

TCBIPN meeting minutes
March 28, 2000

Present: Songcha Bowman, Michael Davis, Bob Torres, Branwyn Davis,
Guruseva Mason, Chris Huffine, Marc Hess, Lillie Zable, Paula
Manley,
Eric Mankowski (notetaker)

The new topic for today's meeting is discussing what works in batter's intervention.

Paula - asking men to talk about victims' experiences by using role play and asking the men to use the word I and not she when describing her experience. This works to increase his empathy and perspective taking.

Paula - to illustrate that cooperation works better than powering control, she asks men to engage in an arm wrestling match in which she will give candy to the person who wins the most matches in two minutes. Men volunteer and struggle for two minutes with each one earning few if any candy. Then she gets up with an accomplice and pretends to win and lose many matches in quick succession thereby winning many pieces of candy and vividly pointing out that cooperation is a better strategy than competition.

Chris - to address how our assumptions are applied incorrectly to others, Chris gave an example of how there may be more than one reason entering into a decision. For example, the decision of what route to take when driving to someone's house could be influenced by the distance, the number of traffic lights on a direct but busy route, the number of taverns along the route which someone would need to consider if they were recovering alcoholic, and the amount of alone time that someone would want in preparation for the meeting. By asking men to ask their partners to describe why they drive in a particular route, we learned that our assumptions are often false.

Lillie - described a role play in which men break into two groups as employers and workers and discuss a labor negotiation. Then they break up into groups of employers and then groups of workers to discuss the same issues. By having experience in both groups and then having experience in the group together men learn better about power and privilege. This activity is adapted from Paul Kivel's book Men's Work and is called Whose Up? Whose Down?

Michael - described an activity in which men debate the pros and cons of a particular issue or case that may have been recently described in the newspaper. Men are assigned to teams and that are asked to explain at some point in the process what their reasoning and rationale is. This requires them to adopt other's perspectives and appreciate other viewpoints besides their own.

Chris - redefining sexual abuse. When asked initially only 10 to 20 percent of men in Chris' groups admit to sexual abuse. When it is redefined to include things like affairs, pressuring sexual partner, coercion vs. seduction, and when rape has been defined as sexual coercion, more like 80-90 percent admit to this definition of broader abuse.

Michael - Michael has broken their program up into 2 groups. The first group is two- four months long and a type of educational group. The second group is longer, focused on process issues, and more open-ended. The first group gives the counselors a chance to see which men will flake out, thus preserving the second group's safety, consistency, and decreasing disruptions if some of these men drop out. The first group is essentially used as a screening group.

Chris - has found open groups far superior to close groups, which must be started from scratch each time from ground zero. It's easier for him to maintain a positive peer culture once it is started; older men see how much they've changed by comparing themselves to newer men in the group and this is reinforcing; it instills hope, encouragement in newer men and gives them possible role models; the new men click into the group quicker because of the safety that is provided.