

# The Wounded Mother

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# Mothers & Motherhood

- Idealized
- Blamed



# Advice of the Experts

- Changes over time
- Different advice for different woman  
(i.e., to work or not)



# Experience of Mothering

- Privileged mother
- Wounded mother



# Wounded Mother

## Stigmatized by

- Poverty
- Racism
- Addiction
- Mental Illness
- Homelessness
- Criminal Justice Involvement



# Process of Trauma

## TRAUMATIC EVENT

Overwhelms the Physical & Psychological Systems  
Intense Fear, Helplessness or Horror

## RESPONSE TO TRAUMA

Fight or Flight, Freeze, Altered State of Consciousness, Body Sensations, Numbing,  
Hyper-vigilance, Hyper-arousal

## SENSITIZED NERVOUS SYSTEM CHANGES IN BRAIN

## CURRENT STRESS

Reminders of Trauma, Life Events, Lifestyle

## PAINFUL EMOTIONAL STATE

### RETREAT

ISOLATION  
DISSOCIATION  
DEPRESSION  
ANXIETY

### SELF-DESTRUCTIVE ACTION

SUBSTANCE ABUSE  
EATING DISORDER  
DELIBERATE SELF-HARM  
SUICIDAL ACTIONS

### DESTRUCTIVE ACTION

AGGRESSION  
VIOLENCE  
RAGES

# Three Critical and Interrelated Issues

- Substance Abuse
- Mental Health
- Trauma



# Trauma: Stages of Recovery

<u>Syndrome</u>	<u>Stage One</u>	<u>Stage Two</u>	<u>Stage Three</u>
Hysteria (Janet 1889)	Stabilization, Symptom- oriented treatment	Exploration of traumatic memories	Personality reintegration, rehabilitation
Combat trauma Scurfield (1985)	Trust, stress- management education	Re-experiencing trauma	Integration of trauma

Source: Herman, 1992, 1997

# Trauma: Stages of Recovery

## Syndrome

Complicated  
post-traumatic  
stress disorders

## Stage One

Stabilization,

## Stage Two

Integration of  
memories

## Stage Three

Development of  
self, drive  
integration

Source: Herman, 1992, 1997

# Trauma: Stages of Recovery

<u>Syndrome</u>	<u>Stage One</u>	<u>Stage Two</u>	<u>Stage Three</u>
Multiple personality disorder (Putnam 1989)	Diagnosis, stabilization, communication cooperation	Metabolism of trauma	Resolution, integration, development of post-resolution coping skills
Traumatic disorders (Herman 1992)	Safety	Remembrance and mourning	Reconnection

Source: Herman, 1992, 1997

# Trauma

## Three Group Models

<u>Group</u>	<u>Recovery Stage One</u>	<u>Recovery Stage Two</u>	<u>Recovery Stage Three</u>
Therapeutic task	Safety	Remembrance and mourning	Reconnection
Time orientation	Present	Past	Present, future
Focus	Self-care	Trauma	Interpersonal relationships

Source: Herman, 1992, 1997

# Trauma

## Three Group Models

<u>Group</u>	<u>Recovery Stage One</u>	<u>Recovery Stage Two</u>	<u>Recovery Stage Three</u>
Membership	Homogeneous	Homogeneous	Heterogeneous
Boundaries	Flexible, inclusive	Closed	Stable, slow turnover
Cohesion	Moderate	Very high	High

Source: Herman, 1992, 1997

# Trauma

## Three Group Models

<u>Group</u>	<u>Recovery Stage One</u>	<u>Recovery Stage Two</u>	<u>Recovery Stage Three</u>
Conflict tolerance	Low	Low	High
Time limit	Open-ended or repeating	Fixed Limit	Open-ended
Structure	Didactic	Goal-directed	Unstructured
Example	Twelve-step programs	Survivor group	Interpersonal psychotherapy group

Source: Herman, 1992, 1997

# ACE Study

## (Adverse Childhood Experiences)

- Recurrent and severe emotional abuse
- Recurrent and severe physical abuse
- Contact sexual abuse

Growing up in a household with:

- An alcoholic or drug-user
- A member being imprisoned
- A mentally ill, chronically depressed, or institutionalized member
- The mother being treated violently
- Both biological parents *not* being present

(N=17,000)

# ACE Study

## (Adverse Childhood Experiences)

### Results

ACEs still have a profound effect 50 years later, although now transformed from psychosocial experience into organic disease, social malfunction, and mental illness.

- Smoking
- Alcoholism
- Injection of illegal drugs
- Obesity

(Felitti, V.J.: Origins of Addictive Behavior: Evidence from the ACE Study. 2003 Oct:52(8): 547-59. German. PMID: 14619682 (PubMed-indexed for MEDLINE).

# Childhood Traumatic Events (Women in the CJ System)

## Largest Effect-Mental Health

- 980% increase in odds if exposure to 7 CTE's

(Messina & Grella, 2006)



# Some Suggestions



# Developing Countries

Developing countries invest their financial resources in women because it's the most effective way to help families.



# Provide Woman-centered Services

Being gender-responsive means creating an environment through site selection, staff selection, program development, content, and material that reflects an understanding of the realities of the lives of women and girls and that addresses and responds to their strengths and challenges.


(Covington & Bloom)



# Guiding Principles

- **Gender:** Acknowledge that gender makes a difference.
- **Environment:** Create an environment based on safety, respect, and dignity.

# Guiding Principles (cont.)

- **Relationships:** Develop policies, practices and programs that are relational and promote healthy connections to children, family, significant others, and the community.
  - **Services:** Address substance abuse, trauma, and mental health issues through comprehensive, integrated, and culturally relevant services.
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# Guiding Principles (cont.)

- **Socioeconomic status:** Provide women with opportunities to improve their socioeconomic conditions.
- **Community:** Establish a system of comprehensive and collaborative community services.

(Bloom, Owen, Covington 2003)



## Assessment

- Level of Burden

## Services

- Woman-centered

## Staff (ASKB)

- Attitudes, Skills, Knowledge, Behavior
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# Research on Curricula

*Helping Women Recover  
Beyond Trauma*



# Client Assessment Scores Improve after Completion of HWR and BT



TOTAL=40-44

Source: KIVA Program records – BDI & TSC Assessment, August 31, 2004 – October 13, 2006

# Client's Parenting Self-Perception

	Change
My child is safe with me.	↑
Understanding my own childhood helps me be a better mother	↑
I feel guilty as a mother.	↓
I feel comfortable asking for help from others with my parenting skills.	↑

N=44

# Thinking About Mothers

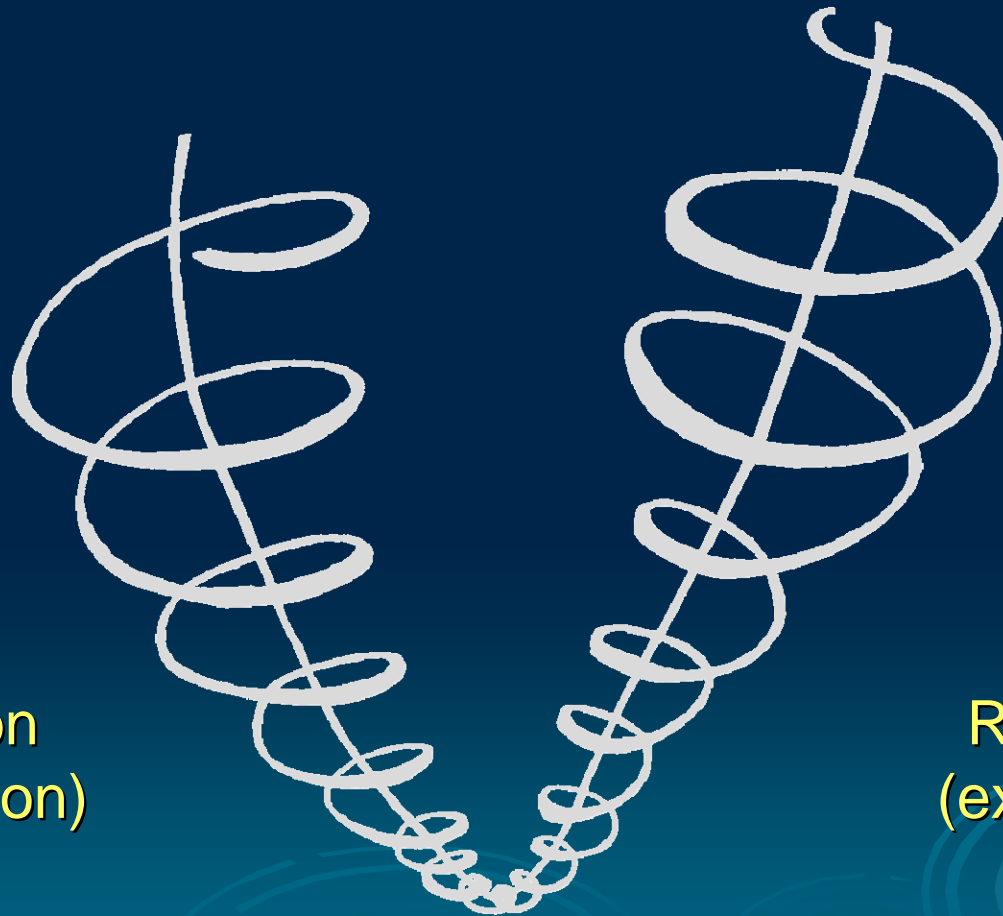
Teach the concept of the  
*“good enough mother”*



# Upward Spiral

Transformation

Addiction  
(constriction)



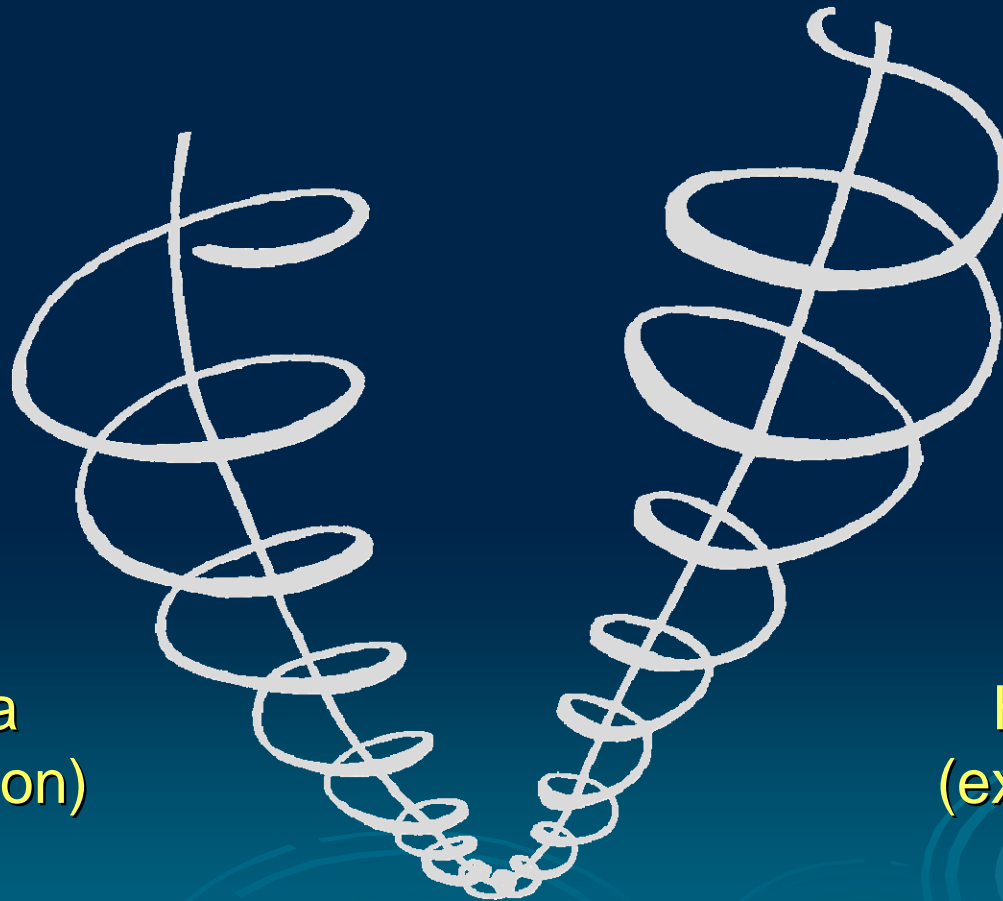
Recovery  
(expansion)

# Upward Spiral

Transformation

Trauma  
(constriction)

Healing  
(expansion)



# Women Healing

## Working on multiple levels:

- Individual
  - Political
  - Spiritual
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