

♀ ON OUR WAY

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



Spring '94

(617) 354-8807

TTY and VOICE



Recycled Paper

WOMEN'S HEALTH DAY APRIL 9th

The Women's Center, collaborating with the Cambridge Women's Commission, the Cambridge Hospital, and the Graham and Parks Community School is excited to be presenting the FIRST Cambridge city-wide HEALTH DAY FOR WOMEN. During the day there will be a wide range of workshops and information on both traditional and non-traditional approaches to women's health. Lots of information and materials will be available throughout the day.

The Health Day will include three workshop periods (at 10:30am, 1:15pm, and 2:45pm) on topics including: PMS, breast health, menopause, safe sex, eating issues, infertility, holistic health care, lesbian health concerns, yoga & meditation, cancer, acupuncture, latina women's health concerns, aging, nutrition, domestic violence, HIV/STD's, birth control, how to quit smoking, talking to your teens about sexuality, childbirth, transformational breath, talking to your health care provider, substance abuse, and building self-esteem. There will also be free massage offered during the day. Something of interest to every woman!

The Health Day will take place from 10am-4pm, Saturday APRIL 9th. Meet at the Graham & Parks School (15 Upton Street, around the corner from the Women's Center) at 10am for coffee, tea, and welcome. Plan to spend the day with us...or at least drop in for a while. Workshops and activities will take place simultaneously at the Women's Center, the Graham & Parks School, and the Riverside Health Center at 205 Western Ave. Snacks and drinks will be provided at noon. Dr. Camilla Parkham of the

Cambridge Hospital will deliver a keynote talk in the Graham & Parks cafeteria at 12:30pm.

All activities at the Women's Health Fair are FREE. For a full listing of the day's events, or for further information, call the Women's Center at 354-8807. Please call by March 25th to request childcare, ASL interpreters, or wheelchair/accessibility arrangements. Please join us for this interesting and informative event for women. Hope to see you there!



THE ABORTION ACCESS PROJECT

The Abortion Access Project, a project of Boston R2N2, has had a busy winter! We have been working with an intern from the Kennedy School of Government to survey Massachusetts hospitals to ascertain exactly what abortion services currently exist, and to highlight where the most serious gaps in services are. One of the results will be a directory to abortion services in Massachusetts that we hope to distribute state-wide.

We have just been informed that the Ms. Foundation will fund a part-time staff person for the Abortion Access Project! We hope to hire a project coordinator/staff person for 10-15 hours per week. If you are or know an activist who might be interested in the position, please contact us as soon as possible.

We welcome new members. Call 738-9479 for information on our next meeting, and join us!

RITUAL ABUSE SURVIVORS GROUP

'Healing Together' is a self-help group for survivors of ritual abuse. The group was created to give survivors of ritual abuse a safe place to talk about their experience and how they were affected by it with others who truly understand (i.e., fellow ritual abuse survivors). We feel that we do not have to, nor do we deserve to, recover from this atrocity alone. We help each other to heal and find joy in our lives by offering each other a chance to share our stories, support, info/healing resources and the chance to form healthy connections with other survivors of ritual abuse.

The group began last November and has been an absolutely wonderful source of support. I am continually awed by the women in this group - their courage, insight and sensitivity. The Women's Center has also been quite a support for the group, especially Judith Norris. We are currently in the process of forming a second section of 'Healing Together'. If you are interested, please call the Women's Center at 354-8807 to leave your name and number for a contact person.

ANXIETY SUPPORT GROUP

The Anxiety Support Group is meeting weekly and enjoying the benefit of several new members' energy and input. (Just so everyone knows, the group is open for new members on the first Wednesday of every month, and closed the rest of the month).

We alternate using our meeting time for either in depth "check-in" time so we all have a chance to get feedback on issues that concern us, and for discussion of group-chosen topics. Some things we've discussed in the past are: the pro's and con's of medication for anxiety/depression; the connections between anger and anxiety; healing strategies; and dealing with social situations (or not dealing with them!).

The group meets every Wednesday from 6-7:30pm (and again new members are welcome to come on every FIRST Wednesday of each month). We welcome any women who struggle with anxiety and/or panic and encourage new members to consider making a commitment to the group so that

we can maintain a stronger trust than is usually possible in "drop-in" groups.

WOMEN WRITING

If you feel a world of words bubbling inside you, let them out. Our group focuses on writing exercises and beginnings. We encourage and listen to one another. This is a group for people who want to make a commitment to their writing but don't think they can. You CAN! Trust your voice and come write with us. You are encouraged to bring writing you would like to share (to be read for about ten minutes: bring copies if you can). Believe what you have to say is important and then come and say it! We meet alternating Saturdays from 12:30pm - 2:30pm. In April, we will be meeting on the 16th and 30th. We'll be seeing you...

SUPPORT GROUP FOR FRIENDS & FAMILY OF PEOPLE WITH CANCER

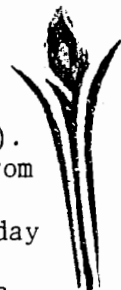
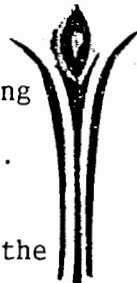
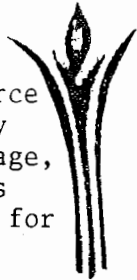
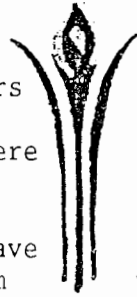
The drop-in group for women who are close to people living with cancer provides a place to share our common and individual experiences. In other words, an informal, safe place to talk or express feelings we may not be supposed to feel, but do.

Come as you need to. The group meets twice monthly on the second and fourth Thursdays from 7-8:30pm.

For additional information, call Anna at 547-6240.

INCEST SURVIVORS ANONYMOUS

Incest Survivors Anonymous is a twelve-step group for women survivors of incest. The group meets each Friday from 6:30 to 8pm. Meetings are led by qualified individual survivors. The chance to speak is timed for everyone. We do not cross talk or interrupt speaking survivors. Those who support us, our pro-survivors, may also attend. Offenders, initiators, or perpetrators may not be in our meetings. An optional topic meeting can form at this time upstairs at the Women's Center.



LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES UPDATE

The Library and Archives have been very busy this past year on several fronts. Last fall, we had two graduate students from Simmons College interning in the Archives. Two collections were processed: the Abortion Access Coalition, 1977-1980, and Women Against Violence Against Women, 1976-1984.

The Archives has been heavily used during the past several months by researchers working on a number of different projects. Extensive use of the Archives collections has been made by Catherine Russo for her forthcoming video documentary on the history of the early Boston Area Women's Movement.

Our on-going priorities are to provide more detailed descriptions of the collections and to publicize the Archives. A major task we would like to accomplish is a printed guide to the Archives collections that could be distributed to publications, Women's Centers, and Women's History Centers. We also have ideas for several other projects and we welcome new members to the collective.

We want to remind readers that we are available to consult with women's groups in the area who would like advice or assistance in organizing their records. We are also available to assist groups in transferring their non-current records to the Archives.

The Library has added over 200 books to its collections this past year, though we are still losing over a hundred books a year as a result of borrowed books not being returned.

The Library does not receive any funding or regular donations. The Library raises money through periodically reselling donated books which cannot be used in the Library because they are not appropriate to the collections or are multiple copies. Fortunately, with the tremendous assistance of our Simmons college intern Jane, and the assistance of several Women's Center staff members, we were able this past fall to raise a few hundred dollars from selling books at a local second-hand bookstore. However, even with much help and muscle, it is a major effort in time and womenpower to pack and lug hundreds of books from the Center to a local bookstore. The money raised from these periodic sales goes to

buy supplies as well as new books. Archival quality file folders, storage boxes, and other supplies are very costly. We receive no funding or financial contributions to insure that supplies and new books will be provided for on a regular basis.

The Library depends on your generosity. Please consider making a financial donation to the "Library Fund." Money can be ear-marked for supplies or for new books.



NEW LESBIAN MOM'S GROUP

The Women's Center began offering a new group in January - for new lesbian moms. The group was initiated and facilitated by Leslie Loomis, a psychologist and a lesbian mom of a 4 year old son. We are seven couples with children ranging in age from 4 months to 2 years. For some of us, groups have been helpful throughout the processes of insemination, pregnancy, adoption, etc. What this group offers in a unique way - is a chance to explore the issues in the couple's relationship which arise when two become three (or 4 or more!).

The energy it takes to be parents is enormous. It's difficult to have much energy left over and the partner relationship sometimes suffers from lack of time and attention. This group provides support to again make our couple relationships a priority.

Our six week group ended in February. While Leslie is unable to continue with the group because of other commitments, the seven couples have agreed to continue as a peer support group for another six week cycle and will reevaluate at that time. Because of our size we are not able to take new members now, but may open again in the future.

Thanks so much to Leslie for getting us started and guiding our beginning.

NURSES NEED SUPPORT

I am a nurse (an RN) myself and need support. If you do too, and are interested in helping form a support group, please leave your name and number for Yolene at the Women's Center.



TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION



ONGOING GROUPS AT THE WOMEN'S CENTER

LESBIAN RAP

Mondays, 7:30 - 9pm

- March 28 Frank Discussion on Monogamy
- April 4 Effects of Stereotyping
- 11 Lesbians Invade Family
Restaurant -to be determined
- 18 Potluck - Bring a Picture of
your Mom & your Baby Picture
- 25 Lesbian Avenger (Guest Speaker)

30+ LESBIAN RAP

Tuesdays, 7 - 8:30pm

- March 29 Game Night
- April 5 Feeling Different & Alone
- 12 Role Models
- 19 Getting to Know You
- 26 What We're Reading

BISEXUAL WOMEN'S RAP

Tuesdays, 7:30 - 9:30pm

- March 29 Dinner at S & S Deli (meet at
the Women's Center)
- April 5 Bisexuality - What Does It
Mean to You?
- 12 Movie Nite
- 19 Diversity in the Bi-Community
- 26 Dealing with Homophobia/Biphobia

INTERNATIONAL/INTERCULTURAL WOMEN'S GROUP

4th Saturday, each month, 1pm

- March 26 How Does a Country's Development
Affect Women?
- April 23 A Cross-Cultural Look at
Domestic Violence

INCEST SUPPORT GROUPS

Facilitated Open Discussion Group for Incest Survivors

3rd Thursday, each month, 7:30-9:15pm

- April 21 Coping/Honoring Ourselves
- May 19 Breaking the Silence

Incest Survivors Thinktank

1st Wednesday, each month, 7:15-9:15pm

- April 6 Child Sexual Abuse & Other Forms
of Political Torture
- May 4 Incest: Is the Personal
Political?
- June 1 Child Sexual Abuse by Clergy and
by Relatives

WOMEN'S CENTER HOURS

Monday-Thursday.....10am-10pm
Friday.....10am-8pm
Saturday.....11am-4pm

SUNDAY

- ⊕ Older Women Aging Well.....2-5pm
(1st Sunday, not meeting in April)

MONDAY

- Battered Women's Support.....7:30-9pm
- Women's NA 12 Step.....7:30-9pm
- Lesbian Rap.....7:30-9pm
- Lesbian Partners/Ex-Partners of Incest
Survivors (1st & 3rd Mon.)....7-8:45pm
- ⊕ Reproductive Rights Network (R2N2)
(usually 2nd & 4th Mon.)....6:45-9:30pm
- ⊕ Women with Disabilities
(3rd Monday).....7:30-9pm

TUESDAY

- Bisexual Women's Rap.....7:30-9:30pm
- ⊕ 30+ Lesbian Rap.....7-8:30pm
- Eating Awareness & Body Image Group
(New members, 1st Tues, 6:30pm)...7-9pm
- Healing After Abortion (4/26)...7-8:30pm

WEDNESDAY

- Anxiety Support Group (Open to new
members, 1st Wed.).....6-7:30pm
- Assessing Your Therapy (2nd Wed.,
every 3 months).....7-9pm
- Battered Women's Support (weekly
except 3rd Wed. of month).....7-9pm
- Boston Bisexual Women's Network (2nd
Wed, odd #'d months).....7:30-9pm
- Incest Survivors' Thinktank
(1st Wed).....7:15-9:15pm
- ⊕ Lesbian Al-anon.....6:30-8pm

THURSDAY

- ⊕ Cancer Support Group (2nd & 4th
Thursdays).....7-8:30pm
- ⊕ Facilitated Open Discussion for Incest
Survivors (3rd Thurs.).....7:30-9:15pm
- Friends and Family of People with
Cancer (2nd & 4th Thurs.).....7-8:30pm
- Incest Survivors Open Discussion
Group.....7:30-9:30pm
- Manic Depression & Depression Group..1pm
- ⊕ Women's Community Cancer Project Open
General Meeting (1st Thurs.).....7-9pm

FRIDAY

- ⊕ Incest Survivors Anonymous.....6:30-8pm

SATURDAY

- Coming Out Discussion for Women of All
Ages (1st Sat, usually ASL Interpreted,
optional lunch out after).....11am-1pm
- Finding & Surviving the Workplace
(2nd Saturday, not in April)...11am-1pm
- International/Intercultural Women's
Group (4th Saturday).....1pm
- Women Writing (biweekly)....12:30-2:30pm
- Women's Writing Group
(biweekly).....12:30-2:30pm



FINDING AND SURVIVING THE WORKPLACE



SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT WORK - MEDIATION AS AN ALTERNATIVE

Our support group provides a safe and accepting forum for women to share experiences about work and the workplace. Many of us have lost our jobs, some have quit out of frustration or abuse suffered on the job, some have been fired, some are considering a career change, and others are stuck and need help figuring out their next steps. While our stories are different, their *themes* and our desires to connect with others resonate as we attempt to find and survive the workplace.

When I first joined the group over a year ago, I was looking for a place to talk and to listen. I'd lost my job unexpectedly six months previously, and needed a place in which I could comfortably talk about the pain and frustration I still felt about my experience with others who empathized. I felt my friends and family had long since tired of my grieving and had limited patience with my lack of motivation. I'd read about this gathering in the Women's Center newsletter and decided to give it a try.

I could not have found a more receptive, supportive group. While there are many organizations in town providing job hunting skill seminars and workshops, this was my first experience with people who were willing to listen to my story, to validate my experience with their understanding nods, smiles, hoots & hollers(!), and to share *their* stories in return if they felt moved to do so. No expectations, no demands. I have gained tremendously from my participation in the group over the past year. I've made new friends, I've gone into business for myself, and I know I still have a place to come to share my concerns and dreams and to be inspired by every other woman's story.

If you are looking for a place to tell your story, if you are struggling with a work-related issue that's holding you back, or if you would like support for creating your next step (including figuring out what it is!), come join us. The group meets on the second Saturday of each month, 11:30am-1:30pm (NOTE: We will NOT be meeting in April. Our next meeting will be May 14th).

The potential for sexual harassment occurrences, allegations and lawsuits exists in any workplace. The best strategies to prevent/reduce liability include establishing policies and procedures that require the reporting of sexual harassment and to train supervisors and employees alike to recognize and resolve such problems within the organization. Many workplaces, however, do not yet accept their responsibility to acknowledge sexual harassment and, when it occurs, employees are in a quandry. If the harasser persists and the company looks the other way, women may feel they have no recourse but to find an attorney for protection. Companies sometimes then retaliate.

Another option might be to consider early on the process of mediation which uses a neutral person to facilitate communication among all the people involved.

A mediator helps both parties determine what is important and assists them in generating their own solutions which can be very creative. Employers sometimes prefer to mediate because they have a part in the resolution which is often less punitive than court/jury awards. Another factor is that mediation is a voluntary process for both parties and either can withdraw at any time.

For the employee this process is a lot less costly than hiring an attorney. It is quicker: mediation can start immediately and be resolved in one to four weeks. The employee can also get the company to take some responsibility as opposed to going to court where they may deny everything.

-Louise Bonar

(Louise Bonar meets monthly with any woman around sexual harassment issues. Upcoming dates are April 7, May 17, and June 15 from 7 to 9pm. She can be contacted through the Women's Center at 354-8807.)



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CENTRAL AMERICAN FEMINISTS

Two women leaders from some of the first "out" feminist organizations in Latin America will be visiting Boston and giving a presentation on Thursday April 7th from 7-9 pm at MIT Room 6-120. Maria Teresa Blandon from Nicaragua and Morena Herrera from El Salvador will share and discuss the 6th Latin American Feminist Encuentro (Encounter) which happened in November 1993. Sponsored by Women Across Borders, CASA, and other feminist and Central America activist groups. Please join us and meet these dynamic feminist Latina sisters! For more information: Nancy Ryan at the Cambridge Women's Commission, 349-4697; or Sarah Driscoll, 522-2051.

WOMEN SAY NO TO VIOLENCE

The 5th annual "Women Say NO To Violence" March and Rally will be held on Tuesday, May 17th, 1994. Beginning at 6pm at Somerville High School, the event includes a rally with speakers and musical performances, a display of the Clothesline Project, and a march through the city of Somerville to Davis Square where we will hold a candlelight vigil and speak-out.

For more information, please call Maria Altamore at the Somerville Commission for Women: 625-6600 x2400.

STOP

**THE WAR
AGAINST
WOMEN**



Help support "On Our Way" and the Women's Center!

YES! I want to help out the ♀'s Center!

Enclosed is my **tax-deductible contribution** of:

\$100 \$50 \$25 \$10 \$other _____

I'd like to become a regular monthly sustainer, with a pledge of \$____/per month.

Please send me a volunteer application.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone # (s): _____

Please clip this coupon and return to: ♀ Women's Center,
46 Pleasant St. Cambridge, MA 02139.

Thank you for your needed support...we appreciate it! ☺