

Who We Are

The Women's Therapy Centre Institute (WTCI) is a feminist psychoanalytic training institute that integrates contemporary psychoanalytic theory with an understanding of gender and the impact of culture on the individual. Since the early 1980s we have been re-evaluating traditional psychological theories to see how they pertain to women. The WTCI is committed to achieving diversity in our faculty, student body, population served, curriculum and public offerings. In 2004 members of the faculty and alumni began a social action project called **Connect and Change** to provide psychotherapy for women who have been the victims of intimate partner violence.

The Problem

Intimate partner violence, which affects people of all ages and sexual orientations from all ethnic, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds, is a major threat to women's health. In the United States, one in four women is likely to be abused by an intimate partner in her lifetime. This abuse results in an ongoing prevalence of major depressive disorders, post-traumatic stress, substance abuse, low self-esteem and demoralization. The children of these relationships often suffer insecure, disorganized and abusive attachments which predispose them

to enter an adult partnership characterized by abuse.

In New York City many women who leave their abuser go to a shelter where they receive mental health and other services. Once a woman leaves the shelter, however, her therapy ends and she is left on her own struggling to sustain distance from her abuser and to deal with enormous problems like inadequate housing, employment challenges, and childcare. For her safety, she must often move from her old neighborhood, leaving her with the added burden of lack of contact with supportive family and community members. Thus her ability to transition into independent living is at risk.

Women come to us for treatment from agencies that provide short term therapy or groups but not the ongoing, long term psychotherapy they need. In a time of serious cutbacks in social services it is even more difficult to find long term psychotherapy if you cannot pay.

Connect and Change

Each psychotherapist in **Connect and Change** makes a commitment to provide ongoing psychotherapy free of charge to one woman who has left an abusive relationship. We offer a solid therapeutic relationship in which the client can find support and help as she makes her way to a life separate from her abuser and as she deals with inadequate housing, economic and social supports.

At the same time we work with each woman to understand the dynamics of her relationship with the abuser and process the history and trauma of her abuse. This work is essential if she is to avoid returning to her abuser or entering a new abusive relationship. The children of these clients benefit as well from their mothers' treatment.

We are in touch with many of the city's social service agencies that refer domestic violence clients to us for psychotherapy. We in turn refer clients to appropriate agencies that can provide concrete services for them.

We believe that The Women's Therapy Centre Institute is uniquely positioned to provide this service because of our psychoanalytic and trauma expertise as well as our social awareness and commitment to social justice. The therapists in **Connect and Change** have an ongoing supervision group, led by Linda Arkin, LCSW, a trauma specialist, in which cases are presented for discussion and support is provided for one another's clinical work. Members study the theoretical and clinical literature to deepen their understanding of intimate partner violence and trauma.

For more information please contact:

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