Psychoeducation Groups for Families of Victims of Sexual Assault: A Grant Proposal

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Introduction

• The National Violence Against Women Survey (NVAWS) (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2006) rendered statistics reporting that one of every six women and one in thirty-three men in the United States have faced rape during their lifetime; some reported multiple incidents.

• According to Tuttle (2011), every individual is relational as an individual exists in social interaction with others; therefore when a person experiences a form of trauma or violence it can impact those in their immediate environment through a form of vicarious trauma.

• Studies suggest that secondary victims may suffer psychological distress, similar to those of the primary victim, in the aftermath of sexual violence, such as posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, guilt, embarrassment, and grief (Christiansen, Bak, & Elklit, 2012)

• The overarching goal of this project include networking with community organizations, engaging families and/or significant others who are experiencing challenges related to the sexual violence experience, and to reduce secondary trauma symptoms among secondary trauma victims.
Social Work Relevance

• The proposed program is relevant to social workers in many institutions and treatment settings such as hospitals, crisis centers, outpatient agencies, and child protective services.

• Because of the potentially severe and long lasting effects sexually violent acts can have on victims of sexual assault, social workers must have an understanding of trauma related symptomology and effective treatment to assist victims and their families in coping.

• It is important for social workers to acknowledge and have a good understanding of the impact sexually violent experiences can have on those providing support and care for survivors.
• Pimlott-Kubiak and Cortina (2003) found that women comprised over 90% of two groups with notable sexual abuse and assault histories in their examination of interpersonal aggression exposure and consequences. Similarly, Elliott, Mok, and Briere (2004) found that women and girls are more likely to be victims of sexual assault.

• The literature also suggests that adolescents, around the age of 15, have the highest risk of victimization by sexual assault based on their sexual attractiveness, vulnerability, and exposure to motivated offenders (Felson & Cundiff, 2013).

• Children are more vulnerable to victimization because of their small size, lack of awareness and understanding, and lower credibility if they were to report the offense (Felson & Cundiff, 2013).

• According to the 2010 National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (Black et al., 2011), about 1 in 5 Black (22%), 18.8% non-Hispanic White women, and 1 in 7 Hispanic women (14.6%) in the United States have experienced rape during their lifetime. In addition, between one-fifth and one-quarter of Black non-Hispanic (22.6%), white non-Hispanic (21.5%), Hispanic (26.2%), and American Indian or Alaska Native (20.1%) men experienced sexual violence at some point in their lives.
Methods

• **Target Population:** The target population for this psychoeducation group include significant others of survivors of sexual violence who reside in the greater Los Angeles, CA area.

• **Strategies Used to Identify and Select a Funding Source:** Potential funding sources were explored through the use of online search engines such as Google, Yahoo, and Grants.gov. A variation of search phrases were used to render results, such as: “mental health grant funding,” “post-traumatic stress disorder,” “sexual trauma family psychoeducation,” and “family psychoeducation grants.”

• **Funding Source Selected:** The Marisla Foundation has been selected as the funder for the proposed project. The sexual violence project and psychoeducational group closely relates to the foundation’s interest in human services. The human services program seeks to assist women, with an emphasis on their physical, mental, and financial health.
Methods

• **Sources used for the Needs Assessment:** There is a need for resources to meet the needs of this population of secondary victims as most sexual violence programs focus on meeting the needs of the primary survivor (Christiansen, Bak, & Elklit, 2012). This writer completed one academic year of internship at Peace Over Violence, as a one-to-one counselor for survivors of domestic and sexual violence. Through this experience, this writer noted the need for psychoeducational services for support members in the lives of the sexual violence survivors.

• **Projected Budget Range and Categories:** The estimated budget for the proposed program is $92,290. The funding will include the salary of a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, direct program costs, and indirect program costs. The psychoeducational group will be developed, facilitated, evaluated, and maintained for one fiscal year.
Grant Proposals

• **Program Summary and Description:** A psychoeducational group will be developed to meet the needs of secondary trauma victims. This group will take place at Peace Over Violence, in Los Angeles, California.

• **Population Served:** The targeted population for the proposed project are the significant others of survivors of sexual violence who have been impacted by the sexual assault experience. The population served through the psychoeducational groups will include families of survivors 12 years of age or older.

• **Sustainability:** This program has been developed to be continually implemented, so long as funding is secured each year.
Grant Proposals

• **Program Objectives:**
  - **Objective #1:** Hire a Licensed Clinical Social Worker within the first month of the project.
  - **Objective #2:** To engage community workers through outreach and networking.
  - **Objective #3:** To provide psychoeducational groups for families of victims.
  - **Objective #4:** To measure outcomes and assess the program’s efficacy.

• **Program Evaluation:** The program will be evaluated through the completion of pre- and post-tests in the psychoeducational group and in community trainings.
Lessons Learned / Implications for Social Work

• Through the grant writing experience, this writer noted the need for psychoeducational services for support members in the lives of the sexual violence survivors.

• Through the process this writer was able to develop and utilize multiple skills, such as planning, research, organization, and creative writing.

• The writer learned the value of collaboration in identifying a needed resource for an underserved population.

• It is important for social workers, and other first responders, to be sensitive to the needs of individuals impacted by sexual violence as a sexual violence experience can have a large impact on the lives of all parties involved, having directly or indirectly experienced the assault.
References


