

Tri County Batterer Intervention Provider Network
August 24, 1999 - Minutes

Present: Vivian Bliss (Solutions), Marc Hess (Multnomah Co. ACJ), Gurusava Mason (Transition Projects), Michael Davis and David Houston (Changepoint), Eric Mankowski (Portland State University; notetaker), Sandy Bacharach (Programa de Mujeres), Chris Huffine (Men's Resource Center)

Topic: Male Privilege and Entitlement (led by Chris)

Highlights:

- Part of having privilege means that you are unaware of the ways in which you are privileged. (Chris) From another perspective, being unaware of privilege (or denying it) is less unconscious and more of a choice to avoid being held accountable for your behavior. (Gurusava)
- Examples of men's privilege: power to dress as you want; awareness or lack thereof about how the night time darkness impacts felt safety of women; power to feel comfortable about being the object of someone else's sexual desire.
- Discussion centered on different strategies for working with clients that succeed in raising their awareness of their privilege as males and how they use it in DV situations and how they are unaware of the effects of their behavior on partners.
- It may be difficult to get the idea of male privilege across to many clients who are low in SES or minorities and underprivileged in many ways. Exercises such as asking clients to identify experiences where they have felt threatened by others or under the power of others sometimes is effective (e.g., how you felt interacting with your parole officer; how you felt as a student or employee relative to your teacher or boss). This lays the groundwork for men being able to see how women experience men. (Marc and Chris)
- While this approach is somewhat abstract, another approach is to use everyday examples of racism, sexism and homophobia that occur in the client's daily personal interactions with others. These examples arise frequently and naturally in the course of the treatment groups rather than being targeted exercises. (Vivian and Michael)
- A discussion of possible film resources for portraying men's privilege and forms of power included both educational/documentary films (e.g., "Why Does he Batter?" available for \$19.95 through Chemeketa Community College - ask Vivian; "The Color of Fear" - but expensive; ask Chris or Eric) and dramatic portrayals in Hollywood (e.g. "The Mission", "Contact", Mosquito Coast).