

# Pattern Changing for Abused Women

An Educational Program

Marilyn Shear Goodman  
Beth Creager Fallon

**IVPS**

Interpersonal Violence:  
The Practice Series

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Beth Creager Fallon

Foreword by Richard J. Gelles

**NIPS**

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Interpersonal Violence:  
The Practice Series

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*This book is dedicated to the many abused women over the years who have sought help at the Women's Resource Center of South County. They came expecting only to receive, but the courageous sharing of their painful stories became a gift to us: it was the inspiration for the Pattern Changing Program.*

Please address questions regarding any section of

*Pattern Changing for Abused Women*

to Marilyn Goodman.

Inquiries about available workshops  
should be addressed to Beth Fallon.

P.O. Box 5646

Wakefield, Rhode Island 02880

## *Foreword*

The relationship between research and practice is difficult and often uneasy. Quite simply, the paradigm and rules of evidence for social research are not easily applied to clinical practice and are sometimes even irrelevant to it. Clinicians frequently require knowledge and insight that either have not yet been developed by researchers or are sometimes beyond the ability of researchers to generate. Research and clinical practice are not incompatible, but the application of research to clinical practice and the applicability of clinical cases to generalizable research conclusions are more difficult than commonly assumed.

I learned this lesson more than 10 years ago, when I spent a year with the Family Development Clinic at Children's Hospital. At that time, my colleagues at Children's Hospital and I assumed that clinical practice could be improved if it was informed by state-of-the-art research on family violence. Of course, at times it was useful to summon up the latest empirical data that related to a specific case, and at other times a case was illuminated by applying a research-based theoretical perspective instead of only the clinical case per-

spective. But in general, during the one-year experience, at too many times the researcher's paradigm and the clinician's seemed less than fully compatible.

In the years since that experiment, I have found that research and practice in the field of family violence have, on occasion, grown farther apart. For example, the First National Family Violence Research Conference, held at the University of New Hampshire in 1980, included a compatible and congenial group of researchers and practitioners. The compatibility and congeniality were much more frayed by the time of the Second National Family Violence Research Conference, in 1984. By the time of the Third Conference, in 1987, two separate conferences had to be held—one for researchers and a second for practitioners.

During the 1960s and 1970s, researchers and practitioners worked hand-in-hand to help draw attention to the problems of child abuse, wife abuse, and elder abuse. They worked with a common purpose and tried to overcome a common obstacle: an indifferent public and indifferent policy makers. The separation of research and practice was the result of a number of forces. First, as I noted above, there is no automatic and easy fit between research and practice. Second, both groups were forced to compete for scarce funding in the 1980s. Third, the field of family violence research and practice became much more political in the 1980s. Research results that did not fit a particular point of view were often rejected, as were the researchers themselves.

This brief social history of the field of family violence is an involved way of explaining why I, as a researcher, appear an unlikely person to write a foreword for this book. However, I am not a totally unlikely choice. I have known Marilyn Goodman since she began her work with the Women's Resource Center of South County. The agency has run a hot line, shelter, and educational program less than 5 miles from where I live and work. Yet although I know Marilyn, we work near one another, and share similar interests in the issue of battered women, we have not interacted professionally on more than a few occasions. I knew about the work Marilyn was doing and had met some women who had participated in the Pattern Changing Program, but my knowledge of the program was no more than my general knowledge of practice in the area of family violence.



Thus, when I read this book for the first time, it was a new experience for me, as it will be for many of the readers of the volume. When I read the introduction of the book and then read about each session, I was impressed by the fact that the basic assumptions of the program and the specific goals of each session were laid out as if informed by the latest, state-of-the-art research on family violence. *Pattern Changing*, however, is based solely on Marilyn Goodman and Beth Fallon's cumulative experience in working with battered women and their acquired insights into what women need to do to move out of a violent relationship and live a violence-free life. Research, theory, and practice have come together again in this volume.

*Pattern Changing* is the hoped-for intersection between research and practice. The book and the program it describes are free from the ideological baggage of either practice or research. The politics of research and practice is absent. The focus of the program and the book is on the needs of battered women. Even though there are different ways of knowing about family violence—my way is through research; Goodman and Fallon's way is through experience—it is clear that both points of view can intersect and provide meaningful assistance for the victims of intimate violence.

A reading of *Pattern Changing for Abused Women* suggests that my view of the relationship between research and practice has been too pessimistic. Goodman and Fallon's program clearly demonstrates that although the goals, emphasis, methods, and foci of research and practice may be different, research and practice can inform each other. Theory and method emerge from the kind of positivistic research I am involved in *and* from the concrete experiences of practitioners like Goodman and Fallon. When the understanding gained from both approaches is compatible, as it is in *Pattern Changing for Abused Women*, it makes for powerful and effective clinical practice.

RICHARD J. GELLES  
Family Violence Research Program  
University of Rhode Island

## *Acknowledgments*

This book is the result of an arduous 10 years of work in developing the Pattern Changing Program. It could not have been achieved without the support and encouragement of others, whom we wish to acknowledge with gratitude.

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# *Introduction*

MARILYN SHEAR GOODMAN

## □ Philosophy

Pattern Changing came into being through attentive listening to the expressed needs of abused women and a deep commitment to attempting to fill those needs. Fundamental to all we teach is a firm belief in basic rights for all persons, an understanding of and ability to set boundaries, and the development of assertiveness skills to ask for our rights and to protect our boundaries. We believe that although anyone may have a brief involvement with an abuser, a woman who possesses this threefold foundation of rights, boundaries, and assertiveness will never be a chronic victim of domestic abuse.

We believe that a combination of four components contributes the most to success in changing patterns: (a) a support group with other