

Trauma Recovery and Empowerment: A Clinician's Guide to Working With Women in Groups

Community Connections 1998

All Rights Reserved



The TREM Model

- ✦ 33 session intervention with a 24-29 session modification
- ✦ psycho-educational approach emphasizing empowerment and skill building
- ✦ holistic approach, connecting SA, MH and trauma

Rationale

- ★ Why this kind of trauma recovery group?
 - high prevalence rate
 - maximally inclusive, without the usual exclusion criteria
 - based on survivor empowerment and peer support and validation
 - educational and skill-focused without being overly didactic



Rationale (2)

- ★ Why this kind of trauma recovery group? (2)
 - an opportunity for safe, well-timed disclosure
 - accurate labeling of traumatic events
 - an opportunity for women to learn how to self-soothe, establish and maintain boundaries, and solve current problems



Process

- ✦ Collaborative input from over 25 clinicians
- ✦ Feedback and correction from several hundred group participants
- ✦ Over 3 years of field testing in multiple sites
 - mental health, substance abuse, corrections
- ✦ Rewriting and reworking of several sessions
- ✦ Expansion to a 33 session format based on participant requests



Philosophy

- ✦ Experiences of abuse shatter one's assumptions about self, others, and the world and form the core of a new meaning system
- ✦ Survivors of abuse experience the impact of that abuse throughout their lives in both obvious and also in more subtle and unexpected ways



Philosophy (2)

- ✦ Current problematic behaviors and symptoms may have originated as legitimate and even courageous attempts to cope with or defend against trauma



Context

- ✦ Institutional support
 - adequate space and resources
 - clinician time and supervision
- ✦ A trauma informed system
 - a commitment to avoid retraumatization
- ✦ Instrumental supports
 - transportation, phone reminders, child care
- ✦ A designated clinical support person
 - peer advocate, case manager, therapist

Group Format

- ★ Closed Group – Open Group Adaptation
- ★ Weekly Sessions of 75 Minutes
- ★ Four Part Intervention – Empowerment also as Stand-Alone
- ★ Each Topic Takes One Week
- ★ Two Co-Leaders
- ★ Minimal Group Rules



Advantages

- ✦ Peer support and modeling
- ✦ Contained and manageable exploration
- ✦ Strengths and recovery focused
- ✦ Present and future emphasis
- ✦ Fully manualized
- ✦ Self-help applications



TREM Leader Techniques

- ★ Leader style
- ★ Trauma specific education
- ★ General psycho-education
- ★ Session structuring
- ★ Activity
- ★ Empowerment and affirmation
- ★ Positive problem-solving
- ★ Question/comment ratio
- ★ Goal achievement



Empowerment

Part I (11 Sessions)

- ✦ Introduction to the Group
- ✦ What It Means to Be a Woman
- ✦ What Do You Know and How Do You Feel About Your Body
- ✦ Physical Boundaries
- ✦ Emotional Boundaries, Setting Limits, and Asking for What You Want



Empowerment Part I (11 Sessions)

- ★ Self Esteem
- ★ Self Soothing: Developing Ways to Feel Better
- ★ Intimacy and Trust
- ★ Female Sexuality
- ★ Sex With a Partner
- ★ Transition Session




Trauma Recovery Part II (10 Sessions)

- ✦ Gaining an Understanding of Trauma
- ✦ The Body Remembers What the Mind Forgets
- ✦ What Is Physical Abuse?
- ✦ What Is Sexual Abuse?
- ✦ Physical Safety




Trauma Recovery Part II (10 Sessions)

- ★ What Is Emotional Abuse?
- ★ Institutional Abuse
- ★ Abuse and Psychological and Emotional Symptoms
- ★ Trauma and Addictive or Compulsive Behavior
- ★ Abuse and Relationships




Advanced Trauma Recovery Issues Part III (9 Sessions)

- ✦ Family: Myths and Distortions
- ✦ Family Life: Current
- ✦ Decision Making: Trusting Your Judgment
- ✦ Communication: Making Yourself Understood
- ✦ Self Destructive Behaviors



Advanced Trauma Recovery Issues Part III (9 Sessions)

- ✦ Blame, Acceptance, and Forgiveness
- ✦ Feeling Out of Control
- ✦ Relationships
- ✦ Personal Healing



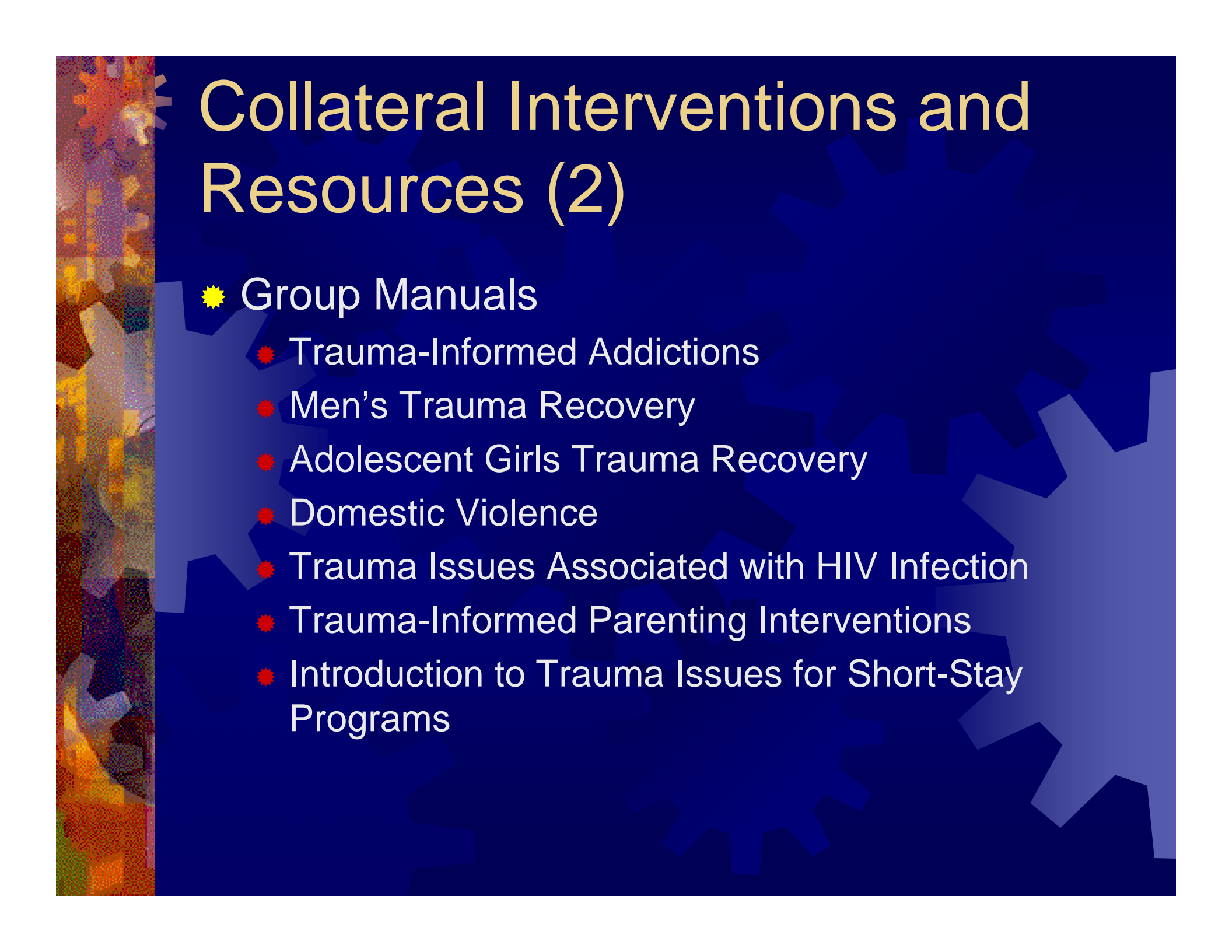
Part IV Closing Rituals (3 Sessions)

- ✦ Truths and Myths About Abuse
- ✦ What It Means To Be a Woman
- ✦ Closing Ritual



Collateral Interventions and Resources

- ✦ Self-help workbook
 - ✦ Healing the Trauma of Abuse
- ✦ Educational video
 - ✦ Women Speak Out
- ✦ Evaluating skill development for treatment planning
 - ✦ Trauma Recovery and Empowerment Profile (TREP) and TREP interventions



Collateral Interventions and Resources (2)

★ Group Manuals

- ★ Trauma-Informed Addictions
- ★ Men's Trauma Recovery
- ★ Adolescent Girls Trauma Recovery
- ★ Domestic Violence
- ★ Trauma Issues Associated with HIV Infection
- ★ Trauma-Informed Parenting Interventions
- ★ Introduction to Trauma Issues for Short-Stay Programs