

# IPSV Support Group

A Guide to Psychoeducational Support Groups  
for Survivors of Intimate Partner Sexual Violence

*Guide*



A Supplement to Circle of Hope

WASHINGTON COALITION OF SEXUAL ASSAULT PROGRAMS



# IPSV Support Group *Guide*

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for Survivors of Intimate Partner Sexual Violence



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This manual may be copied in whole or in part.

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## INTRODUCTION



This Guide is a supplement to the Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs' (WCSAP) general guide to psychoeducational support groups, *Circle of Hope*. *Circle of Hope* provides excellent information about the nature of psychoeducational groups and how they differ from self-help and therapy groups. In addition, there is information about how to select participants, work with a co-facilitator, establish a curriculum, handle the inevitable concerns that arise in the course of running groups, and maintain healthy boundaries in group work. This Guide does not duplicate that information, and should be used in conjunction with *Circle of Hope*, which is available online at [www.wcsap.org](http://www.wcsap.org).

As with *Circle of Hope*, this Guide provides information specifically relevant to psychoeducational groups that are to be run according to the guidelines provided by the Office of Crime Victims Advocacy for community sexual assault programs in the State of Washington. The goal of this supplemental Guide is to encourage support groups where survivors of intimate partner sexual violence can feel welcomed, included, and supported.





A teal banner with a wavy pattern, containing the text 'IPSV SUPPORT GROUPS'.

# IPSV SUPPORT GROUPS

A white box with a teal border, containing the text 'SECTION 1'.

## SECTION 1

## WHAT IS INTIMATE PARTNER SEXUAL VIOLENCE (IPSV)?

**IPSV is sexual assault that takes place within the context of domestic violence.**

In other words, the victim of IPSV is or has been in a relationship with the offender, and the sexual violence is part of a larger pattern of domination and control, with or without additional physical violence. IPSV used to be called “marital rape,” but that term is too limiting. IPSV survivors may or may not have ever been married to their abusers. In addition, IPSV can affect same-sex couples as well as those in heterosexual relationships.

IPSV survivors include a wide range of people:

- the fourteen-year-old girl whose boyfriend coerces her into unwanted sexual activity through threats and intimidation
- the wife who complies with her husband’s sexual demands because of his explosive violence when she resists
- the man whose male ex-lover stalks him and sexually assaults him
- the immigrant woman whose partner sexually degrades her and threatens to have her deported if she doesn’t cooperate
- the college student whose partner humiliates her and says she must have sex with him or he’ll post naked photos of her on the internet

All of these people constitute just a small sampling of IPSV survivors.

As we know, most victimization by sexual abuse and assault occurs between two people who know each other. However, there is a vast difference between the experience of someone who has been raped by an acquaintance and that of a person who has lived in a sexually abusive relationship for a number of years. The dynamics of ongoing power and control, the domination of one partner by another, the secrecy and betrayal, and the confused and conflicting emotions of individuals who have experienced intimate partner sexual abuse, all deserve recognition and response.

## WHY CONSIDER SEPARATE SUPPORT GROUPS FOR IPSV SURVIVORS?

IPSV is both domestic violence and sexual assault; survivors may not feel comfortable in a psychoeducational group that addresses only one of those issues. IPSV survivors who attend general sexual assault groups sometimes feel isolated and poorly understood. For many years, people in this situation have believed that somehow what they experienced isn't "real" sexual assault. The book, *Real Rape, Real Pain*, by Patricia Eastal and Louise McOrmond-Plummer, addresses this issue and describes how survivors sometimes think that because their sexual victimization takes place within a relationship, it is less valid or less serious. In fact, research has shown that IPSV survivors experience more, not fewer, traumatic aftereffects than those who are raped by strangers. Given the fact that IPSV survivors are often sexually assaulted multiple times by their abusers, and are also subjected to physical abuse and emotional degradation in their relationships, it is not surprising that their road to recovery is every bit as difficult as that of any sexual assault survivor.

Because sexual violence has not been routinely recognized as a common form of domestic violence, those who have experienced IPSV may feel just as out of place in a group for domestic violence survivors. As one survivor, Carleen, described her experience in a domestic violence support group:



It was good, but I didn't get a lot out of it. I was one of only two still in an abusive relationship and, from what I could gather, the only one whose main issue was IPSV. The facilitators were very good but I didn't find a lot of the information was relevant to me.



While the secrecy and shame surrounding physical victimization is profound, the humiliation of sexual assault and abuse within a relationship can make it very difficult for survivors to share their experiences. Psychoeducational groups are valuable largely because they decrease survivors' sense of isolation and self-blame, while giving them information that allows them to see that the problem is not theirs alone, but rather is a reflection of the power dynamics of our society. For IPSV survivors, advocacy and group work may inadvertently increase their feeling that they are alone in their pain. By providing a group that specifically addresses their issues, or at minimum including information and acknowledgement of IPSV in general sexual assault and domestic violence groups, agencies can assist these survivors in developing an understanding of their own experiences that will contribute to their healing journey.



I think it's important that facilitators have an understanding of differences between [non-partner] sexual assault and IPSV - for example, the effects of IPSV can be longer and graver than for other types of rape.

[It's also important to note the differences between] domestic violence and IPSV - for example, the fact that rape can affect self-esteem and body image more profoundly than physical violence.

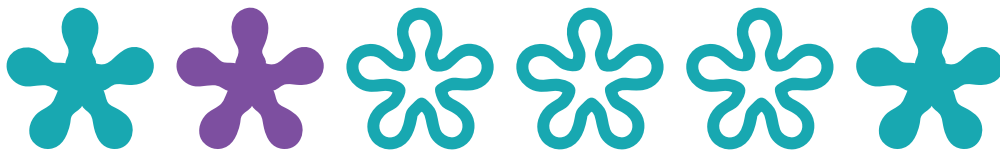
—Louise McOrmond-Plummer  
(personal communication, May 21, 2009)

## WHO SHOULD BE IN THESE GROUPS?

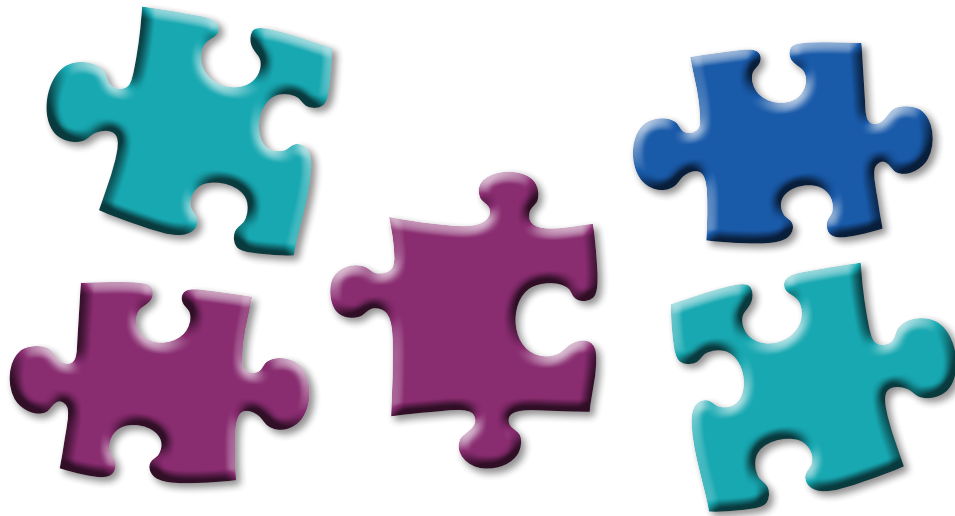
As stated in *Circle of Hope*, research has shown that psychoeducational groups are more effective when group members are dealing with the same issues. However, as you can see from the descriptions of the range of IPSV survivors, just the fact of intimate partner violence alone may not make for a group that is dealing with the same issues. A teenager may or may not relate to someone who is being abused by her long-time spouse. Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals may feel out of place in a mixed group. One woman, who wishes to remain anonymous, was kind enough to share her thoughts with me:

Yes. I am a lesbian, and was in a violent relationship with another woman. As I have read in research online, I fear that people would be more likely to consider the relationship mutually abusive, or to be ignorant of the power dynamics that are different in lesbian relationships (as opposed to the social power afforded men by birthright that shapes heterosexual couple power differentials). I also am afraid that my situation is not “extreme enough” for a group for survivors of intimate partner violence, since I never had any bruises. These feelings grow largely from an experience I had when I called a local domestic violence hotline/battered women’s shelter, and they told me that they “don’t do groups for lesbians.”


(Anonymous, personal communication, May 20, 2009)



Putting together a group that works involves both science and art, as well as a certain degree of luck. If you are working in a rural area where few survivors seek services, it is unlikely that you will be able to run a group composed entirely of IPSV survivors, as a practical matter. In that case, integrating information about IPSV into a more traditional domestic violence or sexual assault group is a reasonable option (see *Integrating IPSV Topics into Sexual Assault or Domestic Violence Groups*, below). In fact, group members who are seeking services for a different issue may also have had experiences with IPSV that continue to affect them. If you are forming a group on a college campus, you may very well have enough group candidates to fill a separate IPSV group.



There is not enough scientific research in this field to guide us unequivocally in how to assemble these groups. A good starting place, as with any program, is to assess the need for services. Because IPSV is still a hidden and largely unnamed issue, people may not come knocking at your door to ask for groups. As both sexual assault and domestic violence agencies educate their staff members about IPSV and begin to routinely discuss these issues with those who seek their services, the need for specialized IPSV groups or modules within other groups may become clearer. Formal surveys may also be useful in determining need, as would a simple question in the course of advocacy services: “We are considering starting a group for people who have experienced sexual abuse or assault in their relationships with a partner. Would you be interested if such a group were available?”



Because IPSV is still a hidden and largely unnamed issue, people may not come knocking at your door to ask for groups.

## DEVELOPING IPSV SERVICES

### 1. Educate yourself and your colleagues about IPSV.

There are a number of resources available to help you; they are listed at the end of this Guide. Attend a workshop, take an online class, do some reading, and open discussions of IPSV during conversations about how best to serve clients. If your agency is a member of WCSAP, technical assistance on the issue of developing IPSV services is also available to you. Since IPSV involves both domestic violence and sexual assault, it is crucial to be cross-trained in these issues.

### 2. Learn how to ask about IPSV when talking to survivors.

As you increase your knowledge and comfort level in dealing with partner sexual violence, you will find that more survivors disclose to you. Having the specific language to ask questions is most helpful. Kathleen Arledge's article (2009) on screening questions is available on the WCSAP website and is a great place to start. Your best source of knowledge and information about IPSV will be the people who have experienced this trauma. Listening to their experiences with respect and concern will inform your heart as well as your brain – and you will need both an informed heart and an informed brain to facilitate an effective support group.

### 3. Integrate IPSV information into all services.

You will be more likely to fill support groups if your program or agency integrates information about IPSV into all of the outreach work and training it provides. The more local professionals and members of the general community learn about this topic, the more likely you are to get referrals or to have people self-identify as IPSV survivors.



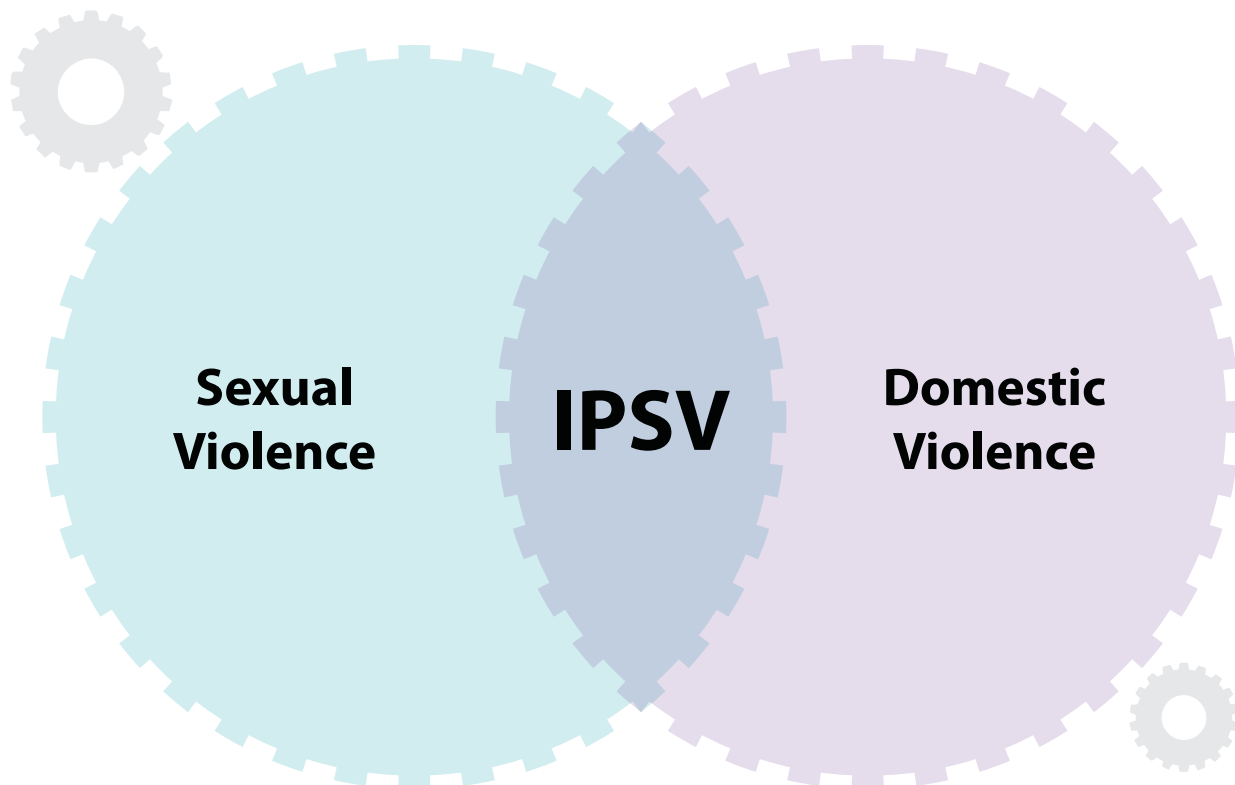
## USING THE GUIDE

### GROUP FORMAT

This guide provides a suggested format for an eight-session psychoeducational support group. No two groups will be, or should be, exactly the same. It is important that you tailor your group to the intended participants. Use what works for you, and change or discard what doesn't. You will find ample suggestions for resources that you can use as a basis for addressing other topics or activities. If you wish to extend the group to twelve sessions, it will not be difficult to find enough material for the additional sessions. Be sure to have participants complete an evaluation at the final group session, and use their feedback to refine and improve subsequent groups. Please feel free to share your thoughts about these materials and their reception by survivors with us at WCSAP, so that we may continue to improve the information we provide.

### DUAL-DISCIPLINE APPROACH

If you work for a dual sexual assault/domestic violence agency, consider having one co-facilitator from each discipline. If that is not possible, seek consultation from your counterparts in the other discipline, since it is important to obtain as much information and familiarize yourself with as many resources as possible in each area.





## STAYING POSITIVE

You may notice that the topic headings for each session are in the form of questions, with a positive tone. While IPSV is a very serious and even tragic subject, one of the main goals of a support group is to give participants a sense of hope. Humor, appropriately used, is a healing tool, as is the use of positive reframing of some of the issues considered. If you do extend the group by creating additional sessions, pay attention to maintaining the positive aspect of the group.



While IPSV is a very serious and even tragic subject, one of the main goals of a support group is to give participants a sense of hope.

## MODIFYING LANGUAGE

As discussed above, IPSV affects a wide variety of people, and you may have a support group that addresses a specific population other than adult women who were abused in heterosexual relationships. Because the preponderance of IPSV support groups probably will be composed of women with male abusers, this Guide uses the pronoun “she” when referring to group participants. Remember, you are encouraged to modify the curriculum to meet the needs of your own program.

## OVERVIEW OF SESSION OUTLINES

Each session outline provided in this Guide contains a structure for the session. Group members will soon become accustomed to this format and will enjoy the sense of familiarity it provides.



**GOAL OF SESSION:** These goals are carefully designed to align with the stages of group development. If you choose to add topics to a particular session, they should support the session goal.



**CHECK-IN:** During the *Check-In*, the group facilitators ask each participant in turn to respond briefly to a prompt. This is an opportunity to acknowledge each person and to set the framework and tone for the session. It is important that the facilitators emphasize the brevity of this activity and establish the ground rule that other participants should not comment or interact during this phase of the group.



**LEARNING AND DISCUSSION:** Knowledge is power, and shared knowledge is an important aspect of psychoeducational support groups. By encouraging discussion, the facilitators can help participants to connect information to their own lives and situations. Group members are the true experts on the subject of intimate partner sexual violence; the group provides the opportunity to integrate their experiences with a wider knowledge of the topic.



**ACTIVITIES:** Sometimes activities precede the *Learning and Discussion* portion of the group, and sometimes they follow it. There may be more than one suggested activity per session. Activities are discussed in more detail under the topic “Using Activities,” below. Activities serve to build group cohesiveness, to engage group members in active learning, and to make the sessions more interesting and more enjoyable.



**CHECK-OUT:** Because participating in a group focused on sexual violence is difficult and challenging, participants need a time to decompress prior to leaving the group each week. The *Check-Out* helps group members make the transition back to their everyday lives by providing positive, forward-looking suggestions for small steps forward during the coming week. The structure is similar to the *Check-In*, with a chance for each participant to make a brief comment in turn. This closing activity teaches realistic goal-setting and assists in managing the emotions that may be stirred up by the group.



**RESOURCES:** Reviewing the resources listed at the end of each session outline is an excellent way for facilitators to prepare for the session. Some resources are useful to share with group members; others are intended to enhance the facilitators’ knowledge.



**CONSIDERATIONS FOR FACILITATORS:** Each session outline contains information to assist facilitators in presenting the information appropriately, handling the group dynamics, and understanding the process of group development.

## USING ACTIVITIES

Every session in this Guide contains suggested activities. This is because adult learners, like learners of all ages, enjoy active participation and tend to retain information better when they are highly engaged in the learning process. Using the psychoeducational model, you will be helping participants to learn, but you certainly don't want an excess of "talking at" the group. Rather, you will use well-designed activities to help participants figure things out for themselves.

Note that the term "well-designed" is used. Activities are fun, but they are not easy to facilitate. They require thought, preparation, and careful structuring. Some group facilitators love activities and enjoy immersing themselves in creative preparation of materials. Others are completely turned off by the "arts and crafts" nature of activity preparation.

If the preparation for activities – such as making up cards or handouts, cutting out shapes, or making posters – is not something that appeals to you, you have four choices:

- ➔ find someone else to help
- ➔ keep the preparations as simple as possible
- ➔ look up some activities that don't require many materials
- ➔ just grin and bear it!



**A student or another volunteer or staff member might really enjoy using his or her creativity to make activity items available, relieving you of the task. You may even find that you have more fun with preparation once you see how the group actually uses the materials.**

## TAKING ITEMS HOME

A number of group activities result in products that group participants would ordinarily want to take home and keep. Because some group members may still be living in abusive situations, this may not be safe. Discuss this issue at the first session and help the group members figure out how they would like to handle it.

## PICKING AND CHOOSING

Depending on how talkative the group participants are, you may use only a fraction of the suggested discussion items and activities proposed for each session.



Design your own curriculum by highlighting the points that you believe to be essential for the session, and then prioritizing the other items.

If the group is having a great discussion on a particular topic, you may choose to shuffle some topics to another session or to forego them altogether. On the other hand, you may put structured time constraints on the various segments of each session so that you can get to everything you believe to be important. Just be sure that you and your co-facilitator, if you have one, have talked this through and are in agreement about your approach. You may develop a subtle signal to indicate that it is time to wrap up a particular portion of the session. This can become a point of conflict between co-facilitators, so be sure to talk about it in advance and agree to work things out if time management becomes an issue.

## GROUP AND OTHER SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Because IPSV can be the hallmark of a highly dangerous (perhaps even lethal) situation for survivors, it is important that a support group is only one of an array of available resources. Certainly participants who are still in contact with their abusers should be working with a community advocate on an ongoing basis to maintain safety for themselves and their children. IPSV is also highly traumatic; on average, survivors show more trauma symptoms than other rape survivors. Therefore, some group participants may need psychotherapy in addition to or prior to participating in a support group. Each survivor should be made aware of the full array of services available to both domestic violence and sexual assault victims in the community.

## SAFETY ISSUES

For those facilitators with a background in domestic violence work, dealing with safety issues will be second nature. For those in the sexual assault field, it may take some more focused effort to ensure that consideration of participant safety is at the forefront at all times. Because we know that victims who have left abusive partners are at increased risk of being targeted for violence, the baseline assumption should be that every group participant may be in danger. For those who still live in abusive situations, extreme caution should be used in bringing home any group materials or using online resources or email. As part of your preparation for facilitating the group, review the Tech Safety information on the WCSAP website at <http://www.wcsap.org/technology.htm>. Safety considerations are highlighted throughout this Guide.

In addition to issues of individual protection, the safety of the group as a whole needs to be considered more urgently than for traditional sexual assault survivors' groups. The expertise of colleagues in the domestic violence field can help sexual assault group facilitators to address group safety issues.



**The baseline assumption should be that every group participant may be in danger.**

## INTEGRATING IPSV TOPICS INTO SEXUAL ASSAULT OR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE GROUPS

Since it may not be practical to establish a group composed solely of IPSV survivors, you may wish to adapt portions of this Guide for use within more traditional sexual assault or domestic violence groups.

### *Sexual Assault Support Groups*

For *sexual assault support groups*, your awareness of IPSV will help you to include discussion of intimate partners as perpetrators whenever appropriate. Since revictimization is unfortunately very common, it is possible that participants who come to a survivors' group in the aftermath of a stranger or acquaintance rape may also have experienced sexual assault by an intimate partner. At the appropriate point in the group process, raising this issue may prompt fruitful discussion.

### *Domestic Violence Support Groups*

In *domestic violence support groups*, IPSV survivors often report feeling that their issues are not addressed. It is embarrassing and humiliating for them to raise the issue of sexual violence in a group focused on physical victimization. The outcome of avoiding this topic may be an increased sense of isolation and shame, as they think that others have not suffered this form of abuse. You can do a great deal to help "hidden" IPSV survivors simply by using examples of sexual violence as well as physical violence when you introduce domestic violence topics. Since the majority of domestic violence survivors have also experienced IPSV, it is critical to weave this issue into general domestic violence groups.

If you are facilitating a non-IPSV-specific support group, review each of the suggested sessions in this Guide to use and adapt what will work for your group. Some options are:

- The *Mini-Course on IPSV* in Session 1
- The *Continuum of Force Activity* in Session 2
- The *Learning and Discussion* on the effect of IPSV on children and other family members in Session 5
- The *CERTS Model of Healthy Sexuality* in Session 6
- The *IPSV-Enhanced Power and Control Wheel Activity* in Session 7

Louise McOrmond-Plummer raises the issue of members of general survivor support groups placing blame on IPSV survivors, and the need for facilitators to be proactive in providing protection:



Some survivors of partner rape – particularly those still living in the relationship – have had such responses as “Aren’t you thinking of your children?” [or] “Oh my god! You have to leave!” with the implication being that the woman is responsible for ongoing rape if she doesn’t leave. . . We now have a very strict policy which states that survivors of partner rape are welcome to be part of our community and to talk about their relationships, and must be safe from secondary wounding. We have formulated a list of things not to say, followed up by responses that are more supportive.

–L. McOrmond-Plummer  
(personal communication, May 21, 2009)

Appendix A contains a handout that provides guidelines for participants to assist them in interacting respectfully, regardless of whether or not they are currently in an abusive situation. This handout may be particularly important in non-IPSV-specific groups.







# SUPPORT GROUP CURRICULUM



## SECTION 2

## SESSION ONE – WHO ARE WE AND WHAT ARE WE DOING HERE?



**GOAL OF SESSION:** To begin the creation of a safe and healthy group environment in which participants can engage in the healing process.

### INTRODUCTION TO GROUP

1. Welcome group members and acknowledge that it may have been difficult just showing up for this first meeting
2. Introduction of members and facilitators
  - Ask members to share just their first names
3. Development of ground rules
  - Have the group come up with ground rules; write them on a flip chart
  - If group members do not raise the following topics, raise them yourself and ask for input
    - ♦ Confidentiality - Remind the group of the information you gave each person during prescreening about the mandated exceptions to confidentiality. See page 28 in *Circle of Hope* for an overview of confidentiality issues.
    - ♦ No partners at meeting place, other safety issues
    - ♦ Attendance policies
    - ♦ Respectful and nonjudgmental responses to each other
    - ♦ Tolerance for using whatever language each person needs to use to describe what has happened
4. Format of each meeting – let participants know what to expect
  - *Check-In* – explain that each person should **briefly** answer the prompt question, and that you will give a signal (such as raising your index finger) if the answer is too lengthy
  - Learning and Discussion
  - Activities (these may be scheduled either before or after the Learning and Discussion section)
  - *Check-Out* – same rule as for *Check-In*, in order to allow everyone to participate and not take up too much time



**CHECK-IN:** *What I most hope to achieve in this group is...*



## LEARNING AND DISCUSSION

- Preview of topics to be discussed in subsequent sessions
- Introducing the concept of the healing journey
  - ◆ Each participant is at a different point in her healing
  - ◆ Be patient with yourself and each other
  - ◆ Understand that some participants may still be in a relationship with the abuser, while others may not be (see Appendix A for a participant handout addressing these issues)
  - ◆ Let participants know that it is generally not helpful to give “advice” within the group – they can share their thoughts and experiences, but they can’t tell others what to do or feel
  - ◆ “You may feel worse before you feel better” – explain how certain group topics may trigger posttraumatic reactions, and brainstorm with the group about how to handle those reactions during and between group sessions
- Safety Issues, safety plans, resources for help with safety (see *Considerations for Facilitators*, below)

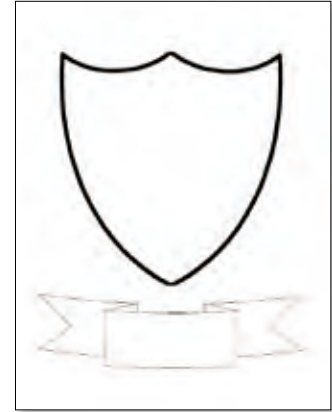
### ***Mini-Course on IPSV***

- ◆ Explain what IPSV is
- ◆ Provide a handout with a few statistics (see Appendix B for *IPSV Fact Sheet*) and/or give participants a copy of the brochure, *Know the Truth about Intimate Partner Sexual Violence*, available from WCSAP and also on the WCSAP website (see *References*)
- ◆ Explain why IPSV is so hard to talk about
- ◆ Provide the context by giving a brief history of laws on marital rape; describe how society supports a sense of sexual entitlement for male partners
- ◆ Ask participants to discuss the points you have raised



### ACTIVITY: Drawing your Strength Shield

**Preparation:** Make enough copies of the Shield Outline (see Appendix C) for each participant; provide a good variety of markers, pens, crayons, and colored pencils. If you want to enhance the activity, you can use larger shield outlines on pieces of poster board or foam board. Of course, you will need to increase the time for the activity if you have a larger shield.



1. Give participants these instructions:
 

“This is your Strength Shield. Please draw one thing on your shield that represents the strength you have or you wish you had. It can be a real object or a symbol. No one is expected to be an artist – just draw it so you can recognize what it is.”
2. Give participants a few minutes to draw, and then ask them to describe their Strength Shield to the group.
3. Ask if it is okay to keep the Strength Shields in a folder and to have them available at future group meetings. If a participant wants to take hers home, that is perfectly fine, of course.



### CHECK-OUT: *What surprised you the most at this first meeting?*



### RESOURCES

#### Safety Planning

- Safety Planning by Jill Davies  
[http://new.vawnet.org/Assoc\\_Files\\_VAWnet/DaviesSafetyPlanning.pdf](http://new.vawnet.org/Assoc_Files_VAWnet/DaviesSafetyPlanning.pdf)
- Safety Plan Form from the North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence  
<http://www.nccadv.org/pdf/Safety%20Plan%20b.pdf>



## CONSIDERATIONS FOR FACILITATORS

- In preparing for this session, it is important that you read the “theoretical framework” information in the *Circle of Hope* guide very carefully.
- Be sure to conduct this session as you intend to conduct subsequent sessions; the first meeting sets the tone and expectation for the group.
- While you will touch on safety planning during this meeting, you will not be able to help participants to develop a comprehensive safety plan within the framework of the support group. This should be done prior to group during individual advocacy work or group prescreening. The article on safety planning by Davies (listed above under *Resources*) reveals how complex a topic this can be. Within the confines of the group, participants can simply indicate their safety concerns and whether their safety needs are being met. Each participant should have an ongoing individual relationship with an advocate if she is still in a vulnerable situation.
- Encourage participants to have fun with the *Shield of Strength* activity. This activity serves a number of functions. It is an icebreaker, allowing participants to get to know each other. It focuses on the positive, which is an important value inherent in this Support Group. There is enough leeway in the activity for participants to reveal as much or as little about themselves as they wish, which makes it less threatening. As long as you help people to feel comfortable about their lack of artistic talent (which makes some folks self-conscious), the act of drawing or coloring usually helps adults to feel playful and more relaxed.
- Don’t be afraid of a little silence during this first meeting. If you ask a question, allow time for people to think before they answer. Group facilitators sometimes move on too quickly because silence can be awkward. You can always make a little comment like, “I’m going to give people some time to think about this,” or “That is a tough topic to talk about,” but don’t rush in to rescue the group from the silence. It is normal in the early phases of group development, and you want to encourage group members to talk to each other, not to expect the facilitators to do most of the talking.

## SESSION TWO – WHY DO WE NEED TO NAME THE PROBLEM?



**GOAL OF SESSION:** To lessen participants' sense of isolation and to enhance their ability to identify abusive behaviors.



**CHECK-IN:** *Have you ever felt like you were the only one experiencing the kinds of problems that brought you to this group?*



**ACTIVITY:** The Continuum of Force

### Preparation:

- Set up three large poster boards or flip-chart papers
  - ◆ Typical Things Partners Do
  - ◆ Not OK, But Not Sexual Violence
  - ◆ Sexual Violence
- Make two sets of index cards with one of the following items on each card; also include several blank cards. It may make things simpler if you paperclip each card to its duplicate, since you will need to mix them up and then distribute both copies of each card. Cards can be changed to meet the specific needs of the group, for example, the items may be adapted to teen survivors.
  - ◆ Asks partner once more to consider having sex after having been refused
  - ◆ Does something to encourage a more positive atmosphere in hopes of having sex
  - ◆ Asks partner repeatedly to have sex after having been told “no”
  - ◆ Offers an exchange – “If you will be nicer to the kids, I’ll go along with having sex.”
  - ◆ Whines and begs for sex
  - ◆ Begins sexual touching even if partner has said she is not interested
  - ◆ Acts angry or huffy or withdraws if partner refuses sex
  - ◆ Says something to make partner feel guilty for not wanting sex
  - ◆ Promises a treat if partner will have sex
  - ◆ Begins behaviors that precede violence, like slamming walls or throwing things, if partner refuses to have sex

## Typical Things Partners Do ➔ Not OK, But Not Sexual Violence ➔ Sexual Violence



- ◆ Verbally demeans partner, calls her frigid or withholding or selfish if she doesn't want to have sex
- ◆ Tells partner she is sexually unappealing anyway after she says she doesn't want to have sex
- ◆ Cries or acts depressed when partner refuses sex
- ◆ Is mean to the children in the household in retaliation for partner refusing sex
- ◆ Changes plans to punish: "We won't go to the park tomorrow, if you don't want to have sex tonight."
- ◆ Engages in sexual activities that offend partner, like internet porn
- ◆ Encourages partner to drink or drug in hopes of lowering resistance to having sex
- ◆ Threatens to hurt partner
- ◆ Threatens to hurt children
- ◆ Acts sexual toward someone else to encourage jealousy
- ◆ Threatens to be unfaithful
- ◆ Actually is unfaithful and blames it on partner
- ◆ Physically holds partner down and has sex
- ◆ Hits or otherwise physically harms partner when sex is refused
- ◆ Threatens partner with a weapon when sex is refused
- ◆ Uses a weapon to force sex (cuts partner with knife, for example)
- ◆ Is cruel and creates physical pain during unwanted sex
- ◆ Goes out and gets drunk or high and blames it on partner's refusal to have sex
- ◆ Refuses to use contraception or coerces partner into becoming pregnant
- ◆ Has unprotected sex for the purpose of deliberately exposing partner to a sexually transmitted infection or HIV

1. Have participants work in pairs. Shuffle the cards and divide them into even groups, and give each pair a stack of cards and the duplicates of those cards as well as a roll of clear tape. Tell the group that each card represents a reaction that a person might have when his partner does not want to have sex and he does. Have the participants decide where each card belongs and tape it to the appropriate poster. Suggest that they can use the blank cards for other actions if they think some things have been left out.
2. If the members of a pair "agree to disagree" about where a particular item should be posted, or if they believe that an item belongs in more than one category, they may use the duplicate cards to post copies of the same item in different locations.
3. After all cards are posted, review each poster. Ask the group for reactions. Make it clear that there are no right or wrong answers, but do encourage discussion of why a particular card was placed on a particular poster, and where else it might have been placed.



## LEARNING AND DISCUSSION

- Why it is important to name IPSV?
- What is your reaction to calling your experience “rape”?
- What process did you go through that allowed you to identify your experiences and have the courage to join this group?



**CHECK-OUT:** *What is the biggest challenge you face this coming week?*



## RESOURCES

*Real Rape, Real Pain*, a book by Patricia Eastal and Louise McOrmond-Plummer (2006), is a fantastic resource for this topic. See especially Chapter 25, *Healing: Naming the Wound*.



## CONSIDERATIONS FOR FACILITATORS

- The question, “What process did you go through that allowed you to identify your experiences and have the courage to join this group?” is designed to help participants begin to see themselves as true survivors and to acknowledge their strengths. Just making it to the group is a triumph, and understanding the magnitude of that decision can provide a starting point for participants to honor their life choices.
- Expect a variety of responses to this session, and accept them all. Some participants may feel this is the first opportunity they have had to talk about crucial experiences, and may talk a great deal. Others may still be very cautious about trusting the group or reflecting on their own experiences. Let participants know that this is normal, and reiterate that each person is on her own journey.



## SESSION THREE - WHY IS IPSV SO CONFUSING?



**GOAL OF SESSION:** To validate the ambivalence and confusion that are the hallmark of abusive intimate relationships, and to reduce the stigma participants may feel about having been victimized.



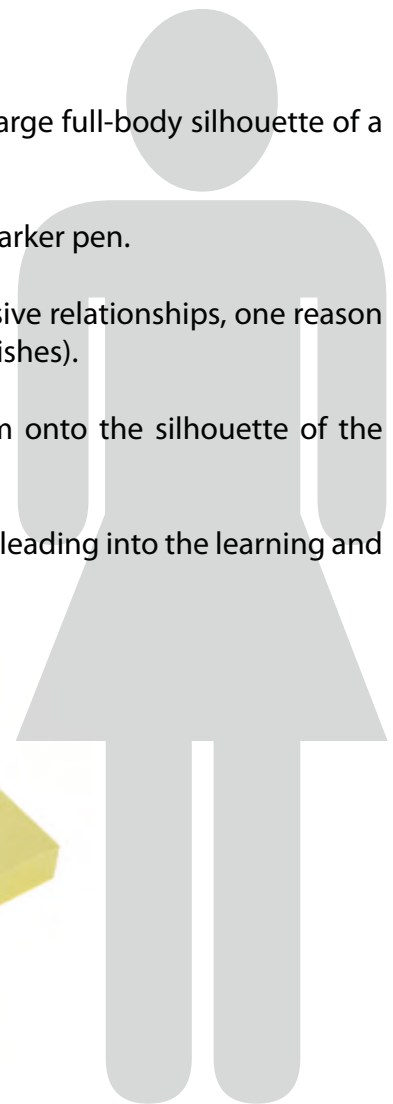
**CHECK-IN:** *Do you think others have underestimated how complicated your feelings for your abuser have been (or are now)?*



**ACTIVITY:** Why Women Stay

**Preparation:** Before the session, prepare a poster board with a large full-body silhouette of a woman.

1. Give each participant a handful of self-stick notes and a marker pen.
2. Ask participants to write reasons why women stay in abusive relationships, one reason per note (each person can write as many reasons as she wishes).
3. Have the participants bring the notes up and stick them onto the silhouette of the woman when they are done.
4. Read through the notes and have the group discuss them, leading into the learning and discussion points below.





## LEARNING AND DISCUSSION

- Excuses abusers give
- The concept of “grooming” and how it applies to perpetrators with adult victims
- Messages from society
  - Who gives the messages?***
    - Family and friends
    - The media
    - Clergy and faith communities
  - What are the messages?***
    - Marianne Winters (2009) discusses these societal messages, which you may want to use as a jumping-off point for discussion:
      - ▲ The idea that rape can’t exist in a marriage or an ongoing relationship – “wifely duty” and the idea that women must be with a man
      - ▲ “Society’s obsession with looks and women’s bodies” – used as “a tool by perpetrators who use verbal insults, comparisons with others, and physical put-downs as an effective tool of emotional abuse”
      - ▲ Strong consequences for anyone who acts or is unusual in any way – racism, sexism, homophobia, discrimination against those with physical or mental disabilities, class discrimination
- Emphasize that we are just beginning to educate professionals and the general population about this issue, so participants may have encountered a great deal of ignorance and very little support. See the websites recommended under *Resources*. As you discuss using the Internet for information and support, do talk about safety issues .
- Mixed feelings about current and former partners
  - ◆ How can you love someone who hurts you?
  - ◆ How can you separate emotionally from someone you love? (Be clear that you are not telling participants that they must separate from their partners – that is their decision.)



**CHECK-OUT:** *What is one thing you can do in this coming week to help you better understand your feelings (past or present) about your abusive partner?*



## RESOURCES

- The book *You Can Be Free* by Ginny NiCarthy and Sue Davidson (see *References*) has an excellent chapter (Chapter 6) called “But I Still Love Him,” that describes romantic, addictive, and nurturing love.
- Tell participants about the websites [www.AphroditeWounded.com](http://www.AphroditeWounded.com) and [www.pandys.org](http://www.pandys.org). In preparation for this session, spend some time exploring each of these websites so you will know about the resources they offer – tons of information, places for survivors to express themselves, professional resources, and much more. The tone of these websites is also very accepting and contributes to survivors feeling less isolated and more validated in their experiences and emotions.
- While online resources can lessen survivors’ sense of isolation, there are safety concerns as well. Do your homework at <http://www.wcsap.org/technology.htm> to educate yourself about technology safety issues before recommending to participants any online resources or activities involving email.
- This article by the FaithTrust Institute identifies concerns and resources regarding faith communities’ response to sexual and domestic violence: <http://www.wavawnet.org/Community/faith>.



## CONSIDERATIONS FOR FACILITATORS

- This is a critical session because it addresses the ambivalence that IPSV survivors often feel for their perpetrators. Yes, the abuser has harmed the survivor, but he may also be her boyfriend, her husband, her first love, or the father of her children. IPSV survivors in general sexual assault support groups may feel that other participants don’t understand the connection and attraction they felt or still feel for the abuser.
- Once again, it is important to emphasize that each participant’s choice is her own, and that telling another person what to do is not only disrespectful, but it doesn’t usually work. It may be difficult for group members to remain nonjudgmental if a participant is describing an ongoing highly abusive situation, but it is essential to the participant beginning to believe that she has real choices in her life.

## SESSION FOUR - WHAT ARE OUR HEALING STRENGTHS?



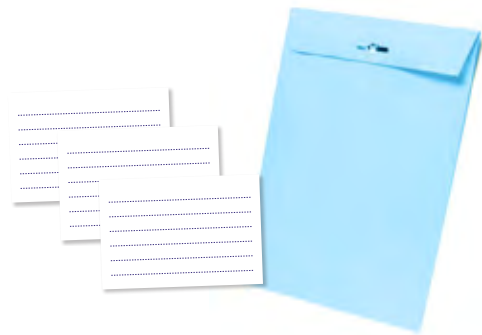
**GOAL OF SESSION:** To identify the strengths that have made participants become survivors, and to provide additional tools to aid in healing.



**CHECK-IN:** *If you had a whole day to yourself, with no obligations, what would you like to do?*



**ACTIVITY:** Making a Coping and Healing Kit



### Preparation:

- On a table, set out prepared cards that represent tangible items that can reduce stress (see below), as well as some blank index cards.
  - ◆ You can print titles on the cards using a regular computer printer, leaving space for participants to write additional information on each card. (See Appendix D for formatted cards you can print.)
  - ◆ Alternatively, you can use all blank cards, and just post a large list of the categories stated below for participants to use for reference.
- You will also need large envelopes (preferably brightly-colored 9x12 envelopes, available at office supply stores) and pens or fine-line markers.
- If you want to liven things up a little more, you can put out an assortment of stickers (displaying fun items) that participants can use to decorate their envelopes.
- Give each participant a large envelope that becomes the container for her kit.

1. Each participant walks around the table and picks the cards that appeal to her, and then personalizes the card. For example, here are the titles of some of the cards (you can add other categories if you have creative ideas):

- ◆ My Favorite Places – a picture or description of a place (past, present, or imagined) where you feel or felt a great sense of peace and safety
- ◆ Gratitude List (things for which I am grateful)
- ◆ Nonalcoholic Drinks that I enjoy (herb tea, cocoa, etc.)
- ◆ My Favorite Books (especially books that lift my mood)
- ◆ My Favorite Music (feel-good music – not “The Blues”!)

- ◆ Ways to Write Down My Thoughts (a notebook or journal and pen, or an online blog website – with attention to safety issues, of course)
- ◆ Humorous or Positive Sayings or Pictures
- ◆ Childhood Favorite Toys (things you loved playing with – if you no longer have the toy, a picture or a description will do)
- ◆ Peak Moments from the Past (write down a brief reminder of a wonderful memory)
- ◆ My Support Network (a list of people you can visit, call or email who always lift your spirits)
- ◆ Comfort Foods (food such as gum or popcorn that you could actually put in your kit, or something you can easily obtain – nothing that will make you feel bad because you ate it!)
- ◆ Reminders of Other Stress Busters (such as taking a warm bath, watching a favorite DVD, or doing a craft project)

A printable version of these cards is available in Appendix D.

2. Participants will choose those cards that represent items they actually would like to have in a Coping and Healing Kit, and then write something about their personal choices; for example, on the Childhood Toys card, someone might write, “Batman Action Figure.” On the Gratitude List card, participants can write down some things that they are grateful for, such as “My health,” or “My daughter’s smile.”
3. Tell participants they could actually make a kit with the real items in it (such as a teddy bear or some packages of cocoa mix), or just use the cards as a reminder of the things that they might turn to when they are feeling stressed.
4. After each person has assembled her kit, ask her to take a few minutes and look it over.
5. Invite participants to talk about the contents of their kits. Make sure you let them know that they can choose not to talk, or to keep some of the items private.
6. Ask participants to discuss how they can use their kits to help them to cope with trauma memories, current stresses, or troubled emotions.
7. Discuss what participants want to do with their kits – take them home, leave them at the group site, or destroy them (just having gone through the process is useful, even if they don’t take anything tangible home with them). **IMPORTANT!** Have the group consider safety issues.

This activity is adapted from a workshop developed by Jennifer Y. Levy-Peck and Charles Peck titled “A Stress-Management Smorgasbord” (2008).



## LEARNING AND DISCUSSION

- Talk about the need for self-care and self-nurturing.
- Reinforce the points from the previous sessions about the process of healing and finding strength. Remind participants that sometimes the process of facing their situation or their past experiences can cause emotional turmoil and pain; this is part of the healing process.
- Identify the issues of grief and loss. For example, if someone has left an abusive partner, others may expect her to feel only relief, but she may feel a deep grief. It is often the loss of a dream or an expectation that is so painful, not so much the loss of the actual (abusive) relationship.
- Discuss: What if you are still with your abuser? How can you participate in self-care?
- Remind participants that one of the hallmarks of an abusive relationship is being isolated and cut off from activities that you enjoy.
- What do you need to stay safe and healthy?
- This may be a good place to raise the issue of stalking and the use of technology as an "electronic leash." Often women who are still living with or in contact with their abusers (or whose abusers won't let go) feel that they can never have any peaceful time because he is always text messaging, calling, or emailing her. See the *Resource* section below for information about tech safety and stalking.
- What are some ways in which you have successfully coped with difficult situations?
- What resources do you have to turn to when you feel overwhelmed?



**CHECK-OUT:** *What are one or two items from your Coping and Healing Kit that you are really looking forward to using soon?*



## RESOURCES

- There are lots of good resources on self-care, stress management, and trauma recovery. You might check some out from the library and bring them so that group members can see them. Some suggestions:
  - ♦ *I Can't Get Over It: A Handbook for Trauma Survivors* by Aphrodite Matsakis
  - ♦ *Learned Optimism: How to Change Your Mind and Your Life* by Martin Seligman
- For information on stalking:
  - ♦ The National Center for Victims of Crime's Stalking Resource Center at <http://www.ncvc.org/src/Main.aspx>
  - ♦ Stalking Incident Log developed by WCSAP, available at <http://www.wcsap.org/StalkingBrochure.pdf>



## CONSIDERATIONS FOR FACILITATORS

- It is important to approach participants from a strength-based model. Each person in the group has certainly coped successfully with a number of life events. This session is designed to help participants to tap into their existing strengths and to connect with needed resources. Be sure participants realize it is okay if they don't currently have access to a particular resource.
- You might consider bringing in some of your own favorite relaxing music (something soothing and instrumental) and playing it in the background while participants work on their Coping and Healing Kits.
- This session would be an excellent time to emphasize the value of maintaining an ongoing connection with an individual community advocate (either in a sexual assault program or a domestic violence program) for participants who really need more resources.
- You are also introducing the idea of support networks here when you discuss the resources participants turn to when they are overwhelmed. So many IPSV survivors live in isolation or feel they have "burned their bridges" with friends and family members who have become exasperated with their life choices. This topic will be explored in more detail in Session Eight, but it is important to plant the seed about the necessity of support in this session.

## SESSION FIVE - HOW DOES IPSV AFFECT CHILDREN AND OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS?



**GOAL OF SESSION:** To have participants identify the impact of IPSV on their children or other family members, so that they may make informed choices and assist in breaking the cycle of violence.



**CHECK-IN:** *What family member are you most concerned about at this time?*



### LEARNING AND DISCUSSION

- It is important to make this discussion meaningful for every member, whether or not she has children. Raise this issue openly with the group, and invite them to check in with each other to make sure that no one feels excluded from the discussion.
- Effects of IPSV on kids
  - ◆ A recent study found that mothers in abusive relationships stated that their children had been eyewitnesses to nearly 20% of the sexual violence tactics experienced by their mothers (Graham-Berman, DeVoe, et al., 2006).
  - ◆ In this same study, 25% of children exposed to intimate partner violence (of all kinds, not just sexual) showed post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms.
  - ◆ Participants may be asked to describe some of the behaviors and emotions they have seen in their children who were exposed to IPSV at home.
- Safety issues for children
  - ◆ Let participants know that IPSV heightens the risk for children within a home.
  - ◆ It very important that parents not feel judged about their relationship decisions. You might consider reading this passage aloud and asking for comments, derived from the Pandora's Aquarium website:





When it is suggested to an abused mother that she is not protecting her children, or that by not leaving an abuser she is not taking her children's needs into account it is powerfully hurtful even if it is well-intentioned.

Many abused mothers struggle to balance the needs of their children with the fear of perpetrators; they love their children deeply and are often painfully cognizant of any toll the abuse may be taking on their children. These statements also assume that you feel more concern for a woman's children than she does. As well, it is erroneous to assume that if a woman "just leaves" her children will be protected from displays of perpetrator violence, since these can often escalate as a relationship is ending. It is also true that some perpetrators misuse visitation to harass and abuse mothers further.

For many abused women, their love and concern for their children is the core of their being. While perpetrators are far less inclined to take any responsibility, it's the mothers who feel the shame and guilt. It simply isn't helpful to reinforce this in any way.

(Pandora's Aquarium, 2009)

- Parenting concerns – ask participants what concerns they have about their children
  - ◆ Children require extra attention and patience right at the time when their parents are facing their own crises.
- Other family members – invite discussion of the impact of IPSV on other family members or on family relationships – for example, a participant may express grief at losing contact with a mother-in-law whom she loved, because of separation from her partner; another person may be estranged from her siblings because they are "burned out" from helping her with her crises

**ACTIVITY: Advice to Teens**

1. Talk about the high incidence of IPSV among teens (one in five teens is physically or sexually abused by a dating partner prior to high school graduation) – see IPSV Fact Sheet, Appendix B.
2. Ask the participants what they wish they had known as teenagers.
3. Have them work together to create a large poster with advice for teens.

**CHECK-OUT: *What is one positive activity you will do with a family member this week?*****RESOURCES**

- The National Judicial Education Program (see *References*) has an amazing free online course on IPSV. Although it is designed to educate judges, it provides useful information for any service provider. It is strongly recommended that before you undertake facilitation of this support group, you take the time to study the relevant modules in this online course. It is self-paced and there is just a wealth of excellent material here. The section on *Custody and Visitation Implications* describes in detail how IPSV affects children.
- The quote about not judging parents comes from the sexual assault survivors' website Pandora's Aquarium ([www.pandys.org](http://www.pandys.org)).



## CONSIDERATIONS FOR FACILITATORS

- As stated in the session outline, it is crucial that all participants feel involved in this session, whether or not they have children. Broadening the topic to the effects on family members may serve this purpose. The activity is intentionally designed to be relevant to all participants.
- This may be a very tough topic for some participants (and for some facilitators). Be prepared to hear about children acting out sexually or witnessing their mother being sexually assaulted. You will also want to be prepared with practical resources, such as referrals to children's programs or therapists, in case participants express a need for such information.
- When you screened candidates for this group, you provided information on the limits of confidentiality and the need for mandated reporting if children are in danger. It is important to remind the group of these guidelines at the beginning of this session, and to follow through if necessary. In the group guide *Talking it Out: A Guide to Groups for Abused Women*, the authors advise, "If you are clear and nondefensive about your role and the policies that you follow, then it is likely that the group members will hear and respond to your consistent emphasis on the rights of all members of the family to live in a safe and healthy environment" (NiCarthy, Merriam, & Coffman, 1984, p. 87).
- Remind group members not to judge each other or to imply that a participant is a bad mother because she may still be living with her abuser. See Appendix A for more information on how to help group members support each other appropriately.

## SESSION SIX - WHO AM I NOW, AND HOW CAN I FEEL GOOD?



**GOAL OF SESSION:** To enable participants to identify the elements of a healthy sexual relationship and healthy coping behaviors.



**CHECK-IN:** *Describe a good day for you.*



### LEARNING AND DISCUSSION

#### The CERTS Model of Healthy Sexuality

- The CERTS model, developed by Wendy Maltz, is a great way to explain the building blocks of a healthy sexual relationship. There is a handout you can copy in Appendix E.
- Have participants read the various points under the CERTS model out loud to the group, and discuss with the group.

#### Discussion Questions:

1. Can you have a healthy sexual and emotional relationship with your current partner?
2. How does the experience of sexual violence affect how you see yourself?
3. How do people use drugs and alcohol to numb themselves to partner violence?
  - What are the consequences?
  - How does substance abuse affect people's ability to consent to sexual acts?
  - Without lecturing, you can raise the issue of self-destructive soothing behaviors, such as alcohol or drug abuse, overeating, or self-injury. The group obviously can't serve as a treatment facility for these issues. The goal is simply to let group members know that these behaviors are common in people who have experienced trauma, and that there is treatment available in the community.



### ACTIVITY: Red Light, Yellow Light, Green Light

**Preparation:** Using the appropriate color construction paper or colored marker on white paper, make three small signs in red, yellow, and green for each person. You can make them more elaborate by using round signs on popsicle sticks, like paddles; or you can keep it simple with just squares of paper or cardboard. Each pair of participants needs to have a set of all three colors.



1. Start off by having participants get into pairs and decide who will be Person A, and who will be Person B. Have all participants start off in one section of the room.
2. Person A is directed to think of a movie she would like to see, and then propose to Person B that they see the movie together. Make it clear this is just a role play, and they are not expected to actually go see the movie! (If the participant can't think of a movie, have her use a television show. If the partner is not familiar with the movie or show, she should describe it.) The goal of the exercise is to have both members of the pair agree on what to do about the movie.
3. Person B should think for a moment, then decide how she feels about seeing the movie. If she absolutely doesn't want to see it, she should hold up the red sign. If she would love to see it, she should hold up the green sign. If she is unsure or ambivalent, she should hold up the yellow sign.
4. If the green sign is held up, the pair can move across the room to another area designated as "The Agreement Area." If the yellow or red signs are held up, Person A and Person B should discuss their ideas about the movie and try to negotiate an agreement about what to do.
5. If participants ask, "Can we agree on another movie?" the facilitator may tell them that is fine, but should not suggest this.
6. Once each pair has come to an agreement, they move together across the room to the "Agreement Area." If they "agree to disagree," they should stay where they started.
7. When each pair has moved to the "Agreement Area" or decided they can't agree, conclude the exercise and begin discussion.

8. **For discussion:**
- What did it feel like when your partner agreed or disagreed with you?
  - How did you or your partner negotiate about seeing the movie?
  - What was effective and what didn't work in negotiation?
  - Did the people in the Person B role take the time to really think through whether or not they actually wanted to see the movie, or did they just go along so as not to cause a disagreement?
9. Then make the connection to sexual decision-making with intimate partners. When both people want to have sex (and agree on the specific sexual activities involved), that is a "green light" situation and there shouldn't be any conflict. When one partner is unsure or ambivalent, that may be a cue for respectful negotiation. When one partner absolutely doesn't want to have sex, how should the other partner react? Use the points from the CERTS discussion to consider how negotiation in the "yellow light" situation should proceed in a healthy relationship.
10. Ask participants how this relates to the choices or lack of choices people have about sex in a violent or coercive partnership. Help the group to clarify that when people are in an abusive situation and are fearful, they usually do not have the leeway to negotiate, to disagree, or to suggest compromise. The purpose of this activity is to provide an alternative model for how sexual decision-making may occur in a nonabusive relationship, not to suggest that people endanger themselves.
11. Do an end-of-activity check-in to see how people are doing, and if they are okay or need something from the group.



**CHECK-OUT:** *This week, whenever you are asked to do something (sexual or nonsexual), take the time to sort out your own feelings and identify to yourself whether you are in the "red light," "yellow light," or "green light" mode.*



## RESOURCES

- Before the session, you should explore the website that has the CERTS information: [www.healthysex.com](http://www.healthysex.com). There is a great deal of useful information on that site.
- Wendy Maltz has also written a book, *The Sexual Healing Journey: A Guide for Survivors of Sexual Abuse*, that you may want to read and recommend for group participants who express an interest in recovering a healthy sex life.
- Another resource is *The Survivor's Guide to Sex: How to Have an Empowered Sex Life After Child Sexual Abuse* by Sylvia Haines.



## CONSIDERATIONS FOR FACILITATORS

- This session may open up some very difficult issues for participants. The topic has been reserved for the sixth session so that group members will be able to have the experience of trusting each other as they confront some of the most painful experiences of their lives. Whether or not they tell the stories of their partner abuse, you can be sure that talking about sexual disagreements will trigger thoughts of these experiences.
- For some IPSV survivors, the concept of identifying their own sexual feelings and preferences is foreign. The "Red Light, Yellow Light, Green Light" activity is designed, in a nonthreatening way, to demonstrate the process of identifying one's own feelings, communicating them respectfully to one's partner, and arriving at a decision that both can handle with comfort. This may seem completely unrealistic to participants who have only experienced abusive relationships, while those who have also been in or observed more respectful relationships will be able to contrast the two types of decision-making.

## SESSION SEVEN - WHAT KIND OF POWER CAN I HAVE IN MY LIFE?



**GOAL OF SESSION:** To help participants identify the power and control elements in IPSV relationships and to assist them in building their capacity to exercise legitimate power in their own lives.



**CHECK-IN:** Tell about a time in your life when you felt strong and competent.

### Optional Addition to Check-In

You may want to introduce the idea of *anchoring*, a helpful coping tool that comes from a discipline called Neuro-Linguistic Programming. An anchor is a stimulus that prompts a certain positive frame of mind. If you choose to teach this tool, explain prior to *Check-In* that you are going to offer an opportunity to learn how to get in touch with positive feelings to help during times of stress. Give the following instructions:

1. If you would like to do this during *Check-In*, you can learn how to use a technique called anchoring.
2. First, settle in to a comfortable position and get as relaxed as you are able.
3. Then, picture in your mind's eye a time in your life when you felt strong and competent. [Pause] If you are having a hard time recalling such a time, you can use your imagination.
4. Now, while keeping that feeling in your mind, touch your right hand to your left elbow. If that is not possible or comfortable for you, use another discreet gesture. Keep it there for a few moments.
5. For *Check-In*, I am going to ask you to tell about the time in your life when you felt strong and competent. As you tell the group about this situation, use your anchor, that is, put your right hand on your left elbow.

After *Check-In*, explain to the group that if they practice recalling a positive feeling and pairing it with an anchoring gesture, soon they can use just the anchoring gesture and their body will automatically recall the positive emotional state. See *Resources*, below, for more information.





### ACTIVITY: Power and Control Wheels

**Preparation:** Obtain an enlarged version of the Power and Control Wheel with space outside the wheel. You can order a poster from The Duluth Model (see *Resources*, below) and have it laminated at an office supply store. Also make handout copies of the Power and Control Wheel and the Equality Wheel, available in Appendices F and G.

1. Show participants the Power and Control Wheel and the Equality Wheel.
2. Have participants identify the power and control elements in their current or former relationships.
3. Give participants a dry-erase pen and ask them to add the aspects of IPSV specific to each spoke on the wheel – for example, under “Emotional Abuse,” they might add “Humiliates her about her body, Tells her she is a whore, Tells her no one will ever want to be with her sexually again.”

Let participants know that no IPSV Power and Control Wheel is currently available, and that WCSAP would like to build one, with their contributions. You can send ideas to WCSAP. Review tech safety guidelines if participants are interested in emailing ideas to WCSAP individually. We will need to have contact information from individual contributors in order to incorporate their ideas into the IPSV Wheel, but they may remain anonymous when the Wheel is produced. Some group members may really enjoy the idea of helping to create a resource that could someday be used to train professionals and to help other survivors.



**ACTIVITY: Building Access to Resources**

1. Explain how accessing resources can build a person's capacity to reclaim some power in their own lives.
2. Have a checklist of resources specific to your community. Have participants go through them to decide which ones would be useful in their current situation

**LEARNING AND DISCUSSION**

- Invite participants to discuss how accessing resources might have an effect on the balance of power and control in their lives – for example, the abuser threatens that his partner will lose the kids if she leaves; she gets help from Legal Services and gets legal advocacy through a DV or SA program
- Ask for reactions to the Power and Control Wheel and how it applies to participants' lives
- Have participants discuss what power they would like to have in their lives, and how they can build a short-term or long-term plan to develop that power

**ACTIVITY: Bill of Rights**

1. Have participants write a Bill of Rights for partners in intimate relationships.
2. Discuss what practical difficulties they may face in claiming those rights.



**CHECK-OUT:** Describe one small step you could take this week that would help you to feel more powerful in your own life.



## RESOURCES

- Information on using the anchoring technique:  
[http://www.trans4mind.com/personal\\_development/mindMastery/anchoring.htm](http://www.trans4mind.com/personal_development/mindMastery/anchoring.htm)
- Power and Control Wheels (see Appendix G)
  - ◆ The Power and Control Wheel is available as a PDF file at:  
<http://www.theduluthmodel.org/pdf/PhyVio.pdf>
  - ◆ The Equality Wheel is also available at <http://www.theduluthmodel.org/pdf/NonVio.pdf>
  - ◆ These wheels may be reproduced and used as handouts, as long as you maintain the attribution information at the bottom of the page.
  - ◆ To order a poster-size version of the wheels for \$15 each, go to:  
<http://www.theduluthmodel.org/store/home.php?cat=5>
  - ◆ If you google “Bill of Rights Relationship” you will find several examples that may help you with the Bill of Rights activity.



## CONSIDERATIONS FOR FACILITATORS

- No pun intended, this can be a “powerful” session. It provides IPSV survivors with a glimpse of the connections between the torment they have experienced in their own lives, and a broader system of injustice and oppression.
- If you choose to introduce the anchoring technique during *Check-In*, take the time to read the information on the website listed under *Resources*, and try the technique yourself before the group session.
- Part of the healing process is to remind survivors that they can be instruments of change – not only their own change, but change in society at large. This theme will be discussed in more detail at the next session, but you are introducing this concept in this session.

## SESSION EIGHT - HOW CAN I CHANGE MY FUTURE (AND MAYBE EVEN CHANGE THE WORLD)?



**GOAL OF SESSION:** To allow participants to reflect on the changes in their lives since entering the group, to say goodbye to each other, and to plan for future challenges.



**CHECK-IN:** *What positive changes have you made in your life since you joined this group?*



### LEARNING AND DISCUSSION

- Support networks and how they help
- Leaving the group and what that means to each participant
- How participants plan to stay safe and strong in the future
- Why change needs to happen in the world, and not just in the individual
  - ◆ People need to handle their own immediate situation first.
  - ◆ Participating in the movement to end sexual and domestic violence can facilitate the healing process.
  - ◆ Survivors' input is welcome and valued in the movement.
  - ◆ Each person is free to choose whether and when to participate in creating social change.
- Let them know about support resources, including reminding them about the AproditeWounded website and any other community resources that may be useful



### ACTIVITY: A Letter to Yourself

**Preparation:** No preparation is necessary, except for providing paper, envelopes, and pens, but you can enhance this activity by providing some attractive stationery.

**Instructions:** Write a letter to yourself, as if you were living five years in the future and everything was going very well in your life. For example,

*"Dear Susan, I had a great day today. I am working at a job I love and every day there are new challenges, but I am handling them well. Here is what is going on in my personal life..."*

Give participants the choice of taking the letter with them (if that is safe) or ask them what they would like to do with the letter (give it to someone else for safekeeping, destroy it, etc.).

**Evaluation:** Explain the need for and value of evaluation, and give each person a confidential evaluation form to fill out.



### ACTIVITY: Messages to the Next Group

1. Tell the group you would like each person to share some wisdom with the next group of survivors.
2. On a large sheet of paper (flip chart), write down what each person says.



**CHECK-OUT:** Give each person the opportunity to say goodbye to the group in whatever way she wishes.



## RESOURCES

- You may wish to bring information about community resources to this meeting.
- Be sure to consult *Circle of Hope* for information about group evaluation.



## CONSIDERATIONS FOR FACILITATORS

- It is amazing how much a group can accomplish in a few short weeks. Help the participants to recognize and honor their progress, and to deal with their frustration that their lives are still works in progress (as are all of our lives!).
- You may find that you are somewhat sad at the ending of the group. While it is fine to acknowledge that you have enjoyed the experience and will miss the group, remember not to make it about you.
- If you have a co-facilitator, you may want to plan for the post-group letdown (similar to actors' experience after the closing of a play) by planning to go out together and celebrate and/or commiserate.
- In a few days, when the dust has settled, meet with your co-facilitator and possibly your supervisor or other colleagues to talk about how the group went, what the evaluations show, what you would like to keep intact in subsequent groups, and what you would like to change.
- Please don't forget to contact WCSAP to give us feedback on this Support Group Guide.

***Give yourself credit for your hard work and dedication!***



# REFERENCE AND RESOURCE GUIDE



## SECTION 3

## REFERENCES



Anderson, J., Hodge, C., Kinzer, M., Lenahan, D., Olson, D., & Sparks, R. (2006). *Circle of hope: A guide for conducting psychoeducational support groups*. Olympia, WA: Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs. [Electronic version available at <http://www.wcsap.org/advocacy/PDF/circle%20of%20hope%202007.pdf>]

Arizona Coalition Against Domestic Violence (2000). *Best practices manual for domestic violence programs*. Retrieved June 25, 2009 from

[http://www.vawnet.org/Assoc\\_Files\\_VAWnet/BestPracticesManual.pdf](http://www.vawnet.org/Assoc_Files_VAWnet/BestPracticesManual.pdf)

See especially the section on Support Groups, pages 83-86.

Arlledge, K.(2009). A guide for developing tools to assess for sexual assault within the context of domestic violence. In *Intimate partner sexual violence: Sexual assault in the context of domestic violence* (2nd ed.). Olympia, WA: Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs. [Electronic version available at <http://www.wcsap.org/IPSV.htm>]

This is a guide to assist service providers in asking sensitive but direct questions to identify IPSV, compiled by a former WCSAP staff member.

Davies, J. (1997). *Safety planning*. Hartford, CT: Greater Hartford Legal Assistance. [Electronic version available at [http://new.vawnet.org/Assoc\\_Files\\_VAWnet/DaviesSafetyPlanning.pdf](http://new.vawnet.org/Assoc_Files_VAWnet/DaviesSafetyPlanning.pdf)]

This article offers a detailed view of the safety issues faced by victims of domestic violence and the need for a respectful, nuanced approach to safety planning.

Easteal, P., & McOrmond-Plummer, L. (2006) *Real rape, real pain*. Melbourne: Hybrid Publishers.

This is essential reading for anyone working with IPSV survivors. The authors, both of whom are survivors and researchers, present a powerful view of the lives of women affected by partner rape and a wealth of information about the issue.

Edmund, D., & Bland, P. (2005) *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*. Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. Retrieved July 1, 2009 from

<http://www.andvsa.org/pubs/RealToolsEntireDoc.pdf>

Because women who experience domestic and sexual violence may be involved with substance abuse as well, this guide is extremely helpful for advocates. The information on support groups is useful even in situations where substance abuse is not the focus.

FaithTrust Institute. (2009). *Addressing faith issues in sexual and domestic violence*. Retrieved July 30, 2009 from the Washington Violence Against Women Network (WAVAW) Web site: <http://www.wavawnet.org/Community/faith>

This article offers a candid look at the positive and negative interactions of the faith community (especially faith leaders) with survivors of sexual and domestic violence. Faith-specific resources are offered.



Graham-Berman, S. A., Devoe, E., Mattis, J., Lynch, S., & Thomas, S. (2006). Ecological predictors of traumatic stress symptoms in Caucasian and ethnic minority children exposed to domestic violence. *Violence Against Women*, 12(7), 663-692.

The researchers provide current research on children who witness sexual violence in the home.



Haines, S. (1999). *The survivor's guide to sex: How to have an empowered sex life after child sexual abuse*. San Francisco: Cleis Press.

The amazon.com description of this book says, "*The Survivor's Guide to Sex* offers an affirming, sex-positive approach to recovery from incest and rape. While most books on the topic broach sexuality only to reassure women that it is alright to say 'no' to unwanted sex, this one encourages women to learn how to say 'yes' to their own desires and on their own terms."

Koch, C., & Pavon, M. (2002). *Grupos de apoyo para latinas maltratadas/ Support groups for battered latinas*. The Coalition for Family Peace and The North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence. Retrieved June 1, 2009 from

[http://www.nccadv.org/pdf/Booklets/support\\_group\\_manual.pdf](http://www.nccadv.org/pdf/Booklets/support_group_manual.pdf)

This manual, while aimed at domestic violence in general rather than IPSV, has the advantage of having text in both English and Spanish. It also has a wealth of activities, many of which could be used or adapted for an IPSV group.

Levy-Peck, J., & Peck, C. (2008, April). *Stress Management Smorgasbord: Strategies for Different Learning Styles*. Workshop presented at On Course Annual Conference, Los Angeles, CA.

Maltz, W. *The CERTS model for healthy sex*. Retrieved July 6, 2009 from

<http://www.healthysex.com/healthysexuality.php#certs>

Wendy Maltz, LCSW, has a refreshing approach to raising awareness about healthy sexual behavior vs. destructive practices. There is a wealth of material on this website to inform discussions about sexuality for survivors. Ms. Maltz has also been kind enough to allow us to incorporate some of her materials into this curriculum.

Maltz, W. (1991) *The sexual healing journey: a guide for survivors of sexual abuse*. New York: HarperCollins.

This is a highly regarded guide to identifying the aftermath of abuse as it affects a survivor's sexual life and developing strategies to reclaim healthy sexuality despite previous trauma.

Matsakas, A. (1996). *I can't get over it: A handbook for trauma survivors*. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications.

This is a step-by-step guide to dealing with the overwhelming emotions generated by the aftermath of trauma. It is intended as a self-help book.

National Judicial Education Program. *Intimate partner sexual abuse: Adjudicating this hidden dimension of domestic violence*. Retrieved April 14, 2009 from <http://www.njep-ipsacourse.org>

This free online course, while intended for judges, provides a not-to-be-missed education on the topic of IPSV. It includes information about the dynamics of IPSV, characteristics of victims and perpetrators, effects on children, cultural considerations, legal aspects, and much more. It also assembles a tremendous amount of resource and reference information.

NiCarthy, G., & Davison, S. (1997). *You can be free: An easy-to-read handbook for abused women*. Berkeley: Seal Press.

Based on Ginny NiCarthy's bestselling book *Getting Free*, this small guide gives women a great deal of easy-to-digest information about abusive relationships.

NiCarthy, G., Merriam, K., & Coffman, S. (1984). *Talking it out: A guide to groups for abused women*. Berkeley: Seal Press.

This is an older book, but it contains excellent information about groups, including a wide variety of exercises that you can adopt or modify and incorporate into your group. There is an abundance of wise counsel in this book for any support group facilitator. Read it!

North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence. *Safety plan*. Retrieved June 15, 2009 from <http://www.nccadv.org/pdf/Safety%20Plan%20b.pdf>

This is a form that provides a framework for safety planning, along with a set of questions for survivors to help them in the planning process.

Seligman, M. (2006). *Learned optimism: How to change your mind and your life*. New York: Vintage.

As a proponent of positive psychology, Seligman provides excellent self-help guidance on how to revise one's thinking and break out of the victim mind set.

Ward, K. *Ken Ward's mind mastery course – NLP anchoring*. Retrieved July 6, 2009 from [http://www.trans4mind.com/personal\\_development/mindMastery/anchoring.htm](http://www.trans4mind.com/personal_development/mindMastery/anchoring.htm)

Ken Ward offers a clear description of the anchoring procedure from Neuro-Linguistic Programming, a tool that helps people to stay in touch with their own strengths.

Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs (2008). Know the truth about intimate partner sexual violence [Brochure]. Olympia, WA: WCSAP. [Electronic version: <http://www.wcsap.org/Knowthetruthabout%20IPSV.pdf>]

Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs (2008). *Stalking incident log*. [Brochure]. Electronic version available at <http://www.wcsap.org/StalkingBrochure.pdf>.

Winters, M. (2009) Making the connections: Advocating for survivors of intimate partner sexual violence. In *Intimate partner sexual violence: Sexual assault in the context of domestic violence* (2nd ed.). Olympia, WA: Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs. [Electronic version available at <http://www.wcsap.org/IPSV.htm>]

This article explains the intersection of domestic violence and sexual assault in intimate partner sexual violence, and provides a framework for addressing IPSV at the organizational and societal levels. The needs of special populations within IPSV survivors are discussed.

Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault (2003). *Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgendered (LGBT) Populations and Sexual Assault*. Retrieved July 8, 2009 from <http://www.wcasa.org/docs/lesbigay.pdf>

This fact sheet answers questions about both stranger-perpetrated and intimate partner sexual assault and contains a list of references.



## GENERAL RESOURCES

[www.AphroditeWounded.com](http://www.AphroditeWounded.com)

Louise McOrmond-Plummer has created this extraordinary website with lots of resources for IPSV survivors and professional who work with IPSV. See also the general sexual assault survivor website *Pandora's Aquarium*, at [www.pandys.org](http://www.pandys.org)

[www.theduluthmodel.org](http://www.theduluthmodel.org)

Duluth Model: Power and Control Wheel, Equality Wheel, and related information.

Horn, B., Lukima, J., & Witwer, G. (1999). *Circle of support: A basic guide for facilitating support groups*. Enola, PA: Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape. Available through [www.pcar.org](http://www.pcar.org) under "Catalog of Products."

This is a guide for running general sexual assault support groups. Some of the activities may be useful in an IPSV support group, and there is good general information about support group facilitation.

Stalking Resource Center – National Center for Victims of Crime  
<http://www.ncvc.org/src/Main.aspx>

Tech Safety Resources  
<http://www.wcsap.org/technology.htm>





APPENDICES



**SECTION 4**

## APPENDICES - Handouts

A.

**APPENDIX A: SUPPORT GROUP GUIDELINES FOR MUTUAL RESPECT**

- This is to be used as a handout for Session One.
- This handout is particularly useful for general sexual assault or domestic violence groups that contain IPSV survivors, and is also worth providing to IPSV support group members as a reminder to respect the diverse life situations of group participants.

B.

**APPENDIX B: IPSV FACT SHEET**

- This handout is for use in Session One *Learning and Discussion*.

C.

**APPENDIX C: SHIELD OF STRENGTH**

- This outline drawing is for use with the *Activity* in Session One.

D.

**APPENDIX D: COPING AND HEALING KIT CARDS**

- These cards are for use with the *Activity* in Session Four.
- These can be printed out on index card blanks (Avery 5388, three per page, or similar forms) or printed on regular paper or card stock and cut out. Make one copy of each card for each participant.

E.

**APPENDIX E: THE CERTS MODEL OF HEALTHY SEXUALITY**

- This is for use with *Learning and Discussion* in Session Six.
- Please pay attention to the use restrictions on the handout.

F.

**APPENDIX F: POWER AND CONTROL WHEEL**

G.

**APPENDIX G: EQUALITY WHEEL**

- Both wheels are for use with the *Activity* in Session Seven.
- These may be reproduced as handouts, but you need to retain all of the information about attribution.

## Support Group Guidelines for Mutual Respect

*Adapted by Jennifer Y. Levy-Peck,  
Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs,  
from guidelines at the Pandora's Aquarium website ([www.pandys.org](http://www.pandys.org))  
with the permission of Louise McOrmond-Plummer*

Support groups for survivors of intimate partner sexual violence, general sexual assault, or domestic violence may include those who are currently living with relationship violence as well as those who are no longer in that situation or whose abuser was not a partner. These guidelines are intended to help create a safe, supportive atmosphere for all group participants, no matter what their circumstances.

### **For survivors who are currently living with relationship violence:**

- Remember that this group is just one form of support. We strongly recommend that you participate in ongoing communication with an individual community sexual assault or domestic violence advocate to address the full range of your needs, including legal advocacy and safety planning.
- We understand that some of our members are in ongoing relationships of abuse. We want to support you and hear you. We encourage you to feel free to discuss your feelings of fear for your future, because this can be an important part of breaking the silence. However if you believe an act of physical and/or sexual violence is imminent, we strongly encourage you to seek the help of the police, a crisis line or a friend who can offer you sanctuary. We understand that reaching out can be difficult, but if violence is imminent we want you to have more adequate support than a weekly group meeting. When members know that somebody will be harmed imminently, they can do nothing, and they feel powerless. If you do discuss imminent harm, please be prepared to be directed to services that can offer you more safety.
- Please feel free to speak about your situation however you like, but be aware that nobody can tell you what you “should” do. If you ask, we will point the way to avenues of support. We hope that if you’re being victimized, that will change, and we believe that ultimately you know best what you need to do.
- Please, when you raise an issue during a group session, let us know what you need from the group. For example, do you simply want to tell someone about your situation? Do you need to know you’re not alone? Are you looking for specific advice from survivors who have shared your situation? If you are just breaking the silence, you may not want to be bombarded with suggestions. It can be helpful to other members to know what you need so they can give you the best support.
- Online resources may be offered during group sessions. If your abuser has access to your computer, you will want to safeguard yourself online. The group facilitators will discuss how to maintain your privacy and safety online.
- Please respect different ways of healing. *(continued)*

## **If you wish to support other group members who are in an abusive relationship:**

Your experience may be different than that of group members who are being sexually victimized by an intimate partner. Depending on the type of group in which you are participating, your offender may have been a stranger or acquaintance, rather than a partner; you may have experienced physical and emotional violence, but not sexual assault; or you may no longer be in contact with your abusive partner.

- If you're a group member, you are a survivor yourself. Take care of yourself, especially around triggers.
- If a member is still in an abusive relationship and is discussing or disclosing abuse, please resist the urge to make statements about his/her partner such as name-calling. Sometimes people feel vulnerable in disclosing abuse by a partner they may still love. Also, we don't know the entirety of another person's relationship. It's more helpful if you focus on the abuse, and let the member know that it's never okay for anybody to sexually assault or otherwise abuse them.
- How to "get someone to leave" shouldn't be on your agenda - encouraging them to find their own power to make change is something quite different. When you see that someone is in an ongoing abusive situation, you may feel powerless and frustrated. If you can free yourself from any sense you may have about needing to rescue, you'll feel less frustration and pain. Saying "you should leave right now" is generally not supportive, whereas saying, "I'm worried that if you remain, it will get worse. You deserve better" is more respectful.
- Many survivors feel ashamed of not following directives. Sadly, some supporters make friendship and respect contingent on the survivor doing what the supporter thinks is best. This can feel almost as controlling as the abuser's behavior. So we hope urges to control somebody else's outcome will be avoided.
- Resist victim-blaming – even well-intentioned statements such as "Why didn't you call the police?" can be hurtful. We ask that you consider the feelings of the other group member. We are here to uplift and support others, not to add to their pain.
- Remember that the survivor's assessment of a partner's danger is often the most accurate. This means resisting the urge to dismiss somebody's fear of what a partner might do if he/she leaves, or posing "easy" answers.
- Never say or imply that a relationship violence survivor is a negligent parent for being in a violent relationship. Many survivors are in fact deeply concerned about the impact on their children. If a survivor of domestic violence has children, it is unhelpful and unsupportive to demand they take action for "the sake of the children," to imply that by not taking action they are putting their children at risk of abuse, or indeed that their current inability to do so is in any way negligent of their children's needs.

**For more information about Intimate Partner Sexual Violence,  
see the Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs' website at  
[www.wcsap.org](http://www.wcsap.org) or visit [www.aphroditewounded.com](http://www.aphroditewounded.com)**



## Fact Sheet on Intimate Partner Sexual Violence



### ***What is Intimate Partner Sexual Violence (IPSV)?***

IPSV is any form of sexual assault that takes place within an intimate relationship. In an abusive relationship, sexual violence is used to gain power and control over a partner through humiliating and degrading that person. It may include verbal abuse, emotional coercion, stalking, and physical violence. IPSV may affect anyone from teens to elderly people (including same-sex partners) who are married, dating, or living together. Abuse by ex-spouses or former partners is also considered IPSV.

### ***What does research tell us about IPSV?***

- **68% of physically abused women also reported sexual assault**
- **79% of sexually assaulted women reported repeated episodes of forced sex**
- **6% of sexually assaulted women contacted the police following the first sexual assault and 8% applied for a protection order**
- **Justice contact, either with the police or by obtaining a protection order, was associated with up to a 70% reduction in the risk of re-assault**
- **Not contacting the police after the first sexual assault doubled a woman's risk of re-assault and not applying for a protection order tripled her re-assault risk**
- **Abuse victims who are also sexually assaulted have higher rates of severe injury and being killed than victims of physical violence alone**
- **Women who are sexually assaulted by partners have longer-lasting trauma than other sexual assault survivors**
- **One in every five teen girls has been physically and/or sexually assaulted by a dating partner prior to graduating from high school**
- **In one study of gay, lesbian, and bisexual college students, 42% of these students reported being forced into sexual activity**

### ***Sources:***

McFarlane, J., & Malecha, (2005). *A. Sexual assault among intimates: Frequency, consequences and treatments.* <http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/211678.pdf>  
(summary compiled by National Sexual Violence Resource Center)

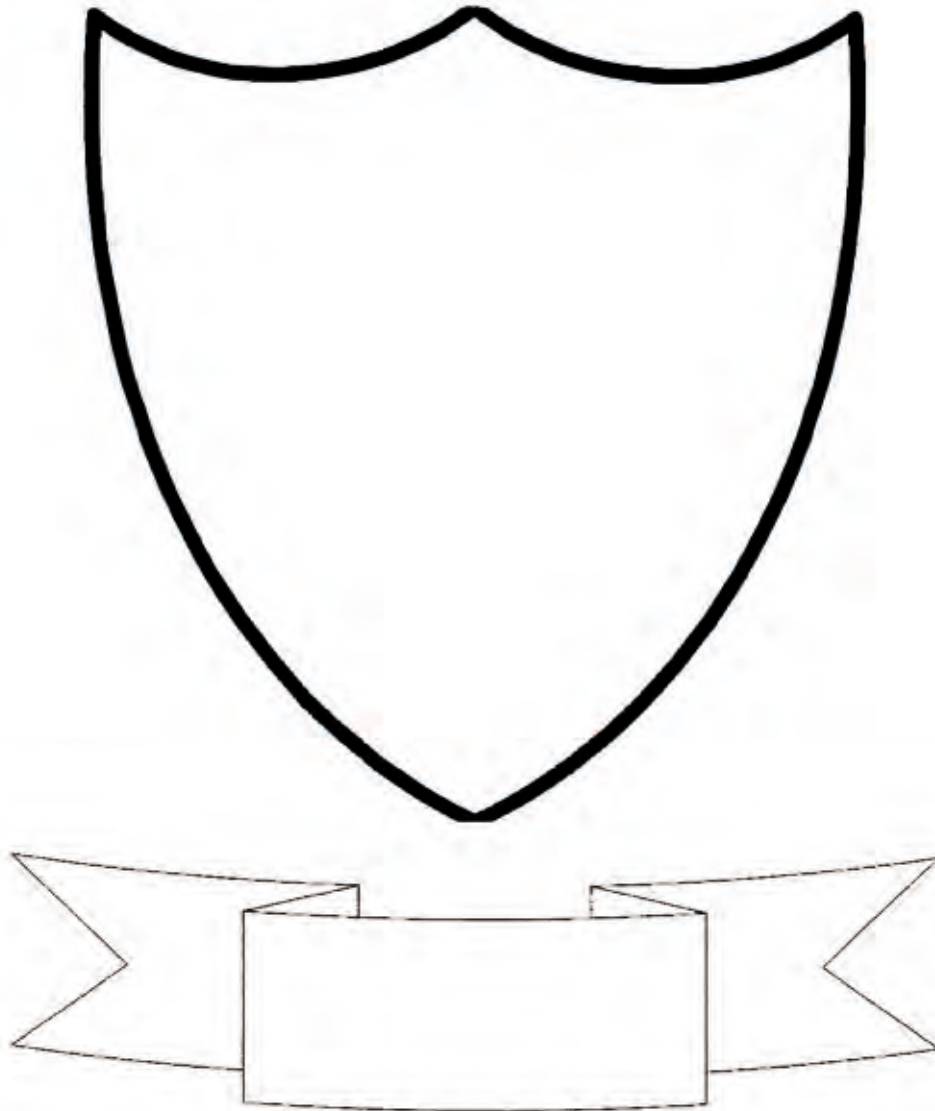
McOrmond-Plummer, L. (2008) *Considering the differences: Intimate partner sexual assault and domestic violence discourse.* <http://www.wcsap.org/pdf/considering.pdf>

Silverman, J., Raj, A., Mucci, L., & Hathaway, J. (2001). Dating violence against adolescent girls and associated substance use, unhealthy weight control, sexual risk behavior, pregnancy, and suicidality. *JAMA*, 286, 572-579

Duncan, D. (1990) Prevalence of sexual assault victimization among heterosexual and gay/lesbian university students. *Psychological Reports* 66, 65-66

**For more information: <http://www.wcsap.org/IPSV.htm>**

## MY SHIELD OF STRENGTH



**My Favorite Places** – a picture or description of a place (past, present, or imagined) where you feel or felt a great sense of peace and safety:



**Gratitude List** (things for which I am grateful):



**Nonalcoholic drinks that I enjoy** (herb tea, coca, etc):



**My Favorite Books** (especially books that lift my mood):



**My Favorite Music** (feel-good music - not "The Blues"!):



**Ways to Write Down My Thoughts** (a notebook or journal and pen, or an online blog website - with attention to safety issues, of course):



**Humorous or Positive Sayings or Pictures:**



**Childhood Favorite Toys** (things you loved playing with - if you no longer have the toy, a picture or a description will do):



**Peak Moments from the Past** (write down a brief reminder of a wonderful memory):



**My Support Network** (a list of people you can visit, call or email and who always lift your spirits):








**Comfort Foods** (foods such as popcorn or gum that you could put in your kit or something you can easily obtain - nothing that will make you feel bad because you ate it!):



**Reminders of Other Stress-Busters** (such as taking a warm bath, watching a favorite DVD, or doing a craft project):



# The CERTS Model of Healthy Sex

-  **CONSENT**
-  **EQUALITY**
-  **RESPECT**
-  **TRUST**
-  **SAFETY**

**“CONSENT** means you can freely and comfortably choose whether or not to engage in sexual activity. This means you are conscious, informed, and able to stop the activity at any time during the sexual contact.

**EQUALITY** means your sense of personal power is on an equal level with your partner. Neither of you dominates or intimidates the other.

**RESPECT** means you have positive regard for yourself and for your partner. You also feel respected by your partner based on how your partner is treating you.

**TRUST** means you trust your partner on physical and emotional levels. You accept each other’s needs and vulnerabilities and are able to respond to concerns with sensitivity.

**SAFETY** means you feel secure and safe within the sexual setting. You are comfortable with and assertive about where, when and how the sexual activity takes place. You feel safe from the possibility of negative consequences, such as unwanted pregnancy, sexually transmitted infection, and physical injury.”

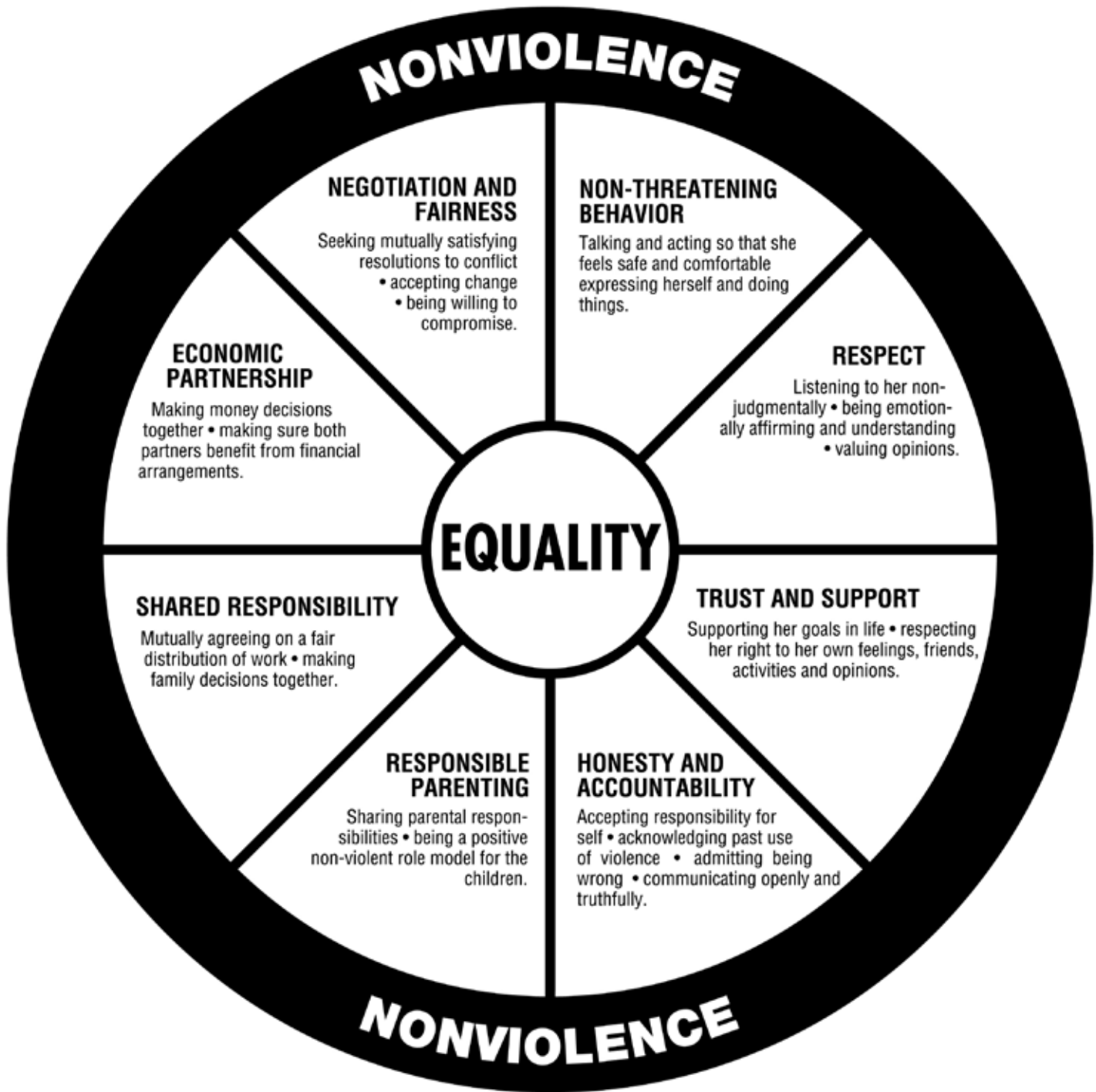
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