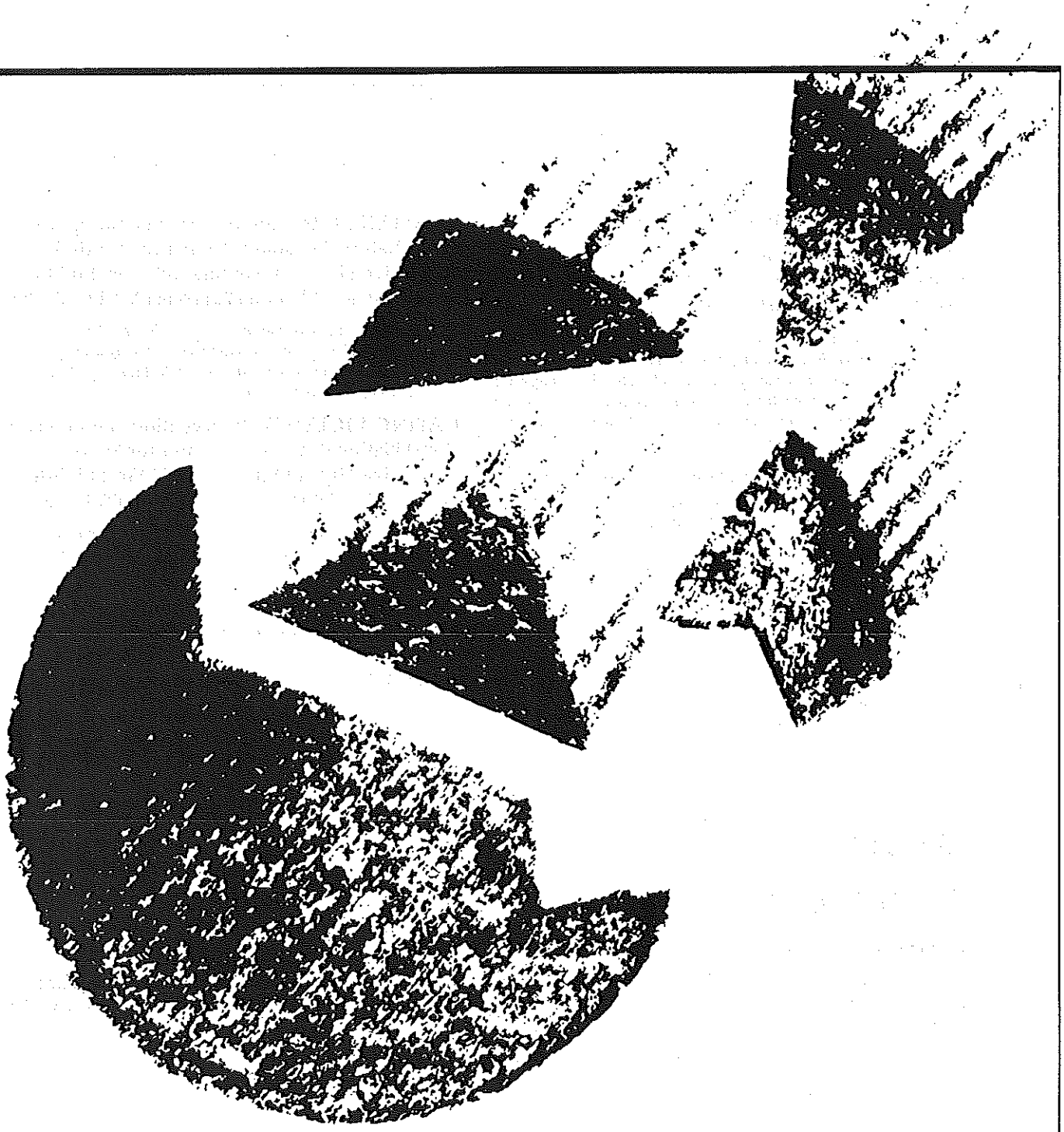

RECOVERY

Discovery of life beyond the pain

Sherryll Kraizer, Ph.D.

NRC YOUTH SERVICES

Curricula by Sherryll Kraizer, Ph.D.

The SAFE CHILD Program, 1990. Revised and updated 1993. Coalition for Children, P.O. Box 6304, Denver, Colorado 80206. (303) 320-6321.

A comprehensive personal safety training curriculum for preschool through grade three including prevention of sexual, emotional and physical abuse, prevention of abuse and abduction by strangers and safety for children in self care. It combines videotape, classroom role playing, and parental participation to teach children how to prevent abuse. Training available.

REACH: for elementary school age children, (1992) National Resource Center for Youth Services, The University of Oklahoma, 202 West Eighth Street, Tulsa, Oklahoma 74119-1419. (918) 585-2986.

A prevention program for high-risk elementary school age children. This 10–20 week group program is designed to provide life skills training which enables: increased self-esteem, management of emotions, effective communication, independent thinking, appropriate assertive behavior, problem-solving, assessment and decision-making, identification and pursuit of goals, taking responsibility for choices, prevention of child abuse, and development of personal resources. Training available.

CHALLENGE: for Adolescents and Young Adults, 1990. National Resource Center for Youth Services, The University of Oklahoma, 202 West Eighth Street, Tulsa, Oklahoma 74119-1419. (918) 585-2986.

A prevention program for high-risk youth ages 13 to young adulthood. This 10-week group program is designed to provide life skills training in the same areas as REACH, *modified for an older age group. Training available.*

DATING VIOLENCE: Intervention and Prevention, (1991) National Resource Center for Youth Services, The University of Oklahoma, 202 West Eighth Street, Tulsa, Oklahoma 74119-1419. (918) 585-2986.

Group and student leader's curricula to educate, intervene and prevent interpersonal violence in dating relationships among young people.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: A Basic Manual for Intervention and Prevention, (1991) Domestic Violence Intervention Services, 1419 East 15th Street, Tulsa, OK 74120 (918) 585-3163.

A curriculum guide for leading public seminars and profes sional training in the area of education, intervention and pre vention of domestic and interpersonal violence.

RECOVERY: Discovery of Life Beyond the Pain

For Children, Adolescents, and Young Adults

By Sherryll Kraizer, Ph.D.

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This Program is dedicated to Steve Siegel of the Denver District Attorney's Office, without whom it would still be a good idea.

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Contents

RECOVERY

The RECOVERY Program is designed to introduce specific life skills which will maximize recovery from child abuse including prevention of further abuse and the secondary effects of child abuse. Through a unique combination of conceptual and experiential learning, the RECOVERY Program assists participants in enhancing personal competency and raising self-esteem.

Program Purpose

The RECOVERY Program is designed to enable participants:

- to learn skills which will help prevent further abuse and interpersonal violence;
- to learn more effective communication strategies;
- to learn assertiveness techniques that work;
- to learn stress management and relaxation methods;
- to develop an understanding of the role of self-concept and self-esteem;
- to enhance decision-making skills;
- to build a range of available resources;
- to increase confidence and comfort in self-reliance balanced with the ability to call on others; and
- to feel more accepting and positive of themselves as individuals.

Recovery Is Not Therapy

RECOVERY is a therapeutic program, it is not therapy. This is a critical distinction.

Therapy is defined as the "treatment of illness or disability."

A therapist is defined as one who "is a specialist in conducting therapy."

Therapeutic is defined as "having healing or curative powers; gradually or methodically ameliorative."

This Program does not look like "therapy" and is not meant to be therapy. It looks more like an educational curriculum with planned discussion, activities and follow-up because it is designed to be used as a learning tool.

The RECOVERY Program is not a discussion of any individual's abuse, but it is designed to support the therapeutic process.

For participants who are in therapy, the RECOVERY Program is appropriate when they are nearing completion of their therapy.

For participants who do not receive therapy or counseling, they may join the RECOVERY Program soon after the abuse is reported. However, it is to be expected that during the first week or two of the Program it may become clear one or more group members need to participate in counseling prior to participating in a RECOVERY group. If so, make the necessary referral and encourage the families to follow through with treatment first, then participation in the RECOVERY Program.

It is clear that children, and even adults, cannot fully recover from their victimization until they feel sure they can prevent it from happening again; until they feel competent once again to function successfully in the world. This has to do with feelings of self-worth, but, more importantly, it has to do with hard, measurable, teachable skills. This is what the RECOVERY Program — as a therapeutic process — provides.

Parental and therapist permission slips are provided in the appendix. They are recommended for all children. If a child is in therapy, the therapist permission for participation is essential.

To repeat: This program is not therapy. It is designed to provide specific life skills which will enhance participants' full recovery from their abuse experience and prevent its recurrence. It is therapeutic in that it restores self-esteem, a positive sense of competency, and empowers participants to exercise more control in their own lives.

Logistics

Group Size

Five or six participants is a minimum group size in order to get quality interactions and group dynamics.

Ten is the optimal group size. Over ten, leaders report that groups tend to be less homogeneous and too large to maximize participation.

Group Format

This Curriculum is written to allow you to present the materials to participants ages 6 through adulthood. Obviously, you will need to draw upon your own expertise and experience to make programmatic choices, adapt the activities and the language to your group. Groups should be age appropriate with a span of not more than 3 years in any one group (except adult groups).

This Curriculum Guide is only a tool. It is left to the discretion of the presenter how long each session will be, and what material will be covered in any individual session. Depending on time and space limitations, this Program may run for 10 sessions lasting up to 90 minutes each, or up to 20 sessions lasting 30 — 45 minutes.

Whenever possible, twenty sessions is the recommended format.

The presenter should feel free to use the Program materials in a way that is consistent with his/her own style and the needs of the participants. For example, the presenter may break the sessions down into smaller parts, adapt specific role-plays or scenarios to the community, or change some of the language to make it more appropriate to the developmental level of the group. The presenter's knowledge of the members of the group is as important as the Curriculum in shaping the learning process.

The RECOVERY Program asks a great deal of participants. The degree to which they participate in the group, in the "selfwork" assignments and in applying the techniques in their lives is the degree to which they will get value from the Program. This is hard work and is acknowledged as such. Change can be difficult; it is often painful. To pretend otherwise is unfair. At the same time, change can be exhilarating, invigorating and satisfying. This too should be acknowledged.

CAUTION: Do not to underestimate the capabilities of the participants, especially young children. One hallmark of this program is the ability to effectively teach concepts and skills usually believed to be beyond the capability of young people. Err on the side of boldness.

Pacing

As you will see, the content of this Program is extensive. Your ability to actually cover the material provided will depend on a number of factors including:

- age and maturity of group;
- special needs of group members; and
- your familiarity and comfort with content.

While it is possible to conduct the Program over ten sessions, twenty sessions enables more opportunities to participate and to master the skills.

Physical Setting

The group should be in a circle or around a large table. Using a table is particularly effective with older groups — it helps participants feel safer. Sitting on the floor tends to create disruption. Sitting in chairs raises not only the bodies but the expectations and makes role-playing, listening and paying attention easier.

Snacks

Snacks are important. Food has a way of making group members feel more comfortable and safe. Children especially need a snack to help them participate fully. This is true at almost any time, day or evening, but especially in groups taking place before lunch or after school. If behavioral problems are occuring, try a snack!

Group Participation

One extremely powerful technique contributed by Ted Estes of the Jenks, Oklahoma Public Schools is the "Thumbs Up / Thumbs Down" method. When you ask group questions, all participants should signal "Thumbs Up or Thumbs Down or Thumbs Not Sure." This keeps all members engaged and is a valuable way for you to gauge areas needing more or less discussion.

Role-play

Role-play is the critical element which takes concepts and turns them into skills. **Except in cases where it is specifically stated that participants should work in pairs, all role-play should take place between the group leader and a participant.** One of the most important aspects of the role-play is to insure that the participant is successful. Keeping the group leader as one of the role-play participants enables you to keep control of the direction of the role-play.

Behavior Management

Discipline is generally not a problem in these groups. You should establish early on that the purpose is to accomplish the work of each session. The value to each member is determined individually, but under no circumstance will one member be allowed to diminish the value to other members. The group needs to agree to listen, to get value and to use timeout when it is needed.

When a participant is having a hard time, ask if she/he wants to take a time out (in another part of the room — never outside the room) or to resume appropriate participation. She/he should be allowed to choose to stay in the group a maximum of one time. The second time, the behavior has made the choice regardless of his/her words and she/he is required to go to time out until she/he can participate appropriately or is invited back. If she/he returns voluntarily and then regresses again, re-entering the group is not something she/he will be allowed to choose again. As group leader, you should choose when she/he re-enters the group.

Children who have difficulty with their behavior are most frequently aided by the process of self-talk. They need to say and constantly reaffirm, "I can control my behavior when I

choose to." This makes clear for them who is choosing to be disruptive and who is choosing to cooperate and get value. **The distinction between the behavior and the individual should be kept clear at all times.**

Selfwork

Selfwork suggestions are provided for a wide range of ages and abilities. Please select from the Selfwork those most appropriate for your group. Writing the Selfwork assignments down and handing them out will increase the likelihood they will be completed and will take away group anxiety and questions about getting it right.

Handouts

Handouts are also provided for a wide range of ages and abilities. Use those which are most appropriate for your group.

Notebooks

Participants in groups where the members are able to read and write should each have a notebook for personal exercises and note-keeping.

Format

Script

Program content is presented in a scripted form to enable ease of preparation. For example:

Program content and dialogue appears in bold print, flush to margin,

> Notations and comments to the presenter appear in paragraph form.

Role-plays (in the form of "What if . . . " questions) are noted in the script, and should be considered a vital element for the mastery of the skills presented.

Each lesson includes an outline, scripted lesson plan, self-work activities, and a parent letter to go home. In order to be most effective, leaders should be familiar with the content of each session prior to the presentation.

Flip Charts

The format of the program includes "Flip Chart" notations (which are also provided for projection.) These charts provide an outline and act as a visual teaching aid.

Parent Letters

Ten parent letters are provided to let parents know what the focus of the group is and how they can support the Program. The letters may be used as they are or adapted to your parent group. There are also parent letters for specific subject areas.

Parent Seminar

The parent seminar is designed to do several things:

- to inform parents about the purpose and content of the program;
- to let parents know how to reinforce the weekly activities;
- to answer parents questions; and
- to complete details such as permission slips, schedules, etc.

The parent's seminar should be informal and reassuring.

Keep in mind that parents whose children are abused are themselves abused. Most of them will not have sought treatment for themselves and there is generally a good deal of denial. One of the purposes of the parent seminar is to acknowledge that this experience has been disruptive and traumatic. More importántly, it is to let parents know that the RECOVERY Program is about moving forward, about getting on with life in such a way that the family and child can heal, learn new skills and find relief from the fear that it will happen again or that the child will be scarred for life.

Parents are particularly concerned that the RECOVERY Program not be more rehashing of the experience. While this comes partly from

denial, it is a valid concern that must be addressed straight-forwardly. Parents need to understand that the intention of the RECOVERY Program is to put the experience into the context of the child's future; acknowledging that it happened; that the child was not to blame; that it shouldn't have happened; and that it is time to learn some skills that will keep it from happening again.

Parents are also often acutely aware of the side-effects of abuse, especially loss of confidence and self-esteem. They are particularly responsive to the Program's focus on rebuilding and are eager to support in concrete ways the development of the skills which make up the Program. Let them know that they will receive a weekly (or biweekly) letter letting them know what has been covered and how they can continue to reinforce and build the skills.

The best preparation for conducting the parent seminar is familiarity with the entire Program; the compassion you already bring to the parents of abused children; and your ability to let them know how you will help.

Permission slips are important. They let you know that parents are clear about the Program and help to assure that any therapist the child has is aware of his/her participation in the Program. Samples are provided in the appendix.

Pretest/Posttest

Evaluating what you accomplish in the RECOVERY program is important to the group leader, participants, and parents. The Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory is a simple and accurate way to measure change. Administer it before and after the program (at the first and last session is fine). The instrument and scoring information are in the Appendix. Sharing the results with participants may be appropriate and add to a sense of closure and success.

Parent Seminar Outline

Introduction of yourself

Purpose of RECOVERY:

to prevent further victimization;

to build self-esteem, communication, assertiveness, problem-solving, decision-making and stress management skills.

Purpose of parent seminar:

to give them specific ways to support and maximize benefit to children.

Basic extent of problem of child abuse:

1 in 4 children abused;

damage is not physical but violation of trust;

diminishes child's sense of self-worth;

often manifested in depression, aggression, revictimization, etc.

Goal is to stop the cycle.

Therapy heals and helps to resolve issues.

RECOVERY restores competency in life-skills and helps prevent future abuse.

The program begins the process and teaching of skills, parents continue it.

Content of program:

Children's program includes prevention techniques tied to assertiveness and building a more positive sense of self.

Emphasis on role of self-esteem and self-concept — particularly the reality that children who think they are bad or damaged may go about proving it by acting out their own conceptions. This pattern must be broken as soon as possible.

Prevention of future abuse (physical, sexual, emotional).

Making choices.

Communication skills.

Assertive behavior.

Internal voice, self-talk, skills for changing thought and behavior patterns.

Reinforcement at home:

Self-work

Parent letters

Permission Slips

Recovery Brochure

The sample brochure on the following two pages may be modified to produce your own brochure about the RECOVERY program. It is designed to be an 8-½ x 11 brochure, letterfolded. Space and type specifications are provided for you to add information or to use it as a self mailer.

For Further Information

This panel is for your use in providing further details. Technical information is provided here to enable you to have type set to match the rest of the brochure.

- Headlines are: 16-point Franklin Gothic Heavy
- Text type is: 12-point Garamond Condensed Light
- Column width is: 17 picas

Mailing or Address Panel

This panel may be used either for name, address, and phone number, or as a mailing panel, thereby creating a self-mailer. It is not necessary to seal or staple the brochure in order to mail it. A bulk-mailing permit may be used for mailings of 200 or more.

It's every child's right

Discovery of life beyond the pain

What Abuse Does to Children

Children who have been physically, sexually, and/or emotionally abused not only suffer a wide range of effects from their victimization, but are at greater risk to be abused again.

Abuse commonly produces feelings of

- Guilt
- Violation
- Loss of control
- Lowered self-esteem

Even those children who seem to be handling their abuse are concerned that

- It might happen again
- They did something wrong
- Other relationships may turn to abuse

For all these children, the RECOVERY Program can help.

Long-term Effects of Abuse

Common problems for abused children include

- Emotional difficulties
- Disruptive behavior
- Poor performance in school
- Vulnerability to further abuse

While these problems are not always obviously linked to the abuse experience, they must not be overlooked or allowed to develop unchecked.

Long-term studies of low achievers, runaways, drug abusers, prostitutes, and incarcerated individuals paint a disturbing picture. Abuse is a consistent and pervasive element in their backgrounds. Low self-esteem and poor self-concept are ever- present.

Knowing this, there can be little doubt that children who are abused need assistance to resolve the questions raised by any abuse experience. The RECOVERY Program is designed to do just that.

What RECOVERY Can Do

Children ages five through 16 are taught effective and positive skills to reduce the risk of further abuse.

They learn

- Prevention Strategies
- Effective Communication
- Appropriate Assertiveness
- Stress Management
- Problem-solving
- Decision-making

They develop better self-concepts and higher self-esteem as they practice specific skills in everyday situations. Over the 10 to 20 weeks, children in the group learn, with and from the other children, that

- Abuse shouldn't have happened to them, and
- They can work actively to prevent it in the future.

A Therapeutic Approach

Each child has a chance to learn and use specific empowering techniques to

- Prevent future abuse
- Build positive self-concept
- Rebuild self-esteem so essential to development of the child's full potential

When Children Should Participate

The RECOVERY Program is not a discussion of any child's therapy. Rather, it is designed to support the therapeutic process.

- *For children who are in therapy,* participation in the RECOVERY Program is appropriate when they are nearing completion of their therapy.
- *For children who do not participate in therapy or counseling*, they may join the RECOVERY Program soon after the abuse is reported.