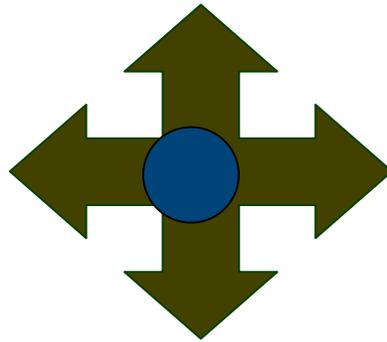

Women Hurting Women Workshops Evaluation

FINAL REPORT



by

**Leslie Tutty, Ph.D. and Kendra Nixon, B.A., B.S.W.
RESOLVE Alberta**

Research Advisory Team:

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Carolyn Anderson, M.S.W., Department of Social Work, Mt. Royal College,
Jane Oxenbury, MEd. C. Psych, Edan Counselling Associates
Rae-Anne Wood-Schatz, Executive Director, Peer Support Services for Abused Women and
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October, 2000

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Purpose/Objectives of Research: The goal of this research was to evaluate a new training program for professionals entitled the “Women Hurting Women Workshop”. These workshops were sponsored by the Women Hurting Women Subcommittee, an ad hoc committee of the Entry Points Committee which is a subcommittee of the Calgary Domestic Violence Committee. The workshops were also offered in association with Peer Support Services for Abused Women. The workshops (offered April 17th and May 15th) were one-day training sessions for service providers who are, or may be providing services to abused lesbian or bisexual women.

The nature of gay and lesbian violence is similar to abuse between heterosexual couples. It may take the form of physical violence, emotional, sexual or financial abuse. Most research suggests that 22-48% of lesbian relationships and 17-38% of gay male relationships involve domestic abuse, similar to the extent of violence in male-female couples. While numerous services and policies and procedures are available to address heterosexual intimate partner violence, most communities have no specialized approaches to address same-sex abuse. Lesbian and gay individuals may avoid mainstream helping agencies or may use the service without identifying themselves as gay or lesbian, thus disadvantaging both individuals and service providers. Most professionals have little training or understanding of abuse in lesbian and gay relationships.

The training workshops (see Appendix I) were offered free of charge to counsellors, police officers, lawyers and doctors from agencies in the city of Calgary. The workshops offered information on homophobia and heterosexism, myths about lesbians, myths about lesbian battery, guides for interventions, safety planning/risk assessment, legal recourse and implications and assessing an agency’s accessibility to abused lesbian and bisexual women. Since such training has not been previously offered in the city and few similar programs have been developed across North America, the current research

¹ Special thanks to Jennifer Francis, RESOLVE Alberta research assistant

was designed to be exploratory in nature. The results will provide information about the background and experience of professionals who attend these workshops, what they found most valuable about attending, what program components were most helpful and if there were gaps or topics that needed more elaboration.

Carolyn Anderson, Jane Oxenbury and Ellen Faulkner led the first workshop. The second workshop was revised after the facilitators recognized several concerns with the first, mostly with respect to the time allotted to various segments and because the final topics related to clinical applications were left short of time. The major changes were that the research segment was shortened, and more material was presented on both clinical responses and legal recourse. The room set-up was altered as well. The tables and chairs in the first workshop were set up facing the presenters in lecture-style seating. In the second workshop the tables and chairs were arranged in a u-shape in the hope of facilitating more interaction. Finally, several of the presenters changed for the second workshop because Carolyn Anderson was unavailable. Rae-Anne Wood-Schatz joined the facilitator team, but reflected that she has a less clinical background than Carolyn does.

The presenters noted several qualitative differences between the workshops. There seemed to be more discussion and sharing in the second workshop and the participation from members of the Domestic Abuse Team from Calgary Police Services added an important dimension to the issues.

Research Resources: This research was conducted by RESOLVE Alberta, a family violence research institute based at the University of Calgary. RESOLVE Alberta donated staff time and resources to evaluate this innovative project. This would not have been possible without the external funding for the research office from the Partnership Program of the National Crime Prevention Program of Justice Canada. Other resources include a yearly grant from the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Calgary.

Methodology: This research used both evaluation questionnaires and telephone interviews to assess the experiences of the respondents who attended the Women Hurting Women Workshops. The analysis followed accepted practices of content analysis involving identifying prominent themes and sub-themes.

All workshop participants were asked to complete a feedback sheet at the end of the workshop. The final statement was a request for research participation, describing the study procedures and including a box that participants can endorse if they were willing to be involved in the evaluation. It specified that if willing, a research assistant would contact them by telephone to set up a time to complete the telephone survey interview about one to three weeks after completion of the workshop. Participants were informed that the telephone interviews would take from 20 to 45 minutes and would be tape-recorded unless they preferred not. Their comments and identity would remain confidential.

Those who agreed to be interviewed were contacted and a letter of consent read to them verbatim (see Appendix II). The letter was mailed or faxed to them so that they received both the research description and informed consent. The research procedures were reviewed and approved by the University of Calgary Joint Faculties Research Ethics Committee.

RESULTS

As previously noted, the Women Hurting Women Workshop evaluation was based on two components:

- I. Quantitative and qualitative data (written comments) generated from the post-workshop questionnaires.
- II. Transcriptions of post-workshop phone interviews.

I) Quantitative Data: Evaluation Questionnaire

At the close of each of the Women Hurting Women Workshops participants were asked to answer a workshop evaluation form. In total, thirty-seven questionnaires were completed. The questionnaire included five Likert scale questions as well as space for written comments. The data was analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Program for the Social Sciences). Overall, most participants rated the workshop very positively (see Table 1).

There were no significant differences in the comments from respondents from the two workshops. The majority of participants indicated that attending the workshop had increased their understanding of homophobia, heterosexism, and abuse in lesbian/bisexual relationships. Participants reported that attending the workshops met their needs on the above issues, providing the knowledge and skills that would have practical application to their work. Furthermore, the workshop participants rated the facilitators' knowledge, method of presentation, and style of presentation very highly (over 80% of respondents rated these aspects as good or exceptional).

The major themes articulated in the written comments from the workshop evaluation questionnaire were summarized with respect to whether they could be considered strengths or limitations. In both sections, informants suggested program revisions.

The strengths included the fact that most if not all, participants enjoyed the workshops. The lunch was very well received, and the venue appreciated. The respondents liked the facilitators' styles of presentation and the variety that emerged from having multiple presenters. The participants found the environment to be respectful. Most also liked the breakout exercises in small group format.

Most respondents enjoyed the part of the presentation raising awareness and addressing myths about heterosexism and homophobia. Some, however, commented that less time could have been allocated to this topic. The majority of the attendees responded positively to the handouts and most stated that they found at least some part of the written materials quite useful and that they would use it in their work in the future.

A final strength was the opportunity to network with others in their field or related fields. Several individuals expressed a desire for a list of participants for future contact or for more information about the backgrounds of the other participants.

With respect to limitations, a number of attendees noted that they would have liked a more practical, clinical approach that would have helped them to deal with clients rather than the theoretical presentations and the awareness-raising sessions which, respondents indicated, dominated the day. Their comments suggested that they had expected or would have liked a more clinically based workshop, with more discussion of practical "clinical interventions" and "screening and assessment, counselling" and the inclusion of case studies.

Many attendees found the theoretical presentation and definitions of lesbian abuse somewhat confusing, lengthy and too detailed. Some suggested that the statistics provided could have been

summarized in a chart, or simply presented more briefly. Many respondents indicated that the time could have been used more effectively in other areas, especially clinical applications.

In summary, the numerical ratings and comments from the 37 workshop evaluation questionnaires indicated that most were quite pleased with the workshops.

II. Post-Workshop Telephone Interviews

Twelve participants were interviewed (seven from the first workshop and five from the second) approximately one month after attending the workshop. The interviews were audiotaped and the tapes transcribed verbatim. As might be expected since many of those interviewed had also completed the workshop evaluation questionnaire, the comments reflect many of the themes already articulated previously. However, the interviews elicited more specific feedback and suggestions.

Participants' Backgrounds and Experience

The first section of the interview gathered information about the respondent's backgrounds and experience with domestic abuse. Of the twelve interviewees, eleven were women and one was male. Their educational backgrounds were varied, with most having at least one university degree: five participants had a master's degree, doctorate, or law degree. The university disciplines included social work, psychology, women's studies, and humanities. Most of the respondents were counsellors, but several were involved in administration, teaching or police services. Half were aged 31 to 45, two were in their twenties and four were aged 46 or older.

Five of the 12 respondents reported either currently working (therapy and crisis intervention) or having worked with individuals/couples affected by intimate partner violence. Of these five, few had experience with abused lesbian/bisexual couples (less than 10% of clients). One respondent worked with a handful of couples who had been involved in a shelter for abused women.

Agency Policies with Respect to Abuse in Lesbian/bisexual Relationships:

Most participants noted that their workplaces did not formally recognize lesbian or gay relationships, but did so implicitly or were very gay positive. One employer offered same-sex benefits (e.g. extended health care) and another offered employee-perks to same sex partners. Most of the respondents reported no formal agency guidelines for practice with lesbian/bisexual clients although several reported informal guidelines or understandings. As one respondent commented:

“This is one of the reasons I was interested in the workshop, because we are a coalition and have many different agencies and community groups around the table. One of my roles is to bring information and practises to the table and so that was my key interest in it, because I don't know what our member agencies have in terms of policy.”

The second section of the interviews evaluated the impact of the workshop. The interview responses in the following sections are presented question by question.

What did you hope to gain by attending the workshop and were your expectations met?

Eight of the respondents commented that they had attended to learn more about issues in lesbian, bisexual relationships and assessing who is violent in the relationship. For example:

“I hoped to gain increased sense of awareness. I hoped to gain more sensitivity and more tools for assisting women to be comfortable, to disclose.”

“I hoped to get updated in the issue of lesbian abuse. I have read a little bit about it, but also I didn’t know what to do from a clinical perspective so I was interested in what advice, suggestions the presenters would have in terms of working directly with lesbian couples. Also, I am interested in the whole issue of assessing who is violent in the relationship and that’s hard to do when both are women. Typically both could claim that they are the victim in the relationship – so the whole issue of same-sex partners raises some really interesting questions for counsellors.”

Most of these participants agreed that their expectations had been met and were pleased with the awareness-raising and gay-positive environment and content. For example:

“I was looking for insight into homosexual relationships and an understanding of their mind-set, outlook and I think, yes, my expectations were met and then some. “

“I went specifically to get a tool-kit, resource manual and the package of materials that were forwarded were excellent, so that need was satisfied – I came away with resources that I expected and which will be valuable to my work in the next few months.”

“I was really impressed with the workshop. I think that the workshop started off and it built up momentum throughout. I thought it was extremely well done. “

In contrast, several individuals who attended the first workshop and who had come for information about clinical intervention expressed disappointment that more time was not devoted to this component:

“I think one of the things that happened in the workshop was that there was so much material that the team wanted to cover that we ended up not having a lot of time focusing on the clinical issues which was one of the primary reasons why I was there. It got left to the last and they had to do a shortened review of it. “

“Some of the statistics and research (I didn’t like): I found that that was very academic and not applicable to front-line workers.”

A final participant suggested that the workshop was a valuable foundation, but that a second workshop with a focus on clinical interventions would be useful:

“The foundation was certainly laid, there was lots of information, and in terms of recognition that it exists, that was certainly met – it was kind of a given, just by the title of the workshop. In terms of intervention, I did get things that I do use more, sort of along the analysis – the myths and stereotypes – how much that is changing your ability to make choice. Certainly it’s a starting point, and in terms of intervention and front-line work, there would be a next part that I would be interested in.”

Feedback about Specific Workshop Components.

Homophobia and Heterosexism

Most attendees expressed that liked this part of the presentation.

“I thought that was all very useful because those kinds of things can be incorporated into the tools that we share with our clients.”

“That was really good; I liked the humour and the heterosexual privilege. It’s a way of presenting the information without it being preachy – and by saying ‘look – this is what’s going on, this is what other people face’.”

“I went for that piece...to really know more about myself and why I think the things I do, and how not having a better understanding is sort of sweeping the issue under the rug by not grappling with the issues, and I think that piece really dealt with it in a very sensitive way.”

“I thought that was pretty insightful. As a non-gay individual, I just don’t ever think of those types of questions and when they were asked back at me, apparently they were stupid questions, but it’s ignorance – I don’t mean that in the sense of being stupid, just lack of information and that was one of the purposes of attending.”

“I liked the handout on heterosexual privileges – lots of people said that they had seen it before, but I hadn’t.”

One interviewee was concerned that this section was too lengthy:

“My sense of that audience was that you were already preaching to the converted – that we wouldn’t have been there if we were homophobic or really concerned about that – so I didn’t know that it really needed to be said to that length.”

Another comment about this section raises an important perspective:

“I think that the imagery exercise is a real pain in the neck, because they are assuming that everybody in the room is heterosexual and completely contradicts the premise of that section of the workshop, which is ‘don’t assume everybody you encounter is heterosexual’. So I think there is a form and function contradiction that really seriously flaws that part of the workshop.”

Myths about Lesbians

This component was generally less well received by the participants than the homophobia portion. Several respondents commented that this segment was lengthy or that they did not learn anything new with this component:

“It was somewhat useful, although maybe it went on a little long and could have had more information more like some of the information that came out in the afternoon... but I know it was a diverse group you were bringing together so sometimes it’s hard to gauge the time frame.”

“That was interesting – I didn’t really learn a lot new about that, I don’t think.”

“I think it’s worthwhile for a relatively uninformed audience. I didn’t get a whole lot out of that, myself.”

Several participants were concerned that discussing the stereotypes reinforced them:

“I don’t think I adhere to many of those myths anyway, so for me, I don’t think there was any new information but I know that for some it was a new experience.”

“I didn’t feel so good about that portion – although I think recognizing stereotypes is really important, I almost wonder if on some level we also reinforced them, because we gave it a lot of voice, and I can’t say I felt good reiterating all the stereotypes I’ve heard – just for my own personhood I can’t say that felt good, even though awareness about them is important.”

Other respondents found it interesting:

“I thought that was useful, very useful... In a general context, there are myths about all kinds of things concerning women that come up on a daily basis in treatment for the clients we serve, so this is helpful.”

“Lots of them I didn’t know. Again, I liked the group process where everyone could think of that, because I think that people are met with different attitudes than other people, so that was good as well.”

Myths about Lesbian Battering

Most participants found this section helpful and gained awareness of the issue:

“That was the part that I really wanted to know about. One part that really intrigued me was what Jane said that it’s sometimes the more powerful one in the community that will be the batterer. That was new stuff to me, so just lesbianism in general was not so important, but when it related to battering – that got my interest.”

“That was interesting. I think the whole idea that it’s not mutual battering was interesting. I found Jane Oxenbury’s idea that in her experience a woman can be abusive in one relationship and leave that relationship and then maybe become the victim (which is a comment she made later) was also interesting – so I think there were a lot of new ideas to think over.”

“I think we all suspected it, and probably not to the extent that I learned and it never occurred to me that. We know why women don’t report... it’s sort of a base that we understand – women don’t come forward because of the embarrassment and the control and so on and so forth. Now there’s the additional “maybe they’re not out” and I never thought about that stuff and what an amazing control that would be. Some of the myths I think I already had some insight into, but it was very eye-opening.”

Some individuals wanted more detail in terms of clinical interventions and ways in which to help abused lesbians.

“Most of us would have some assumptions about wife battering or other forms of violence, and I’m sure that certainly I have assumptions about lesbian violence that were changed...I learned a lot about that and the issues involved.”

“That was good, again. I would have like more in terms of specific to them getting help, like what myths are silencing them – a connection to that, what their resistance looks like, in terms of belief systems. Again, that might be sort of a second component.”

Guide for Interventions

A number of respondents from both workshops commented positively about this focus in the workshop:

“It was great, good, practical.”

“I thought it was very helpful, very useful. There was lots of really, really good information provided. They made the information clear and concise and really user-friendly, so anybody leaving that room could use the material they had to make their services better.

“One of the things that will be beneficial is being able to take this information to the court system which is already somewhat naïve in all domestic violence. They are getting more informed as each day goes on, but this is even that much better, where now we can say that we have a little bit of expertise. Perhaps we can throw some insight into what’s going on here. All that was very helpful.”

Five participants did not have a good recollection of this component.

“There was an article on assessment in a newsletter that I thought was excellent and I am going to use it. Other than that, I didn’t feel that there was a lot of information about intervention, particularly. That was the part that got cut off.”

Safety Planning/Risk Assessment

Most attendees said that component was helpful but did not comment further.

“I thought that was good. It reinforced stuff I already know, and again because the audience was so diverse it was an essential part of it.”

“I vaguely remember that and I think that’s very useful, from what I remember of it.”

“Excellent – I have seen that one before, so that was a good choice”.

This was another component about which those attending the first workshop would have liked to have spent more time.

“That was good. Again, I think we could have spent a little more time on it.”

“That was toward the end of the workshop and we didn’t spend quite as much time on that as I would like”.

Legal Recourse and Implications

None of the seven respondents who attended the first workshop recalled this component or offered an opinion. In contrast, each of the five respondents from the second workshop commented. As noted previously, this component was expanded somewhat for the second workshop.

“One thing that I got out of the workshop that I didn’t expect to get was the information about the domestic violence subgroup – the task force in the police service – and that was quite worthwhile to learn about”

“There was not in-depth discussion on that but it’s really important for us to think about the legal issues, because, again, as heterosexual people, we take certain things for granted, but we know even with the laws we have, there are still injustices done, with common-law couples, so same-sex couples have an even bigger challenge ahead, so I think that is certainly an area that needed to be touched on.”

Several of the respondents did not seem to understand that in the province of Alberta one cannot receive an Emergency Protection Order under the new provincial legislation if in a lesbian/bisexual or gay relationship.

“It was helpful, but I don’t know how much it will benefit, because the issue will come when it comes to getting Emergency Protection Orders” With EPO’s and other issues, I see some difficulty in articulating to the other agency that being judges, etc. to say “this is as dangerous as a heterosexual couple” and needs to be looked at from the same direction. I see that as a big challenge.”

“What would have been a bit more valuable to me was that (topic), because it lays out all the different options. But it’s nice to have that column that says ‘EPO – to date: in Calgary, no EPO’s have been issued for same-sex relationships’ because those are very textbooks definitions that, depending on the city, are realistic or not, and in Calgary, for the EPO’s, it’s not realistic. But, getting a handout on the legal remedies that covers the basics is impossible.”

Assessing Agency Accessibility to Abused Lesbian and Bisexual Women

This component was well received by most attendees.

“I think that was a very important piece, and well done.”

“That was interesting because it just pointed out that perhaps our agencies aren’t as far along as we sometimes think they are.”

“To be honest, I felt a bit insulted, and not [by] anyone in particular. I answered the questions and I thought ‘of course we have’ and then I thought ‘maybe I don’t know the answer to that’. So it was a bit of an exercise in thinking ‘hmm – maybe I need to re-think

this'. So at first I was a bit reactive to it and then when I actually went through it was useful because I realized that there are lots of places where we can bone-up."

"That was good, and CCASA's handout was in the package so I could check it out right away. I think it's good to always be assessing that, so it's nice to have the checklist."

"I think that was an excellent tool. I think from the perspective from where we're at, we have to start with awareness and education-building and then move to that, just because I'm not sure where everyone fits as far as their awareness."

However, several interviewees did not find this component as useful or did not recall it:

"I didn't find that terribly useful because there weren't very many things where I had an eye-opener and said 'oh, my goodness – we had better pull up our socks in that regard'."

"I don't remember that one so I couldn't fairly comment on it."

Were there any topics that you hoped would be covered that were not included?

Eight of those interviewed said "no".

"I don't think so. I actually think there was more covered than I had anticipated."

"I don't think so. I didn't know exactly what the topics were going to be, and certainly considering there is so much information I think one thing built onto another in a sequential way that made sense."

Several respondents expressed a desire to have received more clinical input and counselling interventions and others made specific suggestions about topics.

"I could have had less of the myths and the homophobia piece and just simply clinical application, but that may not have been what others wanted."

"I think that focusing on what isn't right can be constructive – but I think we could have also focused on what we are doing well, like we could have talked about a checklist of all the things we are already doing well and celebrate that and encourage other people."

"Carolyn and Jane were talking about the "power and control wheel" – I have used that wheel in my practice and I have never seen that adapted to lesbian couples and I thought that was great. I thought it was really well-written for that audience. It's a really great tool and I find it useful for heterosexual couples. The complement to that – another wheel that goes with it from the same people is a wheel called "equality wheel" which is about good relationships, so it tells you what a power and control relationship looks like, it also tells you what the opposite looks like, which is awesome because sometimes when you're stuck in an abusive cycle or an abusive relationship you have no conceptualization about what it might look like to be healthy. So having that complement I think would have been great and I mentioned that at the workshop."

“Perhaps something about transgendered individuals and how we are or are not, or can serve them.”

“More specific counselling interventions, and again the assessment. Before this, I was working in shelters and I’m sure that people there facing sexual orientation issues, never mind the battery, but there just wasn’t the environment there to facilitate them coming forward with that information. So something in terms of more than “are your policies non-biased” and “are your handouts non-biased”, just more specifically how you address that.”

In general, how did you like the way in which the workshop was conducted?

Most participants mentioned that they liked the way the presenters conducted the workshop. Also several participants mentioned that they enjoyed the small group work and interactive discussion.

“Very much – in terms of the interaction of the three speakers. I think what was nice was that one was kind of at a low-energy and then the next one would be up there so you never had this exhausted speaker standing there looking at you.”

“I really liked it. I like the interactive component with small groups and the discussions afterwards.”

“It was useful to break down into small groups, although we actually could have used a little bit more time for that – at least maybe another 5-10 minutes per breakdown because it took a little while to get into the topics and then once we got into them it was then often time to go back into the big group, but they were useful.

“I thought it was excellent and the type of training that really needs to be done. I know in the first session it sounded from the comments being made in the small groups that a lot of agencies that were there have already looked at a lot of the issues, so I think it’s a matter of reaching out to the agencies that have not, because I think it’s really needed.”

“I really liked the small group stuff – as much as we all moan and groan about it, I’m glad that the groups were different every time. That really allowed everyone to see different agencies and different perspectives.”

“I really liked it. I thought it was inclusive and it was participatory and it was a balance between listening and actually talking and it was broken down into small groups. I think that small group work is really good and I liked the format of the workshop.”

“I thought it was wonderful. I was really, really impressed and I thought it was actually one of the most useful workshops that I have been to in a very long time.”

One respondent suggested using less lecture style presentations:

“In general, I thought it was conducted in a lecture-audience type format – we had little break-out groups as well, but I’m not sure what other format I would have preferred. Perhaps if we had been sitting more theatre-style, or if we didn’t have the tables, or if it was more interactive. It

was hard for me to network with all the other people, to see them all, so a different physical set-up would have been helpful.” (First workshop participant)

Another respondent from the first workshop found the questions for the group interactions too open-ended at first:

“We needed an icebreaker the first time I went into the group. It’s not like other topics, where people know the routine – they do the introductions. People are a bit more wary, so to move immediately into the group work with such broad, open-ended questions, was difficult. Our group was just sitting there saying “what are we supposed to be doing and how long do we have?” So, we moved into the group with very unclear instructions which were: we were filling out one of those questionnaires and then it’s just like: take it back to your group and discuss it. So until we felt comfortable, we probably would have appreciated focus-closed questions.”

Did you find the handouts useful?

Most interviewees liked the handouts very much:

“I really liked the handouts: very clear, very concise. I looked through my package, thinking that there were lots of things in there that we could duplicate to get to people who weren’t at the workshop.”

“I particularly liked the ‘power and control wheel’ – I advised the staff to get themselves a copy of it and then there was one assessment tool as well. Any tool-oriented strategy I always find very useful – I’ll take it in and maybe not use it immediately, but at least it’s there, or I might know somebody who might find it of value – so anything like that I always find immensely useful at workshops”

Do you have any suggestions to improve the workshop?

Responses varied here:

“When I go to that workshop, I don’t necessarily want to hear about the difference between cultural feminism and radical feminism, especially when I haven’t been explained the link to lesbian issues.”

“I think that having something like the new APA guidelines for psychotherapy (with gay and lesbian clients) would be a good addition to the package of handouts.”

“The big thing for me was just that there was too much of a certain thing (research information; too much of the process stuff as far as talking about the myths and things) and not enough factual information or getting into the meat of how you would actually work with these families as opposed to heterosexual families.”

“I found the section on definitions in the afternoon was much too detailed for me. Couldn’t see the distinctions between all the definitions – they didn’t make a lot of sense to me so it was sort of a bit of overkill. That wouldn’t be as important if some of the clinical stuff hadn’t been missing later on, so I would have shortened that.”

Do you have any suggestions about marketing the workshop in the future?

Several interviewees suggested newsletters and other agencies through which to advertise: Women Looking Forward newsletter; Women in Psychology newsletter; Neighbours (supplement to the Calgary Herald); through the Violence Information and Education Centre; the United Way; the Domestic Conflict Unit of the Calgary Police; shelters; professional groups such as physicians', psychologists', and social workers' associations; and on the Internet. A few respondents said that they would have appreciated a more diverse audience, i.e. more men involved.

One respondent felt that the notice for the workshop was not sent out early enough to potential attendees. One participant suggested that the workshop be marketed to the funding agencies and mentioned the possibility of a subsidy fund for participating agencies to draw upon.

“One of the presenters remarked at one point that she wasn't sure whether they were preaching to the converted and I guess I think one has to start somewhere when you're doing something like this, but I would have like to have seen a more diverse audience, and this probably doesn't have anything to do with the presenters, but there were no men.”

“If all the people who attended that workshop are connected to an agency, I can't think of one agency that wouldn't benefit from that workshop.”

Has your work changed as a result of attending the workshop?

Although some interviewees said that their work had not changed, a number identified ways in which they had incorporated the information or materials into their workplace:

“It has not yet, but we will be doing training in June and I will incorporate some of the issues into it.”

“I have used some of the material in a presentation I am preparing so that was very helpful. I think I have become more aware of the issue of heterosexism which I hadn't thought about before. Certainly, I think everyone is aware of homophobia and hadn't really heard the term heterosexism as defined in the workshop. That was very helpful because it helped me to think differently about that issue and how it might be a problem where I work.”

“It's changed directly in that some of the materials that were provided, like posters and things which I put up visibly in my office and other counsellors have put up posters in their offices as well so that we could make ourselves more visible and accessible to lesbian women who want to disclose.”

“I have been more conscious about using gender-neutral language, and using words like 'partner' and making sure that equally say 'heterosexual &/or lesbian relationships'”

“I shared all of the handouts with the rest of the counselling team In terms of working directly with clients, some of it was just more confidence in knowing what the resources were, and I had more information about the privilege of heterosexuality and how, when people actually bring the

sexual violence forward, that is a huge step. I had more recognition of how much courage that takes and how much recognition of what silences them.”

“I don’t know that my work has changed. I think my attitude has changed, even though I was aware of some of the issues, it was like having all that information and having it suddenly put together and the light bulb comes on. I have been thinking a lot about the privilege that I have and how that shapes who I am and how I do my work.”

In summary, a number of respondents noted significant impacts that they attributed to attending the workshop.

What was the Impact of the Workshop on Agencies?

Most respondents found it difficult to evaluate whether their agency had or would make changes as a result of their attending the workshop. Some reported that there would be changes in a general way, and a few noted that they had already been proactive in making changes at their workplace as a result of attending the workshop. As several interviewees noted:

“I thought the ideas around policies and procedures were really interesting and very enlightening. I thought that we work in a really positive atmosphere anyway, but we don’t have things written down and it’s not in the same kind of structure. Maybe we need to bring that more to the students who work with us and maybe we need to articulate the things we take for granted as a team to the people who don’t work with us full-time.”

“I will be sitting with a diversity task force which, thanks to the tools/resources I got in the binder that was passed on, will be used when considering same-sex issues and evaluating our policies and procedures investments against that sort of framework.”

Other Comments?

“I did like the fact that VIEC had a booth there, and I noticed that some people that I would have assumed would know about VIEC were just learning for the first time about it and that was great, and that it had take-aways.”

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of the two formats evaluating the Women Hurting Women workshop, evaluation questionnaires and telephone interviews, yielded similar findings. In general, the workshops were very well received and people’s expectations were met. Although some participants and presenters both were concerned that they were simply “preaching to the converted”, the comments from the telephone interviews contradict this interpretation. The workshop audience was quite diverse, ranging from those with little knowledge or understanding of lesbian/bisexual relationship issues to several who were experienced counsellors with this population.

As such, in examining each component of the workshop, some found the material invaluable, while others felt that it was not necessary. This is a common dilemma in developing curriculum for most audiences: covering the basics for those with little background, while still providing relevant information for those with more knowledge. For example, some of the respondents noted that the morning sessions on heterosexism and myths about lesbian battering were, unexpectedly interesting.

Others clearly stated that they had come to the workshop for such information. A third group had previously experienced similar consciousness raising sessions and did not personally feel the need to challenge their perceptions and beliefs. Nevertheless, this component is likely still essential to the overall workshop. Notably, some workshop participants who came believing that they were quite aware of issues of heterosexism and homophobia, mentioned that the discussion of the topics raised their awareness of further issues that they could be addressing.

This became more of an issue for some, especially in the first workshop, because the morning focus and the detailed information presented about research on lesbian battering, while seen as comprehensive, took more time than anticipated. As a result, the presenters had less time to cover material about clinical applications, assessment and legal recourses. Importantly, this problem was largely address in the revised second workshop, although some workshop participants still hoped for a more clinical focus. The workshop facilitators have discussed another way to address the perceived lack of clinical depth noted by some respondents: offering an advanced workshop that would deal exclusively with clinical implications and interventions.

The workshop participants were enthusiastic about many components of the workshop including the handouts, group interactions and the facilitator's knowledge. Importantly, a number of those interviewed a month or so after the workshop noted ways that they were utilizing the information in their own work, sharing the concepts with colleagues or clients or applying the ideas in examining their agency policies and procedures. Some had recommended the workshop to colleagues and many provided suggestions about additional topic areas or ways to more broadly market the workshop.

In summary, the "Women Hurting Women" workshops were well received. As an initiative that addresses an under-acknowledged client population, the general format and model with a mix of didactic and experiential components proved effective in meeting the diverse learning style of program participants. The research respondents clearly endorsed the need to continue offering similar workshops and to expand the sessions to include more training in in-depth clinical and legal interventions.

RESOLVE Alberta

RESOLVE (Research and Education for Solutions to Violence and Abuse) is a tri-provincial prairie research institute on family violence and abuse with offices in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. RESOLVE grew out of the University of Manitoba Centre on Family Violence and Violence against Women that was funded in 1992 for a five-year period by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) and Health Canada. In 1997, with assistance from the Honourable Senator Sharon Carstairs, the Manitoba Research Centre began exploring ways to secure long-term funding. Community agency representatives and academics from Alberta and Saskatchewan joined forces with Manitoba to create a tri-provincial research institute on family violence. Importantly, a provincial Steering Community composed of community and university representatives supports each RESOLVE office. The Steering Committees meet four to five times a year and, through involvement in these meetings and sub-committees, are essential components in guiding the activities of RESOLVE. Since August 1999, Leslie Tutty has been the Academic Research Co-ordinator, and Kendra Nixon, the Community Research Development Co-ordinator.

APPENDIX I

Table I: Responses to Workshop Evaluation Questionnaire (N=37)

QUESTION	RESPONSE FREQUENCIES				
1. Overall, how would you rate the training?	Poor: 5.6%	Fair: 2.8%	Good: 11.1%	Very Good: 55.6%	Excellent: 25.0%
2. How has taking this training increased your understanding of:	No Increase:	Minimally Increased:	Somewhat Increased	Increased:	Significantly Increased:
<i>Homophobia?</i>	2.9%	14.3%	20.0%	48.6%	14.3%
<i>Heterosexism?</i>		11.8%	23.5%	32.4	32.4%
<i>Abuse in Lesbian/Bisexual Relationships</i>		2.9%	5.7%	42.9%	48.6%
3. Did the training meet your needs...	None of needs met	Few needs met	Some needs met	Most needs met	All needs met
<i>Homophobia?</i>	2.9%		8.6%	37.1%	51.4%
<i>Heterosexism?</i>	2.9%		8.6%	37.1%	51.4%
<i>Abuse in Lesbian/Bisexual Relationships</i>	5.6%			50.0%	44.4%
4. To what extent did training provide knowledge/skills which will have practical application for your work?	Not at all Practical 0%	Slightly Practical 2.9%	Fairly Practical 25.7	Very Practical 42.9%	Extremely Practical 28.6%
5. How would you rate the following...?	Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Exceptional
<i>Facilitators' knowledge?</i>				10.8%	89.2%
<i>Method of Presentation?</i>			8.3%	30.6%	61.1%
<i>Style of Presentation?</i>			2.7%	35.1%	62.2%
<i>Workshop Venue?</i>				25.7%	74.3%