

♀ ON OUR WAY

Newsletter of the Women's Center
46 Pleasant Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

(617) 354-8807
TTY and VOICE

august '92



MULTI-CULTURAL WOMEN'S GROUP FORMING

A new group is forming at the Women's Center, focused on racial diversity and multi-culturalism. We hope to create a comfortable space in which to share thoughts and feelings of being non-white in this society. Some of the goals of the group will be to promote connection and understanding among women, share our experiences and difficulties in this culture, appreciate our diversity and explore what culture means to us.

This group is open to women of all sexual orientations and from all cultures. We can find our strength in understanding our diversity and our common ground.

Call the Women's Center at 354-8807 for more information.

LESBIANS CHOOSING CHILDREN

The Lesbians Choosing Children Network is alive and well at the Women's Center. Join us at 7:30pm on the second Thursday of every month for a lively discussion on such topics as: alternative insemination - how to do it; sperm - how and where to get it; disposable diapers versus cloth diapers; doctors that will inseminate lesbians; known donors versus unknown donors; yes, lesbians can adopt; and more, more, more.

If you are burning with desire to learn all you can about any of these subjects or other related ones, come to a meeting. Our regular members possess a wealth of information to share. Young children are always welcome.

For more information, call the Women's Center at 354-8807.



NEW GROUP FOR OLDER WOMEN

On Sunday afternoon, September 13, from 3-5pm, older women are invited to gather at the Women's Center to begin a discussion group called "Aging Well, for Older Women."

The centerpiece for these discussions will be Ourselves, Growing Older, Women Aging with Knowledge and Power, a warm and vibrant book that celebrates aging through the voices of women from mid-life to their elderly years. The book challenges common assumptions about aging and challenges us to view our later years with hope and optimism by informing ourselves, by taking control with knowledge and power.

The group discussion will start with the opening chapter, "Aging and Well Being," encouraging the self-care and self-valuing needed for wellness. Topics for discussions and structure for the group will also be planned at this first meeting.

Ourselves, Growing Older is available at bookstores (although it may have to be ordered), from the Boston Women's Health Book Collective (the author), located in Davis Square, Somerville, or from libraries; there is also a copy at the Women's Center.

For more information, call 354-8807 (the Women's Center).

SEXUAL HARASSMENT SUPPORT GROUP

Come to this group to share your experiences, get information on your rights, figure out your options and find emotional support. Facilitated by Louise Bonar, this drop-in group will meet once a month. The dates: Wednesday, September 16; Wednesday, October 21; Tuesday, November 17; and Wednesday, December 16. The time: 7-9pm.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT BATTERED WOMEN'S SUPPORT GROUP

Over the past month, many of you may have been hearing in the news about an alarm device to protect battered women. This "panic alarm," first introduced in Cambridge by Deputy Superintendent Michael Giacoppo, could be a very useful addition in aiding battered women, although it certainly won't solve all our protection problems.

On July 8th, about ten participants from our group went to the police station and were given a first-hand demonstration of the panic alarm by Superintendent Giacoppo. We also met Detective Mary Fitzgerald who has the major responsibility for domestic violence cases in Cambridge. We took this opportunity to give Detective Fitzgerald some materials on abuse against women that we use in our group, as well as a copy of the Battered Women's Directory.

During the two hours we spent at the police station, Superintendent Giacoppo and Detective Fitzgerald answered many of our questions about police procedures and about their response to battered women. We were impressed by their apparent commitment to improving services and providing the best possible response.

Superintendent Giacoppo also agreed to adapt a brochure (one that we had mailed him) used by the Norfolk County District Attorney's office for the needs of battered women. This brochure, to be passed out by police responding to domestic violence calls, would contain information on legal options for battered women and resources such as shelters, hotlines and support groups, providing another aid to women being abused by their "partners."

This month we also did a radio program on battered women with interviewer and producer Nekita Lamour who translated it into Haitian Creole. In addition, one of our members, Pat Haas, was quoted in Glamour magazine on abuse against women.

We also attended a vigil in front of the State House to memorialize all the women who died this year of male violence. Three of us spoke and one of our members sang an operatic requiem.

The Harvard Battered Women's Legal Advocacy Project took the summer off (we only wish batterers would do the same!), but will again attend the group on the last Wednesday of each month, come Fall.

We meet from 7-8:30pm on Wednesdays (except the 3rd Wednesday of each month), and welcome all battered women.

--Betsy Warrior

FROM VERA--

I have greatly enjoyed facilitating groups at the Women's Center. Everyone who attends is appreciated.

In the upcoming months, I'll offer again a two hour workshop: How to Shop for and Interview Psychotherapists. This workshop will include questions to ask, responses to look for, variables that matter when you're looking for a psychotherapist who will be good with you. Come and bring your questions, concerns and experiences. Thursday, September 24, 7:00 to 9:00pm.

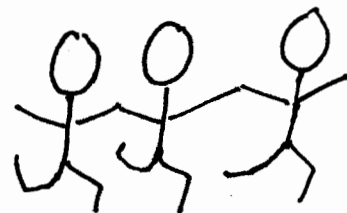
Another repeat offering will be the four session group Learning About Psychotherapy and Assessing Yours. It will begin with an initial, open session about psychotherapy generally; subsequent meetings will be closed and used to help you assess your therapy and use it well, or dump it. This is a group for people wanting to know more about psychotherapy, who have questions or concerns about their current or past therapy, as well as for people who are considering therapy but have never experienced it. Check out the first session from 7:30-9pm on Monday October 5th, and continue with the group for the next 3 weeks if you wish. Come with your therapy dilemmas and worries.

In November, I'll hold a two hour workshop on Holidays: How to View Them So You Can Get Through Them. Bring in all your dreadful fantasies.

Later on, a two session workshop on Growing Up: Shaking off the Lessons You Never Should Have Learned will be held. Bring your own favorite hated lesson to work on, such as "you'll never do it right," "SMILE," "don't air dirty laundry in public," "don't ask questions," "don't talk to people you don't know," or any others.

And, in January: Making Changes in Your Life: Taking a Big Step in a New Year. This will consist of 3 sessions on changes: what, why, when and how.

For more information, to ask questions or make suggestions, call Vera at 354-2304 or the Women's Center at 354-8807.



ORIGINAL MULTIPLES GROUP SEEKS NEW MEMBERS

The Women's Center original group for women with multiple personalities is currently opening up for a limited number of new members. We are very proud of our more than two year pioneering history providing support where there was none; discovering answers where there are still few; and, in general, nudging recovery and self-definition onto a firmer footing with laughter, tears, anger and hugs.

The group meets at 11:00am on alternate Saturdays, for two and a half hours. Interested women must have been defined as multiples and be strongly committed to individual therapy. We welcome women with a ritual abuse or cult history, so long as they - and all of their alters- have completely severed all ties and contacts with active cult members and activities.

In order to make our group more representative, we are especially eager to welcome women over forty and women of diverse ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds into the group. Those who are interested should please call the Women's Center at 354-8807.

HOW WOMEN HEAL FROM CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Wednesday, October 28 from 7-8:30pm.

An informational presentation about coping with the effects of child sexual abuse by therapist Lee Farrington. She will talk about things to do when you are beginning to suspect you are a survivor, or when you have memories or flashbacks; the nature of dissociation; helpful ways to respond to survivors; how we recover. Followed by question/discussion period.

BOOK NOW OUT ON SURVIVOR SEXUALITY

During the years that Incest resources (I.R.) ran the drop-in discussion groups at the Women's Center, many attendees also participated in the first major study conducted on survivor sexuality. Areas covered in the study included body perception, reproduction, sexual preference, sexual "lifestyle," and sexual functioning. The results are all in a new book, Women's Sexuality After Childhood Incest by the cofounder of I.R., Elaine Westerlund. If you've been waiting patiently for the book, copies are now available from the publisher, W.W. Norton (1-800-233-4830) or ask for it at New Words Bookstore.

THINKTANK BEGINS SECOND YEAR!

The Incest Survivor's Thinktank will begin its second year of monthly drop-in meetings on September 2nd. Each month a topic is discussed which has been selected previously by group members. The topic for September 2nd is "Healing From Sexual Abuse and the Workplace."

Meetings begin promptly at 7:15pm and end at 9:15pm. During the first hour of the meeting, a facilitator reads the safety guidelines for the group. Following this, each facilitator briefly talks about what the current topic means to her. Members are then invited to discuss the topic openly.

After a short break, the second part of the meeting begins with announcements. One of the facilitators then lists the highlights of what was discussed during the first hour. Group members may expand the discussion.

Thinktank meetings usually consist of a diverse group of approximately fifteen to twenty women. There is a core group that attend regularly and new faces each time since drop-ins are welcome. The discussions are inspiring and provocative as each person is invited to share her own viewpoint on the topic. There are also other activities associated with the Thinktank.

There is a training meeting which begins at 6:15pm before each Thinktank session. Anyone may attend this meeting. Group facilitation techniques are discussed using training methods such as role-playing. The business of the group, such as flyer distribution and bookkeeping is also discussed.

At each Thinktank meeting, there are two facilitators present as well as another person who is the designated backup. Anyone who would like to become a facilitator is encouraged to attend the training meetings, or call Connie at (617)787-2045 for further information.

Thinktank members as a group do not organize activities. When ideas arise in the group, members sometimes choose to form an outside group. Three new groups have formed in the Thinktank this past year! One is a writer's group, one formed to organize an informal workshop at the Women's Center, and another group meets to pursue letter-writing campaigns on various issues. Ideas are constantly being generated in the group and the second year of the Thinktank should prove as exciting as the first!

WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES GROUP

This discussion and support group for disabled women is part of a larger program on Women and Disability at the Massachusetts Office for the Handicapped. The group that meets at the Women's Center is open to all disabled women. We are particularly interested in reaching out to women who are just becoming aware of a disability.

In the past we have found the group to be very interesting since it brings together women with different types of disabilities. We have been able to learn from each other how those of us with different impairments have similar problems in daily tasks, such as crossing streets and using telephones, and in communicating with partners and/or medical personnel. We have also been exploring shared aspects of our inner lives. Most of us see ourselves in our dreams as we would like to be, without our disabilities. As we gather together and share our experiences and current difficulties, we have found warmth and support in this group. We encourage you to come to a meeting if you would like to explore cross-disability issues.

We meet on the third Monday of each month from 7:30 to 9pm in a wheelchair accessible room. Come join us! For more information on our group call the Women's Center at 354-8807. For more information on the Project on Women and Disability, please call 727-7440.

WOMEN IN RECOVERY (FORMERLY THE WOMEN'S GROUP FOR SOBRIETY)

We have changed the name of our Sunday group to "Women in Recovery." With this name change, we establish our independence from any other recovery organization. Our group stresses the empowerment of the individual woman.

We discuss a wide range of subjects, as they relate to recovery, in a relaxed, supportive environment. The emphasis of "Women in Recovery" is growth through self-awareness and insight. We invite interested women to join us on Sunday afternoons from 2:00-3:30pm.

For additional information, please contact Annette at 628-8231 or Elizabeth at 489-0936.

HEALING AFTER ABORTION

Deciding to have an abortion may be the most difficult decision a woman will ever have to make. No one can help, no one can advise and no one can really know how she feels.

When a woman decides to and does have an abortion there is often at least one person she can lean on, one person to love and support her. This person may help her through the procedure and the days or even weeks that follow. After a while the abortion becomes a vague memory for the support person. For the woman who has had the abortion the physical discomfort soon passes, but the emotional discomfort may eventually turn to pain.

Having an abortion solves the immediate problem of unwanted pregnancy but for some it carries a large price. After an abortion a woman may begin to feel a sense of great loss. She may begin to wonder what might have been and suffer second thoughts. Feelings of anger and even self-hatred may arise as the woman begins to feel she should have or could have had her child, if only she were stronger or had tried harder.

After an abortion women need a safe and supportive place to give and receive understanding. The HEALING AFTER ABORTION group at the Women's Center is such a place. Unfortunately, many of us are not aware of its existence. Our group is small but the support found here is huge. Some of us are single, some are in relationships; we are women of different races, ages, and sexual orientations. Yet we all have one thing in common, we have all suffered through an abortion. Some of us less than a year ago, others over a decade ago. The emotional pain of abortion may have diminished over time, but our need to share experiences and support remains. No one can understand the pain of an abortion as well as another woman who has had one.

An abortion can affect every aspect of your life and in our group no topic is taboo. If you are feeling pain and loss or are just confused after your abortion, please come and begin to heal yourself: you deserve it and you are worth it!

HEALING AFTER ABORTION meets Tuesdays from 7:00-8:30pm at the Women's Center.



TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

LESBIAN RAP

Mondays, 7:30-9pm

- August 24 Your Type of Woman, Does She Exist?
- 31 Open discussion.
- September 7 No Rap - Holiday
- 14 An Affair to Remember.
- 21 Sex Between Friends.
- 28 Different Strokes for Different Folks.

BISEXUAL WOMEN'S RAP

Tuesdays, 7:30-9:30pm

- August 25 Emotional Abuses.
- September 1 Open Rap.
- 8 Movie: Thelma and Louise
- 15 Non-monogamy.
- 22 Bi in Boston.
- 29 War and Militarism.

30+ LESBIAN RAP

Tuesdays, 7-8:30pm

- August 25 Favorite Self-Help Techniques.
- September 1 Being Single.
- 8 Negotiating Within Relationships.
- 15 "Full Moon" Stories.
- 22 Flirting.
- 29 "The World According to Us." Feminist Comedy (video).

INCEST SURVIVORS THINKTANK

First Wednesday 7:15-9:15pm

- September 3 Healing from Sexual Abuse and the Workplace.
- October 7 Child Sexual Abuse as a Political Crime.
- November 4 Dissociation & Flashbacks: Educating Society.
- December 2 Therapy & its Alternatives.
- January 6 Strength from Trauma: Taking Back Power.

SATURDAY WRITING GROUP

Writing doesn't have to be a solitary pursuit. Every other Saturday from 12:30-2:30pm, our writing group meets to write together for two hours. We do writing exercises on topics chosen by the group (topics vary widely). If people wish to, they can share what they've written with the group. As part of a supportive environment, we keep our comments positive or neutral. It's a drop-in group and we welcome anyone who would like to come and find out if it's for them. For information, call Karen at 646-0624 or Clara at 666-2851.



ONGOING GROUPS AT THE WOMEN'S CENTER SUNDAY

- Women in Recovery.....2-3:30pm
- Birthmothers (Women who have surrendered children to adoption) (1st Sun. each month, resuming Oct. 4).....1:30pm

MONDAY

- Support for Battered Women.....7:30-9pm
- Women's NA 12-step.....7:30-9pm
- Lesbian Rap.....7:30-9pm
- Reproductive Rights Network R2N2 (2nd & 4th Mondays)....6:45-9:30pm
- Lesbian Partners & Ex-Partners of Incest Survivors (1st & 3rd Mon.)....7-8:30pm
- Women with Disabilities (3rd Monday) (wheelchair accessible).....7:30-9pm
- Boston Bisexual Women's Network (1st Mon, odd #d months)...7:30-9:30pm

TUESDAY

- Bisexual Women's Rap.....7:30-9:30pm
- 30+ Lesbian Rap.....7-8:30pm
- Eating Awareness and Body Image.....7-9pm
- Healing After Abortion.....7-8:30pm
- Finding and Surviving the Workplace (2nd Tuesday).....7-9pm

WEDNESDAY

- Lesbian Al-Anon (wheelchair accessible).....6:30-8pm
- Battered Women's Support Group (Weekly except 3rd Wed. of month).....7-8:30pm
- Incest Survivors' Thinktank (1st Wed. of the month)....7:15-9:15pm
- Ovary Action (Women's Group of Queer Nation (1st, 3rd Wednesdays after 1st Monday).....8-9:45pm

THURSDAY

- Incest Survivors Open Discussion Groups (weekly).....7:30-9:30pm
- Facilitated Open Discussion for Incest Survivors (3rd Thursday)....7:30-9:15pm
- Women's Community Cancer Project (wheelchair accessible) (1st Thurs.)....7-9pm
- Cancer Support Group (wheelchair accessible) (2nd & 4th Thursday).....7-9pm
- Lesbians Choosing Children Network (2nd Thurs, monthly).....7:30pm
- Women's Writing Group (2nd & 4th Thursdays).....7-9pm

FRIDAY

- Incest Survivors Anonymous (Wheelchair accessible).....6:30-8pm

SATURDAY

- Women's Writing Group (biweekly).....12:30-2:30pm
- Open discussion on Coming Out for Women of All Ages (and lunch out afterwards, all participants welcome.) (monthly, 1st Saturday).....11am-1pm

THE WOMEN'S EDUCATIONAL CENTER, INC.
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THE WOMEN'S SCHOOL

The Women's School is the oldest consecutively running school of its kind in the United States. For over twenty years we've been offering free courses and workshops with a feminist perspective to women in the greater Boston area.

The Spring 1992 semester was one of the most exciting yet. Attendance was higher than it has been in years and our workshops received uniformly good reviews from those attending.

Despite this, the future of the Women's School is in doubt. Many members of the Women's School Collective have moved on in recent years, and we don't have enough members remaining to organize a quality semester. Quite simply, if more women do not join the collective, the Women's School will end.

If you believe in the importance of the Women's School or simply want more information, please come to our open meeting on Tuesday, September 8th at 7:30pm at the Women's Center. If you can't make the meeting but would like more information, please call 354-8807 or write us c/o The Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge, MA 02139.

ATTENTION THERAPISTS

The Women's Counseling and Resource Center, at the Women's Center, seeks volunteer therapists to join our collective. Members must have a Master's Degree in a counseling field, experience, and be willing to spend two to four hours a week working with low and no income women. For more information, call the WCRC at 492-8568.

WOMEN'S CENTER HOURS

Monday - Thursday	10am - 10pm
Friday	10am - 8pm
Saturday	11am - 2pm

FINDING AND SURVIVING THE WORKPLACE

"Finding and Surviving the Workplace: A Support Group for Women" is open to all women who are

- Unemployed and seeking jobs in a difficult job market,
- Changing careers in a difficult job market, or
- Having difficulty on the job because of communication problems with a boss or another employee - the most common experience women have is supervisor/subordinate interactions which make and break careers, and cause numerous job losses.

The group offers a safe and supportive environment in which to brainstorm, strategize, explore, and exchange ideas, and even role play so you can get through that tough interview, or ask for that raise! Knowing that you can talk freely about your own experiences and perceptions, as well as find and give support provides a strong foundation to confront any troubling situation in the workplace. Past members of this workshop have successfully gotten jobs, resolved conflicts, and asked for raises. You can too! Join us!

Finding and Surviving the Workplace meets on the second Tuesday of each month from 7:00-9:00pm.