

## **Workshops**

I try to structure workshops in such a way that participants have an opportunity early on to identify their questions and to share their knowledge (regarding whatever the workshop content might be). I also recognize that people come to workshops wanting to learn more, or to affirm their understandings of a particular topic. Sometimes these understandings are challenged in productive ways.

The general framework of workshops facilitated for this project are described below. In addition workshops detailed here, I co-facilitated an extended workshop for adult educators with Anson Green and Monica Rios at COABE 2000 (Chicago, March, 2000) and am in the process of facilitating a year long series of workshops with staff of the Women's Center of Rhode Island. These workshops are designed to bring issues of literacy to light in terms of the advocacy and case management work Center staff undertake with victims of domestic abuse. In addition to forthcoming workshops explicitly addressing violence and learning, I know that impacts of trauma will be part of any professional development work I facilitate as part of a larger process of breaking silences and placing violence and its impacts on the screen.

When I've begun workshops about violence and learning with adult educators, I've asked them to think about whatever it was they had to do that day to get themselves to work – bring kids to school, take public transportation, maybe deal with a stalled engine, a missed connection, problems with child care providers, inclement weather, whatever. I've asked them to think of times they sat in meetings worried about getting a parking ticket, about the health of a parent or child, a deadline, a lost phone number – any number of common stressors and distractions that affect people on a daily basis. Working from this point, I've then asked people in workshops to consider the effects of childhood sexual abuse, or political torture, or the stress of living within an abusive relationship, or worries about family members in other countries in trying to understand how great a challenge learners can face in trying to stay present to learning.

Content of individual workshops varies according to the needs and interests of the groups with whom I'm working. Generally, they include an overview of violence and its impacts on learning, reference to Jenny Horsman's work, ways in which others are taking up her findings and specific focuses on the groups with whom workshop participants interact. Outlines and handouts of workshops I've presented are included here for others to consider, adapt and expand.

I have used the information on page 2, in overhead form and as a handout, to open workshops, and initiate discussion among educators. The questions on the sheet may or may not be relevant to the group but are useful to fall back on in if people are initially reticent about speaking. Both citations included on the sheet are taken from Too Scared to Learn. The handout raises issues that I plan to cover within the workshop, but also enables me, through initial discussion with workshop participants, to gain a sense of what they know, what they want to know and what next steps we might try to establish. In Rhode Island, I've used the handout/overhead on page 3 as a way to broaden the focus from domestic abuse and violence against women towards community health and wellness, thereby opening the possibility for mixed-gender workshops that enable women who need to learn about resources the safety through which to hear more general information, and then follow up with resources for specific issues. After one such workshop with students at the International Institute of Rhode Island, I was gathering up materials slowly, getting ready to leave. One woman did come to me, disclosing her need for help with resources, and spoke, briefly about what she'd already done towards her own safety plan.

Page 4 includes responses to disclosures to violence. These are not prescriptive suggestions, but are derived from training materials developed by domestic violence workers, and could also serve as a starting point for a discussion amongst educators about what they themselves are and aren't able to hear and support and ways they might find appropriate resources for women and men needing assistance around issues of violence.

The information within the workshops detailed here provide first steps, but should not be undertaken without follow up contingencies – access to resource people who can be reached without long waits, checks that the contact information is still current, etc. Building in time to discuss next steps and concrete actions is tremendously important. Facilitating a workshop without providing resources, materials or other follow up strategies is worse than doing nothing at all.

... all teachers deal with violence in their work because violence is an issue for everyone in this culture. For many people, a teacher is the only outside person they can talk with. I think of a good friend ... who teaches in a community college. In any typical week, he hears stories such as these: a student misses classes because she was assaulted by her relative at a wedding; a male student misses weeks of classes because of a violence beating outside a bar by strangers; a young woman is always on edge because she has been stalked for a long time by an ex-partner; another student doesn't finish his assignment because he spent days in court with his father.... My reason for stressing [this] is that I often hear people speak of the poor in terms of the violent, disruptive lives they lead – as if domestic assault and sexual abuse were issues only pertaining to them not “us.”

*(Alphaplus Literacy and Violence online seminar, 1998, cited in Too Scared to Learn: Women, Violence and Education by Jenny Horsman, 1999, pp 28-29).*

What happens usually is that students will come and talk to me, so there's usually an increase in disclosures after a classroom discussion or lecture dealing with a topic such as colonization, structural violence, patriarchy, etc. I'm not a counsellor. I can listen and I can suggest where people can go for help, but beyond that I can't counsel. I often end up wondering how I can best deal with this.

*(cited in Too Scared to Learn: Women, Violence and Education by Jenny Horsman, 1999, p 29).*

- 1) Do either or both of these vignettes feel familiar to you?
- 2) What have you done when issues of violence have been raised in your class?
- 3) What information did you have? what information/resources did you wish you'd have had?
- 4) How might you respond to disclosures of or discussions about violence next time in your particular context?

**resources online**

[http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Swearer\\_Center/Literacy\\_Resources/proposal.html](http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Swearer_Center/Literacy_Resources/proposal.html)

[http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Swearer\\_Center/Literacy\\_Resources/screen.html](http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Swearer_Center/Literacy_Resources/screen.html)

<http://www.jennyhorsman.com>

[janet\\_issleris@brown.edu](mailto:janet_issleris@brown.edu)

Janet Issleris Literacy Resources/RI PO Box 1974 Brown University / Providence, RI 02912 USA  
(401) 863-2839

**resources for domestic violence assistance in case of emergency: 911**

**for women who are being abused**

- 1. for referrals (more information) within Rhode Island 1-800 - 494-8100
  - 2. for the language line (people who speak languages other than English, call the Blackstone Valley Shelter: 723-3057
  - 3. for referrals [from other states - national hotline ] 24 hours a day: 1-800-799-7233  
Answered in English and Spanish; AT/T language line is also available
- internet: National Domestic Violence Hotline <http://www.ndvh.org/>

**men who batter/hurt women**

New England Batters' Intervention Program - 461-6979  
(Spanish, Cambodian, Laotian, Portuguese, and English) 807 Broad Street  
Registration \$20; first 10 classes \$10, last 10 are \$15.

**Law enforcement advocates for domestic violence and sexual assaults**

in Cranston.	Jessica Ayers	942-2211 ext. 5098
in Warren, Barrington and Bristol.	Renée Belmore	245-3727
in Warwick	Jessica Warwick	468-4372
in Woonsocket, Smithfield, North Smithfield and Burrillville	Mikel Nicolo	766-3628

in Providence, call 272-3121,  
ask for the domestic violence unit; call about a complaint, to report an assault,  
or [verbal] threat – anything that puts you in fear - ( of a boyfriend, roommate,  
husband or other person living with you)  
If the people on the phone understand your language, they will contact the language line  
[Police say they don't check the immigration status of the complainant - the person who makes the complaint]

**To report abuse of children: 1-800-RI-CHILD [1(800) 742-4453]**

[find someone who can help you speak English - there are not always people who speak other languages on that line]

**general health referral information**

Providence Community Health Centers, Inc. 444-0400

Take more insurance and Rite care; have people who speak Spanish, Cambodian and Laotian.

***The following suggestions are offered in terms of their relative usefulness in discussing trauma and learning***

[online at [http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Swearer\\_Center/Literacy\\_Resources/help.html](http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Swearer_Center/Literacy_Resources/help.html)]

**to avoid**

don't address violence without reliable resources / referrals

[need for research]

avoid 'knowing it all,'

don't assume someone else can or should do what you might do

avoid 'doing for'

don't require people to share

teachers are not counselors; don't take on a counseling role

avoid judgements; don't blame the victim

avoid simplistic answers

don't store journals where others might read them

***messages that blame or discourage victims***

Did you try to stop the abuse?

What did you do to provoke it?

Why don't you just leave?

That happened a while ago, why are you still talking about it?

Can't you just forget about it? You need to get on with your life.

**more helpful things to do**

find reliable counseling referrals prior to addressing violence

[investigate possibilities, invite speakers]

build connections/relationships with community providers

listen well

work with learners to develop advocacy skills

work with people to create safe spaces / ground rules for those who wish to share

provide good referral information as appropriate

respect others' rights to make their own decisions, while providing information/ increasing awareness about options

be realistic about difficulties and possibilities (hopeful survival stories)

respect privacy; assist in developing safety plans as needed and providing safe storage spaces/strategies

***important messages to receive***

I believe you

It's not your fault

I'm interested in hearing more.

How can we make our classroom feel safe?

I'm interested in helping you understand how your experiences affect your learning.

### **Reading for practitioners/for discussion/contemplation:**

This vignette, from the Victims Services/Travelers Aid web site, might be useful to teachers/case workers as a way into a broader consideration of violence and its effects on immigrant women, as part of a larger process of examining impacts of violence on learning.

### **Sally's Story**

When Sally C. called the Travelers Aid office at John F. Kennedy International airport, she was sobbing. It took the Travelers Aid counselor several minutes to calm Sally down enough so that she could explain what was wrong. Apparently, Sally had two small children arriving at J.F.K. on Saturday from Nigeria. Sally was calling from her sister's home in Houston. Her children had no one to contact in New York, no money, and no connecting tickets to Houston.

Sally and her family had been living in Nigeria for several years. When her husband became abusive, she told him she was returning to the U.S. But he wouldn't give her money to take her children with her, and Sally was forced to leave them behind. She moved in with her sister in Houston, where she planned to get a job and send for the children.

Meanwhile, Sally's husband had changed his mind. He'd just called to say the children would arrive at JFK on Saturday - with only Nigerian currency. When Sally called Travelers Aid, she was desperately trying to raise money for plane tickets so the boys could fly from New York to Houston. But she was terrified of the thought of her sons stranded and vulnerable in New York City.

The Travelers Aid counselor arranged to meet the children when they arrived at JFK. She then alerted the Houston Travelers Aid office to Sally's situation, so that Sally would be able to get help locally as well. Sally raised \$100 for plane fare; Travelers Aid made up the balance for discounted tickets. A Travelers Aid counselor was there to greet Sally's children when they arrived at JFK, and to make sure they made their connecting flight to Houston.

#### ***guiding questions:***

- 1) would this be a useful reading for you/your learners?
- 2) could you find comparable resources in your area?
- 3) would you use this reading with your learners? how? what follow-up would be useful in your context?

*[Victims' Services/Travelers' Aid : We help travelers, immigrants and the homeless In 1998 7 counselors answered 53,528 calls in 10 languages on our NY Immigration Hotline.  
<http://www.victimservices.org/travhp.html> ]*

## **Workshops at the International Institute of Rhode Island**

The following describes the process through which I developed workshops for staff at the International Institute of Rhode Island, a not for profit agency in Providence providing both English language and social services for immigrant and refugee adults. I met initially with interested Institute staff to learn about their questions and concerns around issues of violence in order to plan a workshop for that group. I share the process so that others wanting to do similar work may gain a sense of the process of learning about what participants in workshops might already know, need and want to know and in demonstrating one way in which a partnership can be strengthened over time through listening, sending written feedback and developing content to meet the interests and needs of a particular group.

After having been asked by Nazneen Rahman, a fellowship participant, to meet with staff of her agency, I met with nine members of the 40 plus social service and educational staff of that agency in order to learn about their concerns and existing knowledge around issues of domestic violence. Two months later, I facilitated a workshop for twelve members of IIRI's staff – teachers and social service workers.

Following the first meeting, I sent these notes to staff, in order to remind them of our discussion as well as to be sure that I'd not missed or misconstrued anyone's comments or concerns.

### ***Notes from meeting, February 9, 2000***

Trauma can be very broadly defined and encompassing. Many adult ESOL learners and practitioners have encountered trauma of a political and/or personal/domestic nature. All of us have experienced some sort of trauma in our lifetimes - the loss of a loved one, surviving a serious accident, experiences of violence, etc. While trauma affects different people differently, access to support and healing systems also is significant in thinking about how people are more or less able to be 'present' (attentive) to learning. Teachers expressed a desire to assist learners, as well as a need to know what to do. "I want to help, but I don't know how."

There is a need for:

- raised staff awareness, across educational and social service divisions, about the prevalence and impacts of trauma on adults
- legal definitions - what does or doesn't constitute legal parameters of domestic abuse?

What legal rights are available to someone whose immigration status is reliant upon an abusive spouse? (can a woman lose her status, for example, if she leaves her husband and loses financial resources and/or opportunities to gain a green card?)

- information about consequences of violence - legal, emotional, affective, in terms of learning.

How to recognize impacts of trauma on learners?

What resources are available to learners/clients and staff?

What **educational** resources are available for integration into classroom (and case?) work?

There is a **perception** that certain cultures propagate a tacit acceptance of machismo and the behaviors associated with being a man in those cultures. "It's private, it's in my house - no one can help/ no one can interfere" **Shaming** is culturally imposed - in many cultures. It's shameful to talk about being a victim of abuse. You also raised these issues:

- broad definitions of violence and trauma - how to understand what constitutes trauma
- how to find out ways to identify people when it's obvious that some sort of abuse is interfering with learning. I don't know how to help. How to present general information about domestic violence resources in a mixed-gender class?
- what are the boundaries? What can/can't teachers do to help learners? Conscious decisions as teachers - how far do we want to go (boundaries)?

"I want to raise awareness at IIRI around domestic violence. Case counselor and teaching staff need to learn about resources and connect with learners/clients and other service providers."

- What to do once dv (domestic violence) has been identified? Other factors, causes? societal/families – what contributes to prevalence of dv?
- legal definition - “small acts” of violence, the perception that they’re not as serious as “big” ones; multigenerational households
- learning more about dv, large percentage of people who are seeking services/help around dv issues are also in need of access to adult education; transitioning out of relationships - there isn’t a lot of support for people transitioning into new processes (learning to live independently, working, finding child care, life changes, etc.).
- dv is common in Mexico/Latin countries *Machismo* makes it hard to tell what’s going on; men have power. How can I tell them (my students) that they have a right to protection, that being hurt by their husbands/partners isn’t legal. Without education, people think it’s ok, or they believe that nobody understands them.
- workshop for staff – what do we do? We need a speaker to tell students about laws, definitions, restraining orders, what happens once one enters the system, what’s the process.

POLICY - attendance and other policy issues need to be taken up within the agency; e.g. zero tolerance for violence onsite; flexible attendance policies for “family issues”, etc.

What constitutes violence, what happens to one’s risking one’s immigration status? Where do women go to speak /to get help in Spanish?

“It’s a problem that people don’t like to talk about, it’s a cultural problem. Try to avoid, shame of being judged. Mostly it happens at home, nobody knows, it’s a taboo.”

“It stays within the four walls. No thought of government protection within many immigrant/ refugee homes – it’s a “normal” part of my life”

There is a danger of knowing/asking “who” (is a victim) - rather than learning ways to make classes safer for everyone.

***What to do? Next steps?***

It seems that the group has agreed it would like to have access to information about dv for themselves as a staff, first, in order to learn what information to then pass along to students/clients.

- opening up one way or another for students posing themes, to see what they know about violence, generally, or dv, specifically - what to do once that happens and someone discloses?
- tie to existing minority health work

**Janet's suggestions:**

Educational staff should meet with social service staff to see what interest they have in exploring in service help around dv. It's possible that social service folks have some awareness, knowledge experience and/or community contacts already.

IIRI educational and/or social service staff need to identify some times that they'd like to have this first workshop (most likely with staff of the Women's Center, and/or with Janet and other dv trainers). Staff needs to consider how you each - separately and collectively - do or don't want to take on dv or violence generally within your classes. I'm available to assist you in these decisions and/or in facilitating discussions with students, as best meets your needs.

**Workshop: April 24**

Based on the information gathered from that first meeting, a workshop was held for IIRI caseworkers and teachers. I began by framing the kinds of stress one might experience during a 'normal' day. What happened to you today just getting to work? What energy have you needed to expend to stay focused on your work? What must that be like for someone dealing with stressors of everyday life as well as/in addition to those they experience as a victim of battering?

As a way of assessing what people knew about violence itself, I distributed a quiz, available online at the Family Violence Prevention Fund web site. I explained that the quiz would help us think about working with learners and others to get a sense of where people's knowledge lies, and also might be useful to adapt for classroom work.

## **Family Violence Prevention Fund**

<http://www.fvpf.org/quiz/q1.html>

### **1. Domestic violence is:**

- A. assaultive behavior between people who are intimate.
- B. found only in certain races and classes.
- C. caused by alcohol abuse.
- D. all of the above.

### **2. Relationships in which domestic violence may occur include:**

- A. people who are currently dating.
- B. people who have dated.
- C. people who are living together but are not married.
- D. gay and lesbian relationships.
- E. married couples.
- F. former spouses.
- G. all of the above.

### **3. Batterers are:**

- A. found in all races and classes.
- B. mostly unemployed.
- C. mostly employed in low-paying jobs.
- D. mostly employed in high-paying jobs.

### **4. What percentage of American women say they have been physically abused by a husband or boyfriend at some point in their lives?**

- A.10% B.14% C.26% D.45% E.58%

### **5. According to a recent public opinion poll, what percentage of Americans feel that men sometimes physically abuse women because they are stressed out or drunk?**

- A. 7 percent B. 16 percent C. 31 percent
- D. 46 percent E. 68 percent F. 80 percent

### **6. The total health care cost of family violence annually is estimated to be in the:**

- A. Hundreds of thousands of dollars.
- B. Millions of dollars.
- C. Tens of millions of dollars.
- D. Hundreds of millions of dollars.

### **7. If an employee discloses abuse to a supervisor, the supervisor should:**

- A. Make sure the employee knows personal problems should be handled during non-working hours.
- B. Refer the employee to the Employee Assistance Program, security and other company and community resources.
- C. Call the police.
- D. Notify her co-workers of the problem so they can be sensitive to it.
- E. All of the above.

**8 A survey of women veterans found that:**

- A. one in four of them under the age of 50 had been physically abused by a partner within the past year.
- B.31% of those who had suffered domestic violence in the past year said they had been forced to have sex without their consent.
- C.90 % of the women under age 50 reported that they had been sexually harassed while serving the military.
- D. "a" and "c" above
- E. all of the above

**9. Which national publication has carried a major story about domestic violence?**

- A. People
- B .Sports Illustrated
- C .Emerge
- D. Men's Fitness Magazine
- E. "a" and "c" above
- F. all of the above

**10. In how many states are there coalitions working to end domestic violence?**

- A.19
- B.28
- C.37
- D.e very state

**11. If you know someone who is a victim, you should:**

- A. demand that she leave the relationship if she is still in it.
- B. tell her what you would do if you were in her situation.
- C. let her know that you care about her, that no one deserves to be abused and that help is available.
- D. all of the above.

**12. If a victim who returns to a batterer or stays in an abusive relationship:**

- A. She cannot be helped.
- B. She initially exaggerated the severity of the abusive situation.
- C. She may be conflicted by financial and childcare responsibilities.
- D. The authorities should be alerted immediately.

**13. You can help stop the epidemic of domestic violence by:**

- A. becoming informed about the issue.
- B. offering support to victims you know.
- C. volunteering at your local domestic violence program.
- D. talking to your doctor about her or his procedures for handling domestic violence victims.
- E. organizing a presentation on domestic violence for your religious, civic or political group.
- F. speaking out when jokes are made about violence against women.
- G. donating money to organizations working to end domestic violence.
- H. all of the above.

## **Answers**

---

### **1. Domestic violence is: *A. assaultive behavior between people who are intimate.***

Domestic violence is not an isolated, individual event but rather a pattern of repeated behaviors that the perpetrator uses to gain power and control over the victim. Unlike stranger-to-stranger violence, in domestic violence situations the same perpetrator repeatedly assaults the same victim. These assaults are often in the form of physical injury but may also be in the form of sexual assault, threats, isolation, emotional mistreatment or economic control. Domestic violence tends to become more frequent and severe over time. Oftentimes the perpetrator is physically violent infrequently, but uses other controlling tactics on a daily basis. All tactics have profound effects on the victims.

### **2. Relationships in which domestic violence may occur include: *G. all of the above.***

Domestic violence is found in all types of intimate relationships whether the parties are of the same or opposite sex, are married or dating, or are in a current or past intimate relationship. There are two essential elements in every domestic violence situation: the victim and perpetrator have been intimately involved at some point in time, and the perpetrator consciously chooses to use violence and other abusive tactics to gain control over the victim. In some instances, the abuser may be female while the victim is male; domestic violence also occurs in gay and lesbian relationships. However, the U.S. Department of Justice estimates that 95 percent of reported assaults on spouses or ex-spouses are committed by men against women.

### **3. Batterers are: *A. found in all races and classes.***

Perpetrators of domestic violence can be found in all age, racial, ethnic, cultural, socio-economic, linguistic, educational, occupational and religious groups. Researchers and service providers have found, however, that economic and social factors can have a significant impact on how people respond to violent incidents and what kind of help they seek. Affluent people can afford and usually seek private help - doctors, lawyers and counselors - while people with fewer financial resources (i.e., those who are low-income or from communities of color) tend to call the police or other public agencies. These agencies are often the only available source of statistics on domestic violence. Consequently, low-income people and communities of color tend to be overrepresented in those figures, thereby creating a distorted image of who suffers from and who perpetrates the problem.

**4. What percentage of American women say they have been physically abused by a husband or boyfriend at some point in their lives? C.26%**

It is a terrible and recognizable fact that for many people, home is the least safe place. Domestic violence is real violence, often resulting in permanent injuries or death. Battering is a widespread societal problem with consequences reaching far beyond individual families. It is conduct that has devastating effects for individual victims, their children and their communities. In addition to these immediate effects, there is growing evidence that violence within the family becomes the breeding ground for other social problems such as substance abuse, juvenile delinquency, and violent crimes of all types.

**5. According to a recent public opinion poll, what percentage of Americans feel that men sometimes physically abuse women because they are stressed out or drunk? D.46 percent**

Despite the fact that awareness about domestic violence is higher than ever before, many people still make excuses for the abuser's actions. No one makes another person act violently; it is a conscious choice. Domestic violence is not caused by alcohol, drugs, stress, the victim's failure to be a better partner or her nagging. Many people who have alcohol and/or drug abuse problems are not violent; similarly, many batterers are not substance abusers. Everyone experiences stress at some time - frustrations associated with money and work, our families and other personal relationships - and everyone responds to it differently. Learning how to handle stress constructively is the responsibility of the perpetrator. Even if a violent incident is preceded by a heated verbal argument, nothing - neither words nor actions - justifies violence against a person, except in cases of self-defense.

**6. The total health care cost of family violence annually is estimated to be in the:  
D. Hundreds of millions of dollars.**

The total health care costs of family violence are estimated in the hundreds of millions each year, much of which is paid for by employers. But greater costs to society are immeasurable: on the victims of abuse, who suffer physical and psychological trauma at the hands of the people who promised to love them; on the children, whose scars from witnessing abuse can last a lifetime; on the health care system, where domestic violence is a leading cause of injury to women; on the courts, burdened with the challenge of administering justice for a crime that affects millions of women every year; and on all of us in society who are personally affected by abuse, whether it is ourselves or a loved one.

**7. If an employee discloses abuse to a supervisor, the supervisor should:**

***B .Refer the employee to the Employee Assistance Program, security and other company and community resources.***

According to a recent survey, a large majority of Employee Assistance Program providers have dealt with specific partner abuse situations in the past year, including an employee with a restraining order (83%) or an employee being stalked at work by a current or former partner (71%). Does your work-lace have a counseling staff trained in domestic violence? At the very least, an employer should be able to provide referrals to service providers in the area who specialize in domestic violence. Security can take critical steps to improve the safety of an employee at work: relocating a victim's workspace to a safer location in the office, providing escorts to parked cars, installing extra lighting in the park-ing lot, and offering priority parking near the building for employees who fear an attack at work.

**8. A survey of women veterans found that: *E. all of the above***

Domestic violence, like other social problems, is found in all sectors of our society, including the military. It is a sad and ironic fact that many women veterans feel unsafe and threatened within the very institution that works to ensure American security.

**9. Which national publication has carried a major story about domestic violence?**

***E all of the above***

By shining a spotlight on domestic violence, the media are playing a critical role in heightening awareness about violence in the home and encouraging people to take action. The issue is not new to magazines targeting women, but today even mainstream publications and men's magazines are publishing insightful articles about spousal abuse. This media attention, along with other public education efforts, is helping to create a social climate in which domestic violence is unacceptable.

**10. In how many states are there coalitions working to end domestic violence? *D.every state***

While there has recently been widespread discussion about domestic violence, advocates have been working to provide support and shelter to battered women and increase public understanding about spousal abuse for more than two decades. Thanks to the tireless efforts of domestic violence advocates, today coalitions of agencies and organizations committed to

ending domestic violence can be found in each of the 50 states. These coalitions provide technical assistance, training and legislative advocacy for local domestic violence programs.

**11. If you know someone who is a victim, you should:**

***C. Let her know that you care about her, that no one deserves to be abused and that help is available.***

It takes a tremendous amount of courage for victims of domestic violence to seek help. If you know someone who is being abused, offer her support and assistance. Begin by expressing concern for her well-being and, if she is a mother, for the well-being of her children. It is also important for you to convey to her: that she is not alone as millions of women just like her are suffering from abuse, that the abuse and violence she endures is not her fault, that domestic violence is against the law, and, perhaps most importantly, that help is available.

**12. If a victim who returns to a batterer or stays in an abusive relationship:**

***C. She may be conflicted by financial and childcare responsibilities.***

Sometimes it can feel frustrating when a friend or family member remains in an abusive relationship despite your efforts to help. It is important to understand that there are many reasons behind her decision to stay in the relationship. In many cases, the victim fears for her life. She may also want her children to grow up with both parents, or feel guilty, believing the abuser's excuses that the violence is her fault. The victim's self-esteem may be so damaged by the abuse that she thinks she can't make it on her own, emotionally or financially. Just like ending any relationship is a process, leaving an abusive relationship takes time. Be patient and understanding.

**13. You can help stop the epidemic of domestic violence by: *H. All of the above.***

People at all levels of society are beginning to ask themselves what they can do to help end domestic violence. Each of us, in our own small way, can offer support to victims and help change societal attitudes that approve or condone domestic violence. If we fail to reach out, sooner or later the violence will spill over into our lives, affecting our own families. The violence in our homes contributes to violence on our streets. It fills our emergency rooms and morgues. It tears apart families and communities. While its scope can seem overwhelming, the truth is that domestic violence is a solvable problem. Together we can ensure that domestic violence is never tolerated, never excused.

Our discussion of the quiz led to a question from one teacher who had heard a psychologist on the Oprah Winfrey show who had stated that women 'permit' a certain amount of verbal abuse. We spoke of the need to challenge the question, "Why does she stay?" by turning the question on its head and asking "Why does he hit her?"

We examined and discussed the power and control wheel and the battered immigrant woman power and control wheel – looking at ways in which cycles of violence play out and at the dynamics of violence itself. Women know the cycle of violence well, and need to be supported in whatever decisions they make. They need to be aware of the fact that for most women (and men) in abusive relationships, the period of greatest danger is upon or after actually leaving the abuser

Participants at the workshop also wanted to know about how to deal with disclosure. We reviewed a range of responses (below) and also discussed the need to deal with self care while working in helping roles. We spoke of the importance of establishing boundaries, of not succumbing to the temptation of rescuing a victim from an abusive situation, and touched on the topics listed below.

### **safety**

- translation - not having kids or other community members act as translators to women reporting violence to police, social service workers or medical personnel
- not calling, leaving messages for a woman that could cause problems for her with her abusive partner
- duplicating/holding important documents, keys – reminding women that part of a safety plan includes having access to necessary papers and keys, phone numbers, etc. when she becomes ready to leave an abusive relationship. (see for example, part of the basic violence page online at

*[http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Swearer\\_Center/Literacy\\_Resources/violence.html](http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Swearer_Center/Literacy_Resources/violence.html)*

Safety Plans *<http://www.wrcsc.org/SafetyPlan.htm#Top>*

General information about safety planning (followed by region specific resource information) is also online at *<http://www.stoptheviolence.org/plan.htm>*

Leaving an abusive relationship is difficult. Sometimes a person can be in more danger after leaving a relationship than before leaving. Read about how to plan for your own safety if you decide to leave.

Making informed decisions - Nazneen: men and women should hear general information about domestic violence and victims of crimes services, which is the approach through which I frame the workshop for learners described below.

***Mandatory reporting laws re abuse, suspected abuse of children***

- stopping silence/stigma around violence – it's not OK

Participants agreed that a first step would be to arrange workshops for students at IIRI, and offering further smaller group workshops and/or speakers in individual classrooms to interested learners following those larger sessions. I subsequently facilitated three workshops at IIRI for ESOL students, (one of these workshops was facilitated with the assistance of two workers from the Women's Center), trying to address not only issues of abuse and available assistance, but also issues particular to women and men in refugee and immigrant communities. All three workshops were attended by mixed gender groups of adult learners; in every instance at least one man asked about women's violence against men. Issues that are relevant to anyone confronting domestic violence, include shame and embarrassment. In immigrant communities, I was told again and again, notions of men and women's roles, and of *machismo* cloud the issue even further. In framing my workshops for students I was careful to not impose my own views of how men and women should interact, but rather to state very explicitly what the laws of the state indicate constitute criminal actions. Framing the issue as one of community well being, as well as a legal concern helped me in both sharing information and inviting learners to pose questions in a non-threatening a manner. Commercial films could also serve as 'codes' (in a problem-posing sense) within a process of beginning conversations about violence with adult learners in mixed-gender groupings, again with support – resources, information, materials – made available after the screenings/discussions. In many instances, support should include a counselor on site, or referral information to appropriate and available counseling resources in the area.

In June, Elizabeth Morrish, Project Coordinator, Women, Violence and Adult Education Project, World Education and I co-facilitated a workshop at the Adult Literacy Resource Institute in Boston, for a mixed-gender group of educators. We designed the workshop to assess participants' knowledge of the issue and to try to build ways for those participants to plan for next steps that they could implement, with or without our assistance. Our outline for the workshop follows:

### **Violence and learning - surfacing the issues**

Participants are invited to share their questions, concerns and experience with considering and confronting violence and its effects on adults' learning. The facilitators will provide an overview of their own and others' work on issues of trauma and learning and will share resources relevant to violence and learning in adult education contexts. We will work with participants to identify specific next steps that may be taken within programs to address issues of trauma and learning, and possibly schedule a follow up workshop as interest indicates.

#### **introduction** *Who we are, why we're here*

**quiet reflection** silent writing, share with neighbor - burning question?

**what is violence** brainstorm - kinds of

**what do we mean when we say violence?** how violence impacts on us

Using select materials, asking participants to decide if they would use these materials (student stories, handouts from conferences, flyers about violence, photos, graphic images) with learners and/or colleagues, and in what ways?

[Elizabeth and her colleagues, Jenny Horsman and Judy Hofer, the training team for the World Education Women, Violence and Adult Education project, developed a wonderful exercise for that project's trainings (at which I have been a participant). They gathered materials and developed packets related to five categories of violence, those related to state, public (rape), domestic, workplace and childhood violence and asked participants to develop a poster using the materials enclosed in their particular packets. Combining writings and visual images within each packet, the training team provided a range of views relative to each sort of

violence; participants chose what to emphasize, how to present the information visually and how to talk about their choices to the group. The team modeled a wonderful process that could be replicated in classrooms and other workshops].

**power and control wheel** - using it as a tool to analyze violence

Talking about the headings in each section of the wheel, ways in which it has been adapted for various purposes and its potential as a teaching tool for learners and colleagues.

**newsprint** sharing questions, observations things I know about violence and learning.

What evidence - seen, heard, sensed that tells you that violence affects students lives /learning?

What actions have you taken to address issues of violence and create a learning environment that takes this into account [or would like to do] ?

What supports and/or hinders you in this work?

say what we know: synthesis of research

summarize Jenny's notes - brief outline: web site, book

summary of her talk, focus on issues such as presence and attendance,  
asking participants to give examples of how they observe these phenomenon in their contexts

***lists of resources***

***next steps: What will people do?***

Participants brought a range of previous knowledge and ongoing concerns to the workshop. Elizabeth incorporated breathing and an awareness of the body to the session that I had not included before. Participants' responses/evaluations were generally positive. Following the workshop, I sent email to all participants, giving them one another's email addresses in response to their request to be able to connect to one another. There was little feedback to me directly about the workshop beyond that session. David Rosen, the agency's director did, however, set an interesting precedent in asking participants about ways that they felt the ALRI could work on next steps with them and provide support to them in continuing to explore the issue.

The information on these two pages reflects the content of informal sessions I facilitated with state child protection workers as part of my effort to learn more about the systems which interact with adult learners and to reach out to workers in other fields to heighten their awareness of impacts of literacy itself on their clients' ability to advocate for themselves, to complete paper work, to understand the literacy of systems themselves. I was also interested in this discussion because educators often hear one side of the story, the one in which a parent has been investigated or lost a child to the state. Often there is the feeling of an adversarial relationship; I was hoping to try to learn more about the realities of the case workers' jobs as part of this exchange. Two more sessions are yet to be planned for the remaining regions in the state.

### **LITERACY AND CASEWORK: *WHAT'S THE CONNECTION?***

#### *A brown bag lunch presentation*

Print, and literacy itself, is often invisible to those of us who read and write routinely for information or for pleasure. Many Rhode Island families, however, feel challenged as they try to make sense of forms and documents. Add to this the stress of the circumstances of our involvement with some of them, and family members with these issues are easily overwhelmed.

This informal presentation will be brought to your region during the lunch hour, so bring your own lunch. The presenter asks that you bring questions, concerns and observations regarding clients and literacy. She will provide those who attend with information, such as referrals and non-threatening approaches to deal with clients.

*Presenter: Janet Isserlis has worked with adult ESOL (English to Speakers of Other Languages) and literacy students since 1980. She is currently the project director of Literacy Resources/RI, the state's adult education resource center.*

The two small groups of child protective workers with whom I met were most interested in program directories for area adult education programs. Both groups entered into discussions about the ways in which literacy is a factor for their clients, with varied degrees of evident understanding about the impact that literacy has on the lives of the adults and children whose lives the state suddenly controls in substantive ways. This is some of the information I distributed to the workers, as well as questions/ prompts for discussions. Of the ten workers who attended, three have asked to be added to the mailing list for LR/RI's bulletin. A couple have phoned for additional referral information. No one has called to suggest that they come speak to adult educators. They couldn't. They're far too overburdened with case work.

## **Adult literacy**

*"... literacy is more than just being able to read and write; it is the ability to comprehend, interpret, analyze, respond, and interact with the growing variety of complex sources of information."*

*[Multiplicities of literacies in the 1990s, by Roger Sensenbaugh. ERIC Digest  
[http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC\\_Digests/ed320138.html](http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests/ed320138.html) ]*

How is literacy a part of your interactions with clients?

What reading and writing do you need to do every day for your work?

What reading and writing do you do beyond the workplace?  
[What reading/writing do you choose to do? do you enjoy?  
do you have to do?]

When / are clients asked to complete paperwork?

With what kinds of forms and documents do they interact?

How does DCYF communicate with clients - phone, letter, home visits other means?

Where are places in your interactions with clients where literacy is required?

Are there challenges in literacy-related interactions with clients?  
If so, how can these interactions occur more smoothly?

-

home visits: print scan, safety scan?

- available literacy resources for adults in RI

- getting information to clients

- interaction with other service providers  
(departments, community-based agencies)

- plain language

- other questions/issues

*Janet Isserlis Literacy Resources/ RI PO Box 1974, Brown University, Providence, RI 02912*

*863-2839; janet\_isserlis@brown.edu*

*[http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Swearer\\_Center/Literacy\\_Resources/](http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Swearer_Center/Literacy_Resources/)*

## **on the screen - paper presented at TESOL 2000 Vancouver, 15 March, 2000**

*This paper was disseminated online following a workshop facilitated at TESOL 2000. I found it difficult at that time to 'present' findings that I was still trying to understand myself, but also felt it important to provide participants with some background information and progress indicators of the work. I shared some of this information during the workshop, and made the URL available through the On the Screen site.*

---

### **Nancy Fritz : 1 March 2000**

#### *Images of water from this week*

*a student describes his family crossing the Mekong River tied together with rope - This in response to the question "Can you swim?" another student tells her teacher her "boyfriend" tried to drown her*

*Our students have so much in their heads – How can they go on? 7 months pregnant by a man who raped her - sitting in Math class trying to understand fractions.*

*Maria - her husband wants to kill himself - but she still comes to class K - sent away from her parents at age 11 - mother starved to death in Cambodia.*

Nancy's writing resonates with many of us; experiences we've been told about by adult refugee and immigrant learners, by adult learners who have experienced abuse in one form or another. This writing emerged from a session that Brett Simmons, an art therapist working with a group of practitioners in Rhode Island, facilitated. Brett helped us work with visual images in a way that was not threatening, that enabled us to reflect upon our own reactions to trauma and learning – or not. In short, she modeling a reflection process for us as practitioners that could also be replicated as part of a larger language learning process with learners.

On the Screen, the project through which Brett, Nancy and others have come together to examine the effects of trauma on learning, is a one year fellowship project sponsored by the National Institute for Literacy with support from the Swearer Center for Public Service at Brown University. This paper was given, in modified form, at TESOL 2000, Vancouver, March 15, 2000.

Traumatic events overwhelm the ordinary systems of care that give people a sense of control, connection and meaning [p.33] Trauma and Recovery, Judith Herman

## **introduction**

*my purpose today is to work with you to:*

- identify/question our assumptions about violence
- challenge ideas that form and reinforce the status quo regarding violence
- explore : our roles as agents of change - what we can do, can and hope to achieve; how to best inform and assist ourselves and our learners around issues of violence - present an overview of my work
- invite you to share ideas and envision steps/next steps.

On the Screen came about as a result of work to which I was exposed 6 years ago when collaborating with curriculum developers/literacy workers through a project of the Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women (CCLOW). Jenny Horsman's work, particularly, on violence and learning, catalysed for me process of dim recognition – I had heard those stories – and evolved into one of explicit naming – this is what it looks like when people are not present to learning and these might be reasons why they are unable to attend to the work we're trying to do in class; why some learners are unable to hear and participate and be fully part of a learning community, at best; or at the least, in less conducive settings, to be able to follow discussions, complete assignments, keep up with the work.

On the Screen came about because of the large numbers of adults in adult education contexts who have experienced abuse or trauma in one form or another and for whom learning poses serious challenges.

My work with adult ESOL learners had prepared me in some way to understand that trauma is a real part of everyday life for many adult immigrants and refugees, but I lacked the frame to step back and look at larger issues. The Refugee Mental Health project in the mid 80's gave me some idea that post traumatic stress was a contributing factor to people's difficulties in acclimating to the resettlement country and to participating in ESOL/literacy classes. I lacked, however, a keen grasp of what living with present abuse, past trauma or some combination of the two really meant. In large part it seemed self evident to me that if learners were able to trust the communities we tried to build in our classrooms, some of that sharing of pain would organically occur and barriers to learning would be lowered. We'd help one another, we'd listen, we'd understand. I came to realize a couple of things: one, that I've been unusually privileged in that I've been able to teach in relatively small groups, and have had

relatively stable groups of learners within those classes - two of several conditions necessary for the development of community in a learning context. The second realization is that trauma is not only an issue for “others” - for learners, for refugees, for immigrants. It is something that affects us all. While many adult learners are victims of trauma, not all trauma victims/survivors are adult learners.

In 1997, shortly after I began working as project director of the RI LRC, a colleague contacted me to see what, if anything, we might be able to do to pull practitioners together to work on women’s issues in literacy. For the next two years we met in a small group, a sharing/discussion group, of about 8 women (although the call for participation had been “for those educators interested in discussing women’s issues in literacy” – we’d never not invited men). I also continued to be connected to the work of CLOW, participating as a workshop facilitator to field test Making Connections, the curriculum we’d developed. Jenny Horsman continued her research, and as I read her findings and participated in an online discussion about her work it became increasingly urgent to me to consider and begin our own explorations of her work south of the border.

I hesitated to take on workshops with teachers, fearing I would do more harm than good in opening the discussion about violence and learning without some sort of counseling, without ‘real’ resources behind me. We did manage to sponsor a workshop for area teachers facilitated by a staff member of our local shelter late in 1988. 16 people attended. Jenny came to Providence to facilitate a workshop last spring for which 30 people had registered; in the event a massive snow storm meant that 10 showed up. Clearly there was – and is – interest - those practitioners to whom I’d spoken who’d thought “violence has nothing to do with me,” were at least open to understanding that there were things they could learn that would help them make their classrooms safer places.

Jenny’s online document, “But I’m not a therapist” resonated for many of us. This fellowship has come about from a need to explore more fully what it means to understand how trauma impacts upon learning while also recognizing that not only are we not therapists, but that many of us bring our own histories of trauma and abuse to this work. It has come about because classrooms need to be made safer for everyone and because adult literacy and ESOL workers need support in doing their work and acknowledgement of the stresses and difficulties as well as the moments of joy and clarity involved in that work. It’s about lowering barriers to learning, to presence. It’s about not “going away and healing” and then getting on with learning. It’s about explicit acknowledgment of the fact that learners and practitioners have much to learn through interaction with community collaborators – domestic violence

workers, health and mental health care providers and others with whom adult learners interact in communities. It's about helping those other providers, too, have a sense of the ways in which language and literacy impact upon people's ability to access and utilize available services in their communities. I'm hoping it's about cross-border work and about community development and about social change.

*So what does it look like?*

In September of last year, I posted a call for participation in the project to the RI adult education community. I asked people to commit to monthly meetings, some full day workshops and the development of some sort of inquiry project within their own contexts. Participants would be paid a stipend for their work, have conference fees paid and books / needed resource materials bought by the fellowship. We meet in our large group, to talk about our practice, we meet in smaller optional meetings with a trauma counsellor hired through the fellowship in order to ask questions, check our hunches, try to learn about appropriate responses, about what trauma might look like, about how we can safely help without ourselves taking on the role of counselors, rescuers or therapists.

We're meeting with and talking to Richard Hoffman, author of *Half the House*, a memoir detailing his own abuse as a child at the hands of a trusted adult.

Jenny is coming back to facilitate workshops with both our small group as well as with a larger group from the community to help us with our work. I'm tutoring a young woman in prison because the educator there has chosen not to participate in the project and I'm determined to at least make the needs – and strengths - of women in corrections education visible in whatever final report I submit. We're communicating through a listserv, archived on a shadow site, as well as disseminating resources through meeting with other programs not participating in the project, and through a website devoted entirely to resources informing our work.

I'm reading constantly.

In the event, our hour and half workshop went for two hours – and this solely to allow everyone in the circle to speak. They spoke to the prompt that Priscilla provided, a question about what they need to do the work they do t deal with issues of trauma in their practice. Their answers in some cases directly addressed the question Priscilla put forward. In other instances the opportunity to speak safely in a room of women – even though many of us were strangers to one another – modelled a powerful way in which listening and speaking in and of themselves can work to help people focus, be present, be part of a larger group.

I had an opportunity to speak with Priscilla and Jenny Horsman about a group that Jenny is now facilitating, exploring in practice the findings and analysis she brought to her research; incorporating spiritual, physical and emotional elements into her work with learners.

At a workshop in Chicago last week I saw nods of recognition when Monica Rios, a student of Anson Green (who has the other half of this fellowship) described her own and her friends' obstacles to changing abusive relationships in their own lives. Teachers to whom I've spoken in programs in Rhode Island voice the same concerns. What can we do?

There are days when I wonder what good any of this work will do. A practitioner in Chicago thanked me for remembering to acknowledge abuse within same sex couples. I had, however, neglected to explicitly mention the additional risk that women with disabilities face. I don't know that I was able to adequately address the ways that systemic violence is done by racism, ableism, homophobia, ageism, sexism and other forms of institutional oppression – all of which do violence to us in myriad ways and which must be named and addressed.

I am not here to provide a DV 101 workshop, per se. Having framed this work, having not asked for a workshop format because when I submitted this proposal I wasn't sure that the fellowship would have been funded and if not, how well I would be able to facilitate an entire workshop – I'd thought I'd share my work and synthesize that of others. The good news is that the fellowship came through. The challenge, though, remains – how can we see this work as I feel we must – as part of a larger process of social change? Judith Herman speaks to the ways in which survivors of trauma seek control, connection and meaning; in many ways language gives access to those very things. Finding the wherewithal to learn language in order to then use it to make meaning, to interact with others, is already some of what we try to help people do. How do we do this work ourselves? How do we express our outrage at the way violence in all its forms has been normalized around the world?

Part of the synthesis towards which I'm working, and part of the discussion and active work I hope we can now open up, has to do with assumptions about violence – who is/isn't affected by it, how or if we talk about violence in classes, what it means to be a victim or a perpetrator of violence, how we

unwittingly, perhaps, are complicit in perpetuating forms of systemic violence.

[definition] Any institutionalized practice or procedure that adversely impacts on disadvantaged individuals or groups by burdening them psychologically, mentally, culturally, spiritually, economically, or physically. It includes practices and procedures that prevent

students from learning, thus harming them. This may take the form of conventional policies and practices that foster a climate of violence, or policies and practices that appear to be neutral but result in discriminatory effects. J. Ross-Epp, AM Watkinson [97] *Systemic Violence in Education: Promise Broken* NY:SUNY Press.

[Gramsci's notions of "common sense" (something seems OK, seems normal because it is so 'common and universally accepted' - eg racism, poverty, homelessness) - which (I think) has the effect of rendering invisible various forms of oppression.]

There is a danger of knowing/asking "who" (is a victim) - rather than learning ways to make classes safer for everyone. Making our classrooms safe is of paramount importance. Creating safe spaces for us to discuss impacts of trauma so that we find balances between those who need to disclose and those who can not bear to witness disclosures find the safety they each need. This is difficult, toxic work. It has to have some hope, some joy, some moments where small changes outweigh despair. Safety itself is an invisible privilege for teachers, as is power – we seldom (if ever) know what it feels like to be unsafe or without power in our own classrooms; we might have experienced a certain lack of power or feeling of competence in difficult staff meetings, or at conferences when our questions aren't responded to very respectfully – but for many of us with education, class and white skin privilege this very concept of safety is one that needs examination.

To try to make this a bit more concrete, I want to share notes from a meeting with staff of a large educational and social service provider for new Americans in Providence's south side. We met to discuss staff's initial concerns about and understandings of the effects of trauma on learning. Trauma can be very broadly defined and encompassing. Many adult ESOL learners and practitioners have encountered trauma of a political and/or personal/domestic nature. All of us have experienced some sort of trauma in our lifetimes - the loss of a loved one, surviving a serious accident, experiences of violence, etc. While trauma affects different people differently, access to support and healing systems also is significant in thinking about how people are more or less able to be 'present' (attentive) to learning. These notes point to their thinking, might resonate and open ours and finally lead to strategies and activities for classrooms and communities.

Teachers expressed a desire to assist learners, but a need to know what to do. ("I want to help, but I don't know how.")

There is a need for: raised staff awareness, across educational and social service divisions, about the prevalence and impacts of trauma on adults

legal definitions - what does or doesn't constitute legal parameters of domestic abuse? What legal rights are available to someone whose immigration status is reliant upon an abusive spouse? (can a woman lose her status, for example, if she leaves her husband or lose financial resources and/or opportunities to gain a green card?)

information about consequences of violence - legal, emotional, affective, in terms of learning.

ways to recognize impacts of trauma on learners [dissociation, erratic attendance, 'all or nothing' approach to learning, taking on new challenges, easy discouragement, silence, fear]

What resources are available to learners/clients and staff? What educational resources are available for integration into classroom (and case?) work?

perception - Certain cultures propagate a tacit acceptance of machismo and the behaviors associated with being a man in those cultures. 'Small acts' of violence, the perception that they're not as serious as 'big' ones; multigenerational households

Domestic violence is common in Mexico/Latin countries. It's hard to tell what's going on; men have power. How can I tell them (my students) that they have a right to protection, that being hurt by their husbands/partners isn't legal. Without education, people think it's ok. OR nobody understands them. It's private, it's in my house - no one can help/ no one can interfere; 'common sense'/invisible nature of the issue. It stays within the four walls. No thought of government protection within many [immigrant/ refugee] homes – it's a 'normal' part of my life. These attitudes only intensify feelings of isolation on the part of the person experiencing abuse at the hands of a partner/family member.

Shaming is often culturally imposed. It's shameful to talk about being a victim of abuse. It's a problem that people don't like to talk about, it's a cultural problem. Try to avoid, shame of being judged. Mostly it happens at home, nobody knows, it's a taboo. Finding out ways to identify people when it's obvious that some sort of abuse is interfering with learning. I don't know how to help. How to present general information about domestic violence resources in a mixed-gender class?

We need to raise awareness around domestic violence. Case counselor and teaching staff need to learn about resources and connect with learners/clients and other service providers. What are the boundaries? What can/can't teachers do to help learners? We need to make

conscious decisions as teachers – how far do we want to go. What are appropriate boundaries?

What to do once dv (domestic violence) has been identified? Other factors, causes? societal/families – what contributes to the prevalence of dv? Can we frame discussions in our classes around violence generally, and create safe places where learners may or may not wish to disclose their own experiences of violence? Can we post information about resources in visible places in our learning centre and make this information available to students who may then utilize these resources when they're ready? Are the available services accessible to adults who do not speak English? Are they culturally congruent? Are they accessible by public transportation?

A large percentage of people who are seeking services/help around dv issues are also in need of access to adult education; transitioning out of relationships - there isn't a lot of support for people transitioning into new processes (learning to live independently, working, finding child care, life changes, etc.).

We need a speaker to tell students about laws, definitions, restraining orders, what happens once one enters the system, what's the process. What constitutes violence, what happens to one's risking one's immigration status? Where do women go to speak /to get help in Spanish?

What to do? Next steps? The group agreed wants access to information about dv for itself as a staff first, in order to learn what information to then pass along to students/clients.

- Opening up one way or another for students posing themes, to see what they know about violence, generally, or dv, specifically - what to do once that happens and someone discloses?

- Tie to existing minority health work/community wellness

- Educational staff should meet with social service staff to see what interest they have in exploring inservice help around dv. It's possible that social service folks have some awareness, knowledge experience and/or community contacts already. Staff needs to consider how they - separately and collectively – do or don't want to take on dv or violence generally within classes.

POLICY - attendance and other policy issues need to be taken up within the agency; e.g. zero tolerance for violence onsite; flexible attendance policies for 'family issues', etc.

How to not revictimize?

*[http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Swearer\\_Center/Literacy\\_Resources/tesol2000.html](http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Swearer_Center/Literacy_Resources/tesol2000.html)*