

TRIBIP MINUTES FOR 10-10-2000

Present: Chris Huffine, Marc Hess, Vivian Bliss, Guruseva Mason, David Houston and Fred Coopridier from Yamhill County Mental Health and Solutions.

Minutes by David Houston, summary of “Batterer Intervention as a Vocation or as Social Activism” by Chris Huffine. The lateness of these minutes being distributed is solely Chris’ fault.

Batterer Intervention: Vocation or Social Activism? Discussion Summary

-A number of providers are not actively involved in the larger DV community, not attending any coordination meetings, such as this one, their county DV council, etc. Meetings such as these seem an important piece of being involved in a coordinated community response and more effectively intervening with abusive men. Why don’t those agencies attend? What would motivate them to attend? Some people might be put off by large meetings, intense discussions, strong emotions, or strong opinions and therefore choose not to attend. Being a woman doing batterer intervention work can be more difficult because she may be viewed by the community as a batterer and treated like a batterer. There are a number of other possible explanations. Perhaps make use of students that Chris is supervising to survey those agencies who are not attending meetings on why they aren’t.

-Public speaking, trainings, consultation, and networking are all important parts of doing the DV work—increasing public awareness and intervention. Often much of that doesn’t pay, but it is vital in helping to stop DV.

-There are going to be people who do batterer intervention just to do a job. In other words, work with the abusive men in group or individually, but have limited interaction with the larger community around this issue. If there is going to be a change in the community regarding DV, people need to do more than that.

-What should we, as BIPs, be representing when we do social activism? Are we representing perpetrators? Victims? Who, exactly are we representing?

-What does social activism involve? What is even meant by social activism?

-Given that some providers have philosophies concerning DV that we don’t agree with, perhaps it’s better that some agencies aren’t more actively involved in the larger community. Keep the activism part to those who are most knowledgeable. On the other hand, being actively involved with the larger DV community can help educate providers and make them more knowledgeable and aware.

-Given that this is oppression work, there needs to be acknowledgement, credit and consideration given to the grass roots organizers. We need to acknowledge the leadership of the oppressed group (i.e., battered women). There needs to be consultation with and guidance by the oppressed group. For example, if a person were to speak out against Measure 9, offering their own

curriculum and ideas and they're not gay, shouldn't they consult with the oppressed group, gays and lesbians, to evaluate their material? And if they object to what that person is saying, shouldn't they modify their material based on those objections?

-There can be a diversity of opinion within a community. There isn't just one set of beliefs or perspectives. That is true within the battered women's community. So who's opinion should be followed? But even given the diversity, isn't there usually some common ground? The consensus among those diverse groups is what needs to be considered. Otherwise, a person can simply pick and choose what they want to listen to or follow. It is possible to increase dissension within the oppressed group by rallying around peripheral points, thereby increasing divisiveness. It's our responsibility to represent what battered women agree on, not on the minority opinions of that group. That diversity and dissension is their responsibility to work through, not ours. We need to represent what they want us to, not what we think we should be representing. Consensus is dynamic and evolving. It is also regional. To that extent, we need to reflect the regional view.

-On-going consultation with advocates on our perspectives and views is important.

-What we know the most about isn't so much violence against women but rather violence by men. That is an area of expertise and wisdom of batterer intervention providers.

-All oppressions are interlocking. As you begin to address one you can't ignore the others. Yet how do you balance that with a heavy focus on DV?

-It is important to intervene with specific individuals as well as larger social intervention. Social change happens slowly; in the meantime individual men will continue to be abusive.

-This issue doesn't have clear answers or clear resolutions, but it is important that it continue to be considered.