Pattern Changing for Abused Women

An Educational Program

Marilyn Shear Goodman Beth Creager Fallon



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Interpersonal Violence: The Practice Series

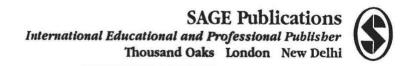
Pattern Changing for Abused Women

An Educational Program

Marilyn Shear Goodman Beth Creager Fallon

Foreword by Richard J. Gelles





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For information address:



SAGE Publications, Inc. 2455 Teller Road Thousand Oaks, California 91320 E-mail: order@sagepub.com

SAGE Publications Ltd. 6 Bonhill Street London EC2A 4PU United Kingdom

SAGE Publications India Pvt. Ltd. M-32 Market Greater Kailash I New Delhi 110 048 India

Printed in the United States of America

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Goodman, Marilyn Shear.

Pattern changing for abused women: an educational program / authors, Marilyn Shear Goodman, Beth Creager Fallon; with a foreword by Richard J. Gelles.

p. cm. — (Interpersonal violence: the practice series; vol. 9)

Includes bibliographical references and index. ISBN 978-0-8039-5493-9 — 978-0-8039-5494-6 (pbk)

Abused women—Rehabilitation.
 Abused women—Counseling of.
 Assertiveness training.
 Family violence—Prevention.

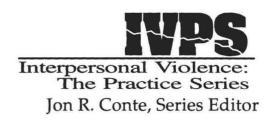
I. Fallon, Beth Creager. II. Title. III. Series: Interpersonal violence; v. 9.

RC569.5.F3G664 1995 616.85'822—dc20

94-31051

11 12 13 14 10 9 8 7 6

Sage Production Editor: Diana E. Axelsen



Interpersonal Violence: The Practice Series is devoted to mental health, social service, and allied professionals who confront daily the problem of interpersonal violence. It is hoped that the knowledge, professional experience, and high standards of practice offered by the authors of these volumes may lead to the end of interpersonal violence.

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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.

Foreword

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.

Our warm thanks go to Richard Gelles. His belief in Pattern Changing's concept and his patient guidance as we moved through the publication process were invaluable gifts. We are grateful for his patience and practical advice that cheered us on during periods of discouragement.

Special recognition is due Jon Conte and the supportive staff at Sage Publications: Terry Hendrix, Dale Grenfell, Diana Axelsen, Gillian Dickens, Christina Hill, and Linda Poderski. Their insightful, patient guidance of first-time authors made this book possible.

Marjorie Swann, Executive Director of the Women's Resource Center of South County from 1981 to 1986, gave not only encouragement but also trust and free rein for creativity in the early development of the program.

Mary Deibler, Executive Director of the Women's Resource Center of South County from 1986 to 1990, continued this trusting support, adding her enthusiasm and humor. She encouraged publications about Pattern Changing and was the first to suggest our writing a book.

We appreciate Mollie and Russell Smart and Alice and Dick Stratton, who read and believed in the manuscript and provided valuable criticism.

And last, but scarcely least, our husbands and best friends, Leon Goodman and Brian Fallon, have given their love, encouragement, patience, and sustaining wit and good humor.

Contents

	Foreword	xiii
	Acknowledgments	xvii
	Introduction Marilyn Shear Goodman	1
	Boundary Setting Using Assertiveness Skills Beth Creager Fallon	11
	Overview	13
	First Things First Format of the Sessions Common Threads	13 16 18
	Myers-Briggs Type Indicator	22
1.	Your Rights and the Impact of Abuse	25
	SESSION I TEXT Basic Rights	25 25

Defining the Abuse Problem	27
SESSION I SCRIPT FOR LEADERS	32
2. Family Roles and Abuse: Why Is It So Hard to Leave?	42
SESSION II TEXT	42
When There Is Abuse, What Is Whose Problem?	42
Why It Is So Hard to Leave	44
SESSION II SCRIPT FOR LEADERS	51
3. The Dysfunctional Childhood Legacy	59
SESSION III TEXT	59
Factors	59
Results	60
SESSION III SCRIPT FOR LEADERS	64
4. Boundaries and Good-Byes to Old Patterns	71
SESSION IV TEXT	71
Boundaries	71
Old Patterns	75
How to Change Unhealthy Patterns	76
SESSION IV SCRIPT FOR LEADERS	79
5. About Feelings: Grief, Fear, and Guilt	85
SESSION V TEXT	85
Sadness and Grief	85
Fear and Anxiety	87
From Guilt to Responsibility	90
SESSION V SCRIPT FOR LEADERS	93
6. More About Feelings: Anger	100
SESSION VI TEXT	100
Understanding Anger	100
Steps for Handling the Anger Within Yourself	102
Steps Toward Taking Action	103
SESSION VI SCRIPT FOR LEADERS	106

7.	Boundary Setting Using Assertiveness Skills 1: Myth and Reality	113
	SESSION VII TEXT	113
	What Is Assertiveness Skills Training?	113
	Definition of Assertiveness	115
	Comparison of Assertive, Nonassertive, and	
	Aggressive Behaviors	115
	Women and Assertiveness	116
	Trusting Yourself to Be Assertive	121
	Stumbling Blocks to Assertiveness	121
	Some Myths About Assertiveness Assertiveness Practice	122
	Assertiveness Fractice	123
	SESSION VII SCRIPT FOR LEADERS	125
8.	Boundary Setting Using Assertiveness Skills 2:	
	Techniques	131
	SESSION VIII TEXT	131
	Rules for Assertiveness	131
	Assertiveness Techniques	132
	SESSION VIII SCRIPT FOR LEADERS	136
9.	Boundary Setting Using Assertiveness Skills 3:	
	Requests and Authority Figures	140
	SESSION IX TEXT	140
	Why Is Making a Request So Hard?	140
	Why Is Refusing a Request So Hard?	142
	Dealing With Authority Figures	145
	SESSION IX SCRIPT FOR LEADERS	146
10.	Boundary Setting Using Assertiveness Skills 4:	
	Practice	152
	SESSION X TEXT	152
	Practicing Assertiveness Skills	152
	Assertiveness and Anger	153
	A Word of Caution	154
	SESSION X SCRIPT FOR LEADERS	156

11. Setting Realistic Goals	162
SESSION XI TEXT	162
How to Set Realistic Goals	162
Achieving Your Goals	163
I Need , I Want , I Deserve	166
SESSION XI SCRIPT FOR LEADERS	167
12. New Patterns of Decision Making	174
SESSION XII TEXT	174
Why Decision Making Is So Difficult	174
Decision Making in a New Light	175
Decision-Making Steps	176
After the Decision	176
SESSION XII SCRIPT FOR LEADERS	178
13. Healthy Relationships	183
SESSION XIII TEXT	183
Do Healthy Relationships Really Exist?	183
How Healthy Relationships Begin	184
How a Healthy Relationship Feels	184
Problems, Conflicts, and Disagreements	185
We All Need a Sense of Family	186
Making the Strengths of Strong Families	107
a Part of Your Life	187
SESSION XIII SCRIPT FOR LEADERS	188
14. Changed Patterns	192
SESSION XIV TEXT	192
New Understanding	192
Practiced Techniques Form New Patterns	193
SESSION XIV SCRIPT FOR LEADERS	195
15. Endings and Beginnings	201
SESSION XV SCRIPT FOR LEADERS	201
Messages of Closure	203
Typical Group Reactions and Leader Responses	205
Market Services and Services an	

Appendix: Forms, Handouts, and Questionnaires	
Pattern Changing Ground Rules	207
Pattern Changing Registration Forms	209
Contract for Pattern Changing Participants	210
Pattern Changing Confidential Information	211
Pattern Changing Progress Questionnaire	213
Your Bill of Rights	214
Outcome Goals for Pattern Changing Participants	215
How Serious Was Your Abuse?	216
Anger Gauge	220
Evaluating Relationships: Healthy or Unhealthy?	222
Recommended Reading for Participants	225
Pattern Changing Program Evaluation	226
Certificate of Completion of Pattern	
Changing Program	228
Index	229
About the Authors	

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