Domestic violence in the Indochinese community
An Introduction to the Issue and Initiatives for Response

Refugee Women's Program Development and Coordination Project ： January 1982

Acknowledgements

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The kit was compiled by the staff of the Refugee Women's Project at the Indochina Refugee Action Center in Washington, DC: Deborah McGlauflin, Project Director and Maxine Mennen, Layout and Production coordinator.

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THE CONTENTS AND INTENDED USE OF THIS KIT

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This kit is directed at two audiences–refugee resettlement practitioners and battered women's service group personnel–with the intent of helping to bring them together at the local level to discuss appropriate community responses to domestic violence, particularly as it affects Indochinese refugee women resettled in the U. S. The premise is that the two networks have complementary expertise and resources which must be simultaneously applied to the problem of domestic violence in the Indochinese community.

There are basically three kinds of information in this kit:

1. For resettlement practitioners: Facts about domestic violence issues and laws and information about the existing service network and its philosophy.
2. For battered women's service groups: Culture-specific information about refugees from Southeast Asia and a description of the resettlement process and the joint public-private structure supporting it in this country; and

3. For both audiences: Information about several specific cases of local collaboration between the two networks in various communities around the country and an article by the director of a shelter for Asian and Pacific women in Los Angeles which is unique for its regular work with Indochinese clients, its Indochinese staff, and its culturally sensitive counseling and mediation techniques.

The kit is *not* intended to give the reader enough specific information about the issue, the population or appropriate approaches to address the problem effectively without further mutual education and a considerable amount of collaboration. In the opinion of the Refugee Women's Project, attempts on the part of either network to address the problem alone run the risk of being ineffective or even counter-productive.

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I. OVERVIEW

A. Introduction: The Issue and the Terminology

Over the past year there has been increasing alarm among resettlement workers, battered women's program personnel, clinic and hospital staff, police, and refugees from around the country over the "domestic violence" in Indochinese communities. In order to understand the problem of domestic violence and address it with appropriate resources, one must first understand the meaning of the term "domestic violence". Technically, it includes spouse abuse (on the part of both husbands and wives), child abuse and neglect (by both men and women), and woman abuse which includes the abuse of women by men other than their husbands. It is a convenient umbrella term which does not specify a victim or a perpetrator. Although all these forms of domestic violence can be found in Indochinese communities (or any other communities, for that matter), the reality of the situation is that women are, by far, the primary targets and victims of abuse. For the purpose of this kit, the term "domestic violence", unless otherwise specified, will refer to violence–both verbal and physical–against women in refugee households. The term "battered women" refers to victims of physical violence. This term is particularly relevant to discussions of the services of local shelters since few women end up in shelters unless violence has escalated to a rather severe level. It is important to specify the target population in this way because:

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1 Child abuse and violence against women are different phenomena with different historical roots; and,
2 The model of services for battered women that has been developed is significantly different from that used in child protection.[1]

Because the abused women under discussion here are members of a new immigrant population, cultural differences must be considered when one looks at the problem of domestic violence in Indochinese communities. However, sensitivity to ethnic cultures should not dismiss domestic violence as a practice more tolerated in some cultures than in others and one in which intervention is inappropriate interference. Carried to its logical conclusion, this

[1] Schechter, Susan, "Against Consolidation of Child Abuse Services," Milwaukee, WI, 1981, p. 2.

line of thought implies that abused women are the problem, rather than the violence against them, and that help is not their due.

Woman abuse is a problem that cuts across all cultural, social, and economic distinctions, It stems largely from the unequal power relationship between men and women. Although this relationship takes various forms in various cultures, the end result is that women (as a group) are in a subordinate, often dependent position relative to men (as a group) and that they are subject to verbal and physical abuse which is used and condoned to keep them in their place.

Of course, this does not mean that all women are abused and all men are abusers. It does suggest, however, that stressful situations and sudden, extreme changes in roles and relationships-such as those that might well occur as part of a refugee's adjustment to life in a new country–might be conducive to violence,

even in households which previously had no such history. Indochinese men and women alike p. 3
are threatened by the comprehensive changes resettlement tends to entail; both can be victims of an inability to face and manage change positively. Violence against Indochinese women can be seen, then, not as a matter of tradition, but, quite the reverse, as a matter of misdirected fear, frustration, and confusion due to a situation where traditions are in f$$$ Unfortunately, many refugee women find themselves in a no-win situation upon resettlement. If they remain at home as mothers and wives, they may miss out on language and cultural orientation classes and may come to be viewed by their families as a handicap because they are unable to fulfill even their traditional roles. On the other hand, the refugee woman who makes the difficult decision to work may come home to a husband who feels very ambivalent towards or threatened by her new role, even if he realizes its economic necessity. The adjustment experience of the Indochinese in this country puts the dynamics of domestic violence into sharp relief, but it is likely that many other non-immigrant women who are abused are experiencing similar problems related to managing changes in their personal and family lives.

All of the above is a rather dispassionate analysis of the problem of woman abuse as it pertains to the Indochinese. However, taking the next step–that of addressing the problem–presents s$$$ formidable challenges. Domestic violence has social, cultural and economic roots and consequences and, therefore, calls for a multi-disciplinary response. If the problem is discussed only in health and mental health terms, the “solutions” that will eme$$$

will not be adequate or lasting. Likewise, care should be taken to seek more than “cultural” p. 4
solutions–such as restoring the traditional mediating role of elders–until the ramifications of such a solution are fully understood and all other angles of the problem have been taken into account. In short, tradition$$$ “brakes” on domestic violence may be dysfunctional in a new cultural setting, and their artificial revival may be doubly dysfunctional, unless one proceeds very carefully.

Finally, the issue of woman abuse tends to bring out deep-seated, emotional responses on the part of those who try to help. Men are challenged to be supportive and sensitive in the face of women's fear and hostility and their own feelings of guilt or helplessness. Women are

challenged to defuse the myth that battered women are somehow guilty and deserving of being abused (a possible reflection of the helping woman's own sense of self-worth). In addition, Americans need to constantly emphasize the universality of the problem and to avoid implying that it is a cultural stigma. If Indochinese women who are victims of domestic violence are to be helped, cooperation between both Indochinese and non-Indochinese men and women is needed.

B. Addressing the Problem with Appropriate Resources

There are two systems in place in this country that have complementary skills and resources which can be applied to the problem of domestic violence in Indochinese households–the refugee resettlement network and the battered women's service group network. Moreover, both systems share the goals and values of self-sufficiency and self-help as they relate to their specific

p. 5 target populations. The following are brief descriptions of the two networks, their histories, capabilities, and current status:

The Refugee Resettlement System:

The public/private partnership around refugee resettlement is largely a result of the Refugee Act of 1980 which provides "a permanent and systematic procedure for the admission of refugees to this country and [provides] both comprehensive and uniform provisions for the resettlement of refugees who are admitted."[2]

Funds to resettle a refugee in the U. S. are appropriated by the U. S. Congress and given to the State Department to administer. The State Department, in turn, contracts with 14 private voluntary member agencies which cooperate under the auspices of the American Council of Voluntary Agencies (ACVA) to perform various resettlement services. Upon arriving in the United States, refugees are linked up with sponsoring relatives, or American individuals, families, churches, or organizations who have been secured for them through or by a voluntary agency. The agency, in conjunction with the sponsor, offers a refugee various services such as airport reception, initial lodging, foo clothing, emergency medical and dental services, counseling, and, in some cases, pocket money.

The Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) in the Department of Health and Human Services oversees the provision of cash and medical assistance and social services to refugees in the initi$$$ post-resettlement period. Most of the funds go to reimburse st$$$ governments for all cash assistance (welfare), medical assistance (Medicaid and Medicare), and Title XX social service costs incurred on behalf of refugees by a variety of state and local

p. 6 agencies, both public and private. Most refugees are entitled to the same welfare, medical assistance, and social services available to American citizens, but, in order to alleviate the

[2] American Public Welfare Association, *Indochinese Refugee Reports*, Volume 1, Number 23, March 11, 1980, Washington, DC, p. 2.

financial burden placed on state governments, ORR provides 100% reimbursement for assistance to refugees for a limited period of time.

Literally hundreds of refugee self-help groups or mutual assistance associations (MAAs) have emerged over the past few years organized along ethnic, religious, professional and fraternal lines. Many provide services complementing existing agency programs for refugees in their communities and provide a critical "safety net" that extends beyond the rather limited scope of federally funded programs (even at ideal funding levels).

Federal funding for refugee resettlement has been sharply cut back, and service providers at the state and local levels are re-evaluating service priorities and developing new funding strategies. It is not possible to provide all services to all refugees. In general, programs that are not directly employment related have taken the brunt of the cutbacks (this has had a disproportionate impact on refugee women in many states, since most of the relatively few programs designed specifically for them were in the category of mental health and subject to drastic cuts; in addition, refugee women often receive low priority for remaining services because their economic role goes unrecognized and men tend to be arbitrarily determined to be more employable).

A small, but growing number of refugee women's self-help groups are addressing themselves to the sizeable number of women

headed households and their economic needs and to the issue of domestic violence. p. 7

Lists of national voluntary agencies, ORR regional directors and state refugee coordinators are appended. Battered women's service groups in need of assistance with refugee clients can contact any of the above for information about local affiliates or contacts in specific agencies–both public and private–involved in resettlement in their respective states and communities.

The Battered Women's Service Group Network:

The current network of services for battered women is the result of a grassroots political movement led by women during the last decade. According to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, "There are approximately 300 shelters for battered women and their children in the United States, as well as countless hotlines and safe home networks. These programs are funded by private contributions, local fundraising and sporadic and inadequate community grants. They rely heavily on the local community for in-kind donations of food, clothing and other services, as well as countless volunteer hours. Lack of space and resources force most shelters to turn away at least three times the number of people they serve. As anticipated consolidations and cuts in social service funding take effect, there will be even fewer resources to serve battered women and their families..."[3]

[3] National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, "Domestic Violence Fact Sheet", Washington, DC, 1981, pp. 1-2.

Federal legislation has been introduced on several occasions which would provide state governments with funds to aid domestic violence victims, with a primary emphasis on funding community-based shelters. So far, the bill has not been passed.

p. 8 Although the situation varies greatly from state to state and community to community, battered women's service groups often provide far more than shelters, hotlines, and safe homes. The following is a breakdown of the services available to battered women, abusive partners, and their children in the 7-county metropolitan area of Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota:[4]

Crisis Services

3 24-hour Crisis Phone Lines
4 Emergency Housing - Shelters
5 - Safe Homes
6 - Emergency Social Services
7 Police Emergency Numbers
8 Emergency Transportation
9 Medical Emergency Numbers
10 Child Protection Services

Support Services

11 Information and Referral Services
12 Legal Information - Prosecuting Assaults
13 - Orders for Protection
14 - Legal Services
15 Financial Assistance - Welfare Dept.
16 Housing Cooperatives
17 Women's Resources - Counseling
18 - Self-Help Support Groups
19 Men's Services
20 Children's Services - Shelters
21 - Legal Services
22 - Parenting/Counseling Services
23 Black Community Services
24 American Indian Community Services
25 Hispanic Community Services
26 Southeast Asian Community Services
27 Sexual Assault Services
28 Women's Organizations

State coalitions exist (list of contacts appended) which can serve as excellent entry points to this network; they are available to resettlement agencies wishing to learn more about relevant

[4] Region XI Battered Women's Consortium, *Services to Battered Women - A Resource File*, St. Paul, MN, 1981, p. 1.

state legislation, local coalitions, and specific programs in their community for battered women, abusive partners, and their children. Information is also appended from and about

the two national resource centers concerned with domestic violence–the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence and the Center for Women Policy Center. p. 9

The Need for Collaboration:

It is reasonable to expect that some aspects of battered women's crisis and support services are effective with all female victims; other aspects may be affected by ethnic cultural factors and may require culturally sensitive approaches; yet others may vary in effectiveness according to individual refugee trauma and post-resettlement adjustment experiences. The most convincing argument for close collaboration between the resettlement and battered service group networks is the need for the two to work together in determining which variables must be considered in designing and implementing service approaches. Also, limited funding prevents either progra$$$ area from devoting adequate resources and attention to the issue as it affects the Indochinese refugee population, making collaboration not simply the best, but perhaps the only option for adequate response to the problem.

Each network has information needs and service limitations which can be largely compensated for by the resources of the other Concerned people in the resettlement network expressed the following needs:

1. Information about state laws regarding domestic violen$$$ and the degree to which they are enforced (information app$$$ ed)
2. Emergency procedures for dealing with abused women;
3. Education about the positive aspects of shelters and safe home networks;
4. Information about programs for abusers and their priority vis a vis the issue of shelter for battered women (information appended); p. 10
5. Familiarization with the typical course of abuse and the place for prevention, intervention, and mediation activities;
6. Familiarization with counseling and intervention techniques developed specifically for battered women and how such techniques differ from those addressing other forms of domestic violence, such as child abuse (information appended); and,
7. Models for training male and female bilingual caseworkers and mental health staff to interpret, intervene, mediate, and/or educate effectively.

Similarly, battered women's service groups can be expected to have some of the following limitations, depending on their resources and the composition of their staff and clientele:

1. Unfamiliarity with ethnic cultural differences and with refugee trauma (information appended):
2. Little experience with Third World women and their ambivalence to the message they receive in the U. S. that it is OK to be equal and independent (given the fact that acting on

this message may cut them off from family and community support, leaving them far more isolated than the average American woman);
3. Lack of bilingual staff capabilities;
4. Unfamiliarity with the delayed stress syndrome, the wife as the focus of frustration over children's declining respect for elders, the wife's contact with other men in her new work outside the home, and other specific causes of violence related to refugee trauma and adjustment experiences;
5. Lack of access to the core group of sympathetic refugee men who have been in the U. S. a while, who have been through change, and who are willing and able to help other. “newer” refugee men avoid the same behavior;
6. Unawareness of the extra degree of vulnerability of interpreters, due to their visibility in and dependence on a small, closed community, resulting in deliberate misinterpretation or fear of interpreting; and,
7. Unawareness of the potential of the resettlement network to address domestic violence before it occurs through women's programs and through cultural orientation programs here and overseas.

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Examples of Collaboration:

All of the above is not to suggest that there will be total agreement about counseling and training needs and approaches or about the division of labor between the two networks. However, discussions that are taking place in four cities across the country are resulting in workshops, orientation tapes in Indochinese languages, staff training, and new referral arrangements. The following are brief descriptions of those efforts:

1. Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota – The Southeast Asian Battered Women's Committee of the Region XI Battered Women's Consortium is planning a conference to be held in April '82 for interpreters and “natural leaders” from the Indochinese community. It will focus on state laws concerning family violence and how they apply to the Indochinese. The committee also advised the East Metro Health Interpretation project on the production of two tapes in Lao, Khmer, and H'mong – one to be used in hospital emergency rooms and one to be used in shelters when no interpreters are present (English back-translations of transcripts appended).

CONTACT: Bernice Sisson

Region XI Battered Women's Consortium

616 Lincoln

St. Paul, MN 55102

(612) 227-6690

2. Los Angeles, California – The Center for Pacific-Asian Families, Inc. (a shelter and hotline program for Pacific and Asian women, including Indochinese, who are victims of battering and

rape) in cooperation with the Pomona International Institute conducted a one-day workshop last fall for Indochinese refugees on the subject of battering and rape (report appended). The Center has also been assisting the Long Beach Cambodian Women's Committee with information and referrals and program planning.

CONTACT: Nilda Rimonte

Center for Pacific-Asian Families, Inc.

820 N. Martel

Los Angeles, CA 90046

(213) 653-4042

3. Seattle, Washington – A task force was formed by the King County Refugee Forum in the fall of '81 which resulted in a one-day workshop co-sponsored by the Domestic Violence Coalition of King County. The workshop addressed domestic violence in the Indochinese community and focused on laws and available services.

CONTACT: Steve Davis p. 12

Washington Association of Churches

Indochinese American Resettlement and

Job Program

810 18th Ave., Room 206

Seattle, WA 98122

(206) 325-3277

4. Alexandria, Virginia– The Alexandria Commission on the Status of Women is interested in recruiting and training refugee women volunteers for its local shelter. The Vietnamese Women's Association of Northern Virginia, Inc. and Cambodian Women for Progress, Inc. are involved in enabling the Commission to serve Indochinese clients through refugee women volunteers.

CONTACT: Patricia Smith or Dr. Carol Becker

Alexandria Commission on the Status

of Women

P. O. Box 178

City Hall

Alexandria, VA 22313

(703) 838-4900 (C. Becker)

(703) 628-1200 (P. Smith)

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II. "AN APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM OF WOMAN-ABUSE IN THE PACIFIC-ASIAN COMMUNITY" By Nilda Rimonte, Founder and Executive Director Center for the Pacific-Asian Family; Los Angeles, California

The Center and Its Services

The Center for the Pacific-Asian Family is a sexual assault and domestic violence center established in mid-1978 to serve immigrant and refugee groups in the Pacific-Asian community of Los Angeles. Included in the term "Pacific-Asian" are non-English-speaking Chinese, Filipinos, Japanese, Koreans, Thai, Indochinese (Vietnamese, Khmer, Hmong and Lao), Samoans and South Asians (Bangladeshis, Sri Lankans, Asian Indians and Pakistanis).[5] The decision to focus on the larger Pacific-Asian community–as opposed to singling out one or two specific ethnic groups–came out of the conviction that the values and experiences of Pacific-Asians are largely shared ones and that they must be stressed as such as a matter of political and funding necessity.

Women and children at the Center have access to a wide range of emergency and support services: 24-hour counseling by phone and in person, 24-hour emergency shelter, assistance with obtaining temporary restraining orders (at no cost), advocacy throughout the police, medical, legal and social service systems, extensive follow up, and a variety of other practical assistance, such as job placement and housing search. Outside of the emotional support and counseling that is provided, collaborative arrangements are being made to integrate mental health services and make both diagnosis and treatment available at the shelter.[6] Interpretation and translation,

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transportation and escort, as well as referral to legal aid and other appropriate helping agents are among the services provided. In addition, the Center conducts a community education program around sexual assault and domestic violence and is generally available for consultation.

[5] The Center makes a distinction between Pacific-Asians and Asian Americans–the latter are culturally Americans and only phenotypically Asians.

[6] These arrangements are being made with Jocelyn Yap, M. S. W. of the Asian/Pacific Mental Health and Counseling Clinic. The Center and Clinic have had a long and close working relationship.

Staffing to Build in Cultural Sensitivity

The Center was conceived, designed, and implemented by a Pacific-Asian woman and is today controlled and staffed by multi-ethnic and multi-lingual Pacific-Asians who are themselves first-generation immigrants and refugees.[7] The acculturation levels of the staff vary, as do their backgrounds. Many of them are professionals in other fields, in addition to being para-professionals in counseling. Professional consultation and supervision are provided by volunteer clinicians who are also Pacific-Asians.

The Center has a policy of *never* using outside interpreters except in extreme emergencies, since confidentiality is jeopardized and there is a distinct possibility of doing more harm than good if critical information is withheld or distorted. Given the fact that an effective interpreter must be acquainted with the Center and its philosophy, with laws and legal rights, and with a myriad of psychological issues and social services, the Center maintains that a person thus trained is much more effectively and appropriately used as a para-professional counselor.

The Center began with the advantage of having a thorough familiarity with the value systems, family models, cultural issues, and adaptation and acculturation problems of Pacific-Asian refugees and immigrants. This first-hand familiarity was put to good use in the

design of its counseling strategies, the development of its training program, and in the p. 15
adaptation and modification of the models offered by existing shelters and hotlines in the area. Moreover, as its ability to intervene sensitively in rape and battering crises became better known to the community, the Center was in a better position to deal with the inevitable charges of being subversive and breaking up marriages.

Culturally-Tempered Feminism

Although born out of and with a feminist perspective, the Center very early on adopted the policy of de-emphasizing its feminist leanings. Since the community it works with is almost 85% first generation immigrants and refugees–90% of whom speak little or no English–it quite obviously is a population heavily weighted with “cultural baggage”. This translates into a conservative, traditionalist community that is male-dominant and highly family-oriented. To espouse feminist ideas in this setting would be self-defeating. Accordingly, in its community education program, its slogan ("Rape and battering are community concerns, women's issues are human problems”), and its logo (figures representing a family contained in the circle of the female symbol) the Center consistently attempts to put the victimization of women within the larger context of family and community.

Publicly, men's right to keep women under control and women's obligation to be controlled have not been challenged by the Center, except at its prevention workshops. But privately, this unequal relationship–so highly conducive to violence–is beginning to be questioned by Pacific-

[7] Current Board and staff rosters include Anglos and Jewish persons, reflecting the Center's expanded service population since its relocation.

Asian women themselves. It is not so much a result of their being exposed to new rights and freedoms, but of the economic realities pressuring them to abandon, or at least modify, their

p. 16 traditional roles to include the role provider, which has largely belonged to men in Pacific-Asian cultures.

Woman-Abuse and the Indochinese

The Center has uncovered the phenomenon of woman-abuse in many Pacific-Asian populations, including the Indochinese. In the past year alone, the Center received 58 emergency calls from Vietnamese and Hmong adult victims of battering. At this rate of one *new* victim per week, the incidence of battering in the Indochinese community appears to be roughly equal to that in the Korean community and ahead of several others. While this indicates a high degree of dysfunction within the Indochinese family, caution must be taken in interpreting the rate of incidence and its ethnic distribution. The Center has always had a Vietnamese counselor and a grant from the Department of Social Services guaranteed regular and consistent outreach and education efforts targeting the Vietnamese. The same situation has not existed for other Indochinese ethnic groups, which may explain their non-representation or under-representation in the Center's caseload.

The caseload probably also reflects the absence of the traditional support system and the subsequent loss of traditional mechanisms for controlling wife-beating, which forces more women to seek outside help. This points out the need to educate refugees, both in overseas camps and here in the U. S., about American laws concerning wife-beating and their enforcement, in order to provide a replacement control mechanism.

Domestic Violence: Its Causes and Effects

Center data indicate that economic pressures and sex role reversals

p. 17 are the two most frequently mentioned “causes” of domestic fights. This is not surprising, since both challenge men's dominance, as well as the very structure of the family and its corollary emphasis on family obligation. One must look deeper, however, to understand the dynamics of the conflict. Women have less power and status at stake in the status quo. This fact, coupled with their tendency to be very “reality-oriented” in their role as nurturers, makes them more flexible and open to change. Such adaptability is not valued or positively reinforced in a violent relationship, however. It create intense personal conflict for the battered woman and commonly results in severe guilt feelings. Continued and consistent follow-up support is required from helping agents, since her ability to survive this conflict largely determines whether or not she will remain trapped in the relationship. At the Center, more than 70% or the Indochinese who actually choose to leave a violent relationship stay away permanently.

While it is probably true that the above observations relate to battered women, regardless of race, it must be remembered that the ideals of personal independence and individual freedom cherished in American society are not shared by Pacific-Asians. Instead, mutual obligation and

self-reliance within the family structure are valued. One is obliged not to bring shame upon one's family and to do one's best to enhance the family honor through achievement and education. In a clash between individual needs and family goals, the family goals must always prevail. Therefore, the Pacific-Asian woman who insists on self-realization and individual freedom is seen as non-conforming and receives very little sympathy from her ethnic community.

The Goals of Support: Empowerment and Self-Sufficiency

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It is the policy of the Center to encourage battered women to make decisions for themselves and to support their decisions, whatever they may be. This stems both from the Center's philosophy of empowering women and from practical considerations of women's readiness to leave violent relationships. The woman who is encouraged to leave before she has a financial plan and is otherwise ready may worsen her situation. Returning to the relationship may be interpreted both by herself and by her abuser as total helplessness and incompetence on her part, thereby reinforcing her dependency and lack of confidence and, conversely, the abuser's sense of superiority.

Since Pacific-Asian women often do not have the experience or skills needed to make decisions–that perogative having been assigned a long time ago to her husband or the most senior male member of her family–they have to be assisted. The very process which involves helping her to clarify her needs and understand her feelings about those needs, however, is in itself alien to the Pacific-Asian woman and can be very bewildering and overwhelming.

Confronting Victimization

It comes as a surprise to Pacific-Asian battered women that they are, in fact, victims and to the batterers that they are committing a crime, due to their lack of awareness of the law. Moreover, women's ignorance about their legal rights in regard to children, property, and immigration status is often manipulated by men in order to control them and keep them in a violent relationship.

To the Center, the battered woman is a victim not only of a violent man, but also of a society that sanctions inequality between women and men, allowing them to be brutalized and pressuring them to

accept and conceal their victimization. Fear, shame, and family obligation are the mechanisms by which pressure is applied. Therefore, it is important that a battered woman recognize and identify herself as a victim as the first step towards understanding how and why she is victimized. Through such insight into the victimization process and its psychodynamics, she begins to understand the role that cultural values and traditional belief systems play, the effects of economic pressures and mental illness, the consequences of dislocation, and the demands of relocation. She is then helped to see how she contributes to her own victimization by tacitly consenting to her role as victims and/or by precipitating an assault through the

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injudicious use of newly acquired assertiveness against a man who remains unchanged or is unprepared for the change in her.[8]

Once she recognizes herself as a victim she must be helped to recognize that she has a choice and that she need not remain one. Too many women have endured violent marriages for too long simply because they felt they had no alternative. In part, this is due to religious attitudes and cultural demands. While the Center recognizes the therapeutic value of preserving ethnic identities, it also recognizes that every ethnic culture has attitudes and behaviors that are dysfunctional. Thus, it argues that there is a need for the Pacific-Asian community to be less rigid and, if necessary, to modify or discard those attitudes or behaviors that undermine the structure of the family which it values so highly.

The Imperative of Change

Change is inevitable and not inherently either good or bad. Women who are abused are, out of fear for their lives, being forced to face and manage change. The Pacific-Asian who chooses not to be

p. 20 victimized is not simply striking out *for* herself; she is also going *against* the traditions by which she was raised and defines herself. Such a woman will be very demanding of any shelter's sensitivity to her conflicts. She will tax the shelter's patience, while being very needful of its support. The challenge–for the community, the shelter, and the victim–is to make the transition smoother and less threatening. However, for the community and the victim, the recognition that change is imperative is perhaps the most difficult step of all; it is the beginning of change itself.

p. 1 Appendix A: Refugee Resettlement Network Contacts

National Offices of Voluntary Agencies

29 CHARLES STERNBERG, Executive Director ROBERT DEVECCHI, Coordinator Indochina Project International Rescue Committee, Inc. 386 Park Avenue South New York, NY 10016
30 Ms. DAIL STOLOW Director of Indochinese Departme Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, Ir 200 Park Avenue South New York, NY 10003
31 Rabbi David Niederman, Executive Dir. Rav Tov, Inc. Committee to Aid New Immigrants 125 Heyward Street Brooklyn, NY 11206
32 BORIS KAZIMIROFF, Director RAY E. DAY, Associate Director Refugee Services National Council of YMCA's International Division 291 Broadway New York, NY 10007
33 WELLS C. KLEIN Executive Director American Council for Nationalities Service 20 West 40th Street New York, NY 10018
34 PAUL MCCLEARY Executive Director Church World Service 475 Riverside Drive Room 666 New York, NY 10027

[8] This insight is attributed to Dr. Daniel Le, a Vietnamese clinical psychologist and respected community leader who has been providing the Center with clinical consultation, supervision, and training.

35 Dr. JAN PAPANEK, President VOJTECH JERABEK, Executive Director TATIANA WREMENKO, Director of Indochinese Program American Fund for Czechoslovak Refugees, Inc. 1790 Broadway - Room 513 New York, NY 10019
36 ALLA G. IVASK Deputy Director Department of Immigration and Refugee Resettlement Tolstoy Foundation, Inc. 250 West 57th Street New York, NY 10019
37 VEN. THICH HANG DANG Executive Co-Director Mr. DAVID ROUNDS Executive Co-Director Buddhist Council for Refugee Rescue & Resettlement City of Ten Thousand Buddhas
38 T.G. MANGHAM, Vice President Refugee Services World Relief Refugee Services National Association of Evangelicals P. O. BOX WRC $$$
39 INGRID WALTER Director Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service Lutheran Council in the USA 360 Park Avenue South New York, NY 10010 p. 2
40 JOHN E. MCCARTHY Executive Director DON G. HOHL Associate Director U.S. Catholic Conference Migration and Refugee Services 1312 Massachusetts Avenue, NY Washington, D.C 20005

Office of Refugee Resettlement Regional Directors p.

41 JACK ANDERSON Regional Director, ORR J.F.K. Federal Bldg., Room 2403 Government Center Boston, MA 02203
42 SHARON FUJII Regional Director ORR 26th Floor 100 Van Ness San Francisco, CA 94102
43 SUANNE BROOKS Regional Director ORR 101 Marietta Tower, Suite 1503 Atlanta, GA 30323
44 JOHN CROSSMAN Regional Director Region X Office of Refugee Resettlement Dept. of Health and Human Service: 1321 - 2nd Ave. Mail Stop MS-815 Seattle, Washington 98105
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p. 1 Appendix B:

Excerpts from "Southeast Asian Social and Cultural Customs: Similarities and Differences." Published in the *Journal of Refugee Resettlement,* March

FAMILY

The family is the core social unit in Eastern cultures, and family obligations have traditionally taken precedence over individual autonomy throughout the life cycle. As a result, family relations and functions have been extensively and elaborately defined. Mutual, reciprocal obligations join child and parent, husband and wife, household and kin. These customs are changing at present, owing to the involuntary separation of members during flight and resettlement, and also to the acceptability of more independent lifestyles in the American society.

NOTES

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Appendix C: Battered Women's Service Group Network Contacts p. 18 p. 17

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Appendix D: RESPONSE TO VIOLENCE IN THE FAMILY VOLUME 4, NUMBER 7 p.
SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1981 (COURTESY OF CENTER FOR WOMEN POLICY STUDIES) “STATE LEGISLATION ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE” BY LISA G. LERMAN WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF LESLIE LANDIS AND SHARON GOLDZWEIG

Less than a decade ago few states had any laws aimed at reducing or preventing violence between family or household members. A battered woman who sought legal protection from abuse had few options. If the woman was married, she could file for divorce, separation, or custody. In some states she could get an injunction ordering her husband not to abuse her while domestic relations proceedings were pending. Such orders were limited in scope and did not provide penalties for violation.

During the last five years, most states have passed extensive legislation on domestic violence. Most of the statutes create new civil and criminal legal remedies for persons abused by family or household members. Some laws specify the powers and duties of police and the courts who handle family violence cases. Some require agencies that offer services to violent families to keep records or write reports on family violence. Finally, and perhaps most important, some state legislatures have allocated funding for shelters and other services for violent families.

Forty-nine states and the District of Columbia have now enacted some type of legislation to protect battered women. Since July 1980, comprehensive protection order laws have been enacted in Georgia, Mississippi, Illinois, and Alabama, and introduced on Arkansas and New Jersey. There has been no recent action in South Dakota. The South Dakota legislature passed a protection order bill, but it was vetoed by the governor.

The rapid development of domestic violence law in the United States is the product of a broad network of community groups, legal service lawyers, shelter workers, and law enforcement officials working to make new services and legal options available to battered women. The initial efforts of this movement focused on setting up shelters and hotlines and developing a civil injunction by which battered women could obtain emergency protection without filing criminal charges. As experience was gained with the protection order laws, it became clear that in-junctive relief is most effective when the statutes spell out specific procedures by which courts and law enforcement agencies should issue and enforce orders, and when the laws make violation of a protection order a criminal offense. While new legislation

p. 2 cannot by itself change the response of courts, police, or social services agencies to the problem of family violence, it does furnish a tool that victims of abuse and their advocates can use to promote more effective court response and better services to violent families...

Protection Order Laws

A protection order (also called a temporary restraining order or temporary injunction) is an injunction designed to prevent violence by one member of a household against another. The court may, depending on state law, order an abuser to move out of a residence shared with a victim, to refrain from abuse of or contact with the victim, to enter a counseling program, or to pay support, restitution, or attorney's fees. The court may award child custody and visitation rights or may restrict the use or disposition of personal property.

Laws providing this type of protection have been passed in thirty-six states and the District of Columbia. Thirty-two of the protection order laws allow the court to evict an abuser from a residence shared with a victim of abuse. The eviction order is possibly the most important form of relief provided by the new legislation. It gives a victim of abuse an enforceable right to be safe in her home, and it establishes that the abuser rather than the victim should bear the burden of finding another residence. Many of the laws allow eviction even if the title or lease of the residence lists only the abuser's name. Some statutes allow eviction in such cases only if the abuser is found to have a legal obligation to support his wife and/or children.

The laws vary widely as to what relationship must exist between abuser and victim for protection to be available. Two statutes restrict eligibility to spouses; the others make relief available to other family or household members, and sometimes to former co-residents.

Most of the statutes make eligibility for a protection order contingent on present and/or former cohabitation. A recent study of six hundred battered women found that 73 percent of the victims studied were single, divorced, or separated at the time the victim reported to a hospital

after an abusive incident. Under many of the current protection order laws, this group of victims would be ineligible for relief.

To get a full protection order (one issued after a hearing at which both parties are present), a victim must show, usually by a preponderance of evidence, that abuse has occurred, or that there has been some threatened or attempted abuse. Nine states also allow issuance of a protection order if it is shown that a child has been sexually abused.

Few of the new laws make protection orders available based on

a showing of harassment or psychological abuse. Coverage of such conduct would provide a remedy to persons who are kept prisoners in their homes, whose property is destroyed, or whose homes are broken into by boyfriends or former spouses. p. 3

The District of Columbia statute defines abuse to include any act committed against an eligible party that would be punishable as a criminal offense. This more general definition would allow issuance of protection orders not only for threatened or attempted assault, but also for burglary, larceny, kidnapping, harassment, or destruction of personal property. The rationale is that if an act may be the basis of a criminal prosecution, it is serious enough to justify issuance of a protection order.

The chart* categorizes protection orders according to how quickly a court will respond after a petition is filed and how long the order may last. A full protection order may be issued only after the abuser is notified and a hearing is held at which both parties have an opportunity to testify. (If the abuser fail to appear at this hearing he is deemed to have waived his right to a hearing, so relief may be granted based on the victim's testimony.)

The less time it takes to obtain a protection order, the mo effective it is likely to be. Thirty-five of the statutes provid for temporary protection orders, which are issued *ex parte* within a day or a few days after a petition is filed, following a hearing at which the victim but not the abuser is present. A temporary protection order lasts until the abuser receives notice and has an opportunity for a hearing on whether the order should be dissolved, at which time a full protection order may be issued

A few of the laws allowing *ex parte* relief have been challe as violating the due process clause of the fourteenth amendment, but so far such challenges have been unsuccessful. The deferral of a hearing has been found permissible if there is a danger of irreparable harm unless relief is granted.

Since most abuse occurs at night, ten of the statutes provide for emergency protection orders, which may be issued at night or on weekends when the regular courts are not in session. The emergency order, often issued by a magistrate rather than a judge, lasts only until the next weekday morning when the victi: must go to court to reapply for a temporary protection order.

In sixteen states, an abuser who violates a protection order may be prosecuted for a misdemeanor offense, and in twenty-four states for contempt of court. (Nine of these allow

prosecution either for a misdemeanor or for contempt.) Thirteen of the statutes include explicit language allowing the courts to impose a jail sentence of six months or more for violation of a protection order. The laws frequently allow imposition of a fine of $500 or more instead of or in addition to a jail

p. 4 sentence. Imposition of a jail sentence in misdemeanor cases is relatively rare; more important to the enforcement of protection orders are the arrest power and other powers granted police in handling protection order violations (see “Police Intervention" below).

Each statute contains procedural rules on where, how, and by whom petitions may be filed, fees to be charged, when hearings must be held, and so on. In many states, these procedures are not listed in a spouse abuse statute but may be found in the general rules of civil practice. Of particular importance are rules on fees for filing papers or delivery of orders to abusers. Provisions waiving filing fees, permitting victims to file without a lawyer, and requiring court clerks to assist victims in filing petitions are essential to ensure that protection orders will be avaiable to victims of abuse who have no money or no access to their money.

Injuctions Pending Domestic Relations Proceedings

Before the new protection order laws were enacted, many state laws covering divorce and other domestic relations proceedings allowed courts to issue injunctions requiring payment of support, designating temporary custody, or prohibiting abuse until the court proceedings were finished. These injunctions were, and still are, available independent of allegations of abuse. In some states that have passed new protection order laws, the injunction pending divorce has been expanded, and enforcement provisions have been added. However, injunctions pending divorce or other proceedings are the only form of civil injunction available in Idaho, Indiana, Michigan, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Virginia, Washington, and Wyoming.

Criminal Law

Every state has laws imposing criminal penalties for assault, battery, burglary, and kidnapping. These laws could be enforced against persons who abuse their mates, but mate abuse has not traditionally been treated as a criminal matter.

To promote enforcement of criminal law against abusers, ten states have enacted legislation making spouse abuse a separate criminal offense. Like the protection order laws, these laws specify the relationships covered and the penalties that may be imposed for commission of the offense. The intent of these statutes is to give direction to the enforcement of criminal law against abusive mates rather than to make any substantive change in the law. A specific criminal law also facilitates identification of family violence cases by statisticians or victim/witness services.

Some laws set out dispositions that may be used in place of a fine or jail sentence in domestic violence cases in which a criminal charge has been filed. Some allow a protection order prohibiting abuse of or contact with the victim; others allow

the court to require the abuser to attend counseling.

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In a few states, such as Washington, Ohio, and Illinois, criminal courts may issue broad protection orders similar to those generally available from civil courts.

The relief available may vary depending on the stage of the criminal process at which an order is issued. The court may impose requirements on an abuser as a condition of release, as a condition of deferred prosecution, or as a condition of probation after conviction. Violation of conditions of release could result in pretrial detention or setting of bail. Where prosecution is deferred pending compliance with a counseling or protection order, violation could result in later prosecution. Violation of terms of probation could result in revocation of probation and imposition of a jail sentence.

The foregoing dispositional options, which are codified in many state laws, are also available in other jurisdictions as a matter of judicial discretion. Statutory authority is not necessary, for example, for a judge to order a defendant to stay away from the victim as a condition of release on bail. However, an explicit statute encourages judges to use particular options in cases in which the victim and offender are related.

Civil vs. Criminal Relief

There are important differences between criminal and civil remedies created by the new legislation. The protection order laws generally offer broader, more flexible, and more immediate relief than can be obtained by filing a criminal charge. Also, the decision to file a protection order lies solely with a victim of abuse.

The passage of a new criminal statute does not guarantee a battered woman a new remedy, since the decision to file a charge is with the prosecutor, not with the victim. Criminal laws, however, may be more effective than civil relief in changing abusive behavior because there is a greater perceived or actual threat of punishment. If criminal penalties are available for violation of a protection order, the same type of leverage over the abuser may be possible in civil as in criminal cases.

Police Intervention

Twenty-seven of the recent state laws on domestic violence expand police power to arrest in domestic abuse cases. In twenty-one states, arrest without a warrant is permitted where a police officer has probable cause to believe that an abuser has committed a misdemeanor. In fourteen states, police may arrest without a warrant if they have probable cause to believe that an abuser has violated a protection order. (Eight states allow probable cause arrest in both cases.) Most of these arrest laws give police a discretionary power, but four state laws impose a duty to arrest where probable cause is present.

Almost half the states impose some duties on police responding to domestic disturbance calls, including transporting the victim to a hospital or shelter, informing her of her legal options, staying until she is no longer in danger, and so on. Many of the laws prescribing police duties or

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expanding arrest powers immunize law enforcement officials from suits for damages for any action taken in a good faith effort to enforce the law.

Data Collection

Lack of adequate data on the nature and scope of family violence has hindered improvement of law enforcement response to the problem. Twenty-eight states have now passed laws that require agencies that assist violent families to either keep internal records of each case handled or to file reports on cases handled or on the general problem to another agency.

Funding

Thirty-seven states have appropiated funds for services to violent families. Such appropriations are made either by including a line item in the budget of a state agency or by passing a bill making a categorical appropriation. All appropriations must be approved by the state legislature. They may originate, however, in the governor's office as part of the proposed budget submitted each year to the legislature by the governor, or as a separate bill.

In fourteen states a new source of funding had been created by passage of legislation that imposes a surcharge on the marriage license. The money collected through the surcharge is distributed to shelters and other service organizations. In three states, the legislatures have appropriated funds in the state budgets in anticipation of income from the marriage license surcharge.

The funding legislation generally specifies whether funds are to be spent on shelters, on counseling services, on employment training, on legal advocacy, or on other services, In some states, the law suggests types of services to be funded while in other states a program must provide listed services in order to be eligible for funding.

The chart[9] lists only statewide appropriations. In many states, other money for services to violent families is also available from city or county governments or from private sources. Nevertheless, the need for funding for shelters and other services to violent families is still largely unmet. Most shelters operate on a shoestring, provide only basic services, and must turn away a substantial percentage of the families which seek assistance.

Conclusion

The process of drafting and lobbying for new domestic violence legislation is difficult and time-consuming. Most of the existing legislation reflects a composite of what the drafters felt

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[9] The September/October 1981 edition of *response to violence in the family,* Volume 4, Number 7, contains an 8 page breakdown, in chart form, of state domestic violence laws. If you would like a copy, you may purchase one, for $5, from Center for Women Policy Studies, 2000 P Street, N.W., Suite 508, Washington, DC 20036. Yearly subscriptions for *response* are $20 for individuals and $25 for institutions; for information contact Center for Women Policy Studies, (202) 872-1770.

would benefit battered women and what was politically feasible in the state. Drafters should consider that setting up a commission to study the problem or to collect data on domestic violence may be easier politically than improving the available legal remedies, and that a protection order law may be less controversial than a funding bill.

In drafting legislation, advocates advocates for battered women should consult with shelters and other groups around the state so that the bill submitted to the legislature will have widespread support. In addition, the legislative counsel's office at the state capitol should be asked to assist in tailoring legislation to fit the state code or court system. An expert on constitutional law should be asked to examine any drafts of bills for possible flaws.

A valuable resource on domestic violence law is a book titled *Adult Domestic Violence: Constitutional, Legislative, and Equitable Issues,* by Boylan and Taub. It is available from the National Clearinghouse for Legal Services, 500 N. Michigan Avenue, Suite 1940, Chicago, IL 60611, for $4.00. Order document #31673.

Appendix E: GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING/FUNDING BATTERERS' PROGRAMS p.

In November 1980, the Ms. Foundation for Women sponsored a briefing for foundation and corporate representatives about programs for men who batter. A panel which included representatives of the shelter movement and of batterers' programs suggested guidelines which they believe are mandated by therapeutic and ethical considerations, in addition to the needs for safety and effective services. The guidelines are:

No program for men who batter should be funded without the existence of shelter or safe home projects for battered women in the immediate community of the proposed program for abusive men. The availability of refuge for battered women while the abuser is in treatment is critical for the safety of the women and any children and the efficacy of the abuser's treatment.

Treatment programs for abusers must work cooperatively with shelters or safe home projects in their area. Batterers' programs must share the same philosophical understanding of the reasons for violence against women and must work in concert with the battered women's movement to end violence against women.

Where community, foundation or corporate funding is limited and insufficient to sustain both shelter and abuser programs, financial resources should be directed to shelter programs until they achieve financial stability.

(Excerpted from the PCADV newsletter, Volume 3, number 5, December 1980. Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 2405 N. Front St., Harrisburg, PA 17110)

EXCERPTS FROM AGAINST CONSOLIDATION WITH CHILD ABUSE SERVICES BY SUSAN SCHECHTER (COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE) p.

This paper was first presented at the opening of the Fifth National Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect, April 1981, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. It responded to the point/counterpoint topic:

"With data indicating a considerable correlation of spouse abuse with child abuse and neglect, it would be both cost-effective and treatment-effective to combine funding and programs for child protection and spouse abuse in a new framework of family violence."

...We must clarify our terminology, or we will misunderstand completely the important issues raised. Terms like spouse abuse and and family violence mislead us and obscure the issues with which we are concerned–systematic violence directed against women and children in the family. Calling the behavior spouse abuse, rather than woman abuse, suggests an equality between men and women that does not exist; probably over 97 percent of serious assaults between adults in the home are directed at women. Secondly, significant data suggest that the majority of men who beat their wives do *not* beat their children. In one analysis of 933 incidents of wife assault only 62 involved violer directed at a child. Additionally, many men who batter women were not battered children. Although we, too, are concerned about child abuse, from men or women, the correlation argument is simplistic, grossly exaggerated and scientifically disputed. That individual men who were beaten as children are more likely to beat their wives still tells us nothing about why women as a group are beaten, or why men who were not beaten as children beat their wives.

We argue against combining services on these and other grounds. Most importantly, battered women exist today as a social category only because former battered women and feminists insisted that safety for women had to be provided as a priority. A political movement, formed through the will and hard work of grassroots women, created this safety, founding over 500 programs in seven years. The model of service developed was significantly different from that used in child protection It assumes that battered women are in a situational crisis caused by the repeated violence that this society has allowed men to carry out. Battered women are not disabled; they and their children are facing violence, pain, fear and major dislocations. Adult women have responded best to small, non-bureaucratic programs in which self-help and self-determination are emphasized. Women regain control over their lives

p. 2 through finding safety, emotional support from other women and advocacy. Children experience the same support and advocacy within many shelters. These services articulate a vision that sees violence as a result of the unequal power between men and women and sees adult women as competent to control their own lives.

Child abuse and violence against women are different phenomena with different historical roots. A major goal of child protection services is to keep the family united, hopefully free from violence. Our goal is to support a woman in creating a violence-free life for herself and her children in whatever way she chooses. You must provide a form of protection and caretaking that is necessary for children but demeaning and debilitating for adults. Child protection services were organized because children are dependent. Battered women's service provision fundamentally challenges women's dependence, asserting the necessity of independence in order to be free from violence. Two clearly different forms of intervention are required. To use only one means women will be treated as incompetent and denied the very autonomy needed to escape victimization...

1 R. Emerson Dobash and Rebecca Dobash, *Violence Against Wives* (New York: The Free Press, 1979) p. 150.

Appendix F: FOR SHELTER AND BEYOND p.

An Educational Manual For Working With Women Who Are Battered

Massachusetts Coalition of Battered Women Service Groups 355 Boylston Street Boston. MA 02116 (617) 266-8545

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Myths About Woman Abuse p.

Introduction

Until recently very few women admitted to being battered, or even to having been battered some time in their pasts. Battering within the context of a family or household was considered a “private matter” and was effectively “hushed up” by courts, law enforcement officials, social service agencies, professionals such as psychiatrists, clergy, as well as those directly involved in the violence. In the last few years, however, we've seen a good deal of publicity about battered “wives.” Scholarship in the area from psychologists and sociologists alike has been published. Some of this work is good. However, much of it is inconclusive and reflective of the same prejudices and stereotypes existent in our society about the roles of men and women—particularly within the context of the family. Rather than attack the scholarship in the area, we will briefly expose some of the most common myths and stereotypes about battered women, relying on our years of experience in shelters and support groups for battered women and our exchange of ideas with the women who have sought our help.

Myth #1: “Battering” overstates the case. Few women get beaten, though maybe a lot of them get slapped around a little.

Some women do get slapped or hit, and leave the violent situation immediately. But most often battering escalates once it starts. By the time a woman calls for services, generally such escalation has occurred.

Battering brutally violates a woman's rights over her body and her life. It can involve severe, aggravated beatings or threats of such beatings; both physical and mental torture; use of weapons; and often sexual assault. In our experience with battered women, we have been aware of several common characteristics. It is not usually an isolated act, but rather continual acts of physical violence and emotional harassment and humiliation. Once the violence has begun, it continues and it escalates. Men who batter women usually deny their behavior both to the woman and to themselves. In fact, in some cases the mental harassment includes this denial and threats of having the woman “put away” for her craziness.

Battering may end .in murder. A Kansas Police Department study found that in 85% of the cases of domestic homicide, the police were summoned at least once before the killing occurred. In 50% of the cases, police had been called 5 or more times before it happened.

Myth #2: Battering is a “family matter.”

No act which can leave a woman permanently injured physically or mentally, or result in her death is a “family matter.” Assault is assault, rape is rape, murder is murder, regardless of the relationship between the people. These are criminal acts. Arguing in such cases that the “privacy” of the family must be maintained can mean injury, death, or virtual imprisonment, to many battered women.

There is a general reluctance to interfere in family relationships. Women have been encouraged by family, clergy, lawyers, and other “professionals” to remain in violent homes in order to preserve the family unit. Recently, police and social service agencies have begun to re-educate themselves about domestic violence, and are attempting to deal with it in different ways. Recognizing that violence within or without the family is unjustifiable, life threatening and criminal behavior is the first step toward really dealing with the issue. Until we stop isolating violence within families from other violent crimes, we will be encouraging thousands of women to stay in an environment that may eventually kill them.

Myth #3: Battering only happens in “problem" families.

The idea of the “problem” family is immediately suspect since it presupposes the existence of non-problem or “normal” families in the majority of homes. The concept of the stable, happy family masks the reality of the large number of people whose family lives are neither stable nor happy, ignores the rising number of people who choose not to live within a nuclear family, and ignores the statistics on woman abuse. This myth also ignores the fact that our society has tolerated—even encouraged—violence against women on a wide-scale basis through media images of women as victims, through the socialization and reinforcement of male privilege and through the refusal to treat violence against women as any other violent crime. Failure to identify the violence by men against women as being closely linked with the unequal standards between the sexes only serves to keep women in subordinate positions. By encouraging male dominance and reinforcing stereotyped role models of the sexes our whole society and not just individuals or individual families is responsible for the violence.

Furthermore, the myth that only problem families experience violence also encourages social service workers, police and court personnel to look for “reasons” and family “problems” to explain away the violence. The notion that alcoholic or drug-abusive men batter because of their drug problem is shattered by the evidence that such men batter both when they are under the influence of alcohol or drugs and whent they are rational and sober. For years women have been encouraged to seek professional help for their alcoholism, men's alcoholism, their failure to make a successful marriage, or “paranoia” about being abused. More and more women are now rejecting such advice and recognizing that the abuser has problems controlling his violent

tendencies. While he may need professional help, a woman cannot make that decision for him or endure the violence while hoping that he will make that decision.

Myth #4: It is only low-income and working class families who experience violence. p. 2

Many have assumed that battering occurs only within low-income or working class families, or within particular racial or ethnic families. Scholarship in this area and our direct experience show that women from every kind of racial, social, ethnic and economic background have been battered. Women have been battered by doctors, lawyers, dock workers, judges, school teachers, ministers, cab drivers and every other variety of worker. Unfortunately statistics dealing with woman abuse have been accumulated and published primarily through public agencies such as city hospitals, police departments, social service agencies and the courts. Therefore statistics sometimes erroneously suggest that certain kinds of women are battered by certain kinds of men.

Since middle class and upper middle class women often have other options open to them, e.g., staying with friends who can afford to take them in, staying in a hotel for a couple of nights, etc., they are less likely to seek assistance from public agencies such as those listed above or from emergency shelters and other service groups. Many middle class women also are afraid of damaging a successful husband's career, and are pressured by family, friends and others to keep up appearances “at all cost—especially for the children.” Others may have the kind of skills that would give them greater access to work and financial independence. Of the middle class women who do seek assistance from battered women service groups, many have spent years working in the home and do not have marketable skills; they suddenly find themselves without any means of support except A.F.D.C.

Relying on statistics from public agencies, therefore, can mislead readers and distort the reality about violence against women cutting across all races, all social, economic and ethnic groups. It is analogous to compiling statistics on what kinds of people use child-care facilities by collecting statistics from Title XX or other government-funded programs. We would be misled into thinking that wealthy and middle class people did not use daycare facilities, tutors, etc.

Myth #5: Battered women constitute a particular and easily definable group of women.

“Battered women” seems to give rise to the stereotype of a passive woman, between 20 and 35 years old, who is unemployed, has 2 or more children, and lives with her husband who is alcoholic. The facts, however, indicate that “the” battered woman is us—any of us. Battered women are as diverse as women are. There is no particular kind of woman who is likely to be battered any more than a kind likely to be raped.

A battered woman may be elderly, teen-aged, or middle-aged. She may represent an upper, middle or working class background, any race or culture. She may work inside or outside the home as a housewife, teacher, prostitute, student or laborer. She fits no easily-definable pattern or stereotype.

Furthermore, just as there are diverse kinds of women who are battered, there are many different kinds of relationships in which abuse occurs. “Wife abuse” has become a fairly acceptable term, but it distorts reality. Battering does not occur exclusively within a marital relationship. Women are battered by male lovers, relatives, neighbors and strangers. Prostitutes are often battered by their pimps, and sometimes by a lover as well—not to mention customers who get sick gratification from beating prostitutes. Older women may be battered by sons or other younger relatives as easily as by their husbands. Lesbians who are coming out of heterosexual relationships have sometimes been battered by the men with whom they've been involved.

It is therefore unrealistic to attempt to deal with woman abuse by defining women who are battered or the relationships in which they've been battered in narrow terms. The more we work with battered women, the more we realize this and try to deal with it by being open to any number of possibilities, and supportive of all women who have been abused, regardless of the circumstances or the people involved.

Myth #6: She asked for it or she wanted it.

Of all the myths about battering this is probably the most degrading and insensitive to women. Yet many battered women have been accused of asking for the violence or deserving it by abusive men, and by those from whom they sought help, e.g., clergy, therapists, social workers, police, etc. Many have been questioned as to what they did to provoke such violence from a husband or lover, and counseled to look to themselves for reasons and/or blame for violence, and to change their own behavior in order to avoid abuse. This has encouraged many women to stay in a violent home for years trying to discover just what they do to provoke violence, thus facing, in some cases, daily abuse and harassment.

Similar to the provocation theory is the Freudian approach to violence against women. This suggests that women like to be dominated and even physically abused, and blames the woman for the violence rather than the man. The fact that the woman considered maso-chistic is trying to escape the violent man is ignored by those who favor this theory; the difficult problems that she must deal with in leaving the abuser are also ignored.

Myth #7: It can't really be that bad or she wouldn't stay (or, isn't she really a masachist after all?).

The assumption that the violence is not serious or the woman would leave immediately fails to deal realistically with the problems a woman must face immediately and long-term once she has left a violent man. Many women—particularly older women—are economically dependent on the men to whom they are married or with whom they live. For these women—especially those with children—the decision to leave a man who is their and their children's sole or primary means of support has an enormous impact on their lives. Furthermore, until 1974

p. 3 when shelters began to open, there were few places a woman could turn to for refuge and assistance. Police officers were reluctant to intervene, social workers often encouraged

reconciliation in order to save the family, and public housing authorities were (and are) unwilling to consider women in crisis as emergency cases. Even with the growing number of shelters for battered women and their children, it is difficult to keep up with the great number of women in need of refuge. Most shelters are always full and rely on over-flow housing. Even if a woman is able to get shelter she still has to worry about where she'll go from there, how she'll support herself and her children, where they'll live, etc. On top of all this she must also begin to deal with her feelings about what she has suffered, and her fear of further violence and harassment.

If she gets a job she'll probably make considerably less than the man she left. Furthermore, she'll need to pay for daycare *if* those services are available where she lives. Finally she must deal with the loneliness of leaving old connections and with family, friends and professionals who encourage reconciliation "for the sake of the children." With all these pressures it is little wonder that women need time to decide whether or not and when to leave a violent home.

Myth #8: The cycle of violence theory.

Many professionals and scholars suggest that there is a pattern to violence, that boys from violent homes will grow up to be batterers; girls, to be victims. What this theory fails to address is the large number of women who are battered by men who came from non-violent families, and women who came from non-violent families but become trapped in violent relationships. Another facet of the cycle of violence theory is the suggestion that battered women batter their children. As a result of this common belief many battered women are afraid to alleg violence in divorce or abuse proceedings for fear $$$ losing custody of their children. In fact some wome$$$ have lost custody because of the violence of the me from whom they were attempting to escape.

We feel that there has been wide scale confusio$$$ about two separate and distinct issues, confusion tha$$$ tends to downplay or ignore violence against women as $$$ secondary or less important issue and tends to malig$$$ battered women in general. There is no evidence tha$$$ battered women are more likely to abuse their children than women who have not been battered; and our direc experience contradicts the theory that battered women batter their children because they have been battered.

Conclusion

Myths that depict women as choosing, enjoying o$$$ irrationally submitting to violence affect our ideas about and our attitudes toward, all battered women. Thes$$$ myths are not only insulting and degrading to the individual women who have been abused, but also ultimately degrading to all women. Moreover, they negatively affect the provision of services to such a woman and undermine her attempts to take control of her life Convenient explanations for family violence often feed into the common prejudices against battered women and undermine the enormous gains made by women through self-help and awareness. They play a part in keeping women in servile dependent roles. Rather than looking to find simple reasons or theories to account for domestic violence, our time is better spent supporting and encouraging

a victim of such violence so that she car can back her self-respect and take control of her life ir order to leave the violence and make a new life for herself and her children.

Special thanks to the Welsh Women's Aid for their ideas and support.

Chris Butler

p. 4 How We Support Battered Women

Commonalities

Have you ever felt afraid of a man?

Have you ever felt or been abused in a relationship?

Have you ever been told that you're not good enough—too fat, too thin, stupid, inadequate or a bad mother?

Have you ever felt that you didn't deserve to be treated with dignity and respect?

Have you ever felt isolated and alone?

Have you ever felt that you're the only one experiencing what you're experiencing?

Have you ever lost friends because of a relationship you were in?

Have you ever felt as though you couldn't make it on your own?

Have you ever stayed in a relationship for economic reasons, for fear you'd be unwanted elsewhere, or out of love, knowing the relationship was bad for you?

Have you ever felt hostility towards you while trying to improve or change your life just because of your color and/or class background?

These are common experiences of battered women, but all women have felt or experienced some, if not all, of the above. Former battered women bring invaluable sensitivity to their work with other battered women, because their lives and feelings have most closely paralleled those of other women experiencing violence. Moreover, a woman who has been battered and has escaped lets another woman know that it is possible for her to escape as well. However, whether or not you are a former battered woman, you bring to your project the value of being a woman and the understanding and compassion for another woman's feelings of fear and isolation. Your opinion and support are valuable to other women.

And Differences

Just as each of us has some experiences common to all women as well as experiences which differ, based on our particular lives and situations. battered women coming to our project have some common and some different experiences. In order to be able to support all women coming to us, we need to understand different experiences and the effect they have on women's views of themselves, their sense of options available to them, and the way they relate to one another.

Women's experiences differ based on their class background and their race and/or culture. A Spanish-or Portuguese-speaking woman will face language/cultural barriers almost everywhere she goes outside her community, as well as additional cultural disapproval for leaving her husband. A Black woman will have had less access to jobs and/or housing because of the hatred and stereotyping of Black people by white people. A woman who has worked solely as a housewife/mother may have to redefine her self-image to think of working outside the home. A woman who has been a prostitute may be in even more danger than another battered woman because she is her pimp's “meal ticket” and if she leaves, he suffers economic loss. She also may have a hard time fitting in if all the other women were in nuclear family situations. A lesbian woman who has been abused by her husband will have quite a different experience than other women, as will a lesbian who has been abused by a woman lover.

Women of all ages are battered. A teenager battered by her father and/or her boyfriend will face many extra legal difficulties if she is a minor, and her lifestyle will perhaps be different from that of a middle-aged woman. An elderly women of 65 or 70 who's been battered may have an even more difficult time thinking of leaving if she's been with the man for 50 years (whether the abuse occurred throughout the marriage or began recently). She also faces particular discrimination if she tries to work in the labor force. A woman who is blind, deaf, in a wheelchair, or otherwise physically different will face greater restrictions than other women on her ability to leave a violent situation; she will also face restrictions on her options, such as living spaces, work locations, etc., once she has left.

In doing our work, we need to be able to respond to the differences of women's experiences, and to assist them in figuring out how to meet the particular needs they have. We need to look at and perhaps change our own feelings and attitudes about women different from ourselves. A part of our work in sheltering and/or supporting battered women needs to be challenging the attitudes which divide women so that we can come together in mutual support of each other.

Supporting Women: Our Philosophy

Most battered women, in order to leave violence, primarily need safety and support. They feel isolated and dependent and blame themselves. They need recognition that their experience is shared and that their problem is social and political, not individual. Our greatest strength lies in providing these things through a safe place to stay and the support and understanding of other women. Many battered women shelters do not take in women who are in serious emotional crisis because the issues are more complicated and take more time and energy than we can provide, because of our focus on battered women and their children.

Peer Support:

p. 5

There's a lot of mystique and intimidation about counseling and therapy which often make us feel that the support we give someone isn't as good or as important as “real counseling.” “I don't have the education to counsel someone. I don't have the training; I'm not a professional.” In fact, most women have learned many of the skills necessary to be supportive listeners by being mothers, sisters and friends to others. We have empathy, caring for others and the ability to listen to and encourage another woman.

Women who staff and women who use our programs may have different experiences, but each have much to give and much to learn from each other. A staffer's perspective is long-range; her concern and knowledge revolve around the group's well-being. A woman using our services, on the other hand, has a lot of knowledge about the experience of battering and of the services because of her personal involvement. While staffers necessarily have more overall power than women using the services, this doesn't negate the basic equality between them. As more former battered women return to staff, the division between women using the services and staff will lessen.

Service group staff are not professionals; most battered women do not need professional help. Moreover, people who have gone through traditional schooling have historically been part of the problem of battering. Many psychologists and psychiatrists tend to believe and reinforce many myths about women, such as the Freudian theory that women are masochistic. They are laught to objectify their “clients,” and to see probler individual emotional symptoms rather than soc$$$ political issues. They separate themselves from experience as though they could never be involve such a crisis. Many women have experienced going male therapist and leaving his office feeling emotior abused or blamed, rather than helped. Because of $$$ is difficult for many therapists to be truly help$$$ women suffering from battering. Not all professior however, adhere to traditional approaches; there good, unbiased therapists around, and there *is* a rol$$$ formalized therapy and counseling for battered wo$$$ who choose it.

Women Supporting Women:

Battered women need women's support: batte: and all forms of violence against women are part of oppression. We all have faced similar proble especially if we, too, have been battered. We are position to understand and empathize with $$$ women's experiences; we understand more easily $$$ men the terrible effects of battering. Women who $$$ been isolated and dependent on men need to know there are other women who've had the same exp ences. Women supporting women is what we've al$$$ done—with our mothers, daughters, sisters and $$$ On a broader level, women supporting each of develops the women's movement.

Self Help:

We need to assist battered women to become st$$$ This means that women should replace control by an abusive man with control by abusive welfare system or by well-meaning staff. $$$ women, with proper support and with the necess resources offered them, have the ability to

take con over their liver. Staffers should be in a secondary rol$$$ advocates, encouraging battered women to take care their own, business, make their own phone calls and $$$ responsibility for their own appointments. We sho$$$ provide them with the information they need about sources and we should help them strategize what to $$$ then they can do it. By being their own advocates $$$ representing their own interests to bureaucracies, $$$ support from staff, women learn that they don't have rely on others to do things for them, that they have $$$ and are capable of taking control. Only when a $$$ reachies a major obstacle should a staffer step in to things for her, and then only at her request. Alth$$$ women using our services may expect us to do things them and to have all the answers, and although it can ego $$$ for us to meet those expectations, we $$$ mately $$$ if we take over work they $$$ do $$$

We should arm women with skilis to survive. $$$

142 knowledge of $$$ deal with bureaucracies
143 policial persp-cure an understanding of were oppression and the ability to analyze their $$$

Empowerment: p. 6

A self-help model leads to empowerment. As a result of our oppression, we have been made to feel powerless: that we can't control our own lives, don't have control over our bodies and can't change things that hurt us. Battered women, in particular, have been told that they are worthless, stupid, incapable, and responsible for the pain they feel. Therefore, our program must contradict these lies and help women gain a sense of personal power and capabilities. By empowerment we mean women beginning to direct their own lives, to control their own bodies, to decide what they want and to try to get it. This also means taking responsibility for their own actions while recognizing that they are not to blame for the violence done to them.

In practical terms, empowerment within a shelter is residents having control over the children's care, the meals, cleaning and general operation of the house, as well as having input into anything which affects them such as site visits and new house policies. It means gaining knowledge from each other and from staff, and then being able to share that with other women.

There are obviously limits to any one woman's power, especially in our society: she may well not have the power (financial) to get an interesting, well-paying job, or the power to stop her violent man from being violent, and she won't have total power over the service group either. She can't have control over institutions around her and doesn't have power over other people. However, in gaining knowledge and confidence in herself, she can go a long way toward developing her personal power and her ability to get what she needs from those around her.

Language:

We need to look at our language to see what philosophy and attitudes it represents. Words like “client” connote unequal relations: the professional has knowledge, answers and power, and the client seeks help and feels powerless. “Counseling” often connotes such a power difference as well, because the roles are seen as static: the $$$ needing help.

Other seemingly harmless words can also have a negative impact. For example, calling a shelter, crisis line or support group an “agency" may, in a battered woman's mind, equate the group with the welfare department and other bureaucratic agencies. Similarly, constantly referring to a battered woman as “the victim” suggests that that is *all* she is; she will always be without any control or decision making power over her life. The knowledge that she has been a victim of the batterer and the society which allows battering can help to free a woman from the guilt and shame of violence; but if we identify a woman as “victim” we only box her in and lock her into a passive role. She can and should move away from that role by taking control in her own time.

When feminists first brought battering to the public awareness, it was called woman abuse or wifebeating, noting *who* was getting battered. Now, many funding agencies, social services, even feminist groups, refer to the problem as domestic violence or spouse abuse. This language change reflects an attempt to mask the real issue — the battering of women, an act committed by individual men, as a part of women's systematic oppression. We need to be careful not to fall into using such terminology: we have a responsibility to make our language reflect the reality of women's experience and direct attention to the real problems.

We all need to look at how language affects us and the women for whom we provide services. Our language should acknowledge women's growth and power. Staffing in a shelter, crisis line or support group is a constant learning experience, and we have to share our ideas and experiences with other staffers and residents. Information and learning have their own special kind of power; by sharing these with each other, we help to empower all women.

What Staffers Should Do:

144 Help women think about their situations, to realize they're not alone, that other women have had similar experiences.
145 Help women figure out what they want (a novel question for most women because we've never been taught to think in those terms).
146 Identify feelings (such as fear, helplessness, power-lessness, hopelessness) which may be preventing women from making decisions.
147 Be honest, be for real: our lives are not perfect either; offer your own experiences if relevant. We can't say what to do, but we can offer ideas from our own lives and from what options we see open for women.
148 Give women the help they need to do things for themselves — even if it means saying no to requests some-times; that can be the best thing to do.
149 Offer resources: who, what, when, where.
150 Help women gain a sense of self-confidence and the ability to take care of themselves.
151 Be challenging, even if you're afraid of not being “$$$” or not being liked. Being supportive does *not* mean allowing women to take advantage of us or our organizations.
152 Be open to women's choices: each woman has control over her life and needs to make her own decisions; we can't be too invested in what decision she makes.
153 Hear what women have to say; don't assume that you know the answers or even the questions.

154 While realizing and building on the commonality of women's experiences, recognize the differences and diversity of women as well. Equality is not sameness; women of different races and cultures experience many things differently.
155 Set limits for yourself in order not to burn out.

Supporting Third World Women p. 7

For the past few years I've been involved with a shelter, Casa Myrna Vazquez, which serves primarily (but not exclusively) Hispanic and Black women and their children. This group of women faces many barriers and obstacles because of their cultural upbringing/conditioning. Also, their race and economic status often means poor housing, health and general living conditions for them and their families. Shelter workers and volunteers need more awareness and sensitivity to these issues to "help these women help themselves." I would like to explore a number of these issues and the challenge they present to those in the role of counselors, supporters, and advocates.

Coming to a shelter is a radical step for most women. For Hispanic women it may mean even greater change in a period of $$$ upheaval and transition. They are $$$ leaving their husbands, but also with the stress of adjusting to a new $$$ especially if they have recently moved from Puerto Rico or another Latin American country to the U.S. For many it is the first time they have stepped outside the closed and isolated circle of their homes. Simultaneously they may have to adjust to an urban U.S. setting and a totally different lifestyle, with differing expectations for women.

Second, facing the decision to leave usually presents more intense personal conflict for a Hispanic woman due to the very strong cultural tradition of "a woman's place is in the home." Having resisted the pressure of church and relatives to keep the family together at all costs, in making a decision to leave she often feels tremendous guilt and betrayal toward her children.

Third, the personal resources in education, skills, and confidence to make decisions and take action are limited for many Third World and low income women. Since many started having children as teenagers and/or married young, they often have little formal education, contributing to their sense of low self-esteem, and financial and emotional dependency. Hispanic women, particularly, have had little familiarity in dealing with social service and housing agencies outside their homes or the family circle, having rehed on husbands/boyfriends to make decisions and relate to such agencies. Additionally, many women are confined by their inability to speak English. Learning English is difficult since it involves a process of acculturation which many resist because it can be a threat to their cultural support systems. Handicapped by language and poor self-image, they are fearful of tackling bureaucracies whose assistance they may need to survive.

Fourth, the economic realities of life in the U.S. have far-reaching effects on Hispanic and Black family relationships; on power relationships within the family and the woman's sense of self-worth. When the husband can't find a job or becomes unemployed, the shift of husband as breadwinner to wife as holder of the pursestrings via welfare can start or escalate family

violence. A woman often overlooks or excuses her husband's beatings out of feelings of guilt for a situation not of her own making and because she still cares for the man.

It is crucial for staff to understand the interplay of cultural imperatives and racial/economic pressures in Third World women's feelings, sense of personal value and service needs in order to build supportive relationships. These women need encouragement without pity, direction and guidance in identifying options, and advocacy without substitution of another kind of deoendency.

At Casa Myrna the racial/ethnic composition of the house often changes overnight, and with these changes comes a new set of problems and possibilities. At one moment the house, might have a few or one English-speaking woman, then $$$ balance of the three ethnic groups. Whether the women remain isolated, $$$ themselves, or freely intermingle depends on several factors: a) how many women are bilingual; b) women's prior exposure and experience with other ethnic groups; c) how strongly racial ethnic prejudices and feelings are held and acted on. Food preferences, child-rearing practices and housekeeping habbits are three areas which serve as focal points for the women to vent their unconscious or conscious racial feelings and attitudes. The shelter can become a “tempest in the teapot” simmering with racial/ethnic tensions and hatred, camouflaging the fear, tensions and sufferings common to all the women.

We feel that the interpersonal dynamics of sharing a multiracial/multicultural living space offers shelter workers and volunteers a unique opportunity to address the racist attitudes and beliefs of everyone's upbringing. In any and all cases, staff can help maintain harmonious relationships by openly dealing with these feelings, whether it be in impromptu coffee klatches, house meetings or support groups. The important thing is to directly and immediately face issues of race and class. Before this can happen, shelter staff should create a forum where they can explore their own racial feelings and prejudices. This is not an overnight process. At Casa Myrna we are just beginning to learn how to help each other grow as individuals and as a group.

—*Curdina Hill*

p. 8 ORIENTATION TAPE FOR REFUGEE BATTERED WOMEN FOR ST. PAUL/RAMSEY MEDICAL CENTER, EMERGENCY MEDICINE DEPARTMENT

p.

Script by: Cathleen O'Leary, M.S.W. Peggy Essling, M.S.W. Clinical Social Workers, St. Paul/ Ramsey Medical Center, Emergency Medicine Department AND Thomas J. Rogers, M.A.

December, 1981

You are in the emergency medicine department of the St. Paul/Ramsey Medical Center. There are nurses and doctors here who will try to find out how you were hurt and where on your body you are hurt. They will want to know what injuries you are concerned about. Please show the doctor where you are hurting and try to help him or her know how you were hurt and how long ago you were hurt. This is the only way that the doctors and nurses can give you the best medical care. Your care may involve X-rays, medication, and/or appointments to return to the hospital for special care.

The staff of the emergency medicine department are particularly concerned if you were hurt by your husband or boyfriend. This is called battering, and if you are a victim of battering, there are other types of help that can be offered to you. We find that victims of battering are often feeling trapped, confused, and scared; and, many times, need help with legal matters and emotional support as well as medical care.

EMERGENCY ROOM ORIENTATION TAPE p.

In the United States, it is against the law for your husband or boyfriend to threaten to beat you or hurt you in any way. Because of this, you can report the incident to the police either while you are here or when you go home if you choose to. If you choose to report the incident to the police, they will either take your husband or boyfriend to jail for a short time or tell him to leave you alone for awhile. If you choose, you can ask a judge in Ramsey County Family Court (Room 1700 Ramsey County Court House, Phone: 298-4875) for a court order called an order for protection. This will allow you to call the police if your husband or boyfriend comes back to where you are living. If you choose to get this order for protection, it means that, for *now*, you do not want to live with this man because he hurts you.

There is a social worker here who will help you with any questions about the police or court orders. This can sometimes be done right now if an interpreter is available or you can come back later for help with this.

The social worker and other staff are concerned that you have a safe place to go when you leave the hospital. Many times, men that hurt women will do it again so we are very concerned

SHELTER ORIENTATION TAPE p.

You should carry your money with you at *all* times, or else put it in a bank.

Women stay in the house to have a safe place to live. There cannot be any physical fighting between women here, and mothers are not allowed to spank or hit their kids.

Don't tell your husband or boyfriend the address of this house.

We are very glad you came here. You are showing your husband or boyfriend that it is wrong to beat you. Men have to learn not to hit women.

SHELTER ORIENTATION TAPE FOR REFUGEE BATTERED WOMEN p.

Script by: Mindy Benowitz Women's Advocates Shelter St. Paul

December, 1981

This house is for women who need a safe place to stay because somebody beats them. This house is here because many women get beaten by men. All types of women get beaten - rich women, poor women,...women from every race and country.

This is your temporary home while you decide what you want to do. When you are here, you can see you are not the only one who gets beaten. We believe it is wrong to beat someone, no matter what problems you and your husband or boyfriend are having, you don't deserve to get hit. Nobody has the right to hit you. In this country it is against the law to beat someone.

You can stay here temporarily. You can take time to decide what you want to do. We can help you, but you decide for yourself. We can help you do several things:

156 We can help find counseling for you or you and your husband or boyfriend.
157 We can help you go home to get your clothes.
158 We can help you get medical attention.
159 We can help you find a new house or apartment.
160 We can help you get a court order telling your husband or boyfriend to move out of the house or apartment because he hits you.
161 We can help you get a separation or divorce if you want to end your marriage.
p. 162 We can help you find English classes.
163 We can help press charges against your husband or boyfriend through the court system.

We want to help you. Please try to tell us what you need or want. We will try to find understanding interpreters to help, too.

This house is very safe. Doors are locked all the time, and we don't allow men to visit, except repairmen. You are responsible for your children. If you go out, either take your kids with you or ask another resident or staff to watch them. If your children are with you, there are women who work here who can help you with your children. We can help children with school, getting clothes, seeing a doctor, and playing. If your children are not with you, we can help you get them if you want them to stay here with you. If you have questions or need help about your children, we can help you.

Each woman staying here shares the housework and has one job to do each day in the house to keep the house clean. Someone will show you what to do.

p. 3 You should carry your money with you at *all* times, or else put it in a bank.

Women stay in the house to have a safe place to live. There cannot be any physical fighting between women here, and mothers are not allowed to spank or hit their kids.

Don't tell your husband or boyfriend the address of this house.

We are very glad you came here. You are showing your husband or boyfriend that it is wrong to beat you. Men have to learn not to hit women.

p. CONSULTATION REPORT

August 27 - September 4, 1981 Los Angeles, California

NILDA RIMONTE Consultant

Indochina Refugee Action Center p.

1424 Sixteenth Street NW, Suite 404 Washington, D.C. 20036 (202) 667-7810

February 1, 1982

Dear Colleague:

Domestic violence is a problem that, according to some, has reached epidemic proportions in this country and which cuts across all distinctions of age, race, ethnicity, education, and socio-economic class. During the past year it has become a visible problem in the Indochinese refugee population resettled in the U.S. There are increasing reports of its occurrence from resettlement workers, shelters, hospital staff, police, and refugees themselves. Refugee families and communities are, in a very broad but real sense, the *victims* of such violence. However, refugee women are most often the immediate *targets*. They join the vast number of battered women in this country for whom a large network of emergency and support services has been developed over the past decade.

The Refugee Women's Program Development and Coordination Project has produced the enclosed information kit which we hope will stimulate further exploration of the problem of domestic violence as it affects Indochinese women and their families. The kit addresses and draws upon the resources of both the resettlement network and the battered women's service group network. It raises more questions than it answers with the intent of encouraging the two networks to collaborate at the local level in educating each other about both the issue and the population and in designing appropriate service responses.

The subject quite naturally evokes emotional responses: denial, despair, anger, and fear. It does not lend itself to neat and simple solutions. Certainly none are presented here and they will only result from your concern and initiative in convening local discussions.

Yours truly,

Deborah A. McGlauflin, Director Refugee Women's Program Development and Coordination Project

1. Effectiveness of Initial Planning p.

A. The local organizer (International Institute, Pomona Center)/ worked together on the planning for the consultation workshop; they worked on the date, the site, the target participants and other logistics. Local program people who were consulted on the proposed workshop provided additional contact persons.

B. The IRAC PWP staff provided information on the goals and guidelines of the consultation, including helpful suggestions on how to obtain the support of local program people. Equally important, she provided the initial challenge and subsequent support for such a consultation.

C. The consultant was in frequent touch with the IRAC staff as well as with the local program people. Suggestions from both IRAC and local people helped in the shaping of the consultation workshop.

2. Description of Work Performed

A. The problems of battering and rape in the Indochinese community of Los Angeles and Orange County were the principal foci of the consultation. Specific issues addressed included the correlation between battering and social-structural as well as personal factors; strategics for getting the community, particularly the women, to view battering and rape within the context of the community's traditional value-system; the need for getting the community to look at battering as a problem involving the imperative of *change* as a tool for adjustment and survival; the special problems that women might encounter in the development of self-help groups responding to the problem of battering and rape; and the role of self-help groups as agents of change. Activities included the following:

164 - Consultation with the Cambodian Wonen's Association and the United Cambodian Community regarding the battering problem among the Khmer population of Long Beach and Orange County;
165 - Consultation with the two leaders of the All-Indochina Women's Group to identify the obstacles to the Group's revitalization efforts;
166 - Consultation with the Asian/Pacific Family Outreach regarding the battering problem among the Indochinse community of Long Beach and specific service delivery issues;
167 - Consultation with the International Institute on the need for involving refugee women around the self-help issues and how women can be encouraged to share in community leadership, currently the exclusive domain of the Indochinese men;
168 - Consultation with other local program people and non-local (Cue Huynh of Northern California) on related issues;
169 - One training workshop with a bi-lingual Indochinese counselor for battered women; and
170 - Planning and preparation for the workshop itself.

p. 2

B. All the activities focused entirely on the subject at hand; One training workshop for Northern California was considered but not implemented.

C. Time turned out to be adequate for the single training workshop that was planned, but additional time would have created less pressure.

3. Effectiveness of the Work Performed

A. The interest, enthusiasm and support of the local organizer and other local program people were indispensable to the training workshop. The information provided to and obtained from the other consultations assisted in determining the focus of the workshop.

B. The workshop was attended by 22 local participants (2 male, 20 female; 1 Cambodian, 2 Laotians, 19 Vietnamese and Vietnamese-Chinese; a good mix of agency staff, community leaders and women who identified themselves simply as “housewives;” half were recent arrivals and the rest 1975 refugees). The target population for the workshop was thereby reached. The participants were actively involved in the group process, with discussions often intense. The participants were also very concerned that the revent arrivals among them who had less English understood the concepts and issues that were being discussed.

C. No IRAC PWP staff was present at the workshop.

D. The consultant designed the workshop as “exploratory” in nature, with the following objectives:

- At the end of the workshop, participants will have gained a sense of the nature of battering and its magnitude among the Indochinese community;

- Participants will become aware of the major issues surrounding battering;

- Participants will explore (or at least begin to think of) the feasibility of developing self-help groups responding to the battering problem in their community.

Approximately 1 hour of the 4.5-hour workshop was conducted in Vietnamese by a refugee woman who works with the consultant as a counselor for batterin and rape victims. This counselor also took turns with other participants in providing interpretation. Based on the questions and the intense discussions that characterized the workshop, the consultant felt that the workshop objectives were achieved. The only deviation from the workshop agenda (please refer to the attached) involved a discussion of rape and rape prevention issues–to the consultant's delight–which tied in very neatly with the battering issues that were first discussed.

Throughout, the consultant emphasized the need for refugee women to view battering and rape as community problems that threaten the very structure

of the family that refugee (and immigrant) women are keen on preserving. She also emphasized p. 3
the complexity of the battering problem and the need to be open to change as an important strategy for confronting battering. With regards to the formation of self-help groups that would address this problem, the consultant underscored the need for self-education before the group's objectives can be defined. As anticipated, a great deal of anxiety surfaced as discussions about change (particularly in regard to the unquestioned right of men to beat their wives) continued. The consultant validated this anxiety by acknowledging the conflicts that change brings about, and by citing examples of how change can be used as a tool for adaptation, and therefore of survival.

E. The case example utilized at the workshop seemed to be a very good way of concretizing the major issues involving battering; the demonstration of specific rape prevention techniques was felt to be useful. The presence of the trained Vietnamese counselor who could speak from first-hand experience in dealing with scores of violent families lent credence to the effort to get the

participants to see battering as a very real problem in the Indochinese community. (It has been the experience of the consultant that middle-class refugee women–along with men of *all* classes–tend to minimize the battering problem and to view it largely as a lower-class phenomenon; no such denial occurred at the workshop, probably because a Vietnamese counselor was there to challenge such denials.) The presence of two men, who were themselves perceived as community leaders, was very salutary, if only because they were both extremely receptive to the ideas being discussed.

A future workshop should probably separate 1975 arrivals from recent arrivals because of the language problem mainly. While interpretation is useful, it does tend to slow down the pace of the workshop. In addition, very recent arrivals are probably not very open to discussions about self-help groups when they themselves are preoccupied with literally adapting to their new environment. A workshop for such a group certainly needs to be designed in an entirely different way; perhaps a workshop is not even a suitable format. Substance for such a group should probably focus on the laws that define wife-beating as a crime, and the differences in the way Americans and Southeast Asians living in a Southeast Asian setting would respond to a battering victim.

4. Participants' Evaluation

Post-workshop discussions indicated that the participants found the information helpful, albeit threatening. Few filled out the evaluation sheet, and none among the new arrivals. However, the 2 male participants identified above requested a similar workshop in the neighboring La Puente-San Gabriel area (one of them actually offered a site); one woman requested for a series of small workshops focusing on rape and rape prevention issues; another requested technical assistance in the formation of a parents' self-help group which the consultant saw as an excellent “back-door” approach to domestic violence.

p. 4 5. Follow-Up Needs

It certainly seems important that the above requests for follow-up workshops should be met. Workshops to train women to assist battered women in crisis seems necessary; women so trained may then form their own network for mutual assistance and support, something perhaps in the order of a women's coalition against violence.

6. This consultant is biased toward using experienced practitioners as consultants, as opposed to professional (and expensive) consultants. While a professional consultant may be skilled, say, in counseling battered women, s/he may not necessarily be aware of the idiosyncratic needs of the special populations for whom s/he may be providing consultation There is also no substitute for the local practitioner's experience. On the other hand, local practitioners may lack the glamour of a formal consultant.

The Consultant

This consultant pioneered the first (and still the only) hotline in the United States geared specifically to meet the needs of Pacific-Asian and Indochinese women. This hotline later

became the nucleus of the sexual assault and domestic violence center (known as the Center for the Pacific-Asian Family, Inc.), that, along with its recently opened shelter for battered women, appears to be unique in all of California and in the U.S. She has provided numerous consultations to a number of local programs (both within the Pacific-Asian community and outside), as well as to non-locals. She has conducted many workshops on battering and rape both as facilitator and presenter, and conducts in-service training workshop: as well as rape prevention workshops in 7 Pacific-Asian communities. She developed, and is currently administering, the "Comprehensive Crisis Services to Indochinese Women" program at her Center, a program that is unique in California (and probably in the U.S.).

Submitted by: NILDA RIMONTE Consultant 9/7/81

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171 EXPLORATORY WORKSHOP: Developing a Self-Help Group in Response to the Problem of Battering
172 Facilitator: Nilda Rimonte, Executive Director Center for the Pacific-Asian Family, Inc.
173 Assisted by: Le Mao Thi Nguyen, Crisis Counselor/Advocate Center for the Pacific-Asian Family, Inc.
174 WORKSHOP AGENDA 3 September, 1981; International Ins 425 S. Garey, Por
175 9-9:30 Self-Introductions Explanation of Workshop Procedures
176 Surfacing of Participant Expectations Leveling of Expectations: the Workshop Objectives
177 9:30-11:30 The Problem of Battering in the Indochinese/Pacific-Asian Community
178 - Susceptibility & Severity
179 - Myths and Realities
180 - Legal Definition
181 - The psychodynamics of Battering: Why Do Women Stay? Why Don't Men Let Go?
182 - "Causes" of Battering: social-structural
183 personal-psychological
184 socio-cultural
185 11:30-12 LUNCH
186 12-2:00 Major Issues in Developing a Self-Help Group
187 - Participation and Leadership
188 - Defining Objectives: Service vs. Social Action
189 - Using Community Resources
190 - Funding
191 A Women's Self-Help Group & Issues Specific to Battering
192 - Confidentiality and Trust p.
193 - Shame
194 - Coping with Male Hostility
195 Subversive Women: Women's Self-Help Group as a Change Agent
196 Follow-up Strategies/Plans

The Center for the Pacific-Asian Family gratefully acknowledges the cooperation and assistance of the International Institute, Pomona Center, and the Indochinese Refugee Action Center in Washington, D.C. for making this exploratory workshop possible.