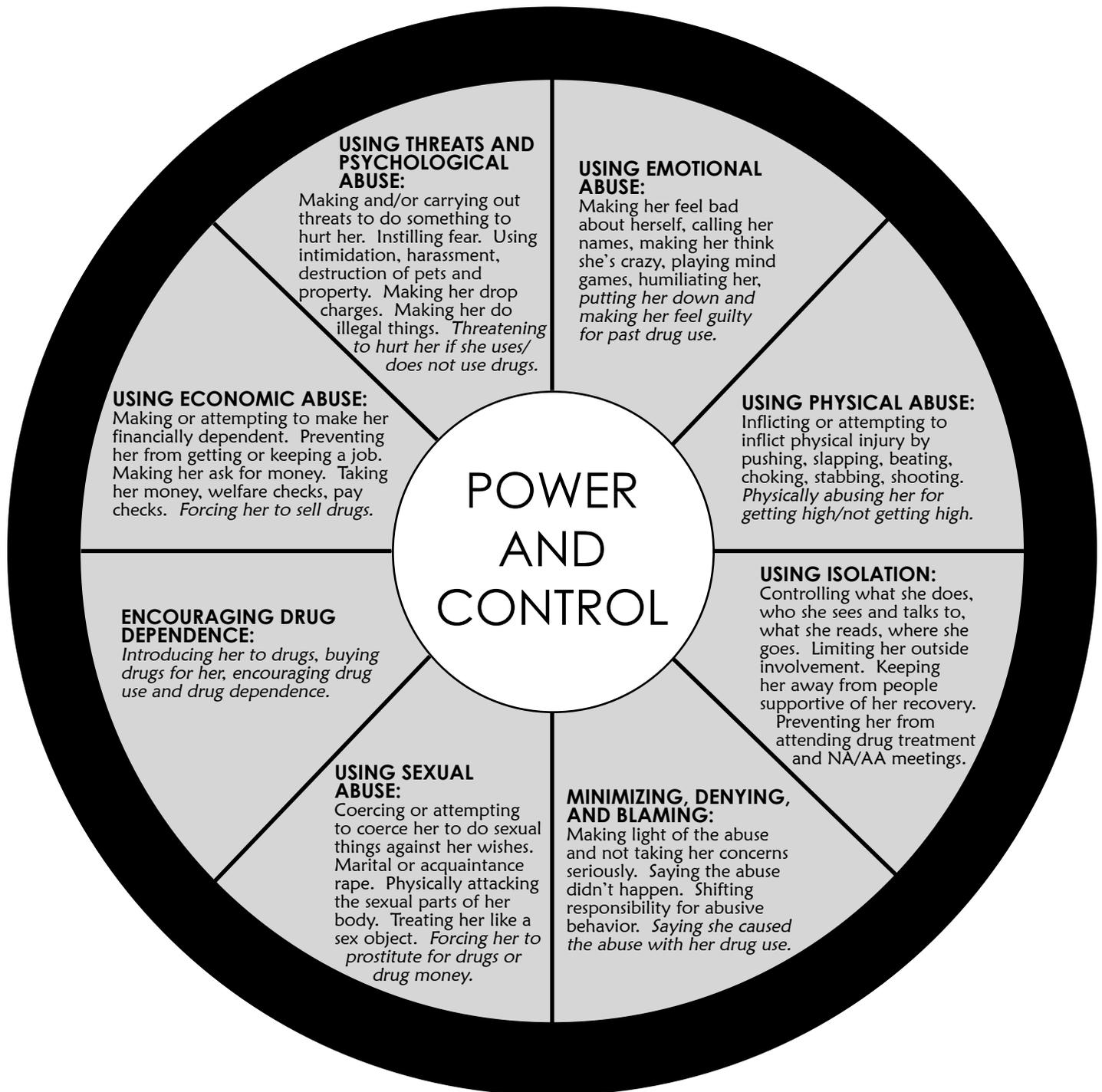
POWER AND CONTROL WHEEL

Physical and sexual assaults, or threats to commit them, are the most apparent forms of domestic violence and are usually the actions that allow others to become aware of the problem. However, regular use of other abusive behaviors by the batterer, when reinforced by one or more acts of physical violence, make up a larger system of abuse. Although physical assaults may occur only once or occasionally, they instill threat of future violent attacks and allow the abuser to take control of the woman's life and circumstances.

The Power & Control diagram is a particularly helpful tool in understanding the overall pattern of abusive and violent behaviors, which are used by a batterer to establish and maintain control over his partner. Very often, one or more violent incidents are accompanied by an array of these other types of abuse. They are less easily identified, yet firmly establish a pattern of intimidation and control in the relationship.



POWER AND CONTROL MODEL FOR WOMEN'S SUBSTANCE ABUSE



Copyright 1996 - Marie T. O'Neil
Adapted from:
Domestic Abuse Intervention Project
202 East Superior Street
Duluth, MN 55802
218.722.4134

Excerpted from:
"Safety and sobriety: best practices in domestic violence and substance abuse," p. 66,
Domestic Violence/Substance Abuse
Interdisciplinary Task Force, Illinois
Department of Human Services.

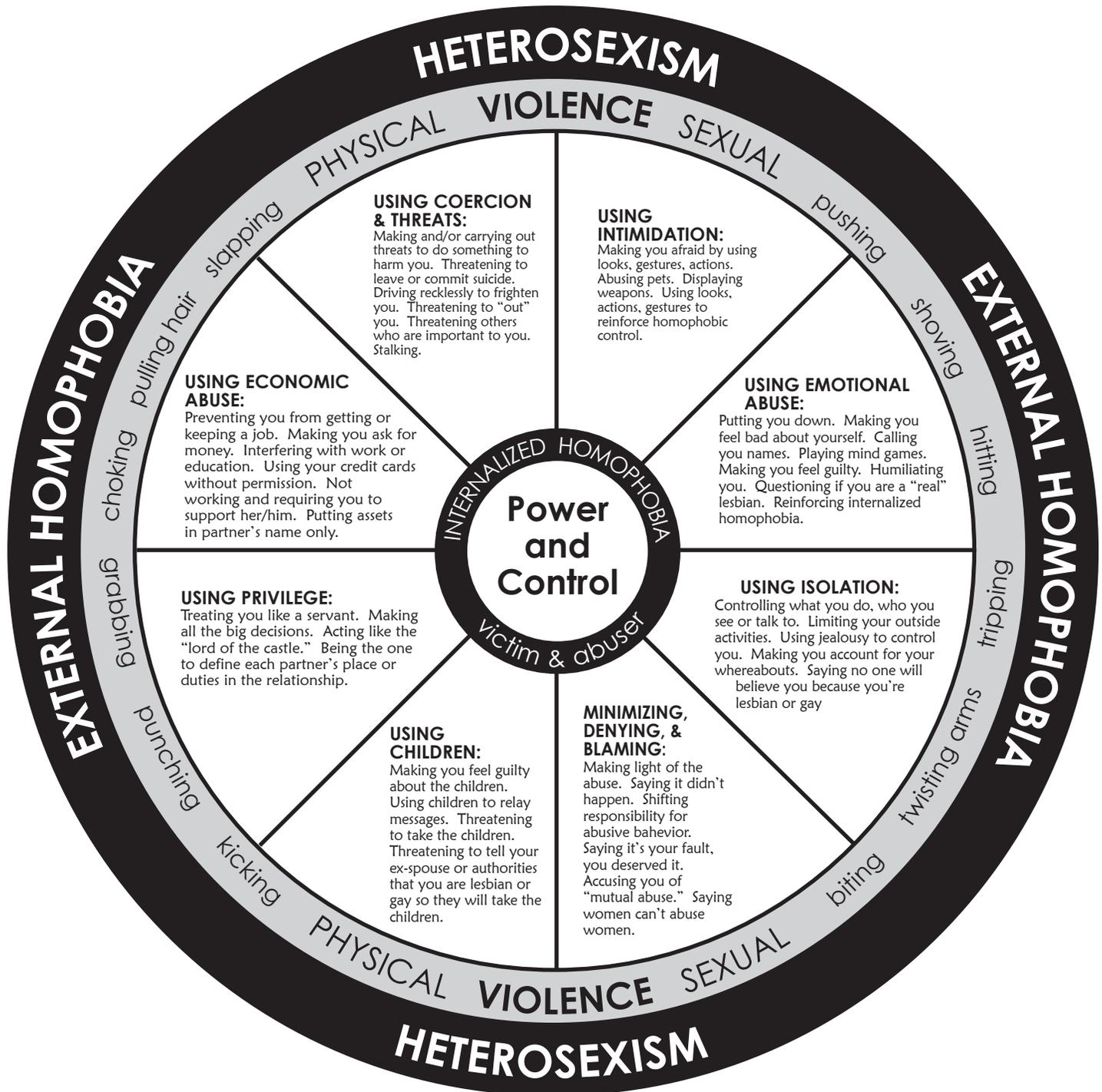
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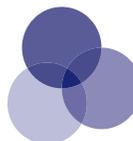
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LESBIAN/GAY POWER AND CONTROL WHEEL



Developed by Roe & Jagodinsky;
inspired and adapted from:
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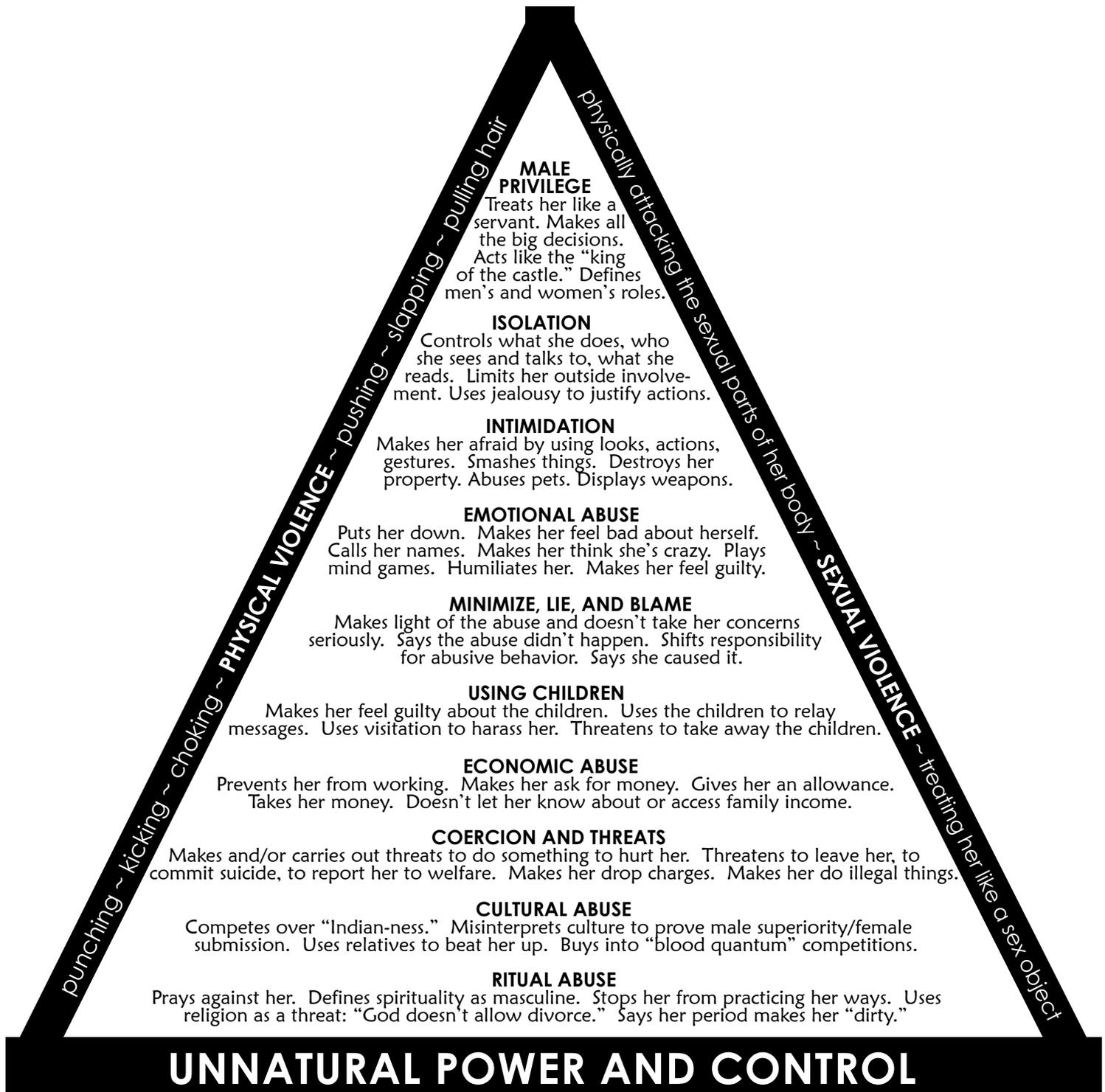
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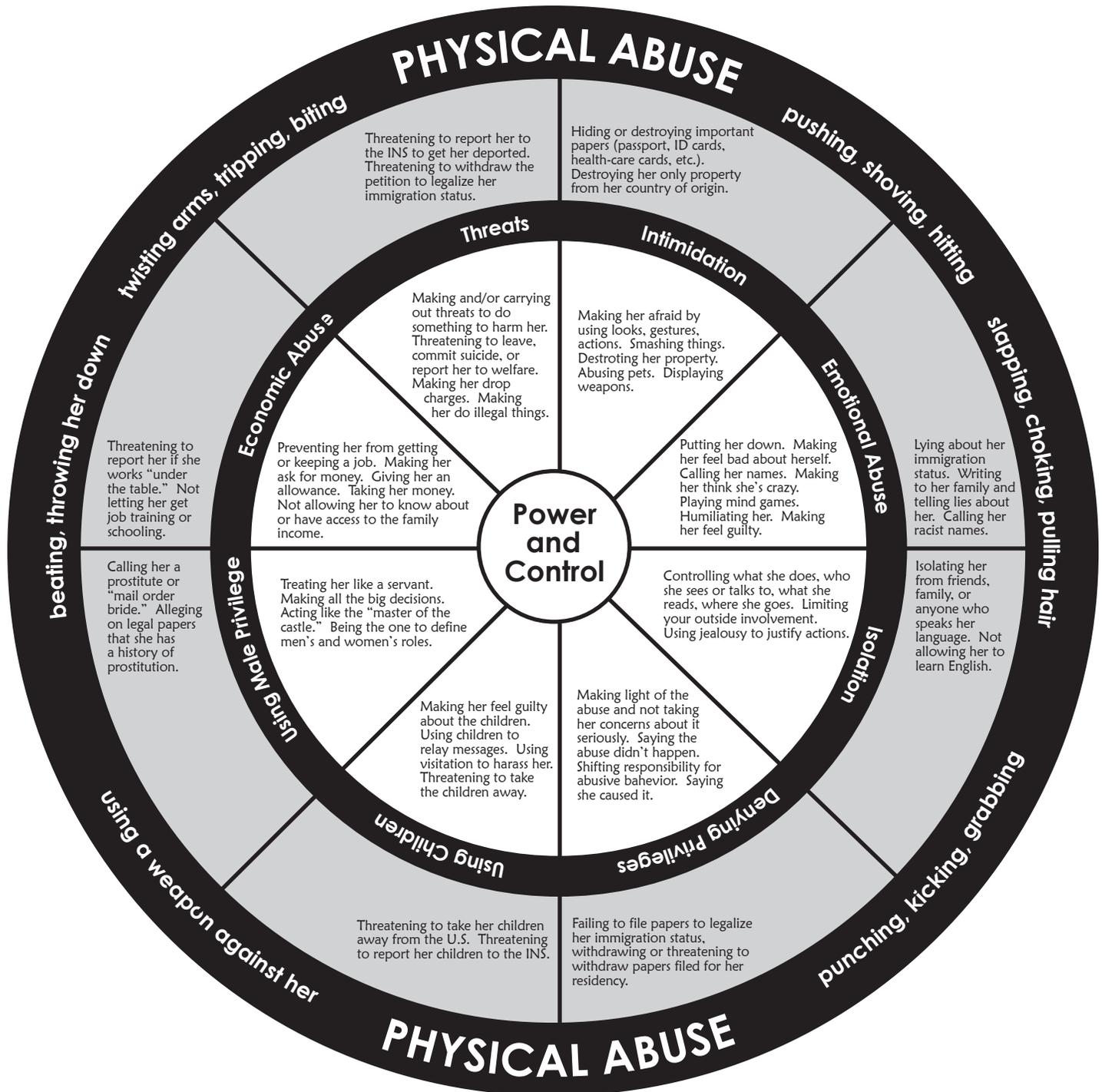
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VIOLENCE AGAINST NATIVE WOMEN: BATTERING

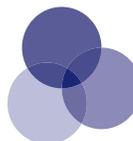


IMMIGRANT POWER AND CONTROL WHEEL



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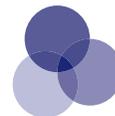
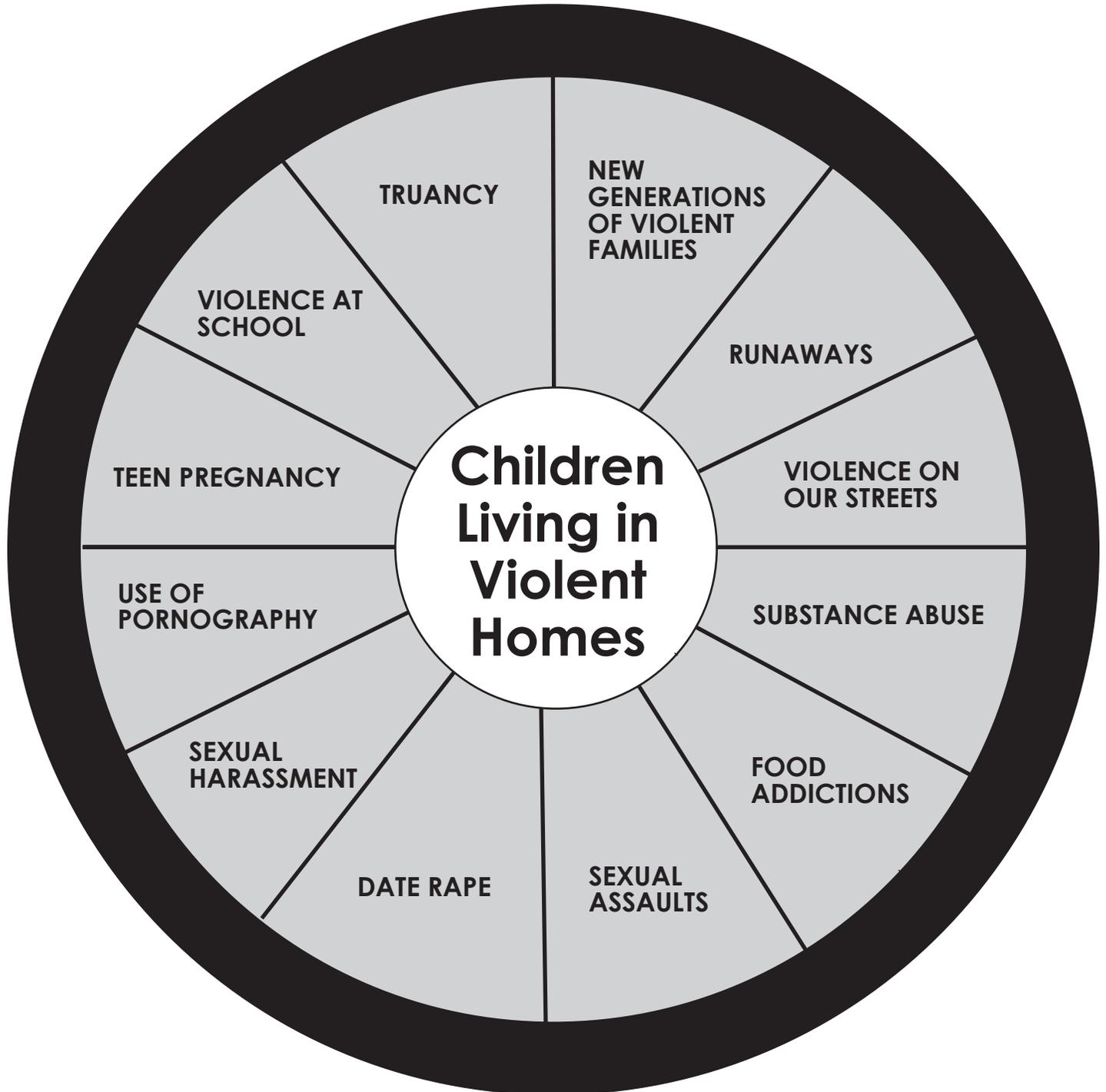
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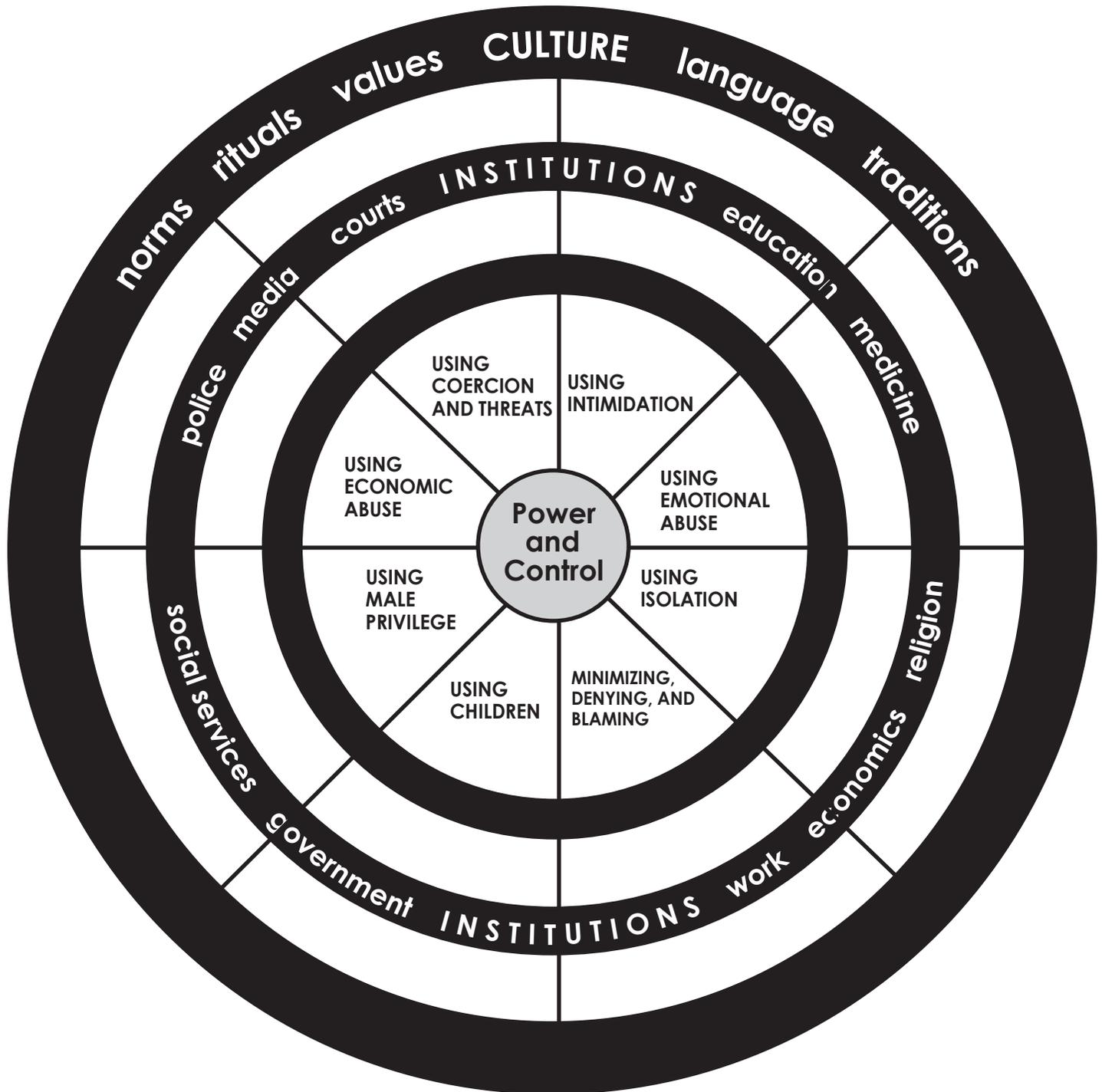
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CHILDREN COPING WITH FAMILY VIOLENCE

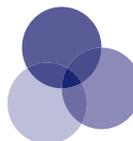


POWER AND CONTROL WHEEL



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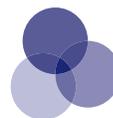
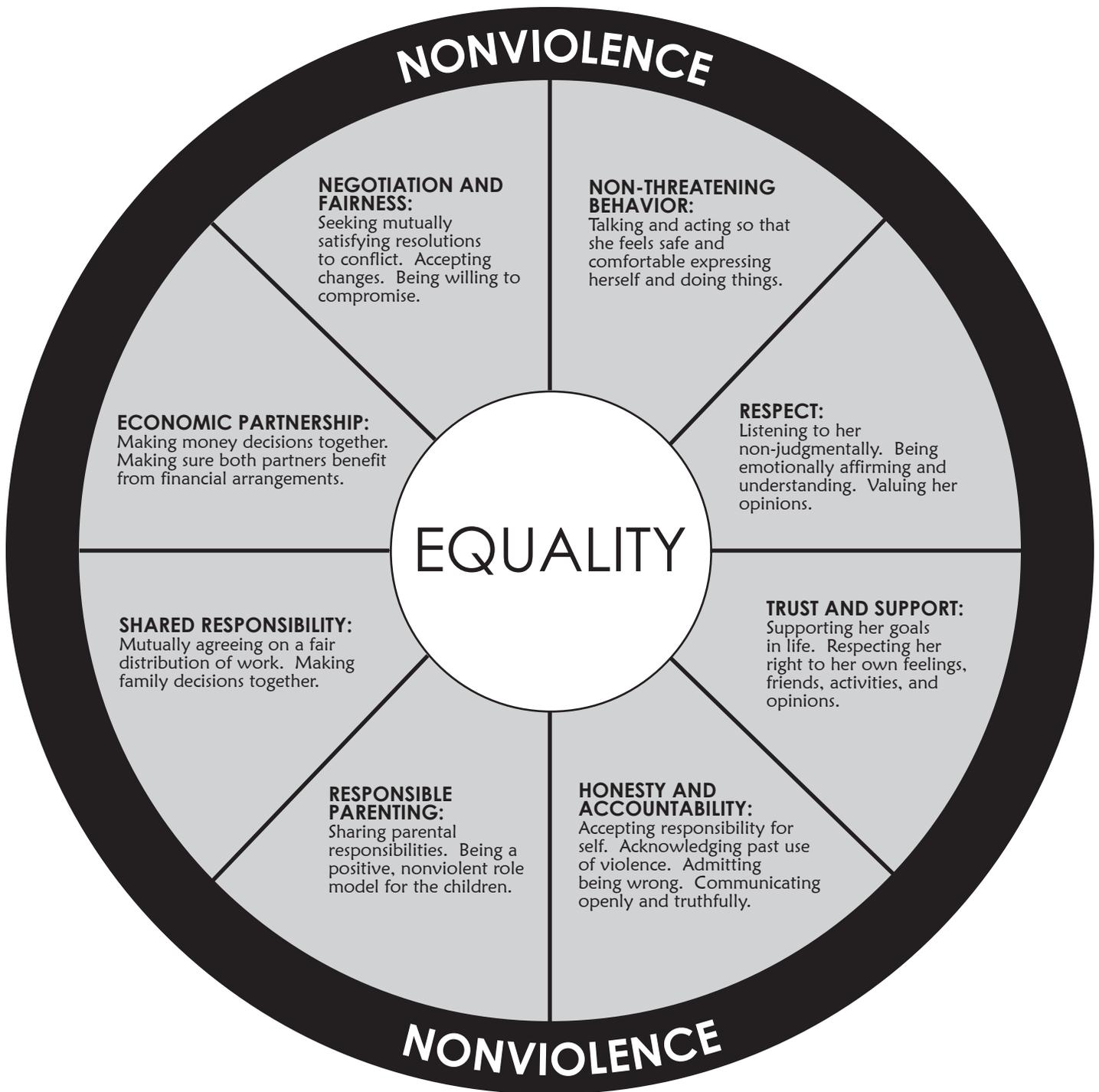
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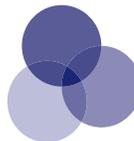
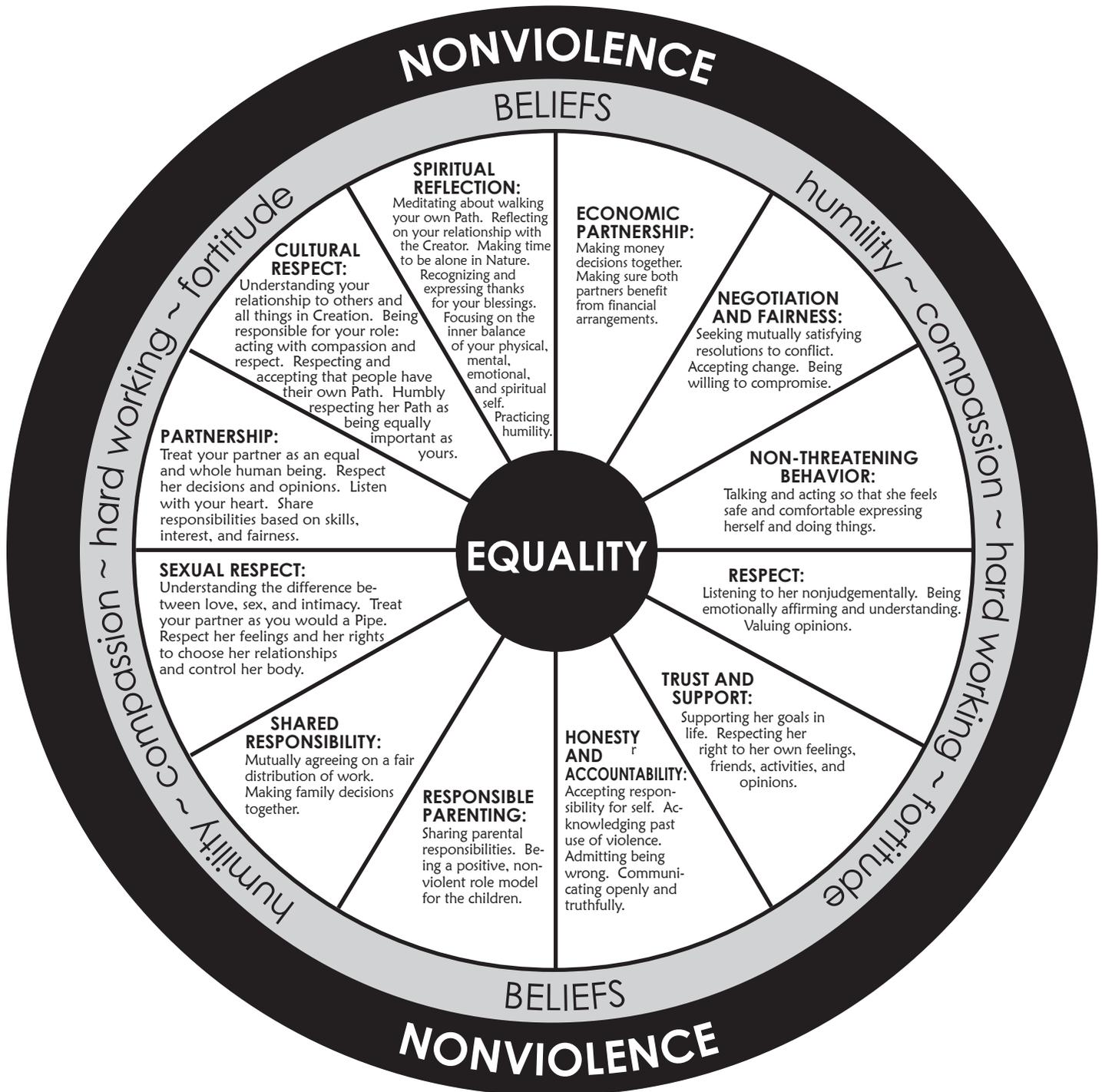
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EQUALITY WHEEL



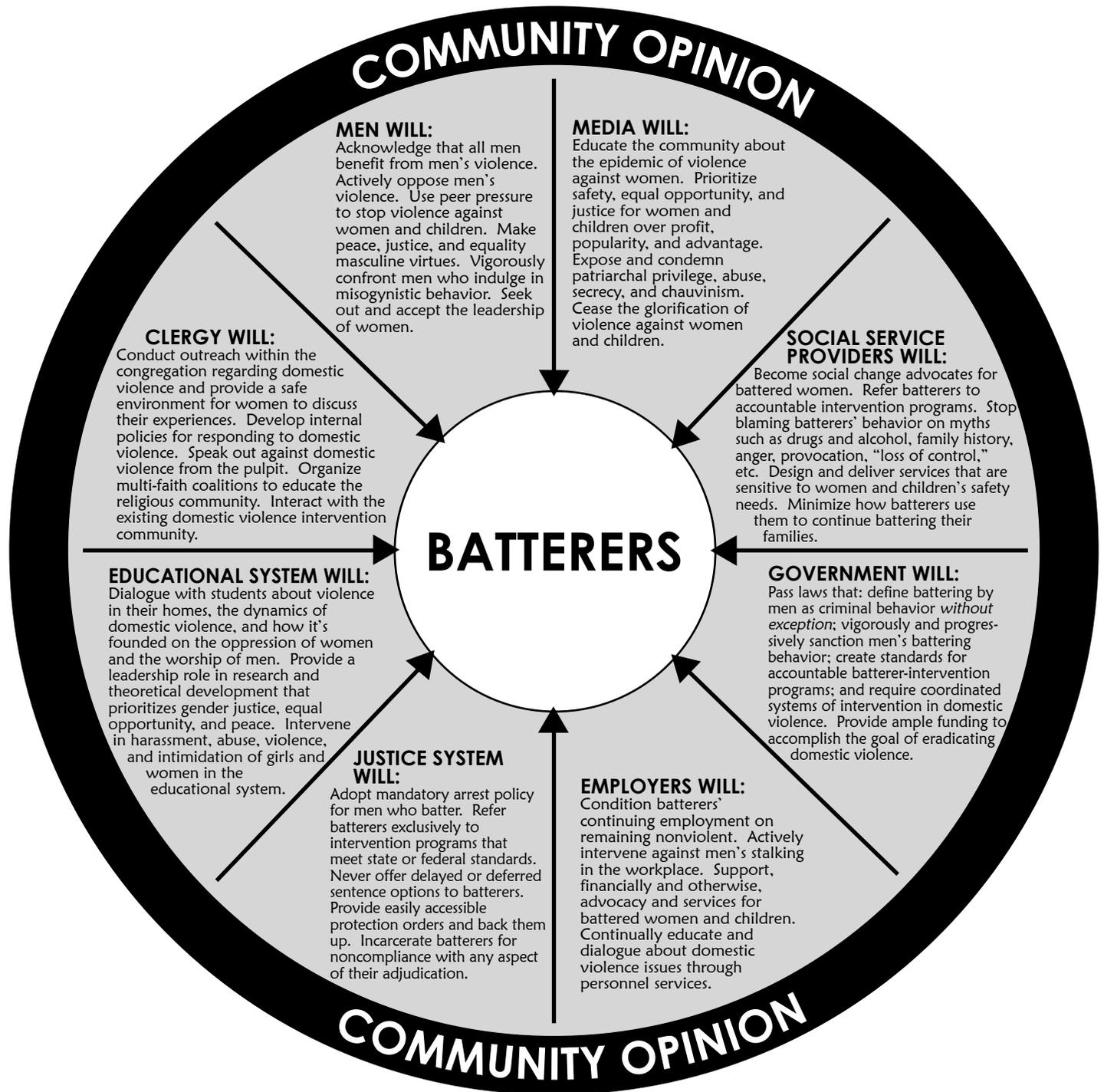
NATURAL LIFE-SUPPORTING POWER

Equality is a natural life-supporting power that is grounded in spirituality.



COMMUNITY ACCOUNTABILITY WHEEL

This wheel *begins* to demonstrate the ideal community response to the issue of domestic violence. Community opinion, which strongly states that battering is unacceptable, leads all of our social institutions to expect full accountability from the batterer by applying appropriate consequences. This wheel was developed by Mike Jackson and David Garvin of the Domestic Violence Institute of Michigan (P.O. Box 130107, Ann Arbor, MI 48113, tel: 313.769.6334).



ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Debi Sue Edmund, M.A., L.P.C., is a licensed professional counselor based in Springfield, IL. As a certified alcohol and drug counselor and a trained domestic violence advocate, Debi has several years of experience working with clients presenting with both substance abuse and interpersonal violence issues. She has worked in drug and alcohol treatment programs in Springfield and Decatur, IL, a domestic violence shelter in Springfield, and a transitional living program in Springfield for survivors of sex work.

Debi also serves on the board of directors for Project Return, a program whose goal is to help incarcerated mothers make a successful transition from prison to a new life in the community. She was a member of the Domestic Violence/Substance Abuse Interdisciplinary Task Force of the Illinois Department of Human Services from 1999-2004. She was editor of *Safety and Sobriety: Best Practices in Domestic Violence and Substance Abuse*, a manual produced by the task force and published by the Illinois Department of Human Services in 2000.

Patti Bland, M.A., CCDC CDP, is director of the Train the Trainer Project for the Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault in Juneau. Patti served both as an advocate and lead chemical dependency counselor at the New Beginnings for Battered Women and their Children shelter and community-based program in Seattle for eleven years. She developed the Domestic Violence/ Chemical Dependency Outreach Project for King County at the Alcohol Drug Help Line in 1994.

Patti served as the Domestic Violence Trainer for Providence Health System Family Violence Program for five years, as an Adjunct Professor at Antioch University (teaching graduate course work in psychology) as well as undergraduate course work at Seattle Central Community College. Patti also was an instructor for Child Protective Services at CPS Academy in Seattle, WA. She has published several articles on chemical dependency and domestic violence and completed development of domestic violence curricula for the Washington State Medical Association and the Perinatal Partnership Against Domestic Violence. Patti is the author of the Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Curriculum for Advocates.

OVERVIEW

Part II

ADVOCATES ASK ADDICTION QUESTIONS

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Recently Advocates at the AWAIC Shelter in Anchorage asked me the following questions to help them provide advocacy for women impacted by co-occurring issues. I think these questions are often asked by advocates across our state and elsewhere as well as by program participants themselves. The answers below reflect an initial attempt to respond to complex issues requiring a great deal of thought. I hope you will take what you like and leave the rest. ANDVSA recommends program staff discuss concerns such as these prior to attempting to provide integrated support groups. We recommend Advocates explore women's substance use, abuse and addiction as barriers to safety. We encourage advocates to address chemical dependence is an anti-oppression issue. We ask for your commitment to ensure services, safety, autonomy and empowerment for all. More thoughtful discussion is needed as well as a whole lot of advocacy in action, one day at a time! ----Patti Bland, M.A. CCDC CDP

1.) Why are DV and substance abuse so interconnected?

Domestic violence and substance abuse often co-occur but do not cause each other.

They seem inter-connected because both severity of injuries and lethality rates increase when co-occurrence happens.

A significant correlation exists between domestic violence and chemical dependency and, depending on whose research you cite, you will note rates of co-occurrence anywhere from 50-96%. However, little has been done to help battered women with chemical dependency issues to address their need for both safety and sobriety.

Intervention strategies addressing both the domestic violence and substance abuse problems are relatively new; many have only been developed in the past 10 years. Model programs exist in WA State, Illinois, Nebraska and Iowa as well as in a handful of other states. Here in Alaska, SAFE in Dillingham has a partnership with the local chemical dependency treatment center and has developed the SISTR program for women addressing both DV and substance abuse issues. AFS in Palmer has provided integrated support groups for several years and is enhancing services for chemically battered women as well as for adolescents this year. AWRC in Anchorage is another Alaska program that addresses both DV and addiction issues.

Many victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and other forms of abuse begin or increase their use of alcohol and other drugs in response to abuse or as a way to medicate the physical and emotional effects of domestic violence or other forms of victimization. It is important to note that while this is true for about 2/3 of victims with multiple abuse issues, a recent federal study indicated about a third may have begun using alcohol or other drugs prior to experiencing abuse. Whether abuse is experienced before or after alcohol or drugs are involved, steps must be made to reassure all victims that any violence directed toward them by a partner is not their fault. In order to ensure safety and sobriety we must hold batterers accountable for their behavior and not blame victims whether they were drunk, sober, abstinent, on medication or tricked into using a substance.

Many victims first begin using substances that are prescribed by their physicians. Others are forced to use by their partners who are seeking to gain or maintain power and control. Recovery

efforts are often sabotaged by their partners who find it harder to control a person who is not using.

According to the New York State *OPDV Model County Policy*:

“Alcohol and other drug use and addiction do not cause men to perpetrate abuse in their intimate relationships,¹ and substance abuse treatment alone is unlikely to stop the violence. Victims with drug-dependent partners consistently report that during their partner’s recovery the abuse not only continues, but often escalates, creating greater levels of danger than existed prior to their partners’ abstinence. In the cases, in which victims report that the level of physical abuse decreases, they often report a corresponding increase in other forms of coercive control and abuse—the threats, manipulation, and isolation intensify.”²

The New York State Model Protocol also states:

“Abusers who are also alcohol or other drug-involved need to address the alcohol/other drug problem separate from, and in addition to, being subject to appropriate criminal or civil justice sanctions for their abusive behavior. Not only is this a critical strategy to enhance victim safety, but abusers’ continued use of coercive and violent acts against their partners is often a precipitant to relapse. Addictions self-help groups and substance abuse treatment programs were not designed to address battering and are not equipped to enforce abuser accountability, a role more appropriate to the criminal and civil justice systems.”

2.) What kinds of drugs cause violent outbursts?

We know guns are associated with increased risk for lethality yet we hear the NRA say ‘guns don’t kill people, people do.’ Drugs don’t cause violent outbursts, people do. While alcohol and other drugs are associated with episodes of violence many people use substances without engaging in violent behavior regardless of their drug use.

When violence and alcohol or other drug use co-occur the following risk factors may exist:

1.) Alcohol can lead to euphoric recall or blackout which can have a negative impact on memory. Blackout is a form of amnesia for a specific period of time whereas euphoric recall is a distortion of perception. While both conditions impact memory neither is considered sufficient to cause a person to engage in violent behavior. Those experiencing blackout and euphoric recall can choose to engage in violence or NOT. The only thing they can’t choose is accurate recall of what choice they made. Alcohol is also associated with distortions in perception that may lead one to believe people are hostile towards one. Alcohol use is also associated with depersonalization and can inhibit empathy. A batterer may use these distortions as an inappropriate excuse to justify violent behavior.

²⁴American Medical Association, *Report of the Council on Scientific Affairs: Alcohol, Drugs and Family Violence*, A-93, 1993.

²⁵Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women, *Safety First: Battered Women Surviving Violence When Alcohol and Drugs Are Involved*, 1992.

2.) Methamphetamine/Cocaine can lead to feelings of power. Additionally, use of these drugs is associated with paranoia. Paranoid people who feel powerful may try “BS” or they may choose to engage in violent behavior. Uppers such as speed and coke are associated with poor impulse control, jumpiness and hypervigilance. Paranoia and suspicion may contribute to a person’s choice to leave shelter without saying a word or can contribute to a person’s choice to lash out if feeling threatened. Usually signs of agitation, pacing, nervousness, rapid and pressured speech etc. precede threats and other forms of violence.

3.) PCP is a drug that can lead to hallucinations and paranoia. Since it is used as an animal tranquilizer for surgery people on it are often paranoid and tend not to feel pain which makes them particularly dangerous if they decide to engage in violent behavior. People hallucinating on PCP (unlike people on LSD) cannot generally be talked down. Call the police if you are concerned about your safety or the safety of others.

4.) Victims of domestic violence who are asked about drugs they associate with violence in their relationships often tell us marijuana is a factor in violent episodes BUT not when their partners are using it. Individuals report more concern when their abusive partners can’t find any marijuana. When the chronic marijuana user has no access to more marijuana the user may become irritable and have sleep difficulties as well as experience loss of appetite. These are minor problems unless the person rebounding from marijuana use is abusive. Batterers may use irritability associated with withdrawal as a trumped up phony excuse to engage in emotional or physical abuse.

5.) Nicotine is an anti-hostility agent. Chronic smokers unable to use tobacco may become hostile and irritable. This does not mean individuals unable to smoke will become violent but batterers denied access to cigarettes may use this as another phony excuse to justify their choice to engage in abusive behavior. The greatest dangers from nicotine use are long-term health consequences (e.g. lung disease, heart disease and various forms of cancer, etc.) which kill more people than alcohol and all the other illegal drugs combined. Also nicotine is associated with low-birth weight babies (as is domestic violence) and other health consequences for children. Some advocates report seeing smokers who are building up a head of steam and ready to ‘blow’ occasionally being diverted from choosing to engage in aggressive behavior by choosing to smoke. Shelter workers should ensure program participants have access to pamphlets and information pertaining to health risks for women and children associated with nicotine use as well as options for a safer coping tool than smoking.

6 a.) Heroin/Opiates (e.g. “Ox,” prescription painkillers, morphine) are associated with the need to continue feeding a costly habit to kill pain. While overdose can be lethal, withdrawal symptoms are generally not usually life threatening. Withdrawal can be seriously uncomfortable and does pose risk for individuals with fragile health or who may be dehydrated. Addiction to opiates is not so much associated with physically violent behavior as it is associated with irritability, flu like symptoms, diarrhea and runny nose.

6 b.) Methadone. Of concern here are safety risks for program participants who may be on methadone maintenance. People on methadone can do very well in Methadone programs. Risk stems not from their dose but from the requirement for them to get their dose at a set time and place daily which makes them a sitting duck for a batterer or stalker. Safety planning and advocacy are essential for these individuals who are often denied access to services and also face unwarranted societal stigma.

7.) Prescription Medications – A major concern here is the onset of withdrawal symptoms. Withdrawal from prescription medication such as sedative/hypnotics e.g. Valium, Xanax, Librium, etc. can be dangerous much as alcohol withdrawal is very serious. Program participants fleeing abusive partners may be unable to bring their medications with them. This can increase

risk (e.g. no access to insulin, an asthma inhaler or other critical medication can rapidly lead to a medical emergency). Lethality or other health risk occurs if alcohol and medications are mixed or combined. Barbiturates are particularly lethal when combined with alcohol and the overdose potential can be high. Also possible is misuse associated with multiple prescriptions for similar pain medications, misuse of old medications, or misuse of someone else's medications when prevented from seeking medical help. Batterers may deny partners access to medication and/or divert their partners' medication for their own use. Coercion, theft, faked prescriptions and doctor s/hopping may increase problems and lead to legal troubles or arrest.

Note: Theft is sometimes an issue in shelter. When the money runs out to feed an addiction or to take care of other pressing problems, desperation may set in. A desperate individual may decide to steal to survive or to maintain the addiction whether that addiction is to cigarettes, crack, alcohol, heroin, prescription medications or any other substance. When we recognize this is happening in shelter we should ask for the behavior to stop in a non-judgmental way and offer alternatives that support both accountability and safety.

3.) How can we help women get free from domestic violence when they are abusing drugs?

Our challenge as advocates is to provide as safe an environment as possible for all who use our services or work at our programs. A first step toward meeting this challenge is identifying options for both battered women impacted by substance use as well as for their advocates. In order to better extend services and advocacy to battered women with separate issues of substance use, misuse or addiction we must examine our current practices and explore new strategies. Agency policies supporting a substance-free environment will need to be balanced with a multi-step approach that provides opportunities for substance-abusing women to safely discuss their daily struggle with sobriety and their compulsion to use. This effort will help chemically dependent battered women achieve both justice and freedom from abusers who often use their addiction to gain or maintain power and control.

Some suggested policy considerations include:

1. Being aware that domestic violence, drug overdose and withdrawal from substances can all be lethal, and that assessing the immediate risk of each is essential.
2. Partnering with a local chemical dependency program and/or consulting with the statewide alcohol and drug help line to develop tools for identifying and assessing the needs of battered women impacted by substance abuse and their children.
3. Developing a safety plan that includes a relapse prevention plan and continuing to support the client after a relapse if she chooses to continue to work on her recovery.
4. Providing referrals to a range of chemical dependency assistance options, such as detox, out patient or inpatient treatment, Alcoholics Anonymous and/or other self-help meetings.
5. Addressing the impact of substance abuse on safety planning.
6. Providing written materials relevant to chemical dependency and substance abuse.

7. Developing a budget plan to implement comprehensive support services to battered women impacted by substance abuse.
8. Periodic training of staff.
9. Monitoring of the program.

OVERVIEW: A MULTI-STEP APPROACH

The overview below identifies basic elements necessary to provide appropriate services for women impacted by substance use, abuse and addiction issues. Recommended procedures for addressing service delivery in a variety of settings are discussed following this overview.

The following steps are recommended:

1. Screening and identification
2. Initial intervention and follow-up
3. Information and referral
4. Alternatives to substance use/Relapse prevention
5. Emotional support

Screening and Identification

We recommend that programs examine their criteria for services and avoid blanket service restrictions for women seeking shelter or other services based solely on their alcohol or drug use history. In many cases, the batterer is more of an immediate threat than the risks associated with substance use. It is important to stress that overdose and withdrawal can pose serious health risks that can become life threatening. These problems can occur even when routine screening reveals no obviously existing substance abuse issues. For this reason, it is important for programs to develop linkages with emergency department personnel, detoxification center staff and other chemical dependency professionals.

A substance screen is an opportunity to help a victim of domestic violence identify whether or not her safety is impacted by her own or another person's use, misuse or addiction to a substance. This discussion is a preliminary step to determine the likelihood that an alcohol or other drug problem exists that could impact her safety. Screening for substance use involves honest talk with individuals about their partner's alcohol and drug use as well as their own, observing their behavior and recognizing signs of use.

Advocates are asked to routinely screen for substance use because some of our intervention and follow-up, including information and referrals we provide, will be based on whether or not substances pose a safety risk for the domestic violence victim and/or others. Routine screening is simple and does not require advocates to provide a full assessment.

Screening differs considerably from an assessment. An assessment uses diagnostic instruments and processes to determine if the person is abusing, or is dependent on alcohol or other drugs. We may describe assessment as an option for women who are concerned about their use and provide information and referral should any woman we are screening express interest in an assessment for themselves or others.

Respectful screening involves conveying the message that addiction and violence can happen to anyone. Advise women “Any woman is vulnerable; you are not alone.” A successful intervention requires internally moving beyond the notion, “Why doesn’t she just quit?” or “Why doesn’t she just leave?” Questions such as these convey lack of knowledge and failure to understand the complexity of safely ending a relationship with either a substance or an abusive partner.

Honestly discussing substance abuse as a safety risk is extremely important. A woman’s decision to keep using or to decline treatment, advocacy or shelter should not be viewed as failure. Recovery is both an option and a process that can take time. Screening and referral can help build a bridge from substance abuse or addiction to health and safety for chemically dependent battered women and their children.

Women facing the dual stigma of both addiction and domestic violence may be reluctant to openly seek help. Generally speaking, women do not self-identify as either addicted or battered unless their safety is assured. Safety includes knowing you are not being labeled or judged.

When screening for substance use be sure to:

- Ensure privacy. Children should not be present.
- Communicate respect and trust. When screening over the phone, let callers know you are asking these questions to better determine their safety needs rather than weed them out. Assure those you screen, both on the phone and in person, except for safety concerns (e.g., CPS or APS-mandated requirements), anything discussed will be held in strictest confidence and will not jeopardize their ability to receive appropriate services.
- Listen carefully and observe behavior. Notice signs of possible alcohol and other drug use. Signs of use include slurred or rapid speech, smell of alcohol, track marks, scabbing, unusual or extreme behavior such as nodding off or being overly alert, staggering, tremors, glassy eyes, dilated or constricted pupils, difficulty sitting still, and tactile hallucinations that lead to scratching or skin picking. Notice if the person you are talking to is disoriented or confused for no apparent reason, argumentative, defensive or angry about questions relating to substance use. Please note that any one thing here does not mean a person is to be automatically labeled as an addict. For example, slurred speech could mean a hearing deficit. Scratching could mean scabies. Confusion could be stemming from a head injury. The purpose of screening is to notice areas of possible concern, to recognize patterns and to help women determine what might be their best options.

Keep in mind that chemically dependent battered women have little reason to trust. Both their bodies and their partners have let them down. Consequently, substance-abusing battered women are often reluctant to disclose use. Disclosure may not be perceived as a viable option. Understand denial. Denial is the most frequent response to questions about substance use whether alcohol or other drug use is an issue or not. For this reason, it is important to provide every woman with brief information about safety and sobriety regardless of the outcome of a screen.

Respectful screening creates an environment where it may seem safer for a woman to disclose use. Ask questions in a non-judgmental manner.

Initial Intervention and Follow-up

Described below are different categories that reflect an individual's use of substances. An advocate's response and follow-up should be determined by each individual woman's experience with substance use.

No Significant Problem with Substance Abuse

Once an initial screening occurs, an advocate may determine a woman has no significant problem with substance use. Should this be the case, information about safety should be provided. Alcohol and drugs affect the brain and the body whether addiction is present or not. This information should be included along with basic information about how substance use can compromise safety. Sometimes a woman herself may not be using or misusing substances but her safety may be compromised by another's use. Discussions about safety should explore risks associated with partner use as well.

Follow-up is advised to determine whether a woman's needs change over time. Additional options, referrals and support must be offered if, over time, an advocate becomes aware of potential difficulties stemming from the program participant's, or another person's, use, misuse or addiction. Follow-up may address concerns stemming from changes in observed behavior, noticeable signs of substance use or concerns about drug-seeking behavior (e.g., over-use of over-the-counter or prescription medications).

It is also helpful to be alert. Notice if the client has:

- The odor of alcohol on her breath
- Red eyes, pin-point or dilated pupils
- Track marks on arms, hands or feet
- Inflamed or eroded nasal septum

Cues which, if not directly indicative of addiction, at least indicate substance misuse may be occurring, include:

- Rapid speech
- Difficulty tracking conversation
- Scratching and picking at arms or face during a visit
- Lethargy
- Nodding
- Cigarette burns (which may also be indicative of domestic violence)
- Prescription drug-seeking behavior

Significant Problem with Substance Abuse

Substance abuse is a destructive pattern of use of drugs including alcohol, which leads to clinically significant (social, occupational, medical) impairment or distress. Often the substance use continues in spite of significant life problems related to that use. Following an initial screening, an advocate may identify a woman has an increased safety risk stemming from her, or another's, significant problem with substance misuse or abuse. Sometimes a significant problem with substance abuse is not identified at an initial contact but is revealed later. Whenever substance abuse is identified, information about safety should be provided and concern should be

expressed. Options should include reviewing safer alternatives to substance use, providing linkage to counseling and on-site support systems, as well as community-based referrals. Discussions about safety should explore risks associated with partner substance abuse as well.

Substance-abusing women should be asked to consider refraining from substance use while they are using services. Follow-up should include checking to see if abstinence is causing any unexpected challenges or difficulties. Should a woman feel out of control, preoccupied by use, edgy or compelled to use, addiction may be indicated and withdrawal symptoms may appear.

Chemical Dependence

Substance use and misuse are behaviors. Research supports several theories related to causal etiologies of substance abuse and addiction, including behavioral, medical and other models. According to the disease model, chemical dependence, unlike domestic violence, is not a behavior. It is considered a primary chronic disease with genetic, psychosocial and environmental factors influencing its development and manifestations. The disease is often progressive and fatal.

When a person begins to exhibit symptoms of tolerance (the need for significantly larger amounts of substance to achieve intoxication) and withdrawal (adverse reactions after a reduction of substance), it is likely that the person has progressed from abuse to dependence and addiction. While diversity of thought exists pertaining to addiction, it is critical to learn to recognize and identify women with this condition and provide appropriate intervention.

Battered Women in Recovery from Chemical Dependence

Following an initial screening, an advocate may learn a woman is in recovery from addiction to alcohol or other substances. Whenever past substance abuse is identified, information about safety should be provided and concern should be expressed about risks to sobriety associated with domestic violence and stress. These concerns may be greater for women with less time in recovery, but warranted for any woman addressing both issues regardless of amount of time in recovery.

Basic safety and sobriety tips should be provided, as well as information about risks associated with partner substance use. Options should include reviewing current support systems, providing linkage to counseling and on-site support systems, as well as community-based referrals. Follow-up is indicated periodically to determine whether increased support is wanted. Chemical dependence is a disease marked by periodic relapse. Should obvious signs of renewed preoccupation with substances or substance use occur, address them immediately. Discuss safety options including support groups and treatment with an open, supportive and non-judgmental attitude.

Battered Women Currently Active in their Addiction

Expressing care and concern rather than being critical is most useful when helping chemically dependent battered women address addiction and its impact on their safety. Be gentle. Always include messages linking safety and sobriety and address the benefits of stopping use any time.

Addiction is characterized by continuous or periodic impaired control over drinking alcohol or using other drugs, preoccupation with drugs or alcohol, use of drugs or alcohol despite adverse consequences and distortions in thinking (most notably denial). Therefore, this problem impacts sufferers whether they are actively using or not.

Addiction is marked by physiological and central nervous system changes that lead to the development of tolerance, loss of control, continued use in spite of adverse consequences and withdrawal symptoms. Women are often unable to discontinue use without assistance.

Should this be the case, advocates will need to help women assess whether the immediate risks from a batterer outweigh those stemming from their current substance abuse and addiction. Ultimately this is not a question of whether safety or sobriety should take place first. Safety and sobriety are both important, since one is less likely without the other. Rather, the question is: What does the woman you are advocating for want to address today?

Discuss strategies to support behavior change such as 12-step programs, chemical dependency/domestic violence support groups and treatment options. If possible, suggest a referral for a more in-depth chemical dependency assessment and make the appointment together if the client is interested. Get a release of information and maintain communication with the chemical dependency treatment provider to support her progress. Be sure to follow up and provide emotional support.

Information and Referral

Providing advocacy-based counseling for battered women impacted by substance abuse is enhanced when advocates are:

- Informed about treatment options and community resources.
- Participating in cross-training with substance abuse programs to increase awareness of safety and sobriety issues.
- Willing to provide service options for victims who are substance dependent whether they are in treatment or not.

Advocates must be able to provide accurate information about substance use, abuse and addiction and know what their local resources are. The Alcohol/Drug Help Line web-site: adh1.org is available 24 hours a day to provide information about substances, including use, abuse and addiction. They can answer specific questions for battered women addressing substance abuse issues as well as help advocates develop options. The ADHL phone number is 1-800-562-1240 (*WA & AK only*) or 206-722-37000.

Ideally, advocates will become familiar with their local resources. Developing a relationship with your local chemical dependency prevention service providers can enhance safety and improve advocacy. Additionally, this relationship can lead to developing collaborative partnerships that could include exchanging staff for support groups, as well as information and educational opportunities addressing both domestic violence and substance abuse issues.

Alternatives to Substance Abuse/Relapse Prevention

One-to-one advocacy and support group sessions should provide information that offers an alternative to substance use as part of a safety plan. Tools to integrate substance abuse as a safety issue are available (see *Power and Control Wheel for Women's Substance Abuse*, et al.).

Since addiction is marked by relapse, and relapse is often triggered by stress, women in recovery experiencing domestic violence may need additional support. According to Bland (2001), advocates may help recovering battered women develop a safety plan that includes but is not limited to:

- Identifying who to call for help (e.g., sponsor, counselor, Alcohol/Drug Help Line); forming support systems, knowing about safe meetings
- Knowing information and education about addiction
- Removing substances and paraphernalia from the home
- Recognizing unsafe persons, places, things
- Understanding how to deal with legal and other problems stemming from addiction (e.g., health, Office of Children's Services (OCS) involvement, poor nutrition)
- Assembling paperwork to determine eligibility for assistance or to begin seeking employment, school, housing or other options
- Knowing how domestic violence can be a relapse issue
- Understanding physical, emotional, cognitive, environmental and other cues indicative of risk and having a plan to deal with it; recognizing role of stress and craving, having a plan to deal with it
- Learning how to parent, engaging in relationships, developing sober friendships
- Knowing when and where to run in a life-threatening situation that puts her sobriety and safety at risk

Consult with your local chemical dependency treatment provider, the Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault or the Alcohol/Drug Help Line Domestic Violence Outreach Project for additional tips to address both alternatives to substance abuse and relapse prevention.

Emotional Support

Last but not least, it is important to remind ourselves that addressing domestic violence and substance abuse issues is always difficult and challenging. Domestic violence programs can, according to Illinois Dept. of Human Services (2000), support victims struggling with issues of substance abuse in the following ways:

- Assist staff in dealing with their own feelings and prejudices about substance abuse. Provide on-going training to enable staff to recognize the characteristics of substance abuse and to make appropriate referrals.
- Minimize blame and moral reprobation for use or relapse which may further disempower the victim and empower the batterer.
- Inform and advise the victim and treatment providers of the risks of conjoint couples counseling sessions.
- While providing advocacy-based counseling, help women recognize the role substance abuse plays. It can keep them tied to an abusive relationship, increase their risk for harm and impair their safety planning ability.
- Assist victims by helping them find an alternative means of empowerment as replacement for the sense of power induced by substances.
- Include plans for continued sobriety as part of a safety plan. Help the victim understand the batterer may attempt to undermine her sobriety before the victim exits the shelter or completes advocacy services.

- Encourage and facilitate linkage with substance abuse treatment resources and abstinence-based support groups.
- Remain aware of which local substance abuse programs and support groups offer the highest degree of physical and psychological safety for victims of domestic violence.

4.) What are the signs of drug abuse?

(Note: Domestic violence and addiction definitions are adapted from definitions developed by the American Psychiatric Association and the American Society for Addiction Medicine and included in the Domestic Violence/Substance Abuse Task Force of the IL DHS 7/2000, Safety and Sobriety: Best Practices in Domestic Violence and Substance Abuse, see p.vi. For information about this publication contact: www.state.il.us/agency/dhs).**

Substance abuse is a destructive pattern of use of drugs including alcohol, which leads to clinically significant (social, occupational, medical) impairment or distress. Often the substance use continues in spite of significant life problems related to that use.

Substance use and misuse are behaviors. Research supports several theories related to causal etiologies of substance abuse and addiction including behavioral, medical and other models. According to the disease model, addiction, unlike domestic violence, is not a behavior. It is a disease. When a person begins to exhibit symptoms of tolerance (the need for significantly larger amounts of substance to achieve intoxication) and withdrawal (adverse reactions after a reduction of substance) it is likely that the person has progressed from abuse to dependence and addiction. While diversity of thought exists pertaining to addiction it is critical to learn to recognize and identify women with this condition and provide appropriate intervention.

Addiction, according to the disease model, is considered a primary chronic disease with genetic, psychosocial, and environmental factors influencing its development and manifestations. The disease is often progressive and fatal. Addiction is characterized by continuous or periodic impaired control over drinking alcohol or using other drugs, preoccupation with drugs or alcohol, use of drugs or alcohol despite adverse consequences, and distortions in thinking, most notably denial. Addiction is treatable and long-term recovery is possible. Although a person may choose to use alcohol or drugs a person does not choose how one's body will respond to that choice. Alcohol and drugs affect the brain and the body whether addiction is present or not. Addiction, however, is marked by the development of tolerance, loss of control, continued use in spite of adverse consequences and withdrawal symptoms.

Cues indicative of substance misuse may include but are not limited to:

- 1.) The odor of alcohol on her breath
- 2.) Red eyes, pin-point or dilated pupils
- 3.) Track marks on arms, hands or feet
- 4.) Inflamed, eroded nasal septum.
- 5.) Rapid speech
- 6.) Difficulty tracking
- 7.) Scratching and picking at arms or face during a visit
- 8.) Lethargy

9.) Nodding

10.) Cigarette burns (which may also be indicative of domestic violence).

11.) Prescription drug seeking behavior

12.) Distorted Perceptions

Note: Alcohol and other drugs distort perceptions. Chemically dependent battered women may have a hard time recognizing options or gauging their safety due to a variety of distortions in thinking. Blackouts may mean the absence of memories for some events. Experiencing a blackout does not mean a person has passed out or lost consciousness. Nor does it mean psychological blocking out of events or repression. A blackout is an amnesia-like period often associated with heavy drinking. People in a blackout state may appear to be functioning normally but later have no memory of what occurred (Kinney and Leaton, 1991).

Inability to remember events poses specific safety problems for battered women experiencing blackouts. Problems can include not being able to recall a safety plan, not being able to know how an injury was sustained, making a report to police at the time of an assault and being unable to recollect the event mere minutes or hours later, let alone in court.

The only initial memory substance users have of what happens when they use is the one that is formed when they are under the influence of alcohol or in a drugged state. Thus if a person under the influence inaccurately assesses her level of danger or perceives herself as “able to handle it,” sobering up the next day may be insufficient to correct the distortion. This toxic thinking or distortion of perception is termed euphoric recall (Johnson, 1980) and theoretically has the potential to increase risk for substance abusing battered women.

Please contact the Alcohol Drug Help Line at 206-722-370 / 1-800-562-1240 (*WA or AK only*) or check their website www.adhl for more specific information about signs and symptoms of alcohol and other drug use, abuse and addiction as well as for information about indicators of overdose and withdrawal. If you are concerned that a resident has overdosed or is experiencing acute withdrawal either could pose serious health consequences and medical attention should be sought immediately. If a person is not breathing or you are concerned symptoms may be life threatening call 911 or the applicable number for emergency medical services in your area.

5.) How should we approach a woman who we suspect is using?

‘Suspect’ is a word with negative connotations. Let’s reframe the question to read, “How should we approach a woman who may be sensitive about discussing her personal substance use as a safety concern?” Alcoholics and addicts do not cause addiction and they do not ‘like’ it. They have a major illness. The number one symptom of this illness is to believe one is well. This belief plus social acceptance of drinking or taking medication to kill pain makes it hard for alcoholic/addicts to seek help they need. Many times they don’t seek help.

Generally speaking, it is useful to note observations of use and directly mention them to the person you are concerned about. A sample way to deal with the obvious problem head on is as follows:

“You and I both know you have been under a lot of pressure lately during your stay. And you and I both know anyone will look for a way to feel better when they are feeling stressed. I’m

concerned about you because you and I both know you have been drinking this morning. Lots of women I see do the same thing. How can I help you find a safer way to cope?”

It engages the person to bring her into the discussion. Positively recognize, she knows what is going on as well as you do. Expressing care and concern rather than being critical is most useful when helping chemically dependent battered women, confront their own addiction.

Confrontation by the woman of her own addiction can be a goal but should not be the style of your interaction. Be gentle. Chemically dependent battered women are often on the receiving end of unkind comments and criticism. Always include messages about the benefits of stopping use any time.

Sample topics to discuss (whether in support group or 1-1) include the following:

- 1) Can you tell me why it may not be safe to use when someone is trying to stalk you/kill you?
- 2) How can your partner use your drinking or drug use to hurt you?
- 3) How has your partner used alcohol or other drugs to control/threaten/shame you?
- 4) When you have not been able to drink or use in the past, what helped you to cope? Can you do that now?
- 5) If there is one thing I (or the group) can do to help you stay safe and sober today, what would that be?
- 6) How could drinking or drug use impact parenting/housing/police response/legal response/interactions with OCS/CPS, other systems or issues?

A woman may find it easier to talk about her partner's use before she feels safe enough to talk about her own. If a woman discloses her partner abuses substances, an advocate might state:

“Many women tell me their partners don't want to drink or drug alone. How often have you found yourself stuck using when you didn't want to?” This is a non-judgmental way to elicit information and provides an opportunity to explore drug related domestic violence. I/V drug users may be particularly vulnerable when targeted by batterers.

Women disclose their partners put them on the street to trade sex for drugs against their will. Many women I/V drug users begin their drug use in the context of a relationship. They may never shoot up alone. Their partner shoots-up for them. Introducing a partner to illicit drug use is a form of domestic violence. Another form of abuse occurs when a batterer deliberately uses dirty needles or cottons or misses a vein on purpose. This also poses a risk for transmission of disease including hepatitis and HIV. Maintaining power and control by serving as a connection or determining a partner's drug supply can also be a form of domestic violence.

Chemically dependent battered women may believe their safety will be assured if they just get sober. For a chemically dependent battered woman, getting sober can pose new risk. An abusive partner may increase violence as the recovering battered woman becomes harder to control. Before screening for substance abuse, validate a woman's survival and praise her sincerely for finding her own way to cope. This should lead to a discussion where you can include the following:

- “You deserve credit for finding a way to cope. Tell me what made you able to survive?”
- “Many women I see tell me when they experience pain they find a way to deal with it. Some women tell me they become compulsive cleaners; others get into shopping, eating or not eating, sleeping a lot or working too much. Have you tried any of these ways of coping? A lot of women tell me the best way to cope is to numb out by drinking or drugging. How often has this worked for you? Can you think of any reasons why drinking or drugging could be unsafe for someone with an abusive partner?” What kinds of luck have you had with other coping skills?”

6.) I want to know how to deal with the manipulations used to avoid substance abuse issues.

‘Manipulation’ is another word with negative connotations. Let’s reframe this statement to read “I want to know how to advocate for women who do not feel safe enough to be open about their substance use.” Every day advocates deal with women other systems label as impossible. In our field we understand women make decisions about their safety daily and we recognize dealing with domestic violence is a process. You, as battered women’s advocates, have all the skills you need to deal with the ‘manipulations’ associated with addiction if you understand this manipulation is a survival strategy. Recognize the woman you are working with is in an abusive relationship with a substance that has her in chains no less binding than the oppressive chains a batterer uses to bind a victim. Also, you are not alone. Substance abuse counselors can address the addiction and help you focus on your role which is to provide advocacy. Women facing the dual stigma of both addiction and domestic violence may be reluctant to openly seek help. Generally speaking, women don’t routinely self-identify as either addicted or battered unless their safety is assured. Safety includes knowing you are not being labeled or judged. Chemically dependent battered women tell us they benefit most from advocates who:

“Try to make you feel like you aren’t the only one. And that somebody else did make it. And someone else has made a life for themselves. They try to make you feel that you’re not worthless or useless.”

Chemically dependent battered women have little reason to trust. Both their bodies and their partners have let them down. Advocacy based counseling looks different for chemically dependent battered women who may have withdrawal issues, memory distortions and cognitive deficits. Advocacy-based counseling for those impacted by substance abuse and/or addiction may include: Repeating information, providing structure, simplifying goals, advocating for their inclusion in shelters and other victim service programs and understanding the impact of chemicals on safety planning and role identity.

Respectful screening for addiction issues that may impact safety involves conveying the message addiction and violence can happen to anyone. Advise women: “Any woman is vulnerable; you are not alone should these problems be facing you.” A successful intervention requires internally moving beyond the notion, “Why doesn’t she just quit?” or “Why doesn’t she just leave?” Questions such as these convey lack of knowledge and failure to understand the complexity of safely ending a relationship with either a substance or an abusive partner.

Honestly discussing sobriety as a safety risk is extremely important. A woman’s decision not to stop using immediately or to decline treatment, advocacy or shelter should not be viewed as failure. Recovery is both an option and a process that can take time. Know your resources. Build alliances with substance abuse prevention professionals and treatment providers. You don’t need to be a chemical dependency counselor. A chemical dependency counselor can provide treatment when it is safe. Addicts will engage in manipulative behavior because they are terrified they cannot live without their substance. They are in pain and they are scared. If we can accept that manipulation is a reasonable way to address the tyranny of addiction we can acknowledge that manipulation is not about fooling us but about survival. If you feel manipulated, so what! Recognize manipulation is a survival strategy. Be respectful but offer program participants honesty as well as options to honestly get what they want or need when they are ready.

Example: “Mary, if I were afraid I would lose my housing I would say I was not drinking too. You don’t have to cover up here. I know you were drinking cause for what ever reason, you felt you had to. People do that. But I’m worried about you. Sample follow-up statements might include:

- 1) Are you more afraid of stopping drinking then of your batterer? Either one can be scary. Both together may be worse.
- 2) What problem scares you the most? What do you want to work on first? What can I do to help you?
- 3) If there was one thing I could do to support you, what would it be? What do you want to do?

The Intervention is in the Asking

“I could not recover from substance abuse if I was still being physically abused, mentally abused, because I would be right back to using. So they walk hand in hand. I would not recover from one unless I address the other, and vice versa.”

It is not necessary for advocates to become chemical dependency counselors but it is important for them to ask about substance use. Countless intervention opportunities are missed when advocates are afraid to ask lest they offend or view intervention as futile. The intervention is in the asking. When women are respectfully asked about both their use and their safety, they hear, even if they are not yet ready to listen or enact change immediately. Often women will later share comments such as, “You know, when you said...it really made sense to me.” Supporting women through their process of change requires an understanding that motivation comes from within. It also takes knowledge of local resources. Safety and sobriety are indeed possible.

Acknowledging the woman before you has managed to survive; sincerely appreciating her individual strengths and recognizing her innate dignity can support her own process and help build a healthy and powerful alliance that benefits both her and her children.

We Share a Similar Story

Safety and sobriety can be addressed respectfully if we acknowledge both substance use (e.g. a glass of wine with dinner), and being in an intimate relationship (e.g. dating or having a partner) is a common experience both for the women we serve and for us. This means misuse of substances or abuse within a romantic relationship could happen to anyone. Any woman may use substances or find herself with a partner. This being the case, any woman could find herself having a problem with either or both through no fault of her own.

Women suffering from addiction don't know when they have the first drink or take the first drug what the future will hold. They expect to 'feel better' or 'kill pain' and find themselves believing they can 'control' it. Unfortunately, addiction is about loss of control and powerlessness. This loss of control and powerlessness does not mean one is weak or helpless. Instead, those who experience addiction cannot reasonably predict what will happen when they use. One is powerless only in terms of how one's body, one's liver, one's brain responds once alcohol or other drugs are introduced inside it. Many addicted women don't want to stop using alcohol or drugs. They want the craving, the problems and the pain of withdrawal to stop. They want to be like everybody else who can have a social drink or take medication without serious physical ramifications. Unfortunately, once an allergy is discovered, the addict must forever avoid substances or experience life-threatening consequences much as those who are allergic to bees must avoid getting stung. Fortunately we can support women's empowerment through our knowledge of options and available resources.

When possible, encourage chemically dependent battered women to consider attending a support group addressing issues pertaining to both domestic violence and chemical dependency. Integrated support groups offer women a format to heal utilizing techniques that are applicable for reaching both goals of safety and sobriety. The major goal of successful groups addressing these issues is to be a safe place where women can tell their story, be believed and begin the healing and connection process. Gender specific support groups and treatment are generally recommended for battered women.

“And it feels in the beginning that it's the end of the world, but it's actually the beginning of a new life.”

“I have my youngest daughter back. She lives with me. My oldest daughter is getting married and my middle daughter is a college student.”

Women from all walks of life are at risk for domestic violence and chemical dependency but screening, identification and intervention can provide empowering options. Women from all walks of life get safe and sober and raise safe, healthy children. Be a bridge to safety and sobriety, screen for substance abuse as part of a safety plan.

7.) Based on your experiences, what are some fair consequences for using in shelter? Do you feel that different levels of response are appropriate?

Based on my experience, I can tell you that there are variations in how programs respond to substance abuse issues. It helps to have a basic policy supported by procedures that advocates have been trained to utilize. Your policy should not routinely deny access to services solely based on substance use by a participant but should address a variety of options. I recommend you review the Alaska Model policy as well as that of Washington State and Illinois. I also recommend you receive training on addiction issues and how they impact safety, provide training for staff, establish linkages with treatment and support group resources and seek guidance from formerly battered women who are in recovery. The Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault can provide you with sample forms, technical assistance, policy options, safety planning and other tools. Different levels of response are indeed appropriate and will take thought to apply within the framework of your agency. There are indeed fair consequences for using in shelter although I would probably reframe that to state, “Choosing to use while in shelter is a choice that impacts the safety of others and may result in:

_____ as a direct result of that choice. If you are not sure you can safely choose to refrain from using during your stay we will help you explore your options which may include: _____.

Note: As advocates our primary goal is not to serve as substance abuse counselors or police officers. Exercise caution. Don't use an individual's substance use as an excuse to 'kick someone out' or 'make them go to treatment.' Deal with each person as an individual and decide how to proceed on a case by case basis. Remember batterers can be lethal. Help program participants develop a safety plan and explore workable options. What can we do to support someone where they are? How can we leave paths open, build bridges, develop alternate housing options and partner with other providers to support empowerment, autonomy, safety and sobriety for those whose addiction creates barriers and increased risk for harm? Every time a battered woman is denied access to help due to substance abuse issues a batterer benefits. Don't forget that. Don't allow it to happen at your program.

8.) How do you maintain a drug and alcohol free shelter with issues that are so deeply embedded in each other?

Develop Strategies for Safety and Sobriety

- 1.) Have releases of information and identify who to call for help (e.g. sponsor, counselor, Alcohol Drug Help Line); help program participant form support systems, know about safe meetings; consider having an on-site support group.
- 2.) Get educated. Know information about addiction. Talk to women in recovery. Purchase resources, videos, recovery workbooks, posters, etc. to make your program 'user' friendly.
- 3.) Remove substances and paraphernalia from the program (e.g. cough syrup and mouth washes with alcohol, pseudoephedrine, old medications, etc.)
- 4.) Recognize unsafe persons, places, things putting a woman's sobriety at risk can also threaten her safety.
- 5.) Understand how to deal with legal and other problems stemming from addiction (e.g. health, OCS/CPS involvement, poor nutrition) contributing to safety problems
- 6.) Help program participants assemble paperwork to determine eligibility for substance abuse treatment, public assistance, employment, school, housing or other options.
- 7.) Know how domestic violence can be a relapse issue and know how batterers use both addiction status and substances to harm program participants

- 8.) Understand physical, emotional, cognitive, environmental and other cues indicative of risk for use and have a plan to help program participants deal with these issues; recognize the role of stress and craving, have a plan to help program participants deal with these issues as well.
- 9.) Help program participants learn parenting options, figure out options to engage in relationships, develop sober friendships
- 10.) Be consistent but flexible
- 11.) Address substance abuse issues promptly. Note concerns verbally or in the log (not client file) and shred the log regularly. Address alcohol/drug issues promptly. Do not fail to address alcohol/drug issues more than one shift. Delays increase risk and make advocacy and safety more challenging.
- 12.) Seek consultation regularly; hypotheticals with non-identifying info do not breach confidentiality.
- 13.) Prioritize hiring recovering advocates and/or advocates with substance abuse prevention or counseling backgrounds. Recruit recovering women as volunteers and staff.
- 14.) Consider addressing addiction both as a safety issue and as anti-oppression work. You are preventing able-bodyism and keeping batterers from benefiting from negative stereotypes about women with addiction. This is a life long process.

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New York State OPDV Model County Policy Substance Abuse Treatment System

MODEL PROTOCOL FOR WORKING WITH WOMEN IMPACTED BY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

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WIRC (Women in Recovery Caucus)

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Introduction

The primary goal of this model protocol is to help advocates better meet the safety needs of all battered women by providing them with the tools to address service needs and options for battered women and children impacted by their own or another's substance use, misuse or addiction. Our challenge as advocates is to provide as safe an environment as possible for all who use our services or work at our programs. Ideally, this protocol and model policy will serve as a first step toward identifying options for both battered women impacted by substance use and their advocates.

Every individual we serve is unique and every advocacy program has strengths and challenges impacting our ability to provide services for battered women and their children. In order to better extend services and advocacy to battered women with separate issues of substance use, misuse or addiction we must examine our current practices and explore new strategies.

Battered women impacted by substance abuse are often invisible when in our programs or perceived as disruptive when their substance use becomes evident or unmanageable. Many times they are missing from our programs altogether. They often need our services

the most and yet are among those who are least likely to seek or receive services. Hopefully, the material provided here will help reduce service access barriers as well as improve safety outcomes for women and their children.

Included in this document are model policies and procedures offered as creative approaches or current best practice for responding to substance-abusing and chemically dependent battered women. As you review the material and recommended guidelines, you may find some of the suggested best practices are initially difficult to implement.

Agency policies supporting a substance-free environment will need to be balanced with a multi-step approach providing opportunities for substance-abusing women to discuss their daily struggle with sobriety and their compulsion to use as issues that affect both safety and empowerment. This effort will help battered women achieve both justice and freedom from abusers who often use their partners' substance use, misuse or addiction to gain or maintain power and control.

At the Network, we recognize the work of advocates is both incredibly hard and vitally necessary. By critically assessing the impact of our policies and practices on battered women with substance abuse issues, we seek to reduce the barriers to safety all victims face. By listening to the experiences of battered women recovering from substance abuse and addiction, we expand our ability to respond to all women who are living with violence. We recognize and support your ongoing commitment to extend services to all battered women. We hope this protocol will help you identify small but important action steps you can implement to enhance safety for all.

BACKGROUND

While most women who have experienced intimate partner violence do not suffer from chemical dependency, it is important to acknowledge many women who work, live or receive services at our programs are dealing with addiction and recovery issues. A recent study of Illinois domestic violence shelters reveals that as many as 42% of service recipients abuse alcohol or other drugs (Bennett & Lawson, 1994). Researcher William Downs reports findings indicating one in four women in an Iowa shelter/safe home sample had a lifetime diagnosis of alcohol dependence and another one in four had alcohol or other drug problems (Downs, 2002).

The Women's Action Alliance experience with a domestic violence shelter program over a fifteen-month period of time indicated 60-75% of the women seeking shelter services had developed problems with their original coping mechanisms, alcohol and drugs (Roth, 1991). Preliminary data from a National Institute on Drug Abuse study noted 90% of women in drug treatment had experienced severe domestic violence from a partner during their lifetime (Miller, 1994). Similar findings have been noted on monthly client service reports from the Alcohol/Drug Help Line Domestic Violence Outreach Project in Washington State (Bland, 2003). Clearly, a significant number of women and children seen in domestic violence agencies and sexual assault victim service programs suffer from substance abuse problems (Kubbs, 2000).

As recently as fifteen years ago, Finkelstein reported alcoholism and drug abuse were still viewed primarily as "men's diseases" (Finkelstein, 1994). Substance abuse and addiction are women's issues. According to the Washington State Coalition on Women's Substance Issues, the physiological impact of substance abuse in women needs more attention. Women have higher blood alcohol levels than do males after consuming equal amounts of alcohol (LaGrange, 1994; Lieber, 1993). Research has documented women have a higher prevalence and greater severity of alcohol-related liver disease with shorter duration of alcohol use and lower consumption levels than men (Kubbs, 2000). Women also have higher death rates from alcohol-related damage (CSAT, 1994).

While using substances can initially serve as a survival strategy or coping mechanism anyone might use in the context of abuse, pain, illness or other trauma, studies indicate women are more likely to begin substance misuse in response to trauma. Women are likely to use prescription medication much more often than men. Seventy percent of prescriptions for tranquilizers, sedatives and stimulants are written for women (Roth, 1991). The Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women (1992) states that psychotropic medication is over-prescribed for battered women. They also note that women who have been abused may also use alcohol or drugs for a variety of other reasons, including: coercion by an abusive partner, chemical dependency, cultural oppression, or—for women recently leaving a battering relationship—a new sense of freedom.

Unfortunately, using substances for any reason becomes problematic when misuse occurs or addiction is indicated. A significant number of battered women and survivors of sexual assault with substance abuse or addiction issues typically experience barriers to services and discrimination. Ability to maintain employment, housing, health insurance or child custody may be threatened by public disclosure of current or past substance

abuse problems. Societal attitudes tend to view addiction as a moral failing rather than as a health problem. This can lead to isolation and shame, which may be compounded when domestic violence and/or sexual assault co-occur. Most alarming of all, is the impact of multiple abuse issues on safety. Safety is strongly compromised when domestic violence and chemical dependence co-occur. While these problems frequently co-occur, there is little evidence that either problem causes the other. Individually, each can be chronic, progressive and lethal. Together, severity of injuries and lethality rates climb for chemically dependent battered women (Dutton, 1992). These problems are compounded when perpetrators include sexual assault and other forms of sexual abuse in their arsenal of violence.

The following are a few of the many reasons an individual who experiences domestic violence and/or sexual abuse and who also has a substance abuse problem, may be at increased risk for harm (Bland, 1997; Illinois Dept. of Human Services, 2000):

- Acute and chronic effects of alcohol and other drug use may prevent one from accurately assessing the level of danger posed by a perpetrator.
- Under the influence, one may feel a sense of increased power. Individuals may erroneously believe they can defend themselves against physical assaults and may not realize the impact of substances on their gross motor functioning and reflexes.
- Substance use and misuse can impair judgment and thought processes (including memory) making safety planning more difficult. (See: “euphoric recall” and “blackout” in Definitions section of Appendix).
- Alcohol and other drug use may be encouraged or forced by an abusive partner as a mechanism of control. Abstinence and recovery efforts may be sabotaged. *For example, a domestic violence/sexual assault victim receiving methadone on a daily basis could easily be stalked.*
- There may be reluctance on the part of the crime victim to seek assistance or contact police for fear of arrest, deportation or referral to Child Protective Services.
- The compulsion to use and withdrawal symptoms may make it difficult for substance-abusing or addicted victims of domestic violence/sexual assault to access services such as shelter, advocacy, or other forms of help.
- Additionally, a recovering woman may find the stress of securing safety leads to relapse.
- If she is using or has used in the past, she may not be believed.

Because women impacted by substance use, misuse or addiction may be at greater risk for injury and lethality, screening for substance abuse is an important tool for identifying barriers to safety and offering options. We can support women seeking safety and sobriety by reducing program service barriers and ending isolation for chemically dependent battered women and their children.

RECOMMENDED POLICY

[Name of agency] shall work to ensure access and services for all recipients by providing universal screening which separately addresses issues of substance use, misuse and addiction, and the delivery of appropriate services and referrals. Universal screening, service delivery and referrals should consider the following issues:

10. Assessing immediate risk to program participants from domestic violence and sexual assault as well as from alcohol and other drug overdose and withdrawal is essential because both domestic violence and substance misuse can be lethal.
11. Addressing the impact of substance abuse on safety planning.
12. Partnering with a local chemical dependency program and/or consulting with local substance abuse professionals to develop tools for identifying and addressing the needs of women and children impacted by domestic violence/sexual assault and substance abuse is essential because substance use can impact safety planning.
13. For women with addiction issues, safety planning includes developing a relapse prevention plan and continuing support after relapse for women choosing to continue to work on their safety and recovery.
14. Providing linkages to a range of chemical dependency assistance options, such as medical detox, inpatient or outpatient treatment programs, counseling, Alcoholics Anonymous meetings, and other support groups.
15. Providing written materials relevant to domestic violence, sexual assault, chemical dependency and substance abuse.
16. Developing a budget plan to implement comprehensive support services to battered women impacted by substance abuse.
17. Developing on-site integrated support groups to address safety issues for program participants and their children who are impacted by their own or another's substance use, misuse or addiction.
18. Periodic training of staff.
19. Monitoring of the program.

OVERVIEW: A MULTI-STEP APPROACH

The overview below identifies basic elements necessary to provide appropriate services for women impacted by violence and substance use, abuse and addiction issues. Recommended procedures for addressing service delivery in a variety of settings are discussed following this overview.

The following steps are recommended:

6. Screening and identification
7. Initial intervention and follow-up
8. Information and referral
9. Alternatives to substance use/Relapse prevention
10. Safety planning
11. Emotional support

Screening and Identification

We recommend that programs examine their criteria for services and avoid blanket service restrictions for women seeking shelter or other services based solely on their alcohol or drug use history. In many cases, the perpetrator is more of an immediate threat than risks associated with substance use. It is important to stress overdose and withdrawal can pose serious health risks and can become life threatening. These problems can occur even when routine screening reveals no obviously existing substance abuse issues. For this reason, it is important for programs to develop linkages with emergency department personnel, health care providers, detoxification center staff and other chemical dependency professionals.

A substance screen is an opportunity to help a victim of domestic violence/sexual assault identify whether or not her safety is impacted by her own or another person's use, misuse or addiction to substances. This discussion is a preliminary step to determine whether alcohol or other drug problems exist that could impact her safety. Screening for substance use involves talking with individuals about their partner's alcohol and drug use (*as well as their own*), observing behaviors and recognizing signs of use.

Advocates are asked to routinely screen for substance use because some of our intervention and follow-up, including information and referrals we provide, will be based on whether or not substances pose a safety risk for the domestic violence/sexual assault victim and/or others. Routine screening is simple and does not require advocates to provide a full assessment.

Screening differs considerably from an assessment. An assessment uses diagnostic instruments and processes to determine if the person is abusing, or is dependent on alcohol or other drugs. We may describe assessment as an option for women who are concerned about their use and provide information and referral should any woman we are screening express interest in an assessment for themselves or others.

Respectful screening involves conveying the message that addiction and violence can happen to anyone. Advise women “Any woman is vulnerable; you are not alone.” A successful intervention requires internally moving beyond the notion, “Why doesn’t she just quit?” or “Why doesn’t she just leave?” Questions such as these convey lack of knowledge and failure to understand the complexity of safely ending a relationship with either a substance or an abusive partner.

Honestly discussing substance abuse as a safety risk is extremely important. A woman’s decision to keep using or to decline treatment, advocacy or shelter should not be viewed as failure. Recovery is both an option and a process that can take time. Screening and referral can help build a bridge from substance abuse or addiction to health and safety for chemically dependent battered women and their children.

Women facing the dual stigma of both addiction and domestic violence may be reluctant to openly seek help. Generally speaking, women do not self-identify as either addicted or battered unless their safety is assured. Safety includes knowing you are not being labeled or judged.

When screening for substance use be sure to:

- Ensure privacy. Children should not be present.
- Communicate respect and trust. When screening over the phone, let callers know you are asking these questions to better determine their safety needs; not to weed them out. Assure those you screen, both on the phone and in person, that, except for specific mandated safety concerns (*e.g., CPS or APS-mandated requirements*), anything discussed will be held in strictest confidence and will not jeopardize their ability to receive appropriate services.
- Listen carefully and observe behavior. Notice signs of possible alcohol and other drug use. Signs of use include slurred or rapid speech, smell of alcohol, track marks, scabbing, unusual or extreme behavior such as nodding off or being overly alert, staggering, tremors, glassy eyes, dilated or constricted pupils, difficulty sitting still, and tactile hallucinations that lead to scratching or skin picking. Notice if the person you are talking to is disoriented or confused for no apparent reason, argumentative, defensive or angry about questions relating to substance use. Please note that any one thing here does not mean a person is to be automatically labeled as an addict. For example, slurred speech could mean a hearing deficit. Scratching could mean scabies. Confusion could be stemming from a head injury. The purpose of screening is to notice areas of possible concern, to recognize patterns and to help women determine what might be their best options.

Keep in mind that women impacted by both domestic violence/sexual assault and addiction have little reason to trust. Both their bodies and their partners have let them down. Consequently, substance-abusing women who experience domestic violence and /or sexual assault are often reluctant to disclose substance use. Disclosure may not be perceived as a viable option. Understand denial. Denial is the most frequent response to questions about substance use whether alcohol or other drug use is an issue or not. For this reason, it is important to provide every woman with brief information about safety and sobriety regardless of the outcome of a screen.

Respectful screening creates an environment where it may seem safer for a woman to disclose use. Ask questions in a non-judgmental manner.

Initial Intervention and Follow-up

Described below are different categories that reflect an individual's use of substances. An advocate's response and follow-up should be determined by each individual woman's experience with substance use.

No Significant Problem with Substance Abuse

Once an initial screening occurs, an advocate may determine a woman has no significant problem with substance use. Should this be the case, information about safety should be provided. Alcohol and drugs affect the brain and the body whether addiction is present or not. This information should be included along with basic information about how substance use can compromise safety. Sometimes a woman herself may not be using or misusing substances but her safety may be compromised by another's use. Discussions about safety should explore risks associated with partner use as well.

Follow-up is advised to determine whether a woman's needs change over time. Additional options, referrals and support must be offered if, over time, an advocate becomes aware of potential difficulties stemming from the client's, or another person's, use, misuse or addiction. Follow-up may address concerns stemming from changes in observed behavior, noticeable signs of substance use or concerns about drug-seeking behavior (e.g., over-use of over-the-counter or prescription medications).

It is also helpful to be alert. Notice if the client has:

- The odor of alcohol on her breath
- Red eyes, pin-point or dilated pupils
- Track marks on arms, hands or feet
- Inflamed or eroded nasal septum

Cues which, if not directly indicative of addiction, at least indicate substance misuse may be occurring, include:

- Rapid speech
- Difficulty tracking conversation
- Scratching and picking at arms or face during a visit
- Lethargy
- Nodding
- Cigarette burns (which may also be indicative of domestic violence)
- Prescription drug-seeking behavior

Significant Problem with Substance Abuse

Substance abuse is a destructive pattern of use of drugs including alcohol, which leads to clinically significant (social, occupational, medical) impairment or distress. Often the substance use continues in spite of significant life problems related to that use. Following an initial screening, an advocate may identify a woman has an increased safety risk stemming from her, or another's, significant problem with substance misuse or abuse. Sometimes a significant problem with substance abuse is not identified at an initial contact but is revealed later. Whenever substance abuse is identified, information about safety should be provided and concern should be expressed. Options should include reviewing safer alternatives to substance use, providing linkage to counseling and on-site support systems, as well as community-based referrals. Discussions about safety should explore risks associated with partner substance abuse as well.

Substance-abusing women should be asked to consider refraining from substance use while they are using services. Follow-up should include checking to see if abstinence is causing any unexpected challenges or difficulties. Should a woman feel out of control, preoccupied by use, edgy or compelled to use, addiction may be indicated and withdrawal symptoms may appear.

Chemical Dependence

Substance use and misuse are behaviors. Research supports several theories related to causal etiologies of substance abuse and addiction, including behavioral, medical and other models. According to the disease model, chemical dependence, unlike domestic violence, is not a behavior. It is considered a primary chronic disease with genetic, psychosocial and environmental factors influencing its development and manifestations. The disease is often progressive and fatal.

When a person begins to exhibit symptoms of tolerance (the need for significantly larger amounts of substance to achieve intoxication) and withdrawal (adverse reactions after a reduction of substance), it is likely that the person has progressed from abuse to dependence and addiction. While diversity of thought exists pertaining to addiction, it is critical to learn to recognize and identify women with this condition and provide appropriate intervention.

Battered Women in Recovery from Chemical Dependence

Following an initial screening, an advocate may learn a woman is in recovery from addiction to alcohol or other substances. Whenever past substance abuse is identified, information about safety should be provided and concern should be expressed about risks to sobriety associated with domestic violence, sexual assault and stress. These concerns may be greater for women with less time in recovery, but warranted for any woman addressing these issues regardless of amount of time in recovery.

Basic safety and sobriety tips should be provided, as well as information about risks associated with partner substance use. Options should include reviewing current support systems, providing linkage to counseling and on-site support systems, as well as community-based referrals. Follow-up is indicated periodically to determine whether increased support is wanted. Chemical dependence is a disease marked by periodic relapse. Should obvious signs of renewed preoccupation with substances or substance use occur, address them immediately. Discuss safety options including support groups and treatment with an open, supportive and non-judgmental attitude.

Battered Women Currently Active in their Addiction

Expressing care and concern rather than being critical is most useful when helping chemically dependent battered women address addiction and its impact on their safety. Be gentle. Always include messages linking safety and sobriety and address the benefits of stopping use at any time.

Addiction is characterized by continuous or periodic impaired control over drinking alcohol or using other drugs, preoccupation with drugs or alcohol, use of drugs or alcohol despite adverse consequences and distortions in thinking (most notably denial). Therefore, this problem impacts sufferers whether they are actively using or not.

Addiction is marked by physiological and central nervous system changes that lead to the development of tolerance, loss of control, continued use in spite of adverse consequences and withdrawal symptoms. Women are often unable to discontinue use without assistance.

Should this be the case, advocates will need to help women assess whether the immediate risk from a perpetrator outweighs those stemming from their current substance abuse and addiction. Ultimately this is not a question of whether safety or sobriety should take place first. Safety and sobriety are both important, since one is less likely without the other. Rather, the question is: What does the woman you are advocating for want to address today?

Discuss strategies to support behavior change such as 12-step programs, chemical dependency/domestic violence support groups and treatment options. If possible, suggest a referral for a more in-depth chemical dependency assessment and make the appointment together if the client is interested. Get a release of information and maintain communication with the chemical dependency treatment provider to support her progress. Be sure to follow up and provide emotional support.

Information and Referral

Providing advocacy-based counseling for battered women and survivors of sexual assault impacted by substance abuse is enhanced when advocates are:

- Informed about treatment options and community resources.
- Participating in cross-training with substance abuse programs to increase awareness of safety and sobriety issues.
- Willing to provide service options for individuals who are substance dependent whether they are in treatment or not.

Advocates must be able to provide accurate information about substance use, abuse and addiction and know what their local resources are. Linkages with your local substance abuse treatment program as well as knowledge of local medical options for program participants who may have a medical crisis stemming from overdose or withdrawal is essential.

Ideally, these linkages will help advocates become familiar with their local resources. Developing a relationship with your local chemical dependency prevention service provider can enhance safety and improve advocacy. Developing this relationship can lead to collaborative partnerships and staff exchanges for support groups. Victim service programs and chemical dependency programs can provide information and educational opportunities together to address both domestic violence and substance abuse issues. Many such collaborative ventures are working well here in Alaska in Dillingham, Palmer, Anchorage and other communities.

For general information about chemical dependency, The Alcohol/Drug Help Line 206-722-3700 or 1-800-562-1240 (*WA or AK only*) is available twenty-four hours a day to provide information about substances, including use, abuse and addiction. They can answer specific questions for battered women and survivors of sexual assault who are addressing substance abuse issues as well as help advocates develop options. See Resources section of Appendix for contact information.

Alternatives to Substance Abuse:

Relapse Prevention and Safety Planning

One-to-one advocacy and support group sessions should provide information that offers an alternative to substance use as part of a safety plan. Tools to integrate substance abuse as a safety issue are included in the Appendix (see Power and Control Wheel for Women's Substance Abuse).

Since addiction is marked by relapse, and relapse is often triggered by stress, women in recovery experiencing domestic violence may need additional support. According to Bland (2001), advocates may help recovering battered women and survivors of sexual assault develop a safety plan that includes but is not limited to:

- Identifying who to call for help (e.g., advocate, rape crisis line, sponsor, counselor, Alcohol/Drug Help Line); forming support systems, knowing about safe meetings
- Knowing information and education about addiction, domestic violence and sexual assault.
- Removing substances and paraphernalia from the home
- Recognizing unsafe persons, places, things
- Understanding how to deal with legal and other problems stemming from addiction, domestic violence and sexual assault (e.g., health, CPS involvement, poor nutrition)
- Assembling paperwork to determine eligibility for assistance or to begin seeking employment, school, housing or other options
- Knowing how domestic violence and sexual assault can be relapse issues
- Understanding physical, emotional, cognitive, environmental and other cues indicative of risk and having a plan to deal with it; recognizing role of stress and craving, having a plan to deal with it
- Learning how to parent, engaging in relationships, developing sober friendships
- Knowing when and where to run in a life-threatening situation that puts her sobriety and safety at risk

Consult with Patti Bland at the Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Office by phone: 907-586-3650 or email: pbland.andvsa@alaska.com or consider contacting the Alcohol/Drug Help Line Domestic Violence Outreach Project in Washington State for additional tips to address both alternatives to substance abuse and relapse prevention 1-800-652-1240.

Emotional Support

Last but not least, it is important to remind ourselves that addressing domestic violence, sexual assault and substance abuse issues is always difficult and challenging. Domestic violence and sexual assault programs can, according to Illinois Dept. of Human Services (2000), support victims struggling with issues of substance abuse in the following ways:

- Assist staff in dealing with their own feelings and prejudices about substance abuse. Provide on-going training to enable staff to recognize the characteristics of substance abuse and to make appropriate referrals.
- Minimize blame and moral reprobation for use or relapse which may further disempower the victim and empower the batterer.
- Inform and advise the victim and treatment providers of the risks of conjoint couples counseling sessions.

- While providing advocacy-based counseling, help women recognize the role substance abuse plays. It can keep them tied to an abusive relationship, increase their risk for harm and impair their safety planning ability.
- Assist victims by helping them find an alternative means of empowerment as replacement for the sense of power induced by substances.
- Include plans for continued sobriety as part of a safety plan. Help the victim understand the batterer may attempt to undermine her sobriety before the victim exits the shelter or completes advocacy services.
- Encourage and facilitate linkage with substance abuse treatment resources and abstinence-based support groups.
- Remain aware of which local substance abuse programs and support groups offer the highest degree of physical and psychological safety for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

RECOMMENDED PROCEDURES

Initial Contact/Crisis Intervention

This is a critical opportunity to provide support and information for battered women and survivors of sexual assault impacted by substance abuse. Initially, the advocate will not know if the individual uses, misuses or is addicted to alcohol and/or other substances. The advocate's ability to communicate through the appropriate knowledge of the issues that she is facing may help save the victim's life and the lives of her children. During the initial contact, following initial crisis intervention and safety planning, advocates should:

1. Inform the program participant of agency policy regarding chemical dependency and the agency goal of providing an environment of safety and sobriety. Be clear that you are asking about the substance use in order to best plan for her safety and sobriety, not as the basis for denying services.
2. Affirm the woman's survival skills and praise her sincerely for finding ways to cope with her situation before screening for substance abuse.
3. Determine if the program participant has drug use issues that affect her safety by using the appropriate screening forms.
4. Discussion about safety may include her opinions on how drinking or drug use could affect her safety.
5. If the program participant has substance abuse or addiction issues but is not ready to address recovery at the moment, provide safety planning that includes referrals to community resources such as the local chemical dependency program, 12-step meetings or Alcohol/Drug Help Line as an option in the future.
6. Make sure all staff who are in contact with a chemically dependent program participant know about the resources available (i.e., contact information for the

- local chemical dependency program, emergency health care provider numbers, list of AA/NA meetings, Alcohol/Drug Help Line, etc.) and how to support her in her choice of sobriety.
7. If the program participant is seeking treatment or is in the detoxing process, refer her to the appropriate medical or counseling resources.
 8. Inform the program participant what her legal rights are, as well as what to expect from a police response. Discuss alternatives and options with her. Advise her how to call the police if she feels she is in immediate danger. Let her know this program will always support her.

In the Shelter

When working with a battered woman impacted by substance use in the shelter, advocates should:

1. Inform the program participant of agency policy regarding chemical dependency and the agency goal of providing an environment of safety and sobriety. Be clear that you are asking about the substance use in order to best plan for her safety and sobriety, not as the basis for denying services.
2. Affirm the woman's survival skills and praise her sincerely for finding ways to cope with her situation before screening for substance abuse.
3. Determine if she has drug use issues by using the appropriate screening forms.
4. If the program participant uses or misuses substances, discuss safety issues with her. Discussion about safety may include her opinions on how drinking or drug use could affect her safety.
5. Tell her that alcohol and drugs affect the brain and the body whether addiction is present or not. Discuss options and alternatives to substance use as a coping mechanism.

After screening, if the program participant has substance abuse issues, the advocate should:

6. Tell the program participant about the non-alcohol or other drug use agreement and ask her to support her recovery by signing it and adhering to this agreement during her stay in the program.
7. Work with the program participant on a safety plan which includes relapse prevention, support group attendance and medical attention, if needed.
8. If she relapses and wants to keep working on her safety and sobriety, support her choice to sign the non-alcohol and other drug use agreement again and adhere to it during her stay in the program.
9. Make sure that all staff who are in contact with chemically dependent program participants know about available resources (i.e., local chemical dependency

- program, list of AA/NA meetings, contact information for Alcohol/Drug Help Line) and how to support them in their choice of both safety and sobriety.
10. Provide information regarding chemical dependency support groups in the community (for women, suggest same-gender 12-step groups) and provide internal support groups with a chemical dependency focus to foster both safety and sobriety efforts.
 11. If a program participant is seeking treatment or is in the detoxing process, refer her to the appropriate resources and make the necessary follow-up to support her through this process.
 12. Inform program participants how to contact the police and explain their legal rights, as well as what to expect from a police response. Discuss alternative options with her if she is not comfortable calling the police.
 13. Work with program participants to develop an ongoing support plan to keep up with the actions she chose for her safety and sobriety.
 14. Make sure that the information provided is clear and easily accessible.
 15. Develop a support plan for making important calls and a reminder plan for appointments with doctors, treatment providers and other agencies WITH the program participant.
 16. Meet separately with program participants' children to assess their needs.
 17. Provide the program participants with information as to what behaviors advocates and/or the agency are mandated to report to OCS. This information should make clear that disclosure of the use of alcohol and other drugs in and of itself is not a mandatory reporting issue.
 18. If a program participant has legal issues stemming from their substance abuse history, advocates can assist them by providing advocacy and contacting the LAP for a referral for help with the process of resolving outstanding warrants, etc.
 19. Let her know this program will always support her efforts.

Community Program

When working in the community program, advocates need to remember that battered women impacted by substance abuse are struggling both with safety and sobriety. Advocates need to make sure these program participants feel welcome in the agency and that they and their children are supported.

1. Inform the program participants of agency policy regarding chemical dependency and the agency goal of providing an environment of safety and sobriety. Be clear that you are asking about the substance use in order to best plan for her safety and sobriety, not as the basis for denying services.
2. Affirm the woman's survival skills and praise her sincerely for finding ways to cope with her situation before screening for substance abuse.

3. Determine if she has drug use issues by using the appropriate screening forms.
4. If she uses or misuses substances, discuss safety issues with her. Discussion about safety may include her opinions on how drinking or drug use could affect her safety. Tell her that alcohol and drugs affect the brain and the body whether addiction is present or not.
5. If she is not ready to address substance use or addiction at the moment, be prepared to include a referral to community resources such as the local chemical dependency program, 12-step or other support group meetings and the Alcohol/Drug Help Line as an option in the future.

After screening, if the program participant has substance abuse issues, the advocate should:

6. Tell her about the non-alcohol or other drug use agreement and ask her to support her safety and sobriety by signing it and adhering to this agreement during her stay in the program.
7. Work with her on a safety plan which includes relapse prevention, support group attendance and medical attention, if needed.
8. If she relapses and wants to keep working on her safety and sobriety, support her to choose to sign the non-alcohol and other drug use agreement again and adhere to it during her stay in the program.
9. Make sure that all staff who are in contact with a chemically dependent program participant know about the resources available (i.e., contact information for Alcohol/Drug Help Line, local chemical dependency program, list of AA/NA meetings) and how to support her in her choice of safety and sobriety.
10. Provide information to her regarding chemical dependency support groups in the community (for women, suggest same-sex 12-step groups) and provide internal support groups with a chemical dependency focus.
11. If she is seeking treatment or is in the detoxing process, refer her to the appropriate resources and make the necessary follow-up to support her through this process.
12. Inform her how to contact the police and explain to her what her legal rights are, as well as what to expect from a police response. Discuss alternative options with her if she is not comfortable calling the police.
13. Work with her to develop an ongoing support plan to keep up with the actions she chose for her sobriety.
14. Make sure that the information provided to her is clear and she can easily access it.

15. Develop a support plan for making important calls and a reminder plan for appointments with doctors, treatment providers and other agencies WITH the program participant.
16. Meet separately with program participants' children to assess their needs.
17. Provide program participants with information as to what behaviors advocates and/or the agency are mandated to report to OCS. This information should make clear that disclosure of the use of alcohol and other drugs in and of itself is not a mandatory reporting issue.
18. If a program participant has legal issues stemming from their substance abuse history, advocates can assist them by providing advocacy and contacting the ANDVSA Legal Advocacy Project (LAP) for a referral for help with the process of resolving outstanding warrants, etc.
19. Let her know this program will always support her efforts.

Transitional Housing Program

Because a program participant will remain for a longer period of time in this program, transitional housing advocates have a key opportunity to provide a continuum of support to women working towards safety and sobriety. Advocates can also link a battered woman and survivors of sexual assault impacted by substance abuse with resources in the community to help her and her children, such as: chemical dependency treatment, health care providers, legal resources, community activities, 12-step and other chemical dependency type groups. In order to do this, advocates should:

1. Inform the program participant of agency policy regarding chemical dependency and the agency goal of providing an environment of safety and sobriety. Be clear that you are asking about the substance use in order to best plan for her safety and sobriety, not as the basis for denying services.
2. Affirm the woman's survival skills and praise her sincerely for finding ways to cope with her situation before screening for substance abuse
3. Determine if she has alcohol or drug use issues by using the appropriate screening forms. If she uses or misuses substances, discuss safety issues with her. Discussion about safety may include her opinions on how drinking or drug use could affect her safety. Tell her that alcohol and drugs affect the brain and the body whether addiction is present or not.
4. If she uses or misuses substances, discuss safety issues with her. Discussion about safety may include her opinions on how drinking or drug use could affect her safety. Tell her that alcohol and drugs affect the brain and the body whether addiction is present or not.
5. If she is not ready to address substance use at the moment, be prepared to refer her to community resources such as the local chemical dependency program, 12-step or other support group meetings and the Alcohol Drug Help Line as an option in the future.

After screening, if the program participant has substance abuse issues, the advocate should:

6. Tell her about the non-alcohol or other drug use agreement and ask her to support her safety and sobriety by signing it and adhering to this agreement during her stay in the program.
7. Work with her on a safety plan which includes relapse prevention, support group attendance and medical attention, if needed.
8. If she relapses and wants to keep working on her safety and sobriety, support her choice and encourage her to sign the non-alcohol and other drug use agreement again and adhere to it during her stay in the program.
9. Make sure that all staff who are in contact with a chemically dependent program participant know about the resources available (i.e., contact information for Alcohol/Drug Help Line, local chemical dependency program, list of AA/NA and meetings, medical referrals) and how to support her in her choice of safety and sobriety.
10. Provide information to her regarding chemical dependency support groups in the community (for women, suggest same-sex 12-step groups) and provide internal support groups with a chemical dependency focus.
11. If she is seeking treatment or is in the detoxing process, refer her to the appropriate resources and make the necessary follow-up to support her through this process.
12. Inform her how to contact the police and explain what her legal rights are, as well as what to expect from a police response. Discuss alternative options with her if she is not comfortable calling the police.
13. Work with her to develop an ongoing support plan to keep up with the actions she has chosen for her safety and sobriety.
14. Make sure that the information provided to her is clear and easily accessible.
15. Develop a support plan for making important calls and a reminder plan for appointments with doctors, treatment providers and other agencies WITH the program participant.
16. Meet separately with her children to assess their needs.
17. Provide her with information as to what behaviors advocates and/or the agency are mandated to report to OCS. This information should make clear that disclosure of the use of alcohol and other drugs in and of itself is not a mandatory reporting issue.
18. If a program participant has legal issues stemming from their substance abuse history, advocates can assist them by providing advocacy and contacting the LAP for a referral for help with the process of resolving outstanding warrants, etc.
19. Let her know this program will always support her efforts.

Legal Advocacy

When doing legal advocacy with battered women impacted by substance abuse, advocates need to be aware that program participants may feel threatened by the legal system. Chemical dependency is a disease that has been criminalized. A program participant may have faced legal consequences in the past as a result of her substance use and/or domestic violence. She may have been criticized for a sexual assault because of substance use. The legal advocate must be very clear in explaining to the program participant how the legal system works and that she is going to support her in addressing her legal issues if needed.

1. Inform the program participant of agency policy regarding chemical dependency and the agency goal of providing an environment of safety and sobriety. Be clear that you are asking about the substance use in order to best plan for her safety and sobriety, not as the basis for denying services.
2. Affirm the woman's survival skills and praise her sincerely for finding ways to cope with her situation before screening for substance abuse.
3. Determine if she has drug use issues by using the appropriate screening forms.
4. If she uses or misuses substances, discuss safety issues with her. Discussion about safety may include her opinions on how drinking or drug use could affect her safety. Tell her that alcohol and drugs affect the brain and the body whether addiction is present or not.
5. If she is not ready to address substance use at the moment, be prepared to include a referral to community resources such as the Alcohol/Drug Help Line, local chemical dependency program, or 12-step or other support group meetings as an option for the future should she need it then, as part of her safety plan.

After screening, if she has substance abuse issues, the advocate should:

6. Tell her about the non-alcohol or other drug use agreement and ask her to support her safety and sobriety by signing it and adhering to this agreement during her stay in the program.
7. Work with her on a safety plan which includes relapse prevention, support group attendance and medical attention, if needed.
8. If she relapses and wants to keep working on her safety and sobriety, support her choice and encourage her to sign the non-alcohol and other drug use agreement again and adhere to it during her stay in the program.
9. Make sure that all staff who are in contact with a chemically dependent program participant know about the resources available (i.e., contact information for the Alcohol/Drug Help Line, local chemical dependency program, list of AA/NA and other meetings) and how to support her in her choice of safety and sobriety.

10. Provide information to her regarding chemical dependency support groups in the community (for women, suggest same-sex 12-step groups) and provide internal support groups with a chemical dependency focus.
11. If she is seeking treatment or is in the detoxing process, refer her to the appropriate resources and make the necessary follow-up to support her through this process.
12. Inform her how to contact the police and explain to her what her legal rights are, as well as what to expect from a police response. Discuss alternative options with her if she is not comfortable calling the police.
13. Work with the client to develop an ongoing support plan to keep up with the actions she chose for her safety and sobriety.
14. Make sure that the information provided to her is clear and easily accessible.
15. Develop a support plan for making important calls and a reminder plan for court dates and appointments with lawyers, doctors, treatment providers and other agencies WITH the program participant.
16. Meet separately with the program participant's children to assess their needs.
17. Provide her with information as to what behaviors advocates and/or the agency are mandated to report to OCS. This information should make clear that disclosure of the use of alcohol and other drugs in and of itself is not a mandatory reporting issue.
18. If program participants have legal issues stemming from their substance abuse history, advocates can assist them by providing advocacy and contacting the LAP for a referral for help with the process of resolving outstanding warrants, etc.
19. Legal Advocates need to develop strategies to counter "bad victim" "bad mother" issues facing program participants' with substance abuse issues. Legal advocates must also be aware that alcohol and other substance misuse can lead to impaired memory and blackouts which could result in poor recollection and inconsistencies in the testimony of a witness.

Support Groups

For women impacted by domestic violence, sexual assault and substance abuse, support groups can play an essential role in their safety, sobriety and recovery. It is extremely important for facilitators to provide a safe, non-judgmental environment to talk about safety, sobriety and justice. It is also very important for facilitators to acknowledge a woman's use, misuse or addiction to substances is not the cause of domestic violence or sexual assault. Offenders should always be held solely accountable for the violence they have directed towards their innocent victims. Support groups should have clear ground rules addressing confidentiality, a non-judgmental atmosphere and respect among group members.

Support group facilitators need to be trained in domestic violence and sexual assault issues as well as knowledgeable about substance use, misuse and addiction.

Collaboration with local chemical dependency programs can facilitate cross-training between domestic violence/sexual assault advocates and chemical dependency counselors.

The following can be useful group topics for women affected by their own or their partner's substance abuse:

- Use, Misuse and Addiction: Impact on Safety
- What is chemical dependency?
- Tactics abusers use to control their partners (related to substance use)
- Date Rape Drugs
- Safety planning and relapse prevention
- Safety planning for stalking victims
- Continuum of domestic violence and of addiction manifestations
- Power and control wheel for chemical dependency issues

The Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault is in the process of developing a support group manual to assist you in the provision of support groups which will be completed in the Fall of 2005.

Community Partnership

Battered women and victims of sexual assault impacted by substance abuse often contact other services, such as health providers or chemical dependency agencies, before they contact an advocate. Therefore, it is essential that victim service agencies partner closely with other social services agencies in order to expand their knowledge and options to better serve substance-abusing and chemically dependent victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. When partnering with other agencies, staff at the domestic violence/sexual assault program must remain vigilant about confidentiality restrictions and must have written releases if sharing information about a chemically dependant client with anyone outside of the agency (even another DV/SA program).

Staff and Volunteer Training

For people impacted by multi-abuse trauma, domestic violence and sexual assault are not the only life-threatening issues they face. Women impacted by violence and addiction are also dealing with a disease, chemical dependence, that can be lethal as well. Training in chemical dependency issues can help staff members and volunteers better serve chemically dependant women and their children. Better training can also improve the safety of program participants and staff present in our programs. Recruiting staff and volunteers who have chemical dependency knowledge or who are in recovery could provide an additional opportunity to meet the needs of chemically dependant program participants. Volunteers play an essential role in delivering services to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault; it is therefore very important to make sure that they

receive the same level of training in providing services to chemically dependent clients as other staff. It is also essential that staff members and volunteers be asked to honor a non-alcohol or substance use policy during work hours, and the agency should offer support for them to be able to meet this requirement.

Rural Issues

Advocates working in rural communities face many barriers, including the lack of resources, transportation and confidentiality. Because resources may be limited, partnership with other agencies plays an essential role in working with women impacted by domestic violence, sexual assault and substance abuse in a rural or off the road communities. Partnership may include (*with direction, permission and a release of information*) advocating with another agency on behalf of the substance-abusing or chemically dependent woman impacted by domestic violence and sexual assault, in order to strengthen the other agency's response to that particular individual's needs. When advocates work with other agencies in a small or insular community, program participant confidentiality can be compromised through information-sharing unless there are consistent efforts to adhere to the domestic violence/sexual assault agency's confidentiality practices. Coordination between agencies is also needed to ensure that women impacted by DVSA and substance abuse have reliable transportation to access necessary services.

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and A. Roman. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Social Services, National Institute on Drug Abuse.

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Roth, P., ed. 1991. *Alcohol and Drugs Are Women's Issues, Volume Two, The Model Program Guide*. New Jersey: Women's Action Alliance and Scarecrow Press.

DEFINITIONS

By Patti Bland, from Hoog, Cathy. 2001. *Enough and Yet Not Enough: An Educational Resource Manual On Domestic Violence Advocacy For Persons With Disabilities In Washington State*. Seattle, WA: Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

Definitions noted with asterisk are from Inaba, D.S. and W.E. Cohen. 2000. *Uppers, Downers, All Arounders: Physical and Mental Effects of Psychoactive Drugs*, 4th Edition, Ashland, OR: CNS Publications.

12-Step Program – a self-help group that is often used as an adjunct to treatment but which is not treatment. 12-step programs can support lifetime recovery and can be extremely useful; however, battered women will also benefit from referrals to gender-specific groups and battered women’s advocacy programs for safety planning as a recovery issue.

Addiction or Chemical Dependence – is characterized by continuous or periodic impaired control over drinking alcohol or using other drugs, preoccupation with use, use despite adverse consequences and distortions in thinking (e.g., denial). The neurochemical dysfunction in addiction is best described as a chemical deficiency in pathways of the brain.

Addict phobia – includes fear of addicts and addiction; holding negative stereotypes pertaining to people suffering from addiction; refraining from offering services, support or respect. Addict phobia creates barriers for those who are afraid of getting labeled and fearful about seeking help. Additionally, addict phobia negatively impacts people struggling to recover daily. Examples of addict phobia include mistaken belief systems about addiction, failure to understand triggers, unrealistic expectations, lack of knowledge about brain chemistry, liver function, relapse processes, resources and recovery options, as well as failure to understand appropriate role of accountability, consistency and structure. Addict phobia makes it possible for individuals and systems to establish overly rigid or overly permeable criteria, which can limit or prohibit access to services or successful outcomes to an entire class of people. Addict phobia is a form of oppression in our society.

Alcoholism – a treatable illness brought on by harmful dependence upon alcohol, which is physically and psychologically addictive. As a disease, alcoholism is primary, chronic progressive and fatal.

**Binge* – using large amounts of alcohol or other drugs in a short period of time. Binge drinking for women may be defined as four or more drinks in one drinking session at least once every two weeks but being abstinent in between those times.

Blackout – an amnesia-like period often associated with heavy drinking. While blackouts impact memory, there is no evidence to support contention that blackouts alter judgment or behavior at the time of occurrence.

**Cocaine psychosis* – a drug-induced mental illness; symptoms include extreme paranoia and hallucinations. Similar psychosis is associated with amphetamine use.

**Coke bugs* – imaginary insects a long-term cocaine abuser thinks are crawling under the skin. They often cause substance abusers to scratch themselves bloody. Similar activity is associated with amphetamine use.

Cognitive Impairments – disruptions in thinking skills such as inattention, memory problems, disruptions in communication, spatial disorientation, problems with sequencing (the ability to follow a set of steps in order to accomplish a task), misperception of time, and perseveration (constant repetition of meaningless or inappropriate words or phrases).

**Craving* – the powerful desire to use a psychoactive drug or engage in compulsive behavior. It is manifested in physiological changes such as change in heart rate, sweating, anxiety, drop in body temperature, pupil dilation and stomach muscle movements. Endogenous craving is caused by neurochemical changes in the brain, such as depletion of dopamine resulting from cocaine use. Other cravings are caused by environmental triggers (cue cravings).

**Cross-dependence* – occurs when an individual becomes addicted to or tissue dependent on one drug, resulting in biochemical and cellular changes that support addiction to other drugs.

**Cross-tolerance* – the development of tolerance to other drugs by the continued exposure to a drug that affects body mechanisms to tolerate other drugs (e.g., tolerance to heroin translates to morphine, alcohol and barbiturates).

Delirium Tremens (DTs) – When the level of alcohol in the blood drops suddenly and the person becomes delirious as well as tremulous and suffers from hallucinations that are primarily visual but also may be tactile.

Detoxification – The process of providing medical care during the removal of dependence-producing substances from the body so that withdrawal symptoms are minimized and physiological function is safely restored. Treatment includes medication, rest, diet, fluids and nursing care.

Dual Diagnosis – A clinical term referring specifically to patients who meet the diagnostic criteria for an addictive disorder as well as meeting the diagnostic criteria for:

- An organic mental or developmental disorder
- A major psychiatric disorder with or without current symptomology
- A personality disorder, or

- A compulsive disorder such as an eating or pathological gambling disorder.

Euphoric Recall – memories formed under the influence of alcohol or other drugs that may be used as inappropriate excuse to minimize, rationalize or deny behavior.

**Harm Reduction* – a tertiary prevention and treatment technique that tries to minimize the medical and social problems associated with drug use rather than making abstinence the primary goal (e.g., needle exchange and methadone maintenance).

Mentally Ill Chemical Abusers (MICA) – A term used to designate people who have an alcohol or other drug disorder and a markedly severe and persistent mental disorder such as schizophrenia or bipolar disorder.

Methadone – A synthetic narcotic. It may be used as a substitute for heroin, producing less socially disabling addiction or aiding in withdrawal from heroin.

Relapse – Is common in recovery from addiction and not considered treatment failure. As with other chronic illnesses, significant improvement is considered successful treatment even if complete remission or absolute cure is not achieved.

Substance abuse – a destructive pattern of drug use, including ETOH (alcohol), which leads to clinically significant impairment or distress. Often the substance abuse continues despite significant life problems. When a person exhibits tolerance and withdrawal, the person has progressed from abuse to *Addiction* (a disease consisting of a number of brain chemistry disorders).

Tolerance – the need for significantly larger amounts of substance to achieve intoxication. Drug effects decrease if the usual amount is taken.

Withdrawal – adverse reaction after a reduction of substance use. Withdrawal is the body's attempt to balance itself after prolonged use of a psychoactive drug. The symptoms range from mild (caffeine withdrawal) to severe (heroin withdrawal) to life-threatening (alcohol and prescription drug withdrawal). The onset of symptoms is generally predictable.

RESOURCES

Organizations/Agencies

Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

Address: 130 Seward St. #209 1 // Juneau, AK 99801

Phone (907)-586-3650

FAX: (907)-463-4493

Web Address: <http://www.andvsa.org>

Contact Patti Bland, M.A. CCDC at the Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault for technical assistance, consultation and training on the intersection between Domestic Violence and Substance Abuse and other forms of Oppression. Patti can be reached at 907-586-3650 ext 34 or by email at: pjmbland@hotmail.com

Alaska Family Services (AFS)

AFS has provided support groups for women with multiple abuse problems for several years. Recently they have developed a wrap-around program to support both safety and sobriety for women with substance abuse and DV/SA issues that includes linkage to both treatment and shelter. Contact them at 907-746-4080.

Email: betsy@akafs.org

Alaska Women's Resource Center (AWRC)

AWRC currently has services to address multiple issues including domestic violence and substance abuse. They are very innovative in their approach to providing support services for recovering battered women and their children. Contact them at 907-276-0528 for more information about this program.

Email: awrc@alaskawomensresourcecenter.org

Safe and Fear-Free Environment SAFE -SISTR Program

The DV program and treatment center in Dillingham, AK have partnered to provide integrated services for women seeking both safety and sobriety. Contact Ginger Baim and EJ Essic at 907-842-2320 for information about starting a similar program.

Email: VRBaim@besafeandfree.org

State of Alaska H&SS

DIVISION OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Toll free Juneau number: (800) 465-4828**Toll free Anchorage number: (800) 770-3930****<http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dbh/contacts.htm>**

This web site has a list of substance abuse treatment programs in Alaska plus links to other useful information about addiction and behavioral health.

The Alcohol/Drug Help Line Domestic Violence Outreach Project can be reached at 206-722-3700 or 1-800-562-1240 (in Washington and Alaska only), or see their website at <http://www.adhl.org>. They can provide information about accessing detox services and ADATSA as well as Washington state programs such as the Washington State Coalition on Women's Substance Abuse Issues. They can also provide information about gender-specific treatment options in Washington, such as Residence XII (Kirkland), Perinatal Treatment Services (Seattle), Mom's Program (Tacoma), Isabella House (Spokane) and Riel House (Yakima), and other treatment and support group options for those impacted by both substance abuse and domestic violence in Washington State.

The Washington State Alcohol/Drug Clearinghouse provides literature, videos and information about substance abuse and addiction, much of it for free. To order, call 1-800-662-9111 (toll free in Washington). From Seattle or out of state, call 206-725-9696. Fax: 206-722-1032, email: clearinghouse@adhl.org, website: <http://www.adhl.org/clearinghouse>.

Recommended Reading and Materials

Safety and Sobriety: Best Practices in Domestic Violence and Substance Abuse, Domestic Violence Interdisciplinary Task Force of the Illinois Department of Human Services, 2000. For information about this publication contact: www.dhs.state.il.us.

Roth, P. (Ed). *Alcohol and Drugs Are Women's Issues, Volume One, A Review of the Issues*. New Jersey: Women's Action Alliance and Scarecrow Press, 1991.

Roth, P. (Ed). *Alcohol and Drugs Are Women's Issues, Volume Two, The Model Program Guide*. New Jersey: Women's Action Alliance and Scarecrow Press, 1991.

Chemically Dependent Victims of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

Adapted from Bland, P. 2001. *Perinatal Partnership Against Domestic Violence: Train the Trainer Curriculum*. Seattle, WA: Washington State Department of Health, Community & Family Health, Maternal Child Health and the Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence. Revised 2002 for Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault *Basic Curriculum for Advocates*.

Keep in mind that not all people who drink or use drugs are alcoholics or addicts. When alcoholism or addiction is present, there is great pain, shame, fear and isolation.

- Alcohol and drug use is associated with greater severity of injuries and increased lethality rates. However, *substance abuse does not cause domestic violence or sexual assault*.
- Being identified as either an alcoholic or an addict (even if people are in recovery) can impact ability to get housing and gain or maintain child custody. This may affect careers, community standing, and/or support (or lack thereof). Increased insurance rates and legal difficulties may also be experienced.
- Chemically dependent people face many service barriers. Shelter space is often denied, detox may not be available immediately, and treatment may seem less urgent than getting safe.
- Chemically dependent battered persons and survivors of sexual assault are not powerless. They are victims of both a life-threatening disease *and* violent crime. Empowerment for these survivors involves *both* safety and sobriety.
- Many substance-abusing victims of domestic violence and sexual assault are introduced to drugs by partners who use substances to gain and maintain power and control. A violent person may use alcohol or date rape drugs like rohypnol to more easily harm another. This is a form of physical, emotional, social, sexual and spiritual abuse. Recognizing this may help establish trust and reduce stigma.
- Substance-abusing victims of violence are often victimized by substance-abusing perpetrators. Cessation of drinking and drug use alone *cannot* ensure safety. Often, recovery is accompanied by more danger for victims. As victim sobriety increases, perpetrators may find their ability to control their partners threatened. They may seek to sabotage recovery efforts or look for new ways to regain control. Refer victims to support groups addressing both the substance abuse as well as the domestic violence/sexual assault issues.
- Treatment for substance abuse can pose many risks for victims of domestic violence/sexual assault. *Conjoint and couples counseling are not appropriate and should not be encouraged by providers*. Domestic violence/sexual assault victims in methadone programs may be particularly vulnerable because they must appear daily

at a set time for their dose and thus can be easily tracked by an abuser.

- Validate that anyone might use drinking or drugging to cope, but there are safer ways to survive sexual assault, rape trauma, abuse and domestic violence. Offer options, but recognize that substances impair judgment, making advocacy-based counseling more challenging. Don't be afraid to refer to 12-step programs, but be able to explain both strengths and limitations. Be aware of alternative referrals, especially for gender-specific or culturally appropriate support groups or chemical dependency treatment providers.
- Recognize euphoric recall and blackout make safety planning harder. Denial of use is not about fooling the provider. It's a tactic to be addressed in a respectful manner. Facing the truth is scary and painful for the alcoholic or addict. Always be honest and direct, but remember tact and dignity.
- Chemical dependency undermines both health and judgment. Withdrawal symptoms can be painful and life threatening. Encourage people to seek medical attention prior to detoxing.
- Chemically affected victims of violence often believe their use of a substance means the violence directed against them is warranted. Always affirm that no one has the right to hurt them, and that violence directed against them is *never their fault* under any circumstance.
- Understand both negative stereotypes and negative internal views about domestic violence, sexual assault and addiction act as barriers preventing people from realizing they need support. Additionally, service providers must examine their own beliefs about alcohol and other drug use, abuse and addiction to ensure addict phobia is not impairing their ability to effectively advocate for recovering or actively using victims of violence.
- Refer people addressing both chemical dependency and domestic violence issues to the Alcohol/Drug Help Line Domestic Violence Outreach Project (www.adhl.org) at 206-722-3700 or 1-800-562-1240 (*WA and AK only*).

SCREENING MATERIALS

Part III

<p>GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR IDENTIFYING PEOPLE WHO MAY BE AFFECTED BY ALCOHOL OR OTHER DRUG USE</p>
--

- LOOK FOR CHANGE IN BEHAVIOR, ATTITUDE, OR APPEARANCE
- IDENTIFY BEHAVIOR WHICH DOESN'T SEEM RIGHT
 - Individual cannot stay awake
 - Is unable to sit still
 - Is disoriented or confused for no apparent reason
 - Laughs or cries at inappropriate times
 - Displays rapid shifts in mood
 - Slurs speech
 - Speech is rapid and loud, and it is difficult to follow person's train of thought
- DO NOT AUTOMATICALLY ASSUME BEHAVIOR IS CAUSED BY ALCOHOL OR OTHER DRUG USE. RULE OUT OTHER CAUSES FIRST.
 - Individual is physically ill (e.g., flu)
 - Is upset about some obvious problem (e.g., has been victimized by sexual partner or other person; is concerned about son's gang involvement)
 - Person's physician has recently prescribed new medication, particularly for psychiatric reasons
- DO NOT ARGUE WITH PEOPLE YOU PROVIDE SERVICES FOR REGARDING THEIR USE OF ALCOHOL OR OTHER DRUGS

Adapted from:

Domestic Violence/Substance Abuse Interdisciplinary Task Force, IL DHS (7/2000). *Safety & Sobriety: Best Practices in DV & SA.*

Common Signs/Symptoms of the Five Basic Abused Substances

Stimulants including speed, cocaine, caffeine, ephedrine, etc.	Depressants including barbituates, minor tranquilizers, alcohol, opiates, etc.	Hallucinogens including LSD, acid, PCP, angel dust, wicki sticks, mushrooms, etc.	Cannabis also known as marijuana, pot, weed, reefer, dope, buds, etc.	Inhalants examples of what is commonly used: glue, gasoline, paint, etc.
Intoxication Characteristics dilated (large) pupils restlessness/excitement insomnia flushed face	Intoxication Characteristics slurred speech drowsiness staggering impairment in attention or memory	Intoxication Characteristics pupils dilate (large) fast heart rate sweating blurring of vision	Intoxication Characteristics increased appetite dry mouth fast heart rate delusions	Intoxication Characteristics dizziness blurred vision slurred speech unsteady gait
increased urination	pupil constriction (small)	tremors	decreased body temperature	slowed reflexes
muscles twitching	smell of alcohol	hallucinations	panic	
rambling speech				
irregular heartbeat				
perspiration or chills				

ANDVSA Real Tools from:
 Domestic Violence/Substance Abuse Interdisciplinary Task Force, IL DHS (7/2000). *Safety & Sobriety: Best Practices in DV & SA.*

Screening Tools

Sample Screening Instruments from *Screening for Substance Abuse During Pregnancy: Improving Care, Improving Health*, published by the national Center for Education in Maternal and Child Health, 1997.

4Ps

Have you ever used drugs or alcohol during this **P**regnancy?

Have you had a problem with drugs or alcohol in the **P**ast?

Does your **P**artner have a problem with drugs or alcohol?

Do you consider one of your **P**arents to be an addict or alcoholic?

This screening device is often used as a way to begin a discussion about drug or alcohol use. Any woman who answers yes to one or more questions should be referred for further assessment.

Ewing H. Medical Director, Born Free Project. Contra Costa County, 111 Allen Street, Martinez, CA 94553. Phone: (510) 646-1165.

T-ACE

How many drinks does it take for you to feel high? (**T**olerance)

Have people **A**nnoyed you by criticizing your drinking?

Have you ever felt you ought to **C**ut down on your drinking?

Have you ever had a drink first thing in the morning to steady your nerves or get rid of a hangover?

(**E**ye-opener)

Any woman who answers more than two drinks on the tolerance question is scored 2 points. Each yes to the additional three questions scores 1. A score of 2 or more is considered a positive screen, and the woman should be referred to specialist for further assessment.

Sokol RJ, Martier SS, Ager JW, 1989. The T-ACE questions: Practical prenatal detection of risk drinking. *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology* 160(4).

TWEAK

How many drinks does it take for you to feel high? (**T**olerance)

Does your partner (or do your parents) ever **W**orry or complain about your drinking?

Have you ever had a drink first thing in the morning to steady your nerves or get rid of a hangover?

(**E**ye Opener)

Have you ever **A**wakened the morning after some drinking the night before and found that you could not remember part of the evening before?

Have you ever felt that you ought to **K**/Cut down on your drinking?

A woman receives 2 points on the tolerance questions if she reports that she can hold more than 5 drinks without falling asleep or passing out. A positive response to the worry question scores 2 points, and a positive response to each of the last 3 questions scores 1 point each. A total score of 2 or more indicates that the woman is a risk drinker and requires further assessment.

Russell M. 1994. New assessment tools for risk drinking during pregnancy. *Alcohol, Health and Research World* 18(1).

Ten-Question Drinking History (TQDH)

Beer: How many times a week do you drink beer?

How many cans do you have at one time?

Do you ever drink more?

Wine: How many times per week do you drink wine?

How many glasses do you have at one time?

Do you ever drink more?

Liquor: How many times per week do you drink liquor?

How many drinks do you have at one time?

Do you ever drink more?

Has your drinking changed during the past year?

Any woman who reports drinking more than four drinks once a week or more is considered at risk and requires further evaluation.

Weiner L, Rosett HL, Edelin KC. 1982. Behavioral evaluation of fetal alcohol education for physicians. *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research* 6(2).

Spouse Abuse Risk Assessment

ANDVSA Real Tools You Can U

From the Domestic Violence/Substance Abuse Interdisciplinary Task Force of the IL DHS (7/2000). Safety and Sobriety: *Best Practices in Domestic Violence and Substance Abuse.*

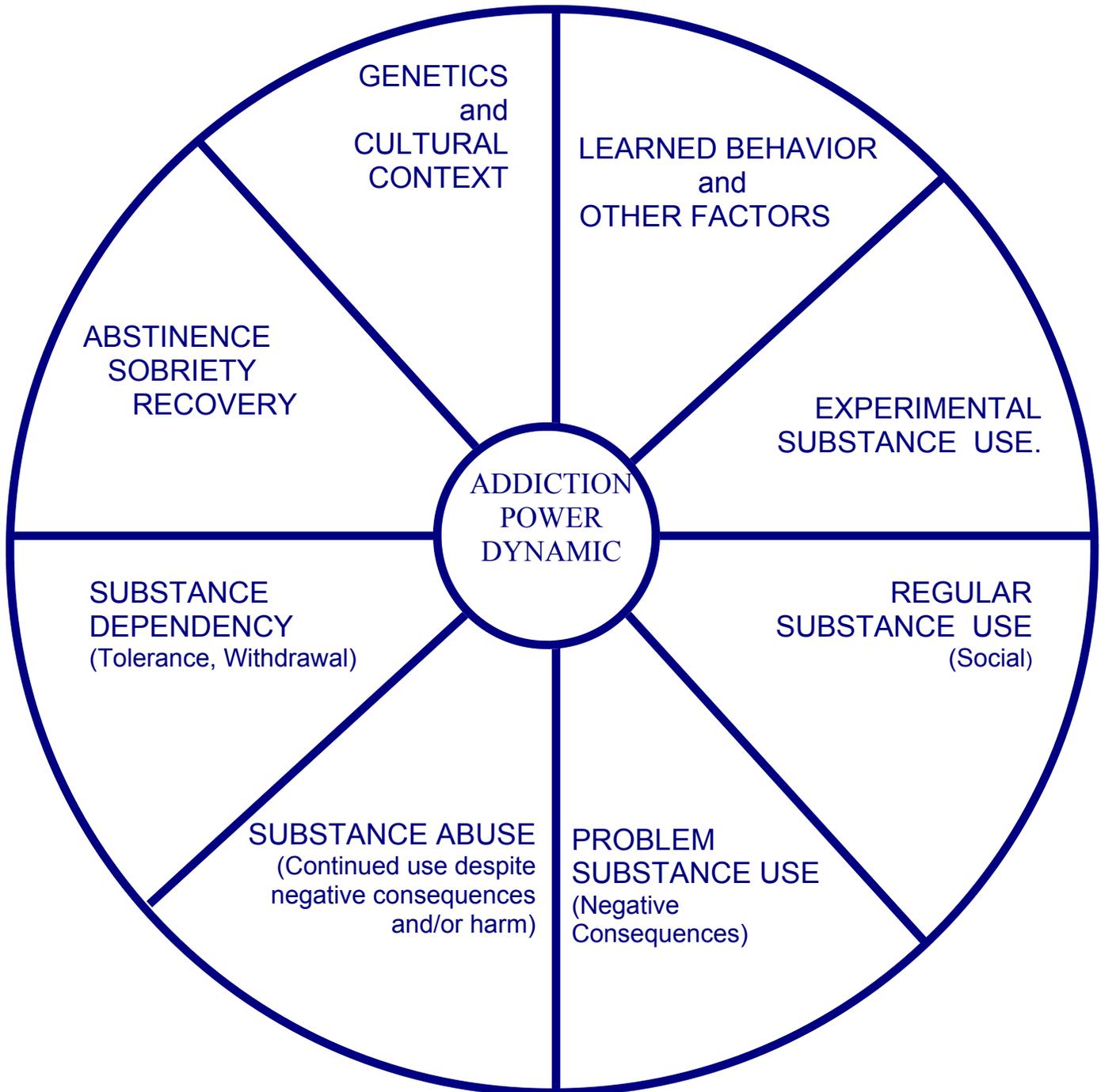
Name: _____ Date: _____

Risk Factors	LOW (L)	Moderate (M)	High (H)	Comments
History of Abuse	No prior reports or injuries	Prior minor injuries	Subsequent incident or serious injury	
Substance Abuse	None	Some use, non-contributing factor	Significant use, contributing factor	
Extent of Physical Injury	No medical treatment needed	Minor physical injuries/treatment	Major physical injury/hospitalization/injury during pregnancy	
Use of Weapons	None	Weapons available, not used	Weapons used, or threat to use	
Emotional Maltreatment	None/infrequent	Frequent/chronic	Threats of death or serious injury/stalking	
Location of Children	Known/no risk	Known/minimal risk	Unknown, or with perpetrator	
Forced Sex	No evidence or allegation	Allegation with no evidence	Evidence of forced sex	
Family Stressors	None	Minimal	Multiple	
Location of Perpetrator	Known, no access to victim	Known, access to victim	Unknown, or at large	
Assault History	None	Infrequent/occasional episodes	Frequent/chronic episodes	
Fear of Perpetrator	None	Minimal	Significant	
Safety Plan	Appropriate	Vague	None	

Any "H" must be thoroughly evaluated; majority of "M's" require additional evaluation; advise the victim of the assessment and recommendations

Warning/Protection Plan:

Alcohol and Other Drug Use from Abstinence to Addiction



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Screening Chemically Dependent Battered Women IN...NOT OUT of our Programs

Reprinted from The A Files Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence Newsletter, Vol. 3., No. 3, Pages 127-138, October 2001

Note: This article is written primarily for Domestic Violence Program Advocates. A companion article written by Patti Bland specifically for Substance Abuse Treatment Providers can be found at the Washington State Coalition on Women's Substance Abuse Issues web page <http://www.wscwsai.org>.

About the Issue

This issue of the A-Files makes visible the experience of substance abusing battered women and our challenge as advocates to develop responsive services in our programs. Safety is an essential element frequently lacking in the lives of women and children who have been impacted by domestic violence. While most women who have experienced intimate partner violence do not suffer from chemical dependency, it is important to acknowledge the many women who live, work or receive services at our programs who are dealing with addiction and recovery issues. Although we cannot always ensure safety, we are obliged to provide as safe an environment as possible for all women who use our services or work at our programs. Barriers to women's safety and sobriety are magnified when routine screening for substance abuse fails to occur.

In her article, "Building A bridge from Substance Abuse to Safety – for Battered Women", author Patti Bland lays out a strong rationale for including substance abuse screening and making room in our programs for women who misuse substances. When our advocacy is not informed by the experience of substance abusing battered women, we are limiting our ability to respond and learn from women who are living with violence. We must ask ourselves tough questions and reevaluate our work practices. Do our practices increase safety and validate the experiences of chemically dependent battered women? What message do we send to the victim, to the batterer, to our community if we do not serve substance abusing women in our programs? Additionally, this issue of the A-Files includes: support group tools, practical strategies, resources, and information about Patti Bland's supplemental resource packet in the *And Now What* section.

At the Coalition, we recognize the work of advocates is both incredibly hard and vitally necessary. Showing up everyday with compassion, an open mind and resilience is the least that is asked of advocates. By stretching our thinking about what it takes and with whom we work to end all forms of violence, we remain rooted in the experience of recovering battered women. We encourage you to read this A-Files. Let the voices of survivors direct us to apply their experience, strength and hope to our daily advocacy work.

Screening Chemically Dependent Battered Women: IN.....NOT OUT!

By Patricia J. Bland, M.A. CCDC ©2001

(Includes excerpts from Women Talk about Substance Abuse and Violence, ten women interviewed by Debi Edmund and Patti Bland; edited by © Debi Edmund, 6/2000)

Safety is an essential element frequently lacking in the lives of women and children who have been impacted by domestic violence. While most women who have experienced intimate partner violence do not suffer from chemical dependency, it is important to acknowledge the many women who live, work or receive services at our programs who are dealing with addiction and recovery issues. Although one cannot always ensure safety, we are obliged to provide as safe an environment as possible for all women who must use our services or work at our programs. Barriers to women's safety and sobriety are magnified when routine screening for substance abuse fails to occur.

Screening for substance misuse is often routinely neglected by advocates for battered women. Failure to ask key questions or to recognize cues indicating the presence of both domestic violence and addiction stems from a variety of causes. These causes include: lack of time, sense of helplessness to assess outside one's own area of expertise, fear of "opening up a can of worms," concerns about angering or hurting a woman's feelings, lack of knowledge of community resources as well as lack of trust in other system providers. These barriers are compounded if they exist within a culture that routinely denies access to services for women with substance abuse or addiction issues.

Why Screen?

Domestic violence and addiction frequently occur in tandem although research indicates neither causes the other. Individually, each can be chronic, progressive and often lethal. Together, severity of injuries and lethality rates climb (Dutton, 1992). Battered women's advocates have an ethical responsibility to routinely screen for addiction issues as well as offer options and services to women who may be at increased risk for more lethal domestic violence due to their own or a partner's substance abuse. Advocates for battered women need to ask women about both their own substance use as well as their partners' use. "Nearly 75% of all wives of alcoholics have been threatened, and 45% have been assaulted by their partners" (AMA, 1994). A recent study in Memphis, TN found in 94% of domestic violence calls, the assailant had used alcohol alone or in combination with cocaine, marijuana, or other drugs within six hours of the assault. Brookoff et al found 92% of assailants and 42% of victims in the Memphis study used alcohol or other drugs on the day of the assault.

“He drank and he used marijuana heavily. He also used other drugs. The abuse kept going. Not even just when he drank. I mean stressful times. He really hurt me, and I remember just lying, pregnant, in a ball, sobbing as he just drank himself into oblivion.”

Research supports universal screening. Actually finding out whether substance abuse or addiction is impacting safety and being able to effectively advocate requires more than checking off boxes or asking questions from a list. The first requirement for respectful screening is an honest evaluation of one’s own attitudes and beliefs about addiction. Before a woman can open up to an advocate she must feel safe. Components of safety include ensuring confidentiality, being culturally competent, and avoiding judgmental or overly directive interactions. Effective screening and intervention requires system-wide respect for women’s choices and autonomy. Screening for safety and sobriety cannot guarantee survival but may increase a woman’s options and improve her odds. Women benefit from non-judgmental advocacy that acknowledges the impact of substance use, abuse and addiction on safety for women and their children. Advocates for battered women must understand getting safe is a process possible for addicted battered women only when tools to support sobriety are provided as part of the process.

“Somebody wanted to show me support, listen to me, not yell at me, not scream at me, just look at some options, instead of that. Through them showing love to me, I began to love myself. I didn’t deserve the punishment, the continuous bad relationships, continuous abusing the drugs, and the shame and the guilt I felt from all that. I deserved better. It was also okay to heal from all of that.”

Screening In...Not Out

Chemically dependent battered women typically experience barriers to services and are often denied shelter, housing, employment, child custody, health insurance and other services. Impacted by both domestic violence and addiction, they are attempting to survive in a world that condemns them for both their substance abuse and their choice of partner. Failure to provide safe services for chemically dependent battered women is a form of able-bodyism. Shelter policies that deny access to services for an entire class of people are both discriminatory and oppressive and cannot be tolerated. The point of screening battered women for substance abuse is not to deny access to victim services but to improve advocacy and safety planning for any women in need of assistance or support. Model programs in Washington state welcome women seeking safety and sobriety and are committed to reducing service barriers and ending isolation for chemically dependent battered women and their children.

“It (using) kept me isolated so I stayed at home in my room with the curtains drawn. On top of him keeping me isolated and not allowing me to go anywhere. I think the biggest thing it did was keep me from getting out and getting the help I needed.”

Think-Rethink

A commitment to serve women dealing with both domestic violence and substance abuse requires critical thinking about policies on the part of battered women’s advocacy programs. Policies supporting a clean and sober environment must be balanced with guidelines making it safe for women who are unable to refrain from use without support to safely tell us they need help. We must keep in mind that in many cases the immediate risk from domestic violence may be more acute than risk from chronic drug or alcohol abuse. We must also be aware risks from overdose or withdrawal can be as lethal as any batterer.

Ideally substance use and abuse should be discouraged as a safety issue for those living and working in our shelters and programs. Guidelines supporting both abstinence and harm reduction are important. This can be challenging for both battered women and advocates who may not be experiencing problems with alcohol or other drugs as well as for those who are. For those whose lives are not threatened by a chronic progressive illness marked by relapse (non-alcoholic/addicts), alcohol or other drug use is merely an option. For women who are not chemically dependent, being unable to have access to substances during a shelter stay or before group may merely be an inconvenience rather than a major barrier to safe services. Chemically dependent battered women have a right to ask us to support their sobriety. To do so is empowering. To do so makes it possible for them to get free from both batterers and substances that put them at risk.

Understanding Domestic Violence and Substance Abuse

“All I know is when I was being abused, all I wanted was more and more. The marijuana wasn’t enough. Then I started getting into the crack. It was easier just to stay stoned and numb and not have to deal with it. The drugs were what made me forget about all the abuse and set aside the fear and terror I had from the abuse and that was my only escape. It was a way to get away from my husband and not feel trapped.”

Understanding the impact of dual problems may very well enhance a woman’s chances for achieving both safety and sobriety. A correlation between substance abuse and domestic violence occurs in 44% to 80% of reported domestic violence incidents depending on what research one chooses to cite (Mackey, 1992). Most women are neither chemically dependent nor battered. However, should women experience domestic violence, develop substance abuse, addiction or both, risks to their health and that of their children increase significantly. Substance abuse may occur as a coping method some battered women use as they attempt to survive the ongoing threat of violence directed at them by intimate partners seeking to gain or maintain power and control (Bland, 1994).

“For me the substance abuse when I first started using was over abuse, was over a rape, and so that’s how I learned to cope with any type of abuse was to get high, and it made everything okay.”

Some battered women may consider using substances less emotionally and physically damaging than facing daily bouts of physical, emotional and sexual abuse with little to blunt the pain.

“The drug didn’t hurt as much as reality hurt.”

The Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women (1992) notes abused women may also use alcohol or drugs for a variety of other reasons including: coercion by an abusive partner, chemical dependency, cultural oppression, over-prescription of psychotropic medication or, for women recently leaving a battering relationship, a new sense of freedom.

“The drugs are an element of control. If they can keep you on the drugs, using or addicted to the drugs, they’re in control. And it’s like strings on a puppet. They just keep you under control because you want that other hit. You want that other drink.”

Defining Substance Abuse and Addiction

It is critical for advocates to learn to recognize the differing safety and advocacy needs of women who are alcoholic/addicts versus those who use or misuse substances.

Alcohol and drugs effect the brain and the body whether addiction is present or not. Substance abuse is a destructive pattern of use of drugs including alcohol, which leads to significant (social, occupational, medical) impairment or distress. Often the substance use continues in spite of significant life problems related to that use.

“We used marijuana every day. I did a lot of cocaine. When I used cocaine all I wanted to do was that next line. I didn’t care about putting the kids on the bus or getting the kids to school. I lost my children.”

Substance use and misuse are behaviors not character defects. According to the American Society for Addiction Medicine, addiction is not a behavior, it is a disease. When a person begins to exhibit symptoms of tolerance (the need for significantly larger amounts of substance to achieve intoxication) and withdrawal (adverse reactions after a reduction of substance) it is likely that the person has progressed from abuse to dependence and addiction.

“One day I didn’t want to drink and I had to. It was the scariest feeling.”

Addiction, according to the medical model, is considered a primary chronic disease with genetic, psychosocial, and environmental factors influencing its development and manifestations. The disease is often progressive and fatal. Addiction is characterized by continuous or periodic impaired control over drinking alcohol or using other drugs, preoccupation with drugs or alcohol, use of drugs or alcohol despite adverse consequences, and distortions in thinking, most notably denial.

“I didn’t think marijuana was addictive.”

“How do you get up in the morning and not smoke a joint?”

Although a person may choose to use alcohol or drugs a person does not choose how one’s body will respond to that choice.

“When I was a little kid, we all got like, shots of whiskey. And I loved it. You got that warm feeling and everything was going to be okay.”

Alcoholics and addicts do not cause addiction and they do not ‘like’ it. They have a major illness. The number one symptom of this illness is to believe one is well.

“I thought alcoholics were the people in the gutters, the winos pushing their shopping carts with all their belongings in it. And I figured since I had a job, a car, the whole nine yards, that I was doing pretty good.”

This belief plus social acceptance of drinking or taking medication to kill pain makes it hard for alcoholic addicts to seek help they need. Many times they don’t seek help. As advocates we must remember addiction is treatable and long-term recovery is possible.

“I am for the first time in my 41 years dealing with life on life’s terms without somebody telling me how to do it. I can actually talk to people now without being drunk. I can actually laugh without being high. And I can actually walk out a door without being paranoid. That feels good. That feels so good. Because I want to live.”

The Family Disease – Risks when Domestic Violence is Present

While chemical dependency is often considered the ‘family disease,’ looking for a ‘family cure’ when domestic violence is present can be dangerous. Battered chemically

dependent women should not be required to participate in family counseling or conjoints that include their abuser. While a chemically dependent battered woman may choose to participate in counseling that includes her abusive partner, advocates should advise her of both the risks and limitations of such a plan. Refer women to chemical dependency treatment programs where family counseling includes safety planning for children and strong linkages exist between the treatment program and its sister domestic violence victims service program.

Women with substance abusing partners may consider participating in 12 step or other support groups such as Al -Anon or Nar-Anon but risks should be explored. Sometimes practicing detachment and avoiding enabling can lead to increased risk for harm if their partner is a batterer. Should a woman be partnered with an abuser who is enrolled in a chemical dependency treatment program, under no circumstances should she be asked to lift a protection, no contact or other type of restraining order in order to support that partner's recovery from substance abuse.

"I got clean and sober and started working, and putting money away to get out of the relationship. And I think he saw that. He became more demanding. Attempts to be controlling escalated. His abuse of the kids escalated as I was sober. His attempts seemed more desperate."

Effective Safety Planning for Substance Abusing Battered Women

Chemically dependent battered women may have a hard time recognizing options or gauging their safety. Some women may experience blackouts. Blackouts may mean the absence of memories for some events. Experiencing a blackout does not mean a person has passed out or lost consciousness. Nor does it mean psychological blocking out of events or repression. A blackout is an amnesia-like period often associated with heavy drinking. People in a blackout state may appear to be functioning normally but later have no memory of what occurred (Kinney and Leaton, 1991).

"I was a blackout drinker from the age of 15. My alcoholism was sitting home sipping wine all day. I could sip a whole gallon. I thought I was crazy. Not really thinking, it's the alcohol."

Safety planning problems can include being unable to recall a safety strategy, not knowing how an injury was sustained or failing to remember making a police report, let alone remembering a court date.

"Getting off the chemicals has made it much easier for me to deal with the other situations I need to in order to get back on my feet."

The only memory substance users have of what happens during use is the one that is formed when they are under the influence of alcohol or in a drugged state. Thus if a person under the influence inaccurately perceives herself as safe or “able to handle it,” sobering up the next day may be insufficient to correct the distortion. This toxic thinking or distortion of perception is termed euphoric recall (Johnson, 1980) and theoretically has the potential to increase risk for substance abusing battered women.

“For me once I pick up the alcohol or the other substances, it’s like that safety plan goes out the window.”

While blackouts impact memory, there is no evidence to support the contention that a blackout alters judgement or behavior at the time of its occurrence (Kinney and Leaton, 1991). Thus, batterers cannot be excused for their behavior when they are under the influence merely because they cannot remember it. Euphoric recall, like blackout, may be misused by batterers to minimize, rationalize or deny their abusive behavior:

“He was more abusive when he was drinking and he was abusive when he was not drinking.”

“The abuse escalated, especially when he was coming down from coke, or if he had a hangover from coke.”

Advocates must consistently give the message that using substances as an excuse for violence is not acceptable. Collusion with this erroneous belief helps a batterer avoid accountability for abusive actions and can mistakenly encourage a victim to believe once substance abuse ceases the violence will definitely stop.

“If you sober up a perpetrator and he doesn’t have treatment for his issues, then what do you have? You have a sober perpetrator. And now he’s more aware.”

Domestic Violence as a Barrier to Recovery

Recovery for women, especially battered women, is all about empowerment. Recovery is built on an individual woman’s experience, strength and hope as well as her belief that change can successfully occur for herself and for her children. Women may not be able to choose how their bodies respond to substances but they have power to take action. This power may be reflected in their decision to go to whatever lengths are necessary to survive for themselves and for their children when they are ready and when it is safe to do so. Recovery is hampered when domestic violence is present.

“This man tried to strangle me. After that happened, then I relapsed. And I was in relapse mode off and on for a whole year after that.”

Abusers want to exert power and will go to whatever lengths are necessary to gain and maintain control.

“Going to a meeting wouldn’t be anything he would tolerate because there would be other men there. Something could happen. So his controlling made it real difficult for me to do what I needed to do for myself.”

Both battered women and addicted women may blame themselves if they are unable to stay safe or sober. If the battered woman and addicted woman are one and the same, the level of guilt and shame may be compounded.

“He was always saying the reason he would abuse me was because of my drug use, even though he had his drug use, or he would bring the drugs to me.”

Talking to Women about Substance Abuse Issues

Many women find it easier to discuss their partner’s substance use as opposed to their own. This is particularly true of women in abusive relationships whose abusers drink or use drugs. A conversation about an abusive partner’s substance abuse gives one the opportunity to explore any history of substance use, abuse and possible addiction.

If a woman discloses her partner abuses substances, an advocate might state:

- “Many women tell me their partners don’t want to drink or drug alone. How often have you found yourself stuck using when you didn’t want to?”

This is a non-judgmental way to elicit information and provides an opportunity to explore drug related domestic violence. I/V drug users may be particularly vulnerable when targeted by batterers.

“I made it for 30 days. The minute I got out of safe environment I was right back with the man and by midnight using.”

Women disclose their partners put them on the street to trade sex for drugs against their will. Many women I/V drug users begin their drug use in the context of a relationship. They may never shoot up alone. Their partner shoots-up for them. Introducing a partner to illicit drug use is a form of domestic violence. Another form of abuse occurs when a batterer deliberately uses dirty needles or cottons or misses a vein on purpose. This also poses a risk for transmission of disease including hepatitis and HIV. Maintaining power

and control by serving as a connection or determining a partner's drug supply can also be a form of domestic violence.

“When I talked to him on the phone, he'd always tell me, all you've got to do is tell me babe, and I'll go get you some more. He kept telling me that's all I needed, a couple of bong hits or a couple of rocks and I'd be just fine.”

“I left the shelter because he bought a bag of cocaine. And so, here I was back in the same abusive relationship all over again. I wanted to be strong and even though I wanted to be out of an abusive relationship, my addictions took me back.”

Chemically dependent battered women may believe their safety will be assured if they just get sober. For a chemically dependent battered woman, getting sober can pose new risk. An abusive partner may increase violence as the recovering battered woman becomes harder to control. Before screening for substance abuse validate a woman's survival and praise her sincerely for finding her own way to cope. This should lead to a discussion where you can include the following:

- “You deserve credit for finding a way to cope. Tell me what made you able to survive?”
- “Many women I see tell me when they experience pain they find a way to deal with it. Some women tell me they become compulsive cleaners, others get into shopping, eating or not eating, sleeping a lot or working too much. Have you tried any of these ways of coping? A lot of women tell me the best way to cope is to numb out by drinking or drugging. How often has this worked for you? Can you think of any reasons why drinking or drugging could be unsafe for someone with an abusive partner?” What kinds of luck have you had with other coping skills?”

Screening Builds a Bridge to Safety and Sobriety

“And drinking kept me in the relationship longer. When you're drinking and you're in that vicious circle, the other vicious circle doesn't matter. All I cared about was getting another drink.”

Screening and referral can help build a bridge from substance abuse or addiction to health and safety for chemically dependent battered women and their children. Women facing the dual stigma of both addiction and domestic violence may be reluctant to openly seek help. Generally speaking, women don't routinely self-identify as either addicted or battered unless their safety is assured. Safety includes knowing you are not being labeled or judged. Chemically dependent battered women tell us they benefit most from advocates who:

“ Try to make you feel like you aren’t the only one. And that somebody else did make it. And someone else has made a life for themselves. They try to make you feel that you’re not worthless or useless.”

Chemically dependent battered women have little reason to trust. Both their bodies and their partners have let them down. Respectful screening involves conveying the message addiction and violence can happen to anyone. Advise women: “Any woman is vulnerable; you are not alone should these problems be facing you.” A successful intervention requires internally moving beyond the notion, “Why doesn’t she just quit?” or “Why doesn’t she just leave?” Questions such as these convey lack of knowledge and failure to understand the complexity of safely ending a relationship with either a substance or an abusive partner.

Honestly discussing sobriety as a safety risk is extremely important. A woman’s decision not to stop using immediately or to decline treatment, advocacy or shelter should not be viewed as failure. Recovery is both an option and a process that can take time.

The Intervention is in the Asking

“I could not recover from substance abuse if I was still being physically abused, mentally abused, because I would be right back to using. So they walk hand in hand. I would not recover from one unless I address the other, and vice versa.”

It is not necessary for advocates to become chemical dependency counselors but it is important for them to ask about substance use. Countless intervention opportunities are missed when advocates are afraid to ask lest they offend or view intervention as futile. The intervention is in the asking. When women are respectfully asked about both their use and their safety, they hear, even if they are not yet ready to listen or enact change immediately. Often women will later share comments such as, “You know, when you said...it really made sense to me.” Supporting women through their process of change requires an understanding that motivation comes from within. It also takes knowledge of local resources. Safety and sobriety are indeed possible. Acknowledging the woman before you has managed to survive, sincerely appreciating her individual strengths and recognizing her innate dignity can support her own process and help build a healthy and powerful alliance that benefits both her and her children.

We Share a Similar Story

Safety and sobriety can be addressed respectfully if we acknowledge both substance use (e.g. a glass of wine with dinner), and being in an intimate relationship (e.g. dating or having a partner) is a common experience both for the women we serve and for us. This means misuse of substances or abuse within a romantic relationship could happen to anyone. Any woman may use substances or find herself with a partner. This being the

case, any woman could find herself having a problem with either or both through no fault of her own.

Women suffering from addiction don't know when they have the first drink or take the first drug what the future will hold. They expect to 'feel better' or 'kill pain' and find themselves believing they can 'control' it. Unfortunately, addiction is about loss of control and powerlessness. This loss of control and powerlessness does not mean one is weak or helpless. Instead, those who experience addiction cannot reasonably predict what will happen when they use. One is powerless only in terms of how one's body, one's liver, one's brain responds once alcohol or other drugs are introduced inside it. Many addicted women don't want to stop using alcohol or drugs. They want the craving, the problems and the pain of withdrawal to stop. They want to be like everybody else who can have a social drink or take medication without serious physical ramifications. Unfortunately, like anyone else discovering an allergy (e.g. an allergy to bee stings), the addict, once "stung," must forever avoid substances or experience life-threatening consequences. Fortunately we can support women's empowerment through our knowledge of options and available resources. The Alcohol Drug Help Line Domestic Violence Outreach Project can provide information about Washington State programs addressing both domestic violence and chemical dependency. They can be reached at 206-722-3700 or 1-800-562-1240 (WA State only). Other supportive options include: Support Groups Addressing Safety and Sobriety.

"The more you tell your story, the more you talk about what you did to get clean and sober, the stronger it makes you the more you hear it. And the longer we're away from the abuser, and the more education we get, and the more we talk to other people about it, the stronger we become, and the more aware."

When possible, encourage chemically dependent battered women to consider attending a support group addressing issues pertaining to both domestic violence and chemical dependency. Integrated support groups offer women a format to heal utilizing techniques that are applicable for reaching both goals of safety and sobriety. The major goal of successful groups addressing these issues is to be a safe place where women can tell their story, be believed and begin the healing and connection process.

Gender Specific Treatment Recommended

"For domestic violence survivors, women's meetings are probably safer."

Chemically dependent battered women should be encouraged to consider gender specific treatment as an option that may best enhance their chances for both safety and sobriety.

Advocacy Based Counseling

“Once I walked away from that abuse (domestic violence), I knew that the next thing I had to do was something about the substance abuse. And then when I made up my mind that I wanted to quit drugs also, the advocates at the shelter were right there for me, and got me into a treatment program.”

Advocacy based counseling looks different for chemically dependent battered women who may have withdrawal issues, memory distortions and cognitive deficits. Advocacy-based counseling may include: Repeating information, providing structure, simplifying goals, advocating for their inclusion in shelters and other victim service programs and understanding the impact of chemicals on safety planning and role identity.

“And it feels in the beginning that it’s the end of the world, but it’s actually the beginning of a new life.”

Conclusion

Women from all walks of life are at risk for domestic violence and chemical dependency but screening, identification and intervention can provide empowering options. Women from all walks of life get safe and sober and raise safe, healthy children. Be a bridge to safety and sobriety, screen for substance abuse as part of a safety plan.

“I have my youngest daughter back. She lives with me. My oldest daughter is getting married and my middle daughter is a college student.”

“I’ve gained more confidence in myself. I don’t have to run and hide in a closet anymore.”

“Knowledge is power, knowledge is power.”

And Now What ?

Developing Strategies for Safety and Sobriety

Women attempting to get sober may develop a plan that may include but is not limited to:

- 15.) Identifying who to call for help (e.g. sponsor, counselor, Alcohol Drug Help Line); forming support systems, knowing about safe meetings
- 16.) Knowing information and education about addiction
- 17.) Removing substances and paraphernalia from the home
- 18.) Recognizing unsafe persons, places, things
- 19.) Understanding how to deal with legal and other problems stemming from addiction (e.g. health, CPS involvement, poor nutrition)
- 20.) Assembling paperwork to determine eligibility for assistance or to begin seeking employment, school, housing or other options
- 21.) Knowing how domestic violence can be a relapse issue

- 22.) Understanding physical, emotional, cognitive, environmental and other cues indicative of risk and having a plan to deal with it; recognizing role of stress and craving, having a plan to deal with it
- 23.) Learning how to parent, engaging in relationships, developing sober friendships
- 24.) Knowing when and where to run in a life-threatening situation that puts your sobriety and your safety, at risk.

Know Your Local Resources

“I needed more than a 12 step program.”

- a.) The Alcohol Drug Help Line Domestic Violence Outreach Project can be reached at 206-722-3700 or 1-800-562-1240 (WA State only). They can provide information about accessing Detox services and ADATSA as well as Washington State programs such as the Washington State Coalition on Women’s Substance Abuse Issues. They can also provide information about gender specific treatment options in Washington such as Residence XII, Kirkland; Perinatal Treatment Services, Seattle; Mom’s Program, Tacoma; Isabella House, Spokane and Riel House, Yakima as well as other treatment and support group options for those impacted by both substance abuse and domestic violence in Washington state.
- b.) The Washington State Alcohol Drug Clearinghouse provides literature, videos, and information about substance abuse and addiction, much of it for free. To order call 1-800-662-9111 toll free from Washington State. From Seattle or out of state call 206-725-9696 or FAX 206-722-1032. E-mail: clearinghouse@adhl.org Web site: <http://www.adhl.org/clearinghouse>
- c.) New Beginnings for Battered Women and their Children provides a weekly drop-in support group for chemically dependent battered women seeking safety and sobriety in Seattle/King County. Contact 206-783-2848 for information.
- d.) Eastside Domestic Violence Program provides a transitional housing program for chemically dependent battered women and their children that includes on-site outpatient treatment services through Therapeutic Health Services. Call 425-746-1940 for information.
- e.) The Mom’s and Women’s Recovery Center in Pierce County, Washington provides screening, assessment, intervention, treatment and support for women addressing both substance abuse and domestic violence issues. Call Sue Winskill at 253-798-6655.
- f.) Recommended reading: Safety and Sobriety: Best Practices in Domestic Violence and Substance Abuse, Domestic Violence/Substance Abuse Task Force of the IL DHS 7/2000. For information about this publication contact: www.state.il.us/agency/dhs).
- g.) The Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence has the following materials developed or written by Patti Bland, M.A. CCDC available upon request. Please contact Leigh Hofheimer for copies: leigh@wscadv.org

- 1.) Support Agreement
- 2.) Non-Use Agreement
- 3.) Sample Screening Questions for Shelter Intake Form
- 4.) Sample Safety Plan
- 5.) Manifestations of Violence (group tool)
- 6.) Non-shaming meeting documentation form and progress note form

- 7.) Article: Chemical Dependency and Domestic Violence: Screening Pregnant and Postpartum Women for Safety and Sobriety, accompanying bibliography and PowerPoint presentation for perinatal health care providers
- 8.) Article: Collaborative Strategies for Addressing Women's Safety and Sobriety
- 9.) Sample Guideline for working with chemically dependent women
- 10.) Sample Policy for working with chemically dependent battered women
- 11.) Women Talk about Substance Abuse and Violence, ten women interviewed by Debi Edmund and Patti Bland; edited by ©Debi Edmund, 6/2000)
- 12.) Screening Tools for Substance Abuse

End Notes

- 1.) Addiction definition is adapted from definitions developed by the American Psychiatric Association and the American Society for Addiction Medicine and included in the Domestic Violence/Substance Abuse Task Force of the IL DHS 7/2000, Safety and Sobriety: Best Practices in Domestic Violence and Substance Abuse, p.vi. For information about this publication contact: www.state.il.us/agency/dhs).
- 2.) Special thanks to the women from New Beginnings Wednesday night support group addressing chemical dependency and domestic violence in Seattle, WA and their sisters in Springfield, IL. Grateful acknowledgements to Debi Edmund of Springfield, IL who served as their editor, Lee Berg, R.N. of St. Joseph's Hospital, Syracuse, NY who provided technical assistance and, as always, thanks to the Alcohol Drug Help Line Domestic Violence Outreach Project Staff in Seattle, WA for everything they do.

Patti Bland, MA. CCDC, received a Master's degree in Public Communications from Fordham University in 1979 and a Certificate in Addiction Studies from Seattle University in 1990. Patti began her career at Residence XII Treatment Center for Women in Burien, WA. She has served both as an advocate and lead chemical dependency counselor at New Beginnings for Battered Women and their Children's shelter and community-based program in Seattle for eleven years. Patti developed the Domestic Violence/ Chemical Dependency Outreach Project for King County at the Alcohol Drug Help Line in 1994. She also served as the Domestic Violence Trainer for Providence Health System Family Violence Program for five years. Patti is an Adjunct Professor at Antioch University and Seattle Central Community College. She is a member of the Steering Committee for the Washington State Coalition on Women's Substance Abuse Issues. Recently, Patti joined the Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse in Juneau as their Training Project Coordinator. She has published several articles on chemical dependency and domestic violence and completed development of domestic violence curricula for the Washington State Medical Association and the Perinatal Partnership Against Domestic Violence. Patti can be reached by e-mail at pjmbland@hotmail.com and by phone at the Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault at 907-586-3650 effective December 1, 2001.

TRAINING
and
GROUP
EVALUATION
TOOLS

Part IV

ANDVSA Substance Abuse Needs Assessment for Advocates Real Tools You Can Use © ANDVSA 2004

Demographics (Please circle the number corresponding to your response.)

1. a.) Profession? 1 Advocate 2 Legal Advocate 3 Children's Advocate 4 Other _____
 b.) Geographic Location _____ 2.) (Optional) I am in recovery. 1 Yes 2 No

Please circle the number that best fits your response to each of the questions below.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Dis-Agree	Disagree Strongly	N/A
3. I would like to receive technical assistance to develop protocols, policies and procedures to better address service provision and advocacy for survivors of DVSA impacted by their own or another's substance abuse	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. My agency provides me with tools to help me provide services for program participants with substance abuse issues	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. My agency does not provide services for program participants with substance abuse issues	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. My agency has a protocol to assess immediate risk to program participants from DVSA as well as from alcohol and other drug use because each can be lethal	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. My agency has a protocol for partnering with chemical dependency programs to develop tools for identifying and assessing the needs of women impacted by DVSA and substance abuse	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. My agency has a protocol to address the impact of substance abuse on safety planning	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. My agency has a safety planning protocol that includes developing a relapse prevention plan and continuing support after relapse for women choosing to work on safety and sobriety	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. My agency has a protocol for providing linkages to a range of chemical dependency assistance options including medical detox, inpatient and outpatient treatment programs, AA and other support groups	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. My agency provides me with written materials relevant to DVSA and substance abuse issues	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. My agency has developed a budget plan to implement comprehensive support services for people impacted by DVSA and substance abuse	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. My agency has a protocol to provide on-site integrated support groups to address safety issues for program participants and their children impacted by DVSA and substance abuse	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. My agency has a protocol to provide outreach and safety planning education on DVSA to chemical dependency treatment program clients	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. My agency has a protocol to provide on-going training and consultation on substance abuse issues for staff	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. My agency has a protocol to provide on-going training and consultation on DVSA issues to substance abuse professionals	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. My agency has a substance abuse protocol that includes a multi-step approach for screening/identification; initial intervention and follow-up; information and referral; alternatives to substance use; integrated safety planning/relapse prevention options and steps for community and emotional support	1	2	3	4	5	6
18. My agency has a protocol to monitor the implementation of program policies and procedure pertaining to DVSA and substance abuse	1	2	3	4	5	6
19. I would like more training on substance abuse issues and protocol development, implementation and funding	1	2	3	4	5	6

20 Please write any comments you would like to make about substance abuse protocol needs on the back of this sheet.

Demographics (Please circle the number corresponding to your response.)

1. a.) Profession? 1 Chemical Dependency Professional 2 Social Worker 3 Mental Health Provider 4 Other _____

b.) Geographic Location _____ c.) (Optional) I am a survivor of DV and/or sexual abuse. 1 Yes 2 No

Please circle the number that best fits your response to each of the questions below.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Dis-Agree	Disagree Strongly	N/A
3. I would like to receive technical assistance to develop protocols, policies and procedures to better address service provision, counseling and treatment outcomes for people in recovery impacted by domestic violence and sexual assault.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. My agency provides me with written materials / tools to help me provide services for individuals with current safety issues.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. My agency policy provides for gender specific services for individuals impacted by domestic violence and sexual assault.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. My agency has a protocol to assess immediate risk from abusers to treatment program participants.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. My agency has a protocol for partnering with victim service programs to develop tools for identifying and assessing the needs of recovering individuals impacted by domestic violence and sexual assault including referrals to shelter, legal and other forms of advocacy and assistance.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. My agency has a protocol to address the impact of domestic violence and sexual assault on sobriety as part of lectures and education provided during treatment and aftercare.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. My agency includes a safety plan as part of recovery and relapse prevention planning.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10 My agency provides on-site integrated support groups to address sobriety and safety issues during treatment and aftercare.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. My agency provides me with training relevant to substance abuse and DV and sexual assault and their impact on recovery.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. My agency has developed a budget plan to implement services for those dealing with multiple-abuse and safety issues	1	2	3	4	5	6
13 My agency has a policy that discourages victims of DV and sexual assault from self-blame for the crimes directed against them while they were using. In other words, we do not victim blame. We hold batterers/offenders accountable for their abusive/criminal actions.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. My agency has a protocol to provide outreach and education on chemical dependency to victim service program staff, program participants and shelter residents who may have substance abuse issues that affect their safety.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. My agency has a policy that precludes us from providing substance abuse treatment to both a victim and his/her abuser at the same time due to safety and liability issues.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. My agency policy does not mandate couples or family counseling when DV and/or sexual assault are indicated.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. My agency has a protocol to refer batterers and offenders to certified batterer intervention/accountability programs. (<i>We do not refer batterers and perpetrators to anger management.</i>)	1	2	3	4	5	6
18. My agency has a protocol to reduce liability and monitor the implementation of program policies and procedures pertaining to domestic violence and sexual assault.	1	2	3	4	5	6
19. I would like more training on DV and sexual assault issues.	1	2	3	4	5	6

20. Please write any comments you would like to make about domestic violence/sexual assault protocol needs on the back of this sheet.

Please mark True (T) or False(F) in the space provided.

1. ____ Chemical dependency is the leading cause of domestic violence.
2. ____ Substance abuse is the leading cause of domestic violence.
3. ____ Misuse of substances is associated with increased severity of injuries and higher lethality rates for victims of domestic violence.
4. ____ Cessation of substance use will always lead to cessation of domestic violence.
5. ____ Euphoric recall and the “honey-moon” phase are identical terms.
6. ____ Blackouts occur when substance mis-users pass out.
7. ____ Victims of domestic violence provoke the violence directed against them and often enjoy the battering experience.
8. ____ Domestic violence is usually an isolated event that may only happen once.
9. ____ Addicts are responsible for having the disease of chemical dependency.
10. ____ Addicts are responsible for their recovery from the disease of addiction.
11. ____ Perpetrators of domestic violence are generally mentally ill.
12. ____ Men and women are equally violent.
13. ____ Leaving is always the safest choice once domestic violence occurs.
14. ____ Anger is the leading cause of abusive behavior and domestic violence.
15. ____ One must always address domestic violence before addressing substance abuse issues.
16. ____ One must always address substance abuse before addressing domestic violence issues.
17. ____ Getting sober can pose certain safety risks for battered women.
18. ____ Quitting drinking and drugging is a matter of will power and can always be safely done without medical intervention if one tries hard enough.
19. ____ Chemically dependent battered women should never be referred to AA or other 12-step programs.
20. ____ Chemically dependent battered women should always be required to attend AA or other 12-step programs.

Answer Key

- 1.) False Some studies indicate social drinkers are a greater risk to their partners than late stage addicts. Domestic violence is caused by many factors. While chemical dependency and domestic violence do not have a causal relationship they can co-occur. According to the AMA nearly 75% of the wives of alcoholics have been threatened and 45% have been assaulted by their husbands. Any woman referred to Al Anon should also be referred to a victim services program.
- 2.) False While 44%-96% of reported cases of domestic violence to police involve the use of a substance by one or both parties most domestic violence cases are NOT reported. Domestic violence is caused by many factors. While substance abuse and domestic violence are often correlated they do not have a causal relationship. Many batterers and victims of domestic violence do not misuse substances.
- 3.) True While substance misuse and addiction do not cause domestic violence and sexual assault, when they occur together, severity of injuries and lethality may be increased. Some studies indicate an individual's beliefs about what happens when one drinks is more important than the presence of alcohol itself. A belief that drinking causes violence can escalate risk. Additionally other studies indicate substance use may impact hostility and empathy as well as memory. While these factors may escalate risk they do not cause violence.
- 4.) False Batterer's who stop using substances may change their tactics. They may become more effective at monitoring and tracking their partners as well as controlling them. Victims who stop using substances may be harder for batterer's to control. An abuser may decide to sabotage a victim's treatment efforts or escalate violence to regain control. Batterer's may force their partners to leave treatment against medical advice, prevent them from participating in self-help and other support groups or force them to use substances against their will.
- 5.) False Euphoric recall is a term coined by Vernon Johnson in his book I'll Quit Tomorrow to describe the distortion in memory that occurs when substances are used. Honey-moon phase is a term coined by Lenore Walker to describe an abuser's efforts to use the tactic of being nice to regain power and control following another type of abusive behavior.

- 6.) False Blackouts are temporary periods of amnesia associated with substance abuse. Most people in a blackout appear normal and have not passed out. While people in a blackout state may not remember what they choose to do; there is no evidence to indicate they are not capable of forming intent. Blackouts are not an acceptable excuse for domestic violence and sexual assault committed by perpetrators under the influence.
- 7.) False There is no credible scientific evidence indicating any behavior on the part of a victim can cause a batterer to act in a violent manner. Additionally, studies pertaining to the experience of victimization overwhelmingly indicate victims of domestic violence feel terror, fear and shame.
- 8.) False Domestic Violence is a pattern of coercive behaviors whereby once person in an intimate partner relationship seeks to gain and maintain power and control over another. Domestic violence tends to be chronic, it is often progressive and can be lethal.
- 9.) False Chemical dependence is a bio/psycho/social health problem. It effects the liver and the brain as well as other areas of human functioning. While there are genetic components, one does not know prior to use whether one will develop addiction.
- 10.) True While one is not responsible for having the disease of addiction one is responsible for participating in recovery efforts once it becomes obvious that a problem exists that effects others as well as oneself.
- 11.) False Most perpetrators of domestic violence do not suffer from mental illness. Some perpetrators experience depression, have trauma from head injury or could be labeled anti-social but the majority of batterers do not have a mental health diagnosis.
- 12.) False US arrest records and criminal justice data indicate the majority of violent crimes committed in the United States are committed by men. While women can indeed be violent, statistically speaking, incarcerated violent perpetrators are more likely to be male.
- 13.) False Leaving can pose increased risks for battered women. According to the US Department of Justice up to 75% of domestic violence assaults reported to police are made after separation. Studies in Washington State and Florida showed 40-65% of victims killed by their perpetrators

were in the process of leaving. 16-17% of these victims actually had protection orders in place at the time of the homicides.

14. False Anger is an emotion and emotions are neutral. Violence is a behavior and a choice. While some angry people may choose to engage in violent behavior; anger does not cause violence. Anger is merely an excuse some batterers try to use to justify their inappropriate behavior rather than accept responsibility for their actions.
- 15.) False Victims of domestic violence may choose to get safe before seeking sobriety or seek sobriety before getting safe. Victims must decide for themselves which task is most necessary initially.
- Ultimately safety and sobriety are linked but one does not guarantee the other.
- True Perpetrators may not benefit from batterer intervention programs if they are actively using substances however substance abuse treatment cannot be a substitute for batterer intervention. Accountability for batterers may include incarceration if their use of substances prevents them from being able to benefit from batterer intervention programs that require victim safety, cessation of violence and batterer accountability.
- 16.) False Victims of domestic violence may choose to get safe before seeking sobriety or seek sobriety before getting safe. Victims must decide for themselves which task is most necessary initially.
- Ultimately safety and sobriety are linked but one does not guarantee the other.
- Addressing substance abuse may be essential for perpetrators to benefit from batterer intervention programs but victim safety must always take precedence. Batterers in early recovery may increase risk for victims by being more aware and better able to control their partners. Studies indicate the persons least likely to benefit from batterer intervention programs are chronic inebriates. Additionally, studies indicate, reoccurrence of violence rates are highest in batterer's intervention programs well inside the first year such efforts are made.
- 17.) True Victims who stop using substances may be harder for batterer's to control. An abuser may decide to sabotage a victim's treatment efforts or escalate violence to regain control. Batterer's may force their partners to leave treatment against medical advice, prevent them from participating in self-help and other support groups or force them to use substances against their will. Additionally, batterers may

threaten to turn their partners in to DFYS, tell others of their treatment issues or mislead counselors in family sessions. Couples counseling can pose risk for very significant harm for victims of domestic violence and is not recommended.

- 18.) False Will power alone cannot prevent withdrawal symptoms or abstinence syndrome. Many individuals who suffer from chemical dependence require medical detoxification to safely stop using. Failure to receive medical intervention can lead to life-threatening symptoms and or death.
- 19.) False Many battered women benefit from AA and other 12 step programs particularly if they are referred to gender specific groups. Battered women should be advised of the strengths and limitations of 12 step programs. Risks include being re-traumatized by drunk-a-logs involving domestic violence, having a batterer locate a first step and attempt to use it against a woman in court or being around people who encourage her to look at her part in any negative personal relationship. It is essential to advise any battered woman considering attendance at AA or other 12 step program that she has no part in the violence and that amends need not be made to dealers or batterers. Also women need to be advised of the risks for sexual abuse from “13th Steppers” (those who prey on the vulnerability of newcomers for sexual favors who could be present at a self-help meeting).
- 20.) False Sometimes it is not safe for battered women to be referred to AA or other 12 step meetings if her partner is actively seeking her. Additionally some battered women may have trouble with the concept of powerlessness. When it is safe for women to attend it may be useful for them to try about 6 meetings to see if they can find any value in attending. If this does not appeal other options should be explored.

Understanding Domestic Violence and Substance Abuse

Pre-test Questionnaire

Please fill out the following information as completely as possible. Do not put your name on it. Your answers will be helpful for us in evaluating the effectiveness of this training program.

Which of the following best describes your occupation? (check only one, please)

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Administrative | <input type="checkbox"/> Nurse | <input type="checkbox"/> Reception/Records |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business/Professional | <input type="checkbox"/> Advocate | <input type="checkbox"/> Health Care Provider |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Educator | <input type="checkbox"/> Law Enforcement | <input type="checkbox"/> Attorney/Legal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social Worker | <input type="checkbox"/> Physician | <input type="checkbox"/> Clergy/Spiritual Counselor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chemical Dependency Professional | <input type="checkbox"/> Government | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

Check the box that describes your comfort level in performing the following tasks. (Note: unless otherwise indicated, these tasks are relevant to all staff.)

TASK	1 Extremely Uncomfortable	2 Uncomfortable	3 Neutral	4 Comfortable	5 Extremely Comfortable
Identify warning signs of DV/SA					
Ask screening questions about DV/SA (if this is appropriate to your professional role.)					
Assist a victim of DV/SA with a safety plan					

List two DV/SA referral resources within your community.

1. _____

2. _____

List two safety and sobriety planning techniques you can explore as options for people who may be impacted by DV/SA.

1. _____

2. _____

Understanding Domestic Violence and Substance Abuse in the Healthcare Setting

Pre-test Questionnaire

Please fill out the following information as completely as possible. Do not put your name on it. Your answers will be helpful for us in evaluating the effectiveness of this training program.

Which of the following best describes your occupation? (check only one, please)

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Administrative | <input type="checkbox"/> Nurse | <input type="checkbox"/> Reception/Medical Records |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nurse Practitioner | <input type="checkbox"/> Medical Assistant | <input type="checkbox"/> Physician Assistant |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social Worker | <input type="checkbox"/> Physician | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chemical Dependency Counselor | | |

Check the box that describes your comfort level in performing the following tasks. (Note: unless otherwise indicated, these tasks are relevant to all staff.)

TASK	1 Extremely Uncomfortable	2 Uncomfortable	3 Neutral	4 Comfortable	5 Extremely Comfortable
Identify warning signs of domestic violence/ substance abuse.					
Ask female patients screening questions about domestic violence/ substance abuse (if this is appropriate to your professional role.)					
Assist a victim of domestic violence/ Addiction with a safety plan/recovery plan.					

List two domestic violence and substance abuse referral resources within your community.

1. _____
2. _____

List two safety planning techniques you can use with a domestic violence victim and two recovery planning tools you can use with an substance abuser/person with addiction.

1. _____
2. _____

Understanding Domestic Violence and Substance Abuse Post-test Questionnaire

Please fill out the following information as completely as possible. Do not put your name on it. Your answers will be helpful for us in evaluating the effectiveness of this training program.

Which of the following best describes your occupation? (check only one, please)

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Administrative | <input type="checkbox"/> Nurse | <input type="checkbox"/> Reception/Records |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business/Professional | <input type="checkbox"/> Advocate | <input type="checkbox"/> Health Care Provider |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Educator | <input type="checkbox"/> Law Enforcement | <input type="checkbox"/> Attorney/Legal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social Worker | <input type="checkbox"/> Physician | <input type="checkbox"/> Clergy/Spiritual Counselor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chemical Dependency Professional | <input type="checkbox"/> Government | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

Check the box that describes your comfort level in performing the following tasks. (Note: unless otherwise indicated, these tasks are relevant to all staff.)

TASK	1 Extremely Uncomfortable	2 Uncomfortable	3 Neutral	4 Comfortable	5 Extremely Comfortable
Identify warning signs of DV/SA					
Ask screening questions about DV/SA (if this is appropriate to your professional role.)					
Assist a victim of DV/SA with a safety plan					

List two DV/SA referral resources within your community.

1.

2.

List two safety planning techniques you can explore as options for people who may be impacted by DV/SA.

1.

2.

Understanding Domestic Violence and Substance Abuse in the Healthcare Setting

Post-test Questionnaire

Please fill out the following information as completely as possible. Do not put your name on it. Your answers will be helpful for us in evaluating the effectiveness of this training program.

Which of the following best describes your occupation? (check only one, please)

- Administrative Nurse Reception/Medical Records
 Nurse Practitioner Medical Assistant Physician Assistant
 Social Worker Physician Other _____
 Chemical Dependency Counselor

Check the box that describes your comfort level in performing the following tasks. (Note: unless otherwise indicated, these tasks are relevant to all staff.)

TASK	1 Extremely Uncomfortable	2 Uncomfortable	3 Neutral	4 Comfortable	5 Extremely Comfortable
Identify warning signs of domestic violence/ substance abuse.					
Ask female patients screening questions about domestic violence/ substance abuse (if this is appropriate to your professional role.)					
Assist a victim of domestic violence/ Addiction with a safety plan/recovery plan.					

List two domestic violence and substance abuse referral resources within your community.

1. _____
2. _____

List two safety planning techniques you can use with a domestic violence victim and two recovery planning tools you can use with an substance abuser/person with addiction.

1. _____
2. _____

Date/Time:

Presenter/s:

Workshop Title:

INSTRUCTIONS: This confidential questionnaire will help us to design training that is responsive to providers' needs and concerns. It is also required for our continued funding. Thank you for your help.

1. Please indicate your position/job title: _____

Please also circle letter below best describing your current employment setting:

- a.) DVSA Program Staff
- b.) Health Care/Substance Abuse Provider
- c.) Legal/Criminal Justice
- d.) Other _____

Please circle your rating choice:

2. Presenter effective:

1	2	3	4
Outstanding	Very good	Good	Poor

3. General level of material was:

1	2	3
About right	Too basic	Too detailed

4. How much did you learn from this presentation?

1	2	3
Very much	Some	Very little

5. To what extent will you be able to apply what you learned to your job?

1	2	3
Very much	Some	Very little

6. What was the most useful to you?

7. What else would be useful to you in a future training?

8. Any other comments are greatly appreciated (Use back if necessary).

ANDVSA Post Training Survey

Demographics (Please circle the number corresponding to your response.)

1. Profession? 1 DVSA Program Staff 2 Health Care/Substance Abuse Provider 3 Legal/Criminal Justice 4 Other _____ 2a. I am in recovery from substance abuse. 1 Yes 2 No 2b. I am a survivor of DV and/or sexual assault 1 Yes 2 No

Please circle the number that best fits your response to each of the questions below.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Dis-Agree	Disagree Strongly	N/A
3. This training provided technical assistance to develop protocols, policies and procedures to better address service provision and advocacy for survivors of DVSA impacted by their own or another's substance abuse	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. This training provided me with tools to help me provide better services for program participants with substance abuse issues e.g. screening, education, support group etc.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. During the past 12 months my agency has provided support group services specifically designed for program participants with substance abuse issues	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. This training can help me to assess immediate risk to program participants from DVSA as well as from alcohol and other drug use	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. This training provided tips for partnering with chemical dependency programs to develop tools for identifying and assessing the needs of women impacted by DVSA and substance abuse	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. This training provided an improved protocol to address the impact of substance abuse on safety planning	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. This training provided safety planning tools to help me develop a relapse prevention plan and offer support groups.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. This training provided tips to help me link to a range of chemical dependency assistance options	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. This training provided me with written materials relevant to DVSA and substance abuse issues	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. During the past 12 months my agency allocated funds to provide comprehensive support services for people impacted by DVSA and substance abuse	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. This training provided me with new tools for integrated support groups to address safety issues for program participants impacted by DVSA and substance abuse that I will use	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. This training has provided me with tools to provide outreach and safety planning education on DVSA to chemical dependency treatment program clients in a group setting	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. I need more on-going training / consultation on substance abuse issues such as drug facilitated date rape, coping, etc.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. During the past 12 months my agency has provided on-going training and consultation on DVSA issues to substance abuse professionals	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. My agency has a substance abuse protocol that includes a multi-step approach for screening/identification; initial intervention and follow-up; information and referral; alternatives to substance use; integrated safety planning/relapse prevention options and steps for community and emotional support	1	2	3	4	5	6
18. My agency monitors the implementation of program policies and procedures pertaining to DVSA and substance abuse	1	2	3	4	5	6
19. I would like more training on substance abuse issues and protocol development, group implementation and funding	1	2	3	4	5	6

20. Please write additional comments on the back of this sheet.

Facilitator/s:

Group Date/Time: _____

Group Topic:

INSTRUCTIONS: This confidential questionnaire will help us to design support groups that are responsive to your needs and concerns.

1. Please circle issues you addressed in group today:

- a.) Safety
- b.) Sobriety
- c.) Legal/Criminal Justice
- d.) Other: _____

Please circle your rating choice:

2. My needs were met in group today:

1	2	3
Very much	Some	Very little

3. Facilitator effectiveness:

1	2	3	4
Outstanding	Very good	Good	Poor

4. General level of material was:

1	2	3
About right	Too basic	Too detailed

5. How much did you learn from this group?

1	2	3
Very much	Some	Very little

6. To what extent will you be able to apply what you learned to your life?

1	2	3
Very much	Some	Very little

7. I feel safe in this support group:

1	2	3
Very much	Some	Very little

8. I can tell my story and be believed in this support group:

1	2	3
Very much	Some	Very little

9. This group helps me connect with others and feel empowered:

1	2	3
Very much	Some	Very little

10. What is most useful for you in this group?

11. What is most challenging for you in group?

12. What could we do better?

13. If there is one thing we could do for you, what would it be?

14. Any other comments or suggestions for improvement?