

Teen Survivor Support Groups: Promoting Resilience and Empowerment

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Objectives

1. Integrate **empowerment-based advocacy principles** into teen survivor support groups.
2. Use the **principles of trauma-informed services** to shape support group practice.
3. Apply an **understanding of oppression issues** to create an accessible and inclusive group.
4. Create a **survivor-led, teen-empowering group experience**.



Teen Support Group

A Guide to Psychoeducational Support Groups
for Teen Survivors of Sexual Abuse and Assault

Guide



WASHINGTON COALITION OF SEXUAL ASSAULT PROGRAMS

<http://www.wcsap.org/teen-support-group-guide>

Empowerment-Based Advocacy

Promoting a sense of power from within by supporting a survivor's self-determination and autonomy.

Believing in survivors' ability to take care of themselves and to know what they need.



Empowerment-Based Advocacy in Your Group

- Provide lots of accurate, useful information
- Give clear, understandable info about confidentiality
- Learn about other resources and help teens gain access
- Examine your own beliefs & biases
- LISTEN!
- Maintain a positive, hopeful tone
- Keep an advocacy lens
- Know that learning travels in all directions



Trauma-Informed Services

An approach to engaging people with histories of trauma that

- recognizes the presence of trauma symptoms
- acknowledges the role that trauma has played in their lives



Trauma-Informed Services in Your Group

- Educate yourself about the neurobiology of trauma
- Learn about teen development
- Consider trauma issues as you set up your group
- Prioritize group safety
- Focus on building trust
- Include critical topics such as boundaries, healthy relationships & sexuality, building support



Anti-Oppression Framework

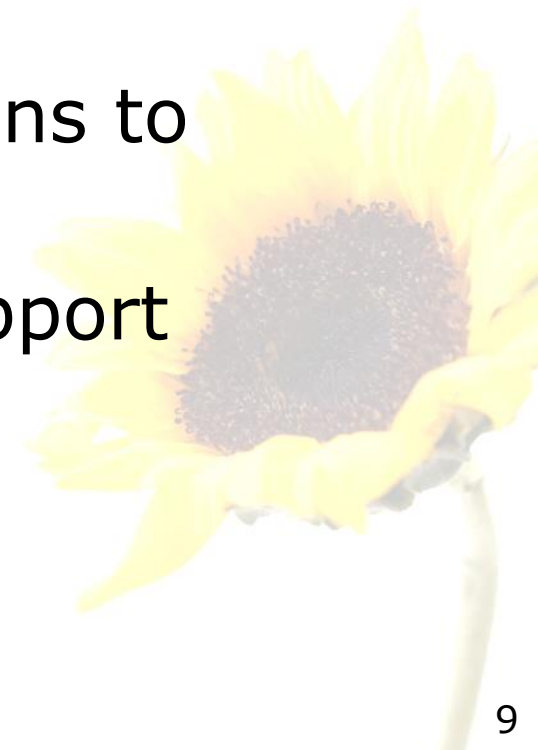
Providing services with an understanding of



- the causes and connections in power disparities
- how abuse of power disparities works on individual and institutional levels

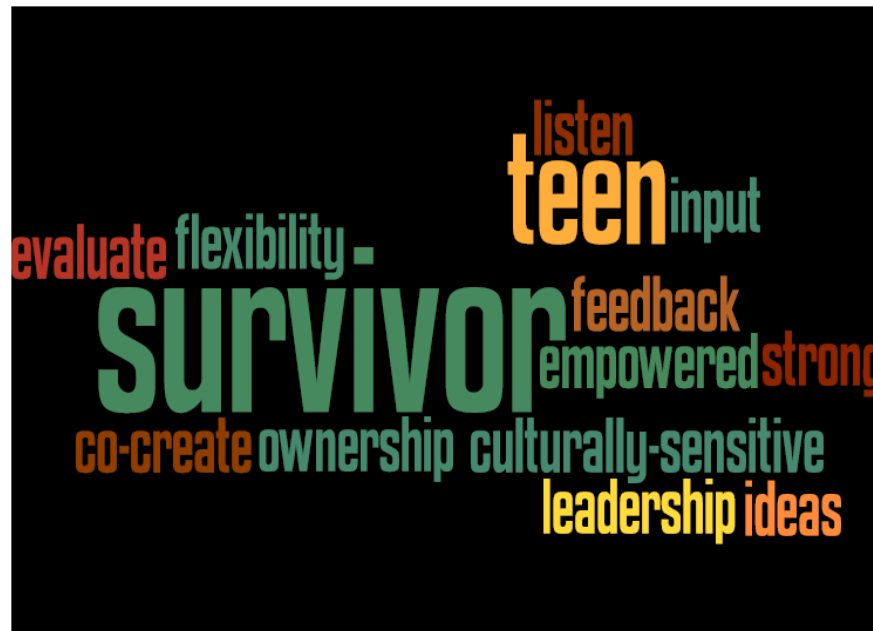
An Anti-Oppression Framework in Your Group

- Make the group inclusive and accessible
- Establish and enforce group ground rules
- Include teen-friendly discussion of societal causes of sexual assault
- Provide space and safety for teens to explore identities & culture
- ASK how the group can best support participants



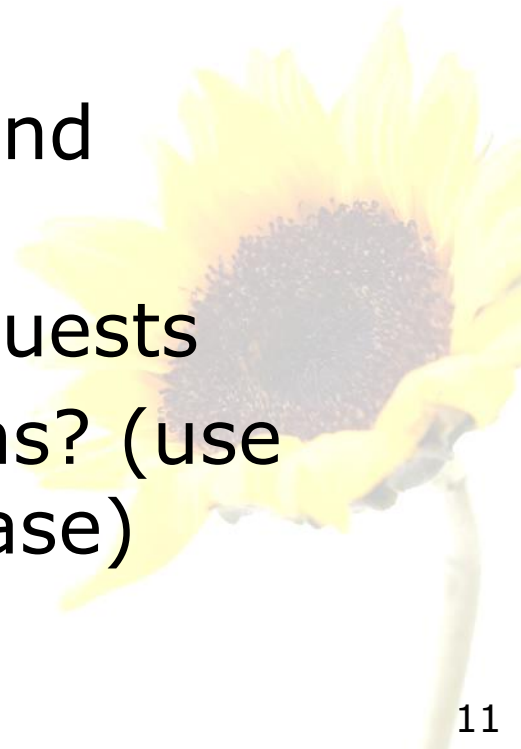
Survivor-Led Services

Founded in the belief that survivors are experts on their own lives. Providing support and resources based on survivors' expressed needs.



Survivor-Led Services in Your Group

- You are the *facilitator*, not the *leader*
- Ask for input and feedback
- Balance group structure with flexibility
- Evaluate, and use the results
- Create opportunities for choice and autonomy
- Respond to group needs and requests
- Why is this so important for teens? (use chat to answer this question please)



Getting & Keeping Participants

- Recruitment
 - Think outside the box
 - Utilize your partnerships
- Retention
 - Logistics matter
 - Match people well to the group
 - Use feedback to personalize content



Tips!

- Confidentiality
 - Establish & clarify agency policies first
 - Give teens the info they need to make the best decisions for themselves
- Working in Schools
 - Evaluate pros and cons
 - Set clear boundaries



Resilience & Empowerment Grow in Group



- Group principles work together
- Group must be based on sound skills
- Teens need a place to move toward peace & recovery
- It's worth the work!

Stay in Touch

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