

## Special Skills and Topics

**P**acebuilding is a life-long learning process. This chapter introduces some of the skills and topics important to women's work for peace. Trainers should work with members of the group to choose which sessions in this chapter fit the needs of each particular group. In a week-long training, it will be difficult to cover all of these topics. However, the group may decide to do one of these sessions per week over a period of several months after the core training to continue the learning and reflection process.

- Session 21 Women's Advocacy and Activism** focuses on strategies for balancing power and raising awareness of conflict issues
- Session 22 Women's Early Warning and Response** provides skills for women to use to identify the potential for violence
- Session 23 Women and Peacekeeping** gives women ideas for how they can reduce violence
- Session 24 Women and Trauma Healing** provides an overview of the concepts and skills of trauma healing
- Session 25 Counseling Victims of Domestic Violence** outlines positive ways women can counsel each other
- Session 26 Creating a Women's Agenda for Formal Peace Talks** provides a process for preparing women for peace talks
- Session 27 Using Ritual and Art in Peacebuilding** helps women think about how they can use ritual in their efforts to build peace
- Session 28 Women and Religion** examines the ways that women are both empowered and oppressed by religious institutions
- Session 29 Men as Partners in Women's Empowerment** looks at how women and men can work together in peacebuilding
- Session 30 Women Working with Women in Peacebuilding** addresses some of the challenges women face working with other women

# Women's Advocacy and Activism

Session

21

## Objectives

- To understand the need for advocacy and activism in peacebuilding.
- To learn how to create a strategy for advocacy and activism on women's issues.

**A woman is like a tea leaf. When she gets in hot water, she just gets stronger.**

**-Eleanor Roosevelt**

## Content

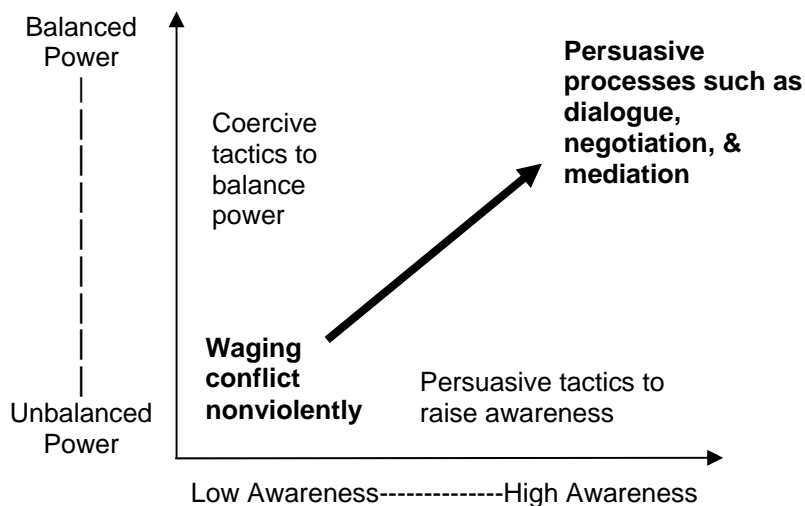
When women want to raise awareness or have their voices heard in public, they may use advocacy and activism to gain people's attention and respect. This session assists women in using advocacy and activism to raise women's concerns.

In some conflicts, dialogue, negotiation, and mediation are not possible. When the power differences between groups in conflict are great, the more powerful group may refuse to meet with their opponents because they feel no need to find a mutual solution. The group with lesser power may also resist dialogue, negotiation, or mediation because it can be interpreted as a sign of weakness or be seen as a betrayal to the cause of justice. In situations where citizens oppose their governments, citizens may find it difficult to find a forum where they can express their concerns and needs. Women in particular may find it difficult to get the attention of those in leadership positions since there are few women in leadership positions in any country. Since women are excluded from public and political

leadership in most countries, they have little alternative ways of voicing their concerns except by direct actions such as protests, sit-ins, and vigils.

Advocacy and activism are a set of strategies used to gain power and increase awareness on a set of issues to create social change. For example, before the Civil Rights Movement in the U.S., the African American community was seriously disempowered in relation to the white state and national governments. The Civil Rights Movement used demonstrations, vigils, pilgrimages, and sit-ins to create mass awareness of the injustices facing African Americans and to demonstrate the power of the Black community. Over a period of many years, the Civil Rights Movement “ripened” the conflict to a place where white leaders had to pay attention and negotiate with African Americans to address their concerns. As a result of many negotiations and court cases, segregation laws were changed, civil rights laws were enacted, and many white Americans began to understand and challenge the attitudes and structures of racism.

The following diagram gives a picture of how to determine conflict ripeness for different interventions. In the lower left corner of the graph, power is unbalanced and awareness is low. Activist strategies use a mix of coercion and persuasion to wage conflict nonviolently. If these strategies work, power becomes more balanced, awareness of issues increases, and building relationships to address the roots of conflict and violence through dialogue, negotiation, and mediation becomes possible.



(Adapted from Adam Curle. *Making Peace*. (London: Tavistock Press, 1971).

There are two key strategies in advocacy and activism:

1. Increase Power: Find a way to increase your power so that the opposing group feels a sense of interdependence with you and agrees to engage in a process of dialogue, negotiation, or mediation.
2. Raise Awareness: Find a way to increase support and awareness for your issues within the general public and the opposing group.

There are a variety of strategies for increasing power and raising awareness. They include stopping activities that you normally do and/or starting new activities.

### **Stopping Regular Activities:**

- Boycotts (or “Girlcotts” in this case☺) are campaigns where people avoid a particular activity until demands are met. Examples include economic boycotts of certain stores (no shopping there), boycotts of buses or trains (no riding), sex boycotts (withholding sex from your husband until demands are met), or cooking boycotts (not doing any cooking until demands are met)
- Strikes or work stoppages where people refuse to continue to function on their jobs causing a breakdown of public life until the issues are addressed.
- Withholding taxes from governments who do not address the concerns of citizens, particularly about military budgets.

### **Lysistrata**

Lysistrata is a character in a Greek play who began a “sex boycott” in an attempt to stop a war. She mobilized other women to refuse to sleep with their husbands until their husbands agreed to stop fighting.

### **Committing New Acts:**

- Protests and demonstrations with placards and chants to raise awareness of issues.
- Candle-light vigils and prayer services in public places to raise awareness of issues.
- Petitions to gather signatures on a list to show how many people are concerned about a certain issue.

- Sit-ins, stand-ins, pray-ins, sing-ins, etc where people go directly to a place where the conflict takes place and refuse to leave until their demands are met.

### **Liberian Women Sit-In to Advocate for Peace**

In April and May 2003, thousands of Liberian women used sit-ins to communicate their demands for a ceasefire, a productive dialogue between warring factions and civil society actors, and an international intervention force to monitor the ceasefire and human rights in Liberia. Women across Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Ghana coordinated their sit-ins for peace in Liberia. Liberian women in refugee camps held a sit-in on the football field of their refugee camp and alerted local press. Groups of Liberian women and their Ghanaian women supporters held a sit-in outside the Liberian Peace Talks being held in Ghana. In Liberia, thousands of women held an ongoing sit-in and candlelight vigil to promote their three demands. Liberian President Charles Taylor called the organizers to find out if they were advocating for a new government. The women had strategically chosen demands that did not call for the overthrow of their unpopular and militarily repressive President. Rather they made demands that would set the context for democracy and human rights to take root.

### **Women in Black**

The “Women in Black” movement began in Israel in 1987. Each Friday, mostly Jewish women gather in Jerusalem’s busiest intersections during rush hour, wearing black clothes to symbolize mourning. They stand in silence to oppose the Israeli occupation of Palestine. The Women in Black movement is now spreading around the world. In 1991, a Women in Black group began in Belgrade, Serbia to denounce the victimization of civilians throughout the Balkans. In the weeks before the 2003 U.S.-led war on Iraq, women wearing black joined together in silent protest in cities in the U.S. and around the world.

### **Nigerian Women**

Nigerian women have a long history of collective protest. The Women’s War of 1929 began when colonial officials tried to regulate the marketplace, one of the few places where women were in control. Tens of thousands of women used traditional ways of humiliating and shaming men: “sitting on a man” or challenging officials to impregnate them. In recent years, women have joined together to protest corporate oil companies who reap huge profits and give only a tiny fraction to the local communities.

Several principles of activism and advocacy contribute to success:

- Be clear of the goals and visions for change
- Be patient and committed to the long term process
- Join and support women's organizations and groups to build support bases
- Build teams of women organized to distribute and divide tasks; let every woman have a role and feel like she has a stake in the process
- Form strong alliances with men who share values, analysis and goals
- Form a wide base of support so that when you are challenged you can point to the "people power" behind you. For example, when Palestinian leader Hanan Ashrawi confronts a crowd she can say "You mess with me, you're messing with everybody."
- Use traditional notions of womanhood to your own interest. For example, in Latin America, women organized as "mothers" to draw on cultural values and respect for motherhood as detailed in the box below.

#### **"Motherist" Movements in Latin America**

Women in Latin America "responded to state violence and the "disappearance" of their children not with the expected passivity and meekness that their culture and their government demanded, but with outrage and single-minded purpose that took the military regimes by surprise. They invaded the streets and plazas, representative off the political realm and a male preserve, thereby politicizing and publicizing their "private" grief. They openly challenged the regimes, converging on the most visible and symbolic public places, defying the ban on public gatherings and claiming a space for themselves and their demands for justice..." As the women became powerful actors, states responded with vicious repression against the women. This backfired, as regimes lost all legitimacy and support and eventually collapsed under the pressure. As a group of mothers, the activists increased their protection from repression and strengthened opposition movements to the violent regime.

*From Women in War and Peace: Grassroots Peacebuilding by Donna Ramsey Marshall, U.S. Institute of Peace 2000.*

## **Activities**

In small groups, discuss experiences of advocacy or activism.

- a. Share experiences where dialogue, negotiation, or mediation were difficult or impossible because women did not have the power or public sympathy to address an issue.
- b. Define advocacy and activism and go over some of the strategies detailed in the content section.
- c. In small groups, ask participants to discuss the following:

- i. Reflect on the activism or advocacy strategies in your community or nation. Have they been effective in increasing power and public sympathy?
- ii. What other strategies may be employed to increase power and awareness about key women's issues in your community? How could women use advocacy and activism tactics more effectively?
- iii. Report back to the large group.

This session was designed by Lisa Schirch.

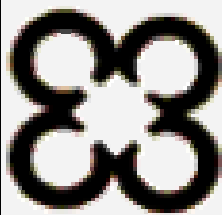
# Women's Early Warning of Violent Conflict

Session

22

## Objectives

- Identify key signals that signal the potential for violent conflict
- Learn how women can mobilize responses to early warning information



**Agyindawaru:** Literally: “the gong of Agyin.” The king of the Ashante people had a servant named Agyin. This symbol is named after him. Agyin sounded a gong to announce special events. Early warning of conflict is like sounding a gong to announce violence.

## Content

In many conflicts, women know that others are preparing for war. A woman may see her son, husband, or father go to the hills to meet other men planning an assault. Or she may see truckloads of arms enter her community at night, hear rumors of war in the marketplace, or sense a growing hatred and political exclusion among ethnic groups. This session examines women's roles as “early warners” – people able to warn others and mobilize responses to impending crises.

Gender analysis is important to early warning and response. Women and men have different experiences, and may be aware of different indicators of potential violence. Women and women's groups are important data collectors and analyzers.

## Women's Early Warning of Violent Conflict

### Goals of Early Warning and Response to Conflict

1. Identify activities that indicate people are preparing for war or violence
2. Collect data about these indicators from many people in many different places and levels of society
3. Analyze data and determine the possible meanings for best and worst case scenarios
4. Mobilize support and resources for addressing the conflict issues and provide a forum for political discussion to avert violence once data indicate the potential for violent conflict. This may include identifying the need for relief aid and humanitarian workers to prepare to intervene if violent conflict occurs.

### Early Warning Indicators

- Social, political, cultural, or economic exclusion or discrimination against some people and groups in society
- Increased income disparity, political oppression, restrictive laws, and human rights violations

### Indicators Linked to Women's Experience

- Few women in political office or public leadership positions.
- Increases in rape and domestic violence
- Increased amounts of women's jewelry for sale in markets as women prepare for and support war.
- Hoarding of supplies in preparation for war shortages
- Increases in media images of masculinity tied with violence
- Increases in the negative images of women in the media and public blaming of women for political or cultural betrayal
- Involvement of women in black markets and new war economies
- More women as the head of their households
- Lack of women's participation in civil society organizations and peace processes

From Susanne Schmeidl with Eugenia Piza-Lopez, "Gender and Conflict Early Warning: A Framework for Action." Swiss Peace Foundation and International Alert, July 2002.

As the war was brewing, women were up and about very early in the morning, getting all of their business done as quickly as possible. The markets were only open for a few hours because people were afraid. When the market was open for longer, it was a sign that things were getting back to normal.”

-Woman from Sierra Leone, *Women, War, and Peace*, p. 117

In the morning, if we see women coming down from the mountain, then we know it is safe to send our children to school. If we don't see women, we know that something may happen. They have been sent back by the men for a reason, and it is very possible that it is not safe.”

-Woman from Burundi, *Women, War, and Peace*, p. 117

An effort to disarm and demobilize armed men in Macedonia used media messages on TV and radios to connect demobilization with women's safety. The successful program connected men's responsibility to protect women with giving up their arms.

-*Women, War, and Peace*, p. 119

## Early Responses to Conflict

Gender equity is central to all peacebuilding initiatives, including those before violent conflict begins. NGOs need to address both men and women's unique needs. Support is needed to form women's peace movements and organization. Regional organizations can assist women in gaining a place in peace negotiations. Women need to be involved in deciding what kinds of responses are needed to prevent victimization of women in a war or post-war context.

## Activities

- 1. Defining early warning**
  - a. Go over the concept of early warning
  - b. Pass out the handout on “goals for early warning” and “early warning indicators” and go over it with the group
  
- 2. Discussing early warning in your community**
  - a. In small groups, ask participants to discuss how women are already providing or could provide early warning for violence in their community.
  - b. Ask participants to discuss how women can create structures and networks to gather information systematically in their community about impending violence.

This session was designed by Lisa Schirch.

# Women and Peacekeeping

Session

23

## Objectives

- To identify strategies for women to intervene in the midst of violence

## Content

Peacekeeping is a short-term peacebuilding strategy to separate the groups in conflict or to bring such pressure on them so that they will stop fighting. Peacekeeping aims to reduce violence. This session explores how women can be effective peacekeepers in their communities.

There are many different forms of peacekeeping. Military peacekeeping carried out by the United Nations or regional organizations such as the African Union are only one form. Civilian peacekeeping is done by non-governmental groups who make a moral or religious commitment to reducing violence.

Civilian groups have entered the civil wars in Nicaragua, Guatemala, Sri Lanka, Bosnia and other places. Civilian peacekeepers try to reduce violence by walking in between warring groups, by accompanying people whose lives are threatened, and by being a presence in towns and cities under attack. They also monitor and report on the levels of violence.

Civilian peacekeepers do not use the power of guns. They must assess their ability to stop war in each situation. International civilian peacekeepers may be able to reduce violence in some situations where warring parties depend on support from

the international community, since the lives of internationals within these war zones would be somewhat protected. In other situations, religious leaders make effective civilian peacekeepers because of their moral and spiritual power.

In many cultures, women have a history of being peacekeepers. Throughout Africa there are stories of women walking between warring tribes. In some societies, women would walk naked or lift their skirts to the warring tribes as a way of bringing shame and a curse on them for fighting. In other parts of the world, women have created “peace zones” where they can keep their children safe. Peace zones are established through negotiated agreements with all combatants who agree to avoid fighting in certain areas.

At the interpersonal and family level, peacekeeping is also required. Efforts to reduce violence against women around the world use civilian peacekeeping as a way of keeping women safe. In Washington, D.C., a neighborhood group known as the “orange hats” patrol city streets at night so that women and others may feel safe walking around.

### **Keeping the Peace Inside Sudanese Homes**

A southern Sudanese women’s group realized that one of their members had become silent, depressed, and was obviously troubled. Upon questioning, they learned that her husband was physically abusing her. Almost every day, he beat her immediately after he arrived home in the evening. The woman felt powerless to stop the beatings. The women decided to intervene to assist their sister. One afternoon, twenty of them went to the small house where the woman and her husband lived. The husband had not yet arrived home. The women sat silently until the husband arrived. When the husband arrived, the women did not speak to the man, but continued to sit quietly. He looked at them, then went to his bed without speaking. After a time the women left, saying to the man as they left, “if necessary, we will return.” The man never beat this wife again.

### **Women in UN Peacekeeping Missions**

Research from the United Nations shows that a “critical mass” of women staff in UN peacekeeping missions seems to correlate with increased success in other forms of peacebuilding such as formal peace talks. It also focuses attention on human rights and gender issues in the code of conduct for peacekeepers and contributes to an environment of compassion, nonviolence, listening and learning, stability, and morality in the peace process. In addition, substantial numbers of women peacekeepers in a force correlate with increased confidence and trust among the local population, improved ability to use dialogue and negotiation to diffuse potentially violent situations in the local context, and a transformation of discriminatory views and stereotypes of women in the host country.

-from “The Role of Women in United Nations Peace-Keeping,” *Women2000* December 1995.

## Activities

1. Explain the idea of peacekeeping and how women and other civilians may help stop acts of violence.
2. Read the case study of peacekeeping in a domestic violence situation in Sudan in the box above out loud. Reflect on what happened:
  - a. What forms of power were the women using to stop the violence?
  - b. Why did the man never beat his wife again?
3. In small groups, identify the most dangerous places for women in your community. What forms of peacekeeping might be appropriate in these areas? Who should be involved in the peacekeeping?

This session was designed by Lisa Schirch.

# Women and Trauma Healing

Session

24

## Objectives

- To define trauma and trauma healing
- To identify a variety of strategies for addressing women's trauma

## Content

Women's experience of trauma during violent conflict creates a set of physical, emotional, and psychological needs. Since many women experience direct violence at some point in their lives, either in their own homes or as an assault by a stranger, most women peacebuilders are themselves wounded in some way. This session helps participants identify the types of trauma healing women need in order to function effectively as peacebuilders in both their family and community.

### **What is trauma?**

The word 'trauma' comes from a Greek word meaning "wound." Trauma is an event or series of events that cause severe physical, emotional, or spiritual injury.

### **What kinds of trauma do women experience?**

The session on women and violence explores the many ways women are victimized both by family members and their communities in times of "peace" and during violent conflict. Sometimes women experience trauma at a specific moment or period in time. These are "specific traumas." Other women experience trauma as a regular part of their lives. These are called "chronic traumas."

## **Specific Traumas**

- War
- Loss of child or husband
- Rape
- Torture
- Emotional and mental distress by physical displacement or refugee status (80% of refugees around the world are women)

## **Chronic Trauma and Stress**

- Domestic Violence
- Domestic Rape
- Media Violence
- Living in a patriarchal society that values women's lives and experiences less than men's

## **What is trauma healing?**

Specific traumas require short-term trauma healing interventions. Chronic trauma and stress require ongoing, regular processes to help women recover from trauma. Here is a list of common trauma healing processes for women:

- Female medical professionals who can attend to rape, abuse, and torture victims.
- Individual and/or counseling with a mental health professional
- Sharing sessions for groups of women
- Prayer and healing services with candles and other rituals

Trauma prevention is part of trauma healing. Trauma prevention keeps traumatic reactions from escalating once a tragedy has happened and works at root causes so it doesn't happen again. Trauma prevention focuses on peacebuilding at the societal level so that the causes of trauma do not reoccur.

### **Mending Women's Hearts in Sierra Leone**

"Mending Hearts" is a program for women who were raped or violated. The program includes rituals or ceremonies to help "clean" a woman after rape or incest. Women friends help wash the rape survivor and clean them on the outside. The group creates a safe space for women to cry and clean out the inside of themselves as well.

## **Women and trauma healing:**

Trauma awareness and recovery is both a decision and a process. Trauma recovery does not occur step by step in a uniform order. People may go through different elements of trauma healing at different times. Victims need to know the paths available to them to move toward healing. Like the medical field, the best trauma healing processes are not only cure trauma, they also prevent future trauma by

helping people move out of the cycle of revenge and violence.

### **Elements of Trauma Healing**

- Naming the trauma and working through emotions
- Forming meaningful relationships with others
- Finding spiritual meaning
- Re-establishing a sense of personal integrity and control
- Seeking root causes of the trauma and working to alleviate them

There is a tension between the powerful urge to deny trauma, to not speak about the unspeakable, and the great need to have others listen to and publicly recognize the experience of trauma and victimhood. Women need a safe place to tell the truth of what happened to them. In Truth and Reconciliation processes, organizers need to ensure that they create a protected space for the telling of the very personal and sexual nature of crimes against women.

### **The Role of Ritual in Trauma Healing**

All cultures have rituals to help people deal with trauma. All cultures have funerals, for example, to help people deal with the loss of a loved one. Many people who are traumatized find it difficult to talk about their trauma. It may be too painful for words to express. Ritual is a way of communicating that does not involve words. Many people find it healing to use ritual to symbolically address grief and trauma. Rituals engage participant's sense of smell, taste, sight, and touch in the trauma recovery process. Rituals also create a place for the safe expression of emotion.

Ritual can be used in trauma healing to do the following:

- To create a safe space through candle light, prayers or other rituals so that people feel safe to express their emotions and share their trauma
- To enable people affected by trauma to express the pain of trauma through symbols or symbolic actions rather than words
- To transform people's sense of their identity from victims of trauma to survivors of trauma.

#### **Ritual as Trauma Healing**

One woman who experienced severe sexual abuse as a little girl decided that she needed to create a ritual to help her move on from the experience of being a victim. She wanted to see herself as a survivor. She decided to hold a funeral for one of her childhood dresses that represented the way she had lost her childhood to the sexual abuse. She had a coffin made for the childhood dress and invited her closest friends. Together they mourned the loss of her childhood and how the little girl inside her that had been so victimized had died. After the funeral, the woman announced that she was a *survivor* rather than a victim of sexual abuse. For her, the ritual of a funeral was part of her recovery process.

## **Women's Groups as Trauma Healing**

Women have a tradition of meeting together to heal themselves and others. When women meet together in this way, they become very powerful. During the Middle Ages, the Church and State became so fearful of women's powers of healing, even though they were often based on Christian prayer and natural herbs, that they killed up to nine million women in Europe during the so-called "witch hunts" for practicing midwifery and healing within women's groups.

Today modern society provides few if any spaces where women can meet alone to focus on healing themselves and addressing problems in their lives. Many women feel isolated and alone and do not have regular contact with other women in a safe space where they can talk. The practice of meeting together with other women on a regular basis is returning to many societies. When women meet with other women to share our traumas and stress, we become our own healers. Women meet together in many cultures in churches, mosques, temples, huts, or in living rooms. In North America, the women's movement is based on women's groups. Women's groups are also called "birth centers for social change," "patriarchy-free zones" or "consciousness-raising groups." They are places where women can learn about women's history, women's issues, and feminism.

Women's circles are a unique space set apart from regular, everyday life. It can be a "patriarchy-free zone" where women can freely express themselves and feel empowered. Women's circles allow the expression of emotions and the use of symbols instead of words to express the pain of trauma. Women's circles help women build relationships where they feel empowered to act together to change the conditions that lead to trauma.

### **Activities**

#### **1. Introducing basic concepts**

- a. In the large group, write the word "trauma" at the front and ask participants to call out words they associate with that word. Ask the large group to define the difference between "stress" and "trauma". Share other insights into trauma based on the content reading above.

#### **2. Responding to Trauma**

- a. In the large group, make a list of the ways women respond to trauma.
- b. In small groups, discuss what kinds of programs or services women need to deal with trauma.
- c. Reflect on the importance of creating spaces in your lives where you can share your stories with supportive women who have also experienced trauma in their lives.
- d. Review the 'elements of trauma healing' detailed in the content section.

### **3. Sharing about Trauma**

- a. If the group did not share personal stories of violence against women in session 13, consider that activity for this session. If the group did the personal sharing activity earlier, ask the group to form pairs to process their stories with the skills and knowledge from this session. In pairs, ask people to do the following:
  - i. Briefly review their story
  - ii. Talk to each other about how they have addressed the trauma of the violence against them,
  - iii. Discuss the important elements in their own trauma healing path.Debrief this activity with the large group to gain new insights.

This session was designed by Lisa Schirch.

# Counselling Victims of Domestic Violence

Session

# 25

## Objectives

- To identify how women can counsel victims of domestic violence.
- To practice counseling skills with other participants in the workshop.

## Content

In many communities around the world, women do not have adequate resources for addressing the trauma of domestic violence. All women involved in peacebuilding will most likely encounter women in their organizations and groups who have experienced domestic violence. This session helps women peacebuilders develop basic skills in counseling women victims of domestic violence.

Counseling is increasingly a professionalized art. Yet women have been counseling and consoling each other over domestic violence for as long as it has existed. In many cities, there are professional counselors for rape and abuse victims. These may be medical professionals, mental health professionals or religious leaders. While these people have years of training to guide them in their counseling of victims of domestic violence, many other people will encounter victims without this type of background.

The elements of trauma healing were detailed in the last session. The handout on the next two pages gives some specific ideas about how to respond to women who have been abused.

## **Guides for Counseling Victims of Domestic Violence**

### **1. Listen and ask questions.**

Women may have a hard time talking about violence against them. Women may be vague or unclear about the violent events. As a counselor, you can listen patiently. Be comfortable with long silences. Ask questions about the abuse, such as:

"Are you in danger?"

"What does he do when he gets angry?"

"Are you worried about the safety of you and your children?"

Listen to the woman and understand her situation. Uncover abuse. Recognize panic and fear. Take seriously her assessment of a life-threatening situation and the potential danger to her from her husband's violence. Do not discount her fears that he may try to kill her if she leaves, or that if she stays she may be killed.

### **2. Believe her.**

Women who have experienced violence in the home may minimize or make excuses for the violence. They may fear not being believed or being blamed for the abuse. Telling you the story of the violence in her life is probably embarrassing for her. She is not likely to exaggerate.

### **3. Affirm her.**

Respond with affirmation and without judgment to a battered woman. Let her be your teacher and educator. You be the listener. Listen without assigning blame.

### **4. Challenge the violence.**

It is often difficult for victims of domestic violence to come forward because of our tendency to "victimize the victim." It is important to state clearly that violence is not acceptable and not ask a woman questions such as "What did you do to provoke him?" A battered woman is not responsible for the violence in her relationship. Confront her with the reality of the situation: she can't make him stop and neither can you. She can, however, declare that she will leave if he does it again, or that she will not come back until he gets help.

### **5. Help discover and develop her own resources.**

Encourage her to name the personal resources she has to deal with the situation. Does she have any money, friends, relatives who will help, employment? Encourage her to make contact with the nearest shelter. The battered woman must make her own choices and make them in her own time. Support her even if you disagree with her decision. If she decides to stay in the relationship, it is appropriate to share with her your concern for her safety and to discuss ways she can increase her safety. It is not appropriate for you to tell her what she has to do or should do. Beware of your tendency to want to rescue the woman. It is important that she make her own choices, whether to stay or leave, and how to do it.

### **6. Ask about her children.**

Are they being abused by either her husband or her? Does she want this kind of future for them? Sometimes concern for the welfare of her children can motivate a woman to act for her own safety too.

### **7. Try to involve her in a domestic violence program.**

Give her information about the support programs available to her. In addition a woman

counselor, a lay religious leader or woman's group can provide the further support that she may need to deal with her situation.

### **8. Continue to support her**

It is important that you not give a battered woman resources and then exit the scene. Maintain contact by checking with her periodically to see how she is doing and offer more information on resources.

### **9. Assure confidentiality**

Let her know that you will not discuss this matter with anyone else without her permission. Agree that you will not call on her at home and bring up the subject. Doing either of these may increase her danger as well as increase her fear and distrust.

### **10. Give her the gift of time and be prepared for frustration.**

A battered woman needs time to sort through a lot of religious, social, emotional and economic issues. She deserves time and patience from you as she does this. Provide support and help her rebuild her sense of self-worth, self-confidence and the belief that she can make it on her own.

### **11. Gently address self-blame**

Respectfully offer alternatives to her understanding of the abuse if she blames herself. If you say "I am confident that God does not want you to suffer" or "I do not believe that God is punishing you for sin" you may help her find a way to resist self-blame and take action for her self-protection.

If the victim is feeling that she must forgive the abuser and stay in the abusive situation, respectfully suggest that if abuse is ongoing, it means that the abuser has not repented and that therefore forgiveness is not appropriate. You may suggest that forgiveness is the end, not the beginning of the healing process.

### **What to do if confronted by the abuser**

Any information shared by a victim about her assailant's behavior must be considered confidential in order to guard her safety. Confrontation with abusers by untrained practitioners may endanger victims. If the abuser confronts you, remember he may vehemently deny any wrongdoing and may not even be able to remember the episodes of violence.

You will need to be patient with him, yet unrelenting in your statements that the violence must cease today. The abuser may have a long history of violence in his own family and will need help in seeing his behavior clearly and beginning to identify the patterns of violence in his life. This should be a learning process to effect change and NOT an exercise in finding excuses for the violent behavior. There is no short term solution to the life of violence; therefore it should be your goal to involve him in a batterer's program as soon as possible.

-Adapted from *Franciscan Peacemakers website on Domestic Violence* at [www.franpax.org/flclergy.html](http://www.franpax.org/flclergy.html)



Trauma healing is like a long journey toward an unknown destination. Counselors can walk with victims for part of that long journey so that the victims know they are not alone.

*Image: Asha Kaji Thaku*

## Activities

### 1. Reviewing counseling skills

- a. Pass out the handout on counseling victims of domestic violence.
- b. Ask participants to take turns reading the suggestions.
- c. Ask participants to comment on the handout, make additions, or changes to fit into their culture.

### 2. Victimization Exercise

- a. In pairs, describe in detail an experience you have had as a victim. Each partner should ask the other about what happened using as many of the skills from the handout as well as the questions below to guide the conversation. You will not be asked to share these stories in the larger group and each group of pairs should assure each other of confidentiality.
  - i. What happened?
  - ii. What did you think about while it was happening?
  - iii. Who did you tell?
  - iv. Who did you decide not to tell?
  - v. How did you feel?
  - vi. What did you do?
  - vii. What were the immediate after effects?
  - viii. What were/are the long term effects?
  - ix. What is it like to remember it now?

*(Adapted from Susan Schechter's exercise for training rape crisis volunteers.)*

- b. Debrief in the large group. What did it feel like to listen to someone's story of a trauma? What did you do to practice your counseling skills? What were your strengths? What was challenging?

This session was designed by Lisa Schirch and draws from the Franciscan Peacemakers Domestic Violence Program.

# Creating a Women's Agenda for Formal Peace Talks

Session

26

## Objectives

- To identify women's needs in peace settlements
- To identify women's capacity for leadership in peace talks
- To create a women's charter to articulate women's needs and ideas

## Content

After war or civil violence, formal peace talks aim to bring together important leaders of armed groups to negotiate a ceasefire and then create a political solution to the causes of the violence. Women are often left out of formal peace talks. Since the leaders of armed groups are almost always men, it is predominantly male leaders who are negotiating the end to the wars and designing the post-war political leadership. Some women who have tried to participate in peace talks have been discouraged, ridiculed, or completely blocked from participating.

Having women at the peace table provides an opportunity to make advancements on women's issues and rights. For women, the peace table becomes a platform for addressing social injustices against women.

The peace table involves intense bargaining and "deal making" that requires intuitive and practiced skills. These skills are important to both male and female negotiators. Some believe the skills women have acquired from being caretakers and mothers managing children, the sick, and elderly enhances their abilities to engage at peace talks. Liberian women's leader Ruth Perry states that the influence she had over the warlords during peace negotiations came from the trust she got from her role as a mother. She said

“they considered me an experienced mother with many children.” She described herself as a disciplinarian to the warlords and told them no side could renege on agreements that had been reached during peace talks.

Some scholars who have experienced women at the peace table note that their presence makes a difference: women model good communication, respect and cooperation. However, there has not been any consistent research on this since so few women participate in peace talks.

While women’s identities and skills as mothers and relationship-builders may allow them to have a positive influence on peace talks, it is also helpful for them to have acquired and practiced negotiating skills, to be aware of negotiating strategies, and to have a women’s agenda for peace talks.

### **Women in the Burundian Peace Talks**

Women’s participation in the Burundian peace process increased significantly when the organizers from the Mwalimu Nyere Foundation invited UNIFEM to brief the negotiating parties and facilitation team on how gender relates to peace accords. Experts from other countries who have made peace accords, such as Guatemala and South Africa, shared advice on how gender impacts land rights, governance, resettlement, refugee reintegration and other post-war programs. UNIFEM helped to convene the first All Party Burundi Women’s Peace Conference where more than 50 Burundian women developed a common vision for peace and presented it to the facilitator, former President Nelson Mandela. Many of their recommendations, including punishment for sexual crimes against women, measures to increase women’s security, and equal education for girls and boys, were included in the final peace accord. It demonstrated that women’s participation in peace talks makes a significant difference.

-from *UNIFEM at Work Around the World* on Security Council Resolution 1325. Women, Peace, and Security. UNIFEM p. 2.

In October 2000, the United Nations Security Council unanimously passed Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security, urging its member states to ensure the full inclusion of women in all aspects of international peace and security processes. Resolution 1325 is the most comprehensive UN resolution to date on the role of women in peacebuilding activities. 1325 urges member states to include more women at all levels of decision making and field operations related to conflict resolution.

## **Resistance and Challenges to Women’s Participation in Peace Talks**

Male negotiators may exclude women intentionally. In other cases, women do not participate in formal peace talks for unintentional reasons. In the Somali peace talks of 2003 for example, women’s groups simply did not have enough money to send representatives to the peace talks that continued over many months. The list below details both the intentional and unintentional exclusion of women from peace talks.

### **Political Constraints**

- Participants at peace talks may be composed only of the “warring parties” and women may be excluded from fighting or deliberately choose not to participate in the fighting.
- In peace talks that do include civil society actors in addition to the warring parties, participants may be representatives of different civil society organizations. If women are not organized into women’s groups, they may be excluded because they are not chosen as representatives from civil society.
- Women may not be organized into groups that can send representatives to the peace talks.

### **Cultural Constraints:**

- Women may be confined to the home and prohibited from using or developing leadership capacity during times of war or peace. Women’s exclusion from peace talks may reflect on social norms that restrict women from all forms of political process.
- Men may actively exclude women from peace talks because women are often stereotyped as “too emotional” and not able to think rationally.
- Women’s involvement in politics is sometimes seen as a direct threat to culture and tradition.
- Women’s involvement is thought to make women more vulnerable by exposing them to potentially dangerous situations.
- While new roles may be accepted during crises, after the fighting is over and official peace processes begin, women may be encouraged to return to their traditional roles.
- Women may be threatened for their involvement in politics.

### **Economic Constraints**

- Women often lack the economic resources to mobilize themselves to participate in peace processes.
- Women’s groups may not have the funding to send representatives to take part in the formal peace talks.

### **Experiential Constraints**

- Women may lack the political experience to know how to become involved in official peace processes.
- Women may lack education and so may be at a disadvantage in terms of the skills and knowledge needed to participate.

### **Crying for Representation in Burundi**

During the Burundi peace talks, one of the male delegates said “The women are not party to this conflict. This is not their concern. We cannot see why they have come, why they bother us. We are here and we represent them.” Women’s groups continued to press for representation at the peace talks. At one point, they held a “cry-in” in front of the building where the negotiations were taking place. The men inside heard the women’s sobs and asked the women to explain what they were crying about. Representatives of the women’s group informed the male negotiators that they were crying for everyone they had lost in the war, everything that had been lost, for the loss of hope in their future, and for their exclusion from the negotiating table where they might have a say in their country’s future.

### **Women Press for Inclusion in Cote d’Ivoire Peace Talks**

In November 2002, the civil war in Cote d’Ivoire was escalating at an alarming pace. Ongoing peace talks were being held in other West African countries. The peace talks did not include any women representatives. Women throughout the region began to encourage and assist Ivorian women in their struggle to gain representation in the peace talks. The West African Women in Peacebuilding Network annual conference in Dakar, Senegal issued a statement calling Ivorian leaders and regional organizations to include women in the peace talks. Resolution 1325 gives women’s groups a powerful tool to call upon in situations where women are intentionally or unintentionally excluded from formal peace talks.

### **Northern Ireland Peace Negotiations**

Women in Northern Ireland worked across lines of conflict to create the Northern Ireland Women’s Coalition, an official political party that won two seats at the negotiation table. The women started by agreeing on their common ground: a search for human rights, equality and inclusion. The group was able to get these three values represented in the Good Friday Peace Agreement in addition to a provision for victims and the establishment of a civilian forum.

### **The Liberian Women’s Vision for Peace**

Women in Liberia joined together to develop a common statement of their vision for Peace. They spread the message of this text to everyone they could and worked tirelessly to encourage armed groups to lay down their weapons.

“Our vision for peace in this land that was given to us by God and based on our

experiences of the past is that Liberia will be a place where collective ownership, patriotism, and increased solidarity will be the hallmark.

A society where an enabling environment will be created for citizens to be actively involved in the development process irrespective of social and economic status.

A society where the rights of people are respected, justice, and good governance are prioritized.

A place where the youths will be considered stakeholders in issues that affect the society and their opinions will be respected and regarded.

A society where the basic needs of all will be met and children will be protected during armed conflicts.

A society where women will be given a chance to participate in decision making in society especially as it relates to conflict resolution and peacebuilding based on their respective qualifications. That women's roles and efforts in the nation building process will be respected and appreciated.

A society where structures would be put in place to constructively address community and national conflicts.

We believe that our vision cannot be realized without God's blessings and inspiration and without the collective efforts of every Liberian.

We are therefore calling on all peace loving citizens of this land given to us by God to join hands in making this vision a reality."

### **Assessing Women's Capacity for Participation in Peace Talks**

Not all women are equally capable of participating in formal peace talks. In some situations, warlords have brought in their silent, obedient girlfriends to represent women during peace talks because they wanted to appear like they were including women, but they wanted to ensure that they would be able to control what women said and how they participated in peace talks.

Women who have shown the capacity for leadership over time and are respected as leaders by their communities are most capable of making an impact at peace negotiations. However, women who have been victimized during war or survived great hardships can give powerful testimonies to women's concerns and needs. These women also should have a voice in formal peace talks.

The Nairobi Peace Initiative-Africa (NPI-Africa) has helped women in Somalia, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo and other African countries develop an agenda for their participation in formal peace talks. Before deciding to help women's groups, NPI-Africa makes an assessment of women's capacity for participation.

They look at the following factors to assess the women's power and capacity for participation:

1. The history and development of women's organizations in the region.
2. The perception of these women's groups and their leaders by the wider communities where they work.
3. Their financial capacity to send representatives to peace talks.
4. Their vision for what they would like to do at the peace talks and how they want to participate.
5. Their "plan B" or their alternatives if they are not allowed or able to participate in formal peace talks. What are the women's best alternatives to participating in the peace talks? What will they do if they do not succeed in the negotiations or get only part of what they ask for?

## Activities

### 1. Introductory Discussion

In the large group, facilitate a discussion on the following questions:

- a. Do women in your region of the world participate in formal peace talks when your countries are at war?
- b. If they do, who do they represent? Are women's groups represented at the peace talks? If there are women there, do they legitimately represent women's interests or are they token representatives?

### 2. Developing a Strategy to Overcome Obstacles to Women's Participation in Peace Talks

- a. In the large group, identify the obstacles to women's participation in formal peace talks in your region. As you identify obstacles, write them down. Are there political, economic, cultural, and experiential constraints on the list?
- b. Pass out the handout on "Resistance and Challenges to Women's Participation in Peace Talks" and discuss it.

### 3. Creating a Women's Agenda for Formal Peace Talks

There are several steps needed to assist women in developing an agenda for formal peace talks. These steps are outlined below, and draw on skills offered in previous sessions. This activity could in fact be an agenda for an entire workshop. It could also be completed in an afternoon if time is limited.

- a. **Expectations and Hopes:** What do women want to accomplish by participating in the peace talks?

- b. **Fears:** What do women fear about participating in peace talks? What is a “worst case scenario” for the peace talks?
- c. **Current Situation:** What are women’s experiences during the war? What are the major problems for women?
- d. **Women’s Responses:** What are women already doing to address the problems they have identified?
- e. **Identifying Gaps:** What are the gaps between women’s concerns and what is already happening?
- f. **Goals:** What are the specific goals women have to address existing problems?

Divide the allotted time to address each of these topics. Facilitate a large group discussion or divide into small groups to develop a women’s agenda for formal peace talks.

This session is based on the work of the John Katunga, Florence Mpayei, and Berewa Jommo of the Nairobi Peace Initiative-Africa, Rita Litwiller, and Lisa Schirch.

# Using Ritual and Art in Peacebuilding

Session

# 27

## Objectives

- To raise awareness about the capacity of ritual for communication and transformation in peacebuilding processes
- To foster skills in using ritual to address trauma and conflict

## Content

Communication experts estimate that between 65-80% of human communication is nonverbal. Yet peacebuilding relies heavily on verbal methods of communicating about conflict. This session explore how to communicate about peace through ritual.

Symbols can bridge cultures. Artists create images, songs, or poetry that captures shared human experience. The act of eating together, a daily ritual in all cultures, can be shared. Ritual is... space, communication, transformation.

**Space:** Rituals take place in a unique social space, set aside from normal life. Ritual takes places at special times and places that set it apart from everyday life.

**Communication:** Ritual is a way to communicate through symbolic actions using bodies, senses, emotions, and symbols rather than words. Sometimes words cannot capture the complexity of our feelings. In ritual, people communicate and learn by doing. There is a preference for nonverbal communication using bodies, senses, and emotions rather than words. Communication theorists claim between 60-80% of communication is non-verbal. Education theorists argue there are “multiple forms of

intelligence” and “multiple ways of knowing.” Ritual communicates through emotions and using all the senses (tasting, touching, hearing, seeing, and smelling). Ritual includes potent images, objects, and actions that are significant to participants and have the effect of transforming the way people see the world. Particular symbols become important ways of remembering or reliving traumas as well as the recovery process. These special symbols are objects, persons, or actions that “sum up” the whole experience.

**Transformation:** Ritual marks and assists the process of personal and relational change or transformation. Ritual gives people a “prism” or a new way of looking at themselves, their identity, their experiences, and their relationships with others. Ritual can heal wounded identities when it helps people move from seeing themselves as victims toward seeing themselves as survivors. Or it can create new identities, such as when former enemies agree to work together as peacebuilders in their community. Ritual can create a constructive pathway for expressing conflict between groups. Groups engaged in violent conflict may decide to create a ritualized game, sport, or festival where they compete with each other in less deadly, more creative ways.

## Types of Ritual

While many people think of rituals as formal and traditional, all rituals are created at some point in time to fill some perceived need in a community. Female genital mutilation (FGM) is an unhealthy, violent ritual. FGM has not always existed: it was created by people who thought women’s sexuality needed to be controlled. Not all rituals are beneficial to a community, even though people in the community may think they are. Ritual is a powerful tool that can be used for constructive or destructive purposes. Women can use traditional rituals or create new rituals to assist in the process of peacebuilding.

- ◆ **Formal:** High awareness of ritual (Catholic Mass)
- ◆ **Informal:** Low awareness of ritual (eating meals together, dancing)
- ◆ **Traditional:** Long history of the ritual
- ◆ **Improvised:** New ritual material that has not been performed before
- ◆ **Religious:** Rituals whose meaning is tied explicitly to religious themes
- ◆ **Secular:** Ritual's whose meaning is tied more to non-religious, everyday themes

## Spectrum of Types of Ritual

Formal-----Informal

Traditional-----Improvised

Religious-----Secular

## Examples:

Here are some examples of rituals useful in peacebuilding processes between groups in conflict:

- Eating meals and drinking together
- Traveling to a symbolic place together
- Singing and dancing together
- Working on a piece of art together
- Holding a silent candlelight vigil together
- Attending a religious service together
- Praying together
- Creating a graduation ceremony at the end of a workshop to mark the participant's new identities as peacebuilders

### Sudanese Women Sing for Peace

In Sudan, women compose songs calling for the war between the North and the South to be resolved through dialogue. They sing to call upon God and the leaders to focus their efforts on a just peace. They sing about saving their children from the evils of war.

-from "Women: Together for Peace." Babiker Badri Scientific Association for Women's Studies Issue No. 16. June 2001, p. 6.

## Activities

### 1. Large group discussion of ritual and peacebuilding

- a. How do you define ritual? Write down the words the participants use to describe it on a large sheet at the front.
- b. How are rituals used in peacebuilding in your community?

### 2. Developing ritual spaces for peacebuilding

Facilitate a discussion of the following questions:

- a. What kind of ritual space would be helpful for peacebuilding in your context?
- b. How does the size and shape of rooms or the geographic location of dialogue processes shape the kinds of discussions that will occur?

- c. How could the space you are in right now be changed to more fully nurture a sense of peace between people? Rearrange the room or space as much as possible. Reflect on how the changes feel.

### **3. Improving communication with ritual**

- a. How could ritual be used in your context to improve communication about the conflict?
- b. What symbols trigger a sense of trauma in the conflicts in your community?
- c. What symbols trigger your sense of hope and recovery from those conflicts?
- d. What could you do with these symbols that might tap into the power of ritual?

### **4. Discussing the power of ritual to transform**

- a. How could ritual be used to encourage transformation?
- b. How could a “ritual prism” help people see themselves, others, and the world in new ways?
- c. What rituals could help people heal their identity or change their understanding of themselves from victims to survivors of trauma?
- d. What rituals could help groups strengthen their relationships?
- e. Can ritual be used for the expression of differences between groups in conflict?

### **5. Spend time doing a ritual or singing a song**

- a. Ask participants if anyone knows of a ritual or a song that they would like to share with the group.
- b. The song “Healing River” found on the next page works well with women of different religions since God is referred to here as a “healing river.”
- c. Women may pass a bowl of water and wash each others hands and/ or throw water over their shoulders to symbolize putting their fears behind them and moving boldly into the future.

### **6. Develop a ritual for closing a women’s training or workshop.**

- a. Ask two participants to volunteer to help facilitate the discussion about how the group would like to end their workshop together. The goal is for them to create a symbolic ritual to end their time together.
- b. The two facilitators should help the group discuss what they want to do in the closing ritual.
  - i. How can the participants make a special space for the ritual?
  - ii. What do the participants want to communicate?
  - iii. What do the participants want to transform?
- c. Ask for volunteers to form a small group to continue the planning and involve others in leading the ritual.

This session was designed by Lisa Schirch.

## Song: O Healing River

Oh Healing River  
Send down your water  
Send down your water upon this land  
Oh Healing River  
Send down your water  
And wash the blood from off of the sand.

This land is parching  
This land is burning  
No seed is growing  
In the barren land

Oh Healing River  
Send down your water  
Oh Healing River  
Send your water down

Let the seed of freedom  
Awake and flourish  
Let the deep roots nourish  
Let the tall stalks rise  
Oh Healing River  
Send down your water  
Oh Healing River  
Send your water down.

# Women and Religion

Session

28

## Objectives

- To provide insight into the role of women in religion
- To examine the impact of religion on women's roles
- To examine how women can be constructive in religious conflicts

## Content

Many women place a high value on their religions. Religions can play an important role in women's empowerment. Yet most religions restrict the leadership and human potential of women. This session will examine the roles religion plays in women's lives as a cause of conflict and a resource for peace. Religion is a very sensitive issue and the session does not aim to alter people's religious beliefs but to open a dialogue on how women can be faith-based peacebuilders.

The roots of peacebuilding are often found in religious values and traditions that aim to nurture healthy relationships among people. While religion is often a source of conflict, religions also have teachings on and can be resources for peace. In many communities, religious leaders are peacebuilders.

Women have held prominent visible roles in all religions. Yet religion is used as a reason to prevent women from playing leadership roles. Can women play constructive roles in religious conflicts? If a religion restricts women's roles in society, then it may be difficult for women to be effective peacebuilders.

## Activities

1. In the large group, brainstorm responses to the question “How does your religion influence your desire to be part of peacebuilding?”
2. In small groups, discuss the following questions:
  - a. How does your religion empower women? What specific role models do you look to in your religion?
  - b. How does your religion disempower women? What specific teachings prohibit women from becoming leaders or using their talents?
3. In small groups of participants of the same religion, develop two role plays for exploring the role of religion in women’s lives.
  - a. Each group should develop a role play about how their religion hurts women. Assume that a woman or girl in the role play wants to go against a tradition justified by that religion. Ask each group to act out the scenario by assigning the roles of the women and the important figures in her life: parents, elders, religious leaders, sisters, and friends. Have the woman or girl approach each person in the role play to discuss her wish to break with tradition.
  - b. In the same small groups, develop a role play about how a woman or a group of women played prominent roles in a religious conflict that shows women with strong religious beliefs playing positive roles in a conflict.
  - c. Debrief both of these role plays

This session was designed by Thelma Ekiyor and Lisa Schirch with contributions from Hajiya Aisha Muse, Hajiya Zanies Bayer, Elizabeth Joseph and the International Fellowship of Reconciliation’s Workshop Kit on *Women and a Culture of Peace*.

# Men as Partners in Women's Empowerment

Session

29

## Objectives

- To explore the challenges and opportunities of working with men in peacebuilding

## Content

While there are great differences between men and women, there are also great differences among men and among women. Many women find that their greatest supporters are men. In the pursuit of peace, men and women need to work together. This session explores the opportunities and challenges women face in working with men in peacebuilding.

The challenges women face when working with men are as varied as the number of men they work with. Some men do not want women to be involved in peacebuilding. They may actively seek to exclude women from peacebuilding projects or they may try to disempower women who are already active. Some men feel threatened by women who act like their equals. Men may express their anger toward women's involvement in peacebuilding through direct aggression or passive aggression.

Other men are key supporters of women's roles in peacebuilding. Because men currently hold most leadership positions, they are in the position to give women opportunities to participate in peacebuilding. Some men support women's involvement in peacebuilding and are eager to work with women in creating peaceful communities.

Women use a variety of strategies to address men who want to exclude them from peacebuilding. They may confront men directly about their behavior or they may use a variety of paths to find a way to continue building peace despite the opposition. Many women have found it important to develop male allies in their work. Male allies can use their networks to support the work women do to build peace.

## Activities

### 1. Sharing Challenges

In pairs, take turns sharing two stories, one of a man who is currently empowering and supporting them and one of a man who is challenging or obstructing their ability to contribute to peacebuilding.

### 2. Overcoming Challenges

In the large group, ask participants to list strategies to use with men who obstruct their work. Make a list at the front of the room of the different strategies women suggest.

### 3. Implementation

In pairs, share how you might implement any of these strategies with the man who is currently obstructing your work. What will you do different the next time you see that person? What will you say or do? How can you find support from other men and women?

This session was designed by Lisa Schirch.

# Women Working as Partners in Peacebuilding

Session

30

## Objectives

- To understand conflict between women as normal and acceptable
- To provide insights into the various ways women express conflict
- To develop strategies for dealing with conflict between women

## Content

Women often work together very cooperatively. But women are not immune to conflict. Conflict is a normal part of all life. When women are in conflict with each other, it can be particularly painful as women expect that other women should empower rather than disempower or discriminate against them. Women peacebuilders need to find ways of being in conflict with other women that allow for the healthy expression of difference, jealousy, or competition while affirming the common ground between them.

Women and men have different ways of expressing conflict. As noted in earlier chapters, it is more acceptable in most cultures for men than women to express anger and argue with each other. Many women are encouraged to hide their anger. All humans have a full range of emotions, so even though women are encouraged to suppress their anger, it still finds a way of coming out. Women who hide their anger often express it in other ways. Some women express "passive aggression" through trying to hurt someone in an indirect way. This could be through not doing household chores or refusing to include someone in a group. Passive aggression is a way to communicate dislike and anger in a way that is socially acceptable for

women. However, it still creates a harmful dynamic because the real issues and sources of conflict cannot be addressed or discussed.

Women who want to control others often use manipulation to get others to do what they want. Women can manipulate both men and other women in a range of ways. When women want to make someone feel bad, they use manipulation including nonverbal cues like rolling eyes, not looking at someone, or excluding someone from social gatherings or meetings. Women can use manipulation to gain support of others by offering social and status rewards as well.

## Activities

### 1. Identifying Challenges

- a. In the large group, discuss whether women help to perpetuate their own oppression. How do women oppress each other and contribute to patriarchal systems?
- b. Define "passive aggression" and "manipulation." Ask the large group if they have ever seen this type of behavior.

### 2. Sharing Challenges

- a. In pairs, take turns sharing two stories, one of a woman who is currently empowering and supporting them and one of a woman who is challenging or obstructing their ability to contribute to their communities or using manipulation or passive aggression.
- b. Ask people to share with their partner how others pull them down in their own peacebuilding efforts.

### 3. Overcoming Challenges

- a. In the large group, ask participants to list strategies to use with women who obstruct their work.
- b. As the group, evaluate the different strategies. Which are most likely to be effective in your own lives?

This session was designed by Lisa Schirch.

## The Way Forward

**L**iving in a world where women’s lives, experiences, and abilities are valued less than men’s takes a daily toll on women’s self-esteem. Women around the world have resources to draw on to empower them to pursue their visions of peace. Women can also develop strategies to empower themselves and other women in building peace. This chapter highlights some of the specific challenges women often face in peacebuilding. It also provides an opportunity for women to assess their resources or “sources” of empowerment and to develop strategies for strengthening their ability and their capacity to build peace.

**Session 31: Women and Leadership** identifies strategies for helping women develop and promote their leadership

**Session 32: Creating Action Plans** provides a space for women to identify the needs in their communities, to discuss challenges and opportunities for women as peacebuilders, and gives ideas about how to form teams and timelines for accomplishing the work.

# Women in Leadership

Session

# 31

## Objectives

- To identify the importance of having women in leadership positions
- To understand the dilemmas and resistance to women leaders
- To discuss strategies for building the capacity of women to be leaders



*A good leader inspires others to have confidence in her. A great leader inspires people to have confidence in themselves.*

-Chrysalis leadership training for pioneering women

## Content

This session explores some of the attitudes that discourage women from becoming leaders as well as some specific strategies to help women empower themselves to be leaders.

In many places, women's leadership is restricted to raising children, providing education for children, running the household, and possibly engaging in selling and shopping for household goods. Males, on the other hand, are given leadership responsibilities for politics, security, and other public issues. When women show leadership or aspire to be

leaders in their workplaces, communities, or nations, they often meet resistance from other women and men who think they are either ‘too feminine’ or ‘too masculine’ to be a good leader.

### **Too Feminine**

In times of political transition and when there is suspicion of current male leaders, women leaders may be seen as less threatening and more appealing. In Latin America, women use the image of “supermadre” or supermother to gain political power and offer alternative political agendas. However, when women use existing gender definitions to gain office, it often becomes more difficult to address the traditional “male” issues of security and the economy.

### **Too Masculine**

Some women who have been able to obtain positions of political leadership are ridiculed for being too much like men. Some argue these “invisible women” or “honorary men” do little to advance women’s roles in society and may reinforce existing gender discrimination by resisting the inclusion of other women into leadership positions.

### **Power in Numbers**

Studies show that when individual women are in positions of leadership without the support or accountability of other women, there is little promotion of women’s concerns. In situations where women are vastly outnumbered by male politicians, men can be as or even more effective in promoting women’s concerns as women. As long as women are in the minority in political leadership in a country, it will be difficult to advance women’s concerns. The UN Division for the Advancement of Women claims a “critical mass” of 30-35% of women in leadership is needed to address such issues as domestic violence, gendered wage discrepancies, parental leave, etc. Some countries are now creating quota systems to ensure that women compose at least 30% of leaders at the national and regional level.

There is a growing awareness that when women and men share leadership, there is more attention to human rights, indigenous and national self-determination for minority groups, greater economic justice and environmental protection, broader ideas of security, and more attention to reproductive issues and population-planning policies. In other words, when women join men in leading their communities, regions, and countries, everyone benefits and real changes take place that support a just peace.

### **Self-Esteem**

Leaders need a healthy sense of self-esteem; a belief that they have something to contribute to their community. Because women often receive so many negative messages from others about their capacity to contribute, women may need to work specifically to strengthen their sense of themselves as able to be leaders.

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>
<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Threats or Challenges</b>

### **East Timorese Women in Politics**

Unifem supported a series of political skills training workshops for women in preparation for the 2001 elections in East Timor. 145 women were trained in the process of running for electoral office, the importance of women's participation in elections as both candidates and voters, and electoral campaigning skills. Women won 24 of 88 seats in the election- that is 27% of the Constituent Assembly in East Timor.

-from "UNIFEM at Work Around the World"

## Activities

1. **Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats (or Challenges) to women's leadership in peacebuilding**
  - a. Draw a SWOT chart, as diagramed above, in front of the group on large paper or pass out handouts for the 'SWOT' analysis.
  - b. In small groups fill out one square of the SWOT chart and just focus on the strengths, for example, or each small group can complete a whole chart by themselves.
  - c. Debrief in the large group by comparing charts or by asking each small group to present their square of the chart.
  - d. Review any of the content material that you find helpful to the group.
  - e. Discuss or reflect on the following questions:
    - i. How can we build on the strengths for women's leadership in peacebuilding?
    - ii. What specific activities could we develop to address the challenges to women's leadership in peacebuilding?
  
2. **Nurturing self-confidence**
  - a. Ask each person to close their eyes and think of a time when they acted with self-confidence. Ask participants to think about these questions: What allowed you to feel self-confident? How did you hold yourself physically? What did you look like to others? What do you need to do to feel self-confident, like you were in this specific instance, more often?
  - b. What specific actions could you take in the next month that would help you practice being self-confident?

This session was adapted from the Chrysalis Leadership Training for Pioneering Women

# Creating an Action Plan

Session

32

## Objectives

- To create a plan of action by and for the participants in the workshop

## Content

What happens next? This session gives women the opportunity to talk with each other about what they want to do as individuals or as a group to continue building peace. The reflection and activities help identify the needs in their communities.

Will this group of women meet again? Will they form small groups to work on projects together? Will they be prepared to respond to the next major conflict in their communities?

### **Sudanese Women Civil Society Network for Peace**

The Sudanese Women Civil Society Network for Peace is a non-political group of 21 women's organizations from different regions of Sudan. Sudanese women designed it to create a forum to share their ideas, experiences, and activities. The group holds forums to listen to women and creates space for dialogues. They formulate joint peace strategies and charters, hold trainings to build their capacity, and disseminate information.

## Activities

### 1. Designing Action Plans

- a. In small groups of 5-7 people, ask participants to brainstorm a list of ideas that women in the workshop could do individually or collectively to help build peace. Ask each group to record their ideas on separate sheets of notebook size paper and to tape these pieces of paper to the walls of the room. (Remove most of the other paper on the walls from the previous workshop sessions.)
- b. Ask each woman to put a mark next to the five ideas she thinks would meet the most needs for peacebuilding. Participants can use stickers or colored markers, or pencils. When all the women are finished voting, count the marks next to each idea and write the number of votes each idea received next to the idea in large print.
- c. Observe with the group which ideas were most popular. Ask people to select one group to do further brainstorming work. Get into these action groups to decide how to implement these ideas. Ask each group to choose two people to be their coordinators. Ask each group to define the project in more detail and to develop some goals with a timeline of steps to meet the goals.
- d. Each action group should present their ideas, goals, timelines, and coordinators to the larger group.

### 2. Building Women's Peace Networks

- a. In small groups, ask participants to identify existing women's networks in their region. Where are the places women meet each other?
- b. Ask the small groups to brainstorm ways women and women's groups could more effectively communicate and coordinate their activities with each other.
- c. Ask the small groups to explore how a women's peace network in their region could take some of the action steps identified above.
- d. In the large group, ask small groups to report their ideas.
- e. Encourage the large group to make some decisions about their next steps. Who will do what? When will it be done? Where will it take place?

This session was designed by Lisa Schirch.