Support groups can serve as a valuable adjunct to individual advocacy or counseling. These groups provide opportunities for participants to discuss their daily struggle with the multiple issues affecting their safety, sobriety, wellness and empowerment.

Much of the power in support groups comes from the personal stories. People share their experience, strength and hope with each other. When one person breaks the silence about personal experiences that are uncomfortable or “taboo” to talk about, others feel safer breaking their silence.

Members of the group also hear success stories. They hear what others are doing to cope with problems similar to their own. They can help other members who are not as far along on their path, which can help improve self-esteem and give them the feeling of making a positive contribution.

However, individuals who are survivors of multi-abuse trauma do have some special safety and access concerns. Support groups should have a non-judgmental atmosphere, clear ground rules addressing confidentiality, and respect among group members.

In this section, you will find some tips, general guidelines and a sample overall support group format. We have included some suggested group topics complete with handouts. Please feel free to adapt either the overall format or the topics in whatever way works for your particular setting or time constraints.

**Confidentiality**

Most people in support groups respect anonymity and confidentiality, but be sure to explain what these concepts mean in your particular program, especially when there are safety issues involved. To ensure confidentiality:

- Use first names only.
- Limit notes. (Document topic covered and attendance only and require a signed release of information to disclose these.)
- Advise group participants about what you are mandated to report (child welfare or adult protective services issues, suicide threats, etc.).
- Advise individuals leaving an abusive situation not to share information in a group setting if doing so could put their safety at risk.
- Some group members don’t want to be greeted or acknowledged outside of the group.
due to safety or privacy concerns. Be sure to address this with the group. Some groups come up with a code to use if they see each other in a public place.

Promoting easy access to the group

Some initial discomfort is normal for anyone who is new to support groups. It is natural to feel nervous in a roomful of strangers. First-time participants may have spent years avoiding the issues the group is discussing. People whose experience includes violence or abuse also may have safety concerns. Here are some tips to help group members feel comfortable, stay safe – and hopefully, keep coming back:

• Have easy access to the group – don’t create barriers. For example, try to hold the group in a location that is close to a bus stop during hours the buses are running.
• There is no right way to conduct these groups. Be open to suggestions from participants.
• Prioritize child care.
• Have healthy food, de-caffeinated coffee and tea available.
• Assist with transportation.
• Ensure accessibility for people with disabilities.
• Don’t screen out. Prepare for arrival!
• Have enough staff or volunteers available to deal with unexpected issues.
• Have group members create their own resource book of referrals.

General tips

It is extremely important for facilitators to provide a safe, non-judgmental environment for people coping with multiple issues. It is also very important for facilitators to emphasize that no one deserves violence, bullying or other abuse, no matter what else is going on. Offenders should always be held solely accountable for the abuse they have directed toward their victims.

Here are some general tips for effective “drop in” support groups:

• Support group facilitators need to be trained about the unique problems faced by people who are survivors of multi-abuse trauma.

• Be flexible. Think kitchen-table – have a topic in mind but be willing to change. Let members of the group own the group.
A GROUP SURVIVORS LOOK FORWARD TO

Perks such as child-care, sharing a meal together and even acupuncture help draw participants to support group sessions at South Peninsula Haven House in Homer, AK. The shelter offers support group sessions twice weekly, on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The Tuesday group addresses healthy relationships, while the Thursday group focuses on safety and sobriety.

Participants in the Tuesday night group share a meal prior to group sessions, and child-care is provided. Both shelter residents and women coming to the group from outside the shelter are welcome to come to dinner.

A community volunteer offers free acupuncture sessions prior to both the Tuesday and Thursday groups. “This lady has been doing it for over 20 years and she’s absolutely amazing. She does it out of the kindness of her heart,” says shelter coordinator Paula Lee. “I find the acupuncture really helpful. It helps with anxiety, detoxing, stress of course, and it’s just all-around healing.”

Group participants also keep a phone list for support between meetings. “A woman might need help going to court and doesn’t want to go by herself and there’s not an advocate to go,” says Ms. Lee. “She might need help moving to a safe place. She might need a babysitter. They help each other.”

- Include time for group members to address practical issues such as housing, employment, legal or children’s issues, and community resources.

- Allow group participants to use the copy machine, telephone, fax, etc., if feasible.

- Adjust group guidelines and topics depending on setting (domestic violence shelter, sexual assault program, substance abuse treatment center, mental health facility, transitional housing program, jail or prison, or elsewhere).

- Be willing to talk about issues the group wants to talk about, but don’t pressure anyone to share if they’re not ready.

- Remember you may only see a group member once or you may have the member for three or more years. Be solution-based and friendly, but make the most of your interaction because it may be the only one you get.

- For drop-in groups, the average member comes about 12 times; make sure all group participants understand they are welcome to return at any time.
Stage 2 groups

Typical domestic violence/sexual assault programs offer short-term group options from 4 to 12 weeks and discourage long-term presence in groups, which may be viewed as fostering dependency. Generally speaking, however, it can take twice as long for survivors of multiple abuses to do half as much as they would like to achieve because of all the barriers and challenges they face daily.

During the process of addressing multiple issues survivors continue to need emotional and other forms of safety, validation and connection, particularly when they are exhausted and overwhelmed by the many ongoing challenges they face. Providing long-term group support is an affordable option that reduces isolation, provides encouragement and fosters connection.

Stage 2 groups for survivors who have moved beyond immediate crisis but still benefit from peer group support can be led by members themselves. This is very empowering and a good option for long-term group members who are developing confidence and leadership skills. The Stage 2 group model acknowledges both the strengths of survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault and their often long-term need for peer support and encouragement.

General goals

Regardless of topic or setting, keep these overall goals for the group in mind:

- Address safety concerns and provide safe space. Participants in the group need to feel safe in order to tell their story and benefit from being believed. Be sure to listen and validate each person’s experience, strength and hope.

- Build on existing strengths. Don’t focus on what is wrong with people. Focus on what has happened to them. Provide practical support. Help group participants identify safer coping mechanisms than alcohol or drugs, cutting, binging and purging, etc., if their coping tools are not working well for them or pose risk to themselves or others.

- Provide an opportunity for connection. Encourage group members to support each other, and develop phone lists when it is safe to do so.

Overall format for groups

Participants in support groups may be more comfortable when group sessions have a predictable structure. Here is an example of an overall format that has been used successfully with people who have multiple issues including current interpersonal violence or past trauma.
• **Check in.** Open the session by asking group members to briefly state one thing they did right, or were proud of achieving during the previous week.

• **Identification of problems, challenges or goals, and resources.** Ask participants if anyone is facing a special challenge, or has a particular goal they would like to achieve. Identify resources currently utilized by group members and develop additional options to resolve problems, meet challenges and achieve goals.

• **Educational component.** Use a portion of the session to educate participants about some aspect of interpersonal violence and its relation to past trauma, mental health concerns, substance use or any of the other issues they may be facing. Topics may include power and control dynamics, safety issues, sobriety issues, wellness issues, children’s issues, healthy boundaries, coping skills, etc. Below are some examples of possible topics, along with suggestions about how to use the handouts we’ve included in this kit.

• **Closure.** Close the session by asking individuals to name one thing they can do to achieve safety, sobriety, wellness or empowerment as defined by each person.

**Sample topics for educational component and suggested handouts**

Here are some sample topics for use in the educational component of support groups, along with suggestions for handouts to use with each topic. Each of these topics could stand alone, so that individuals who only attend some group sessions won’t need to rely on information from a previous session to understand the topic being discussed in the current one. The topics may be used in any order. These are examples only! Nothing here is carved in stone – feel free to be creative with these topics and come up with some of your own.

**Note about copyright:** All handouts referred to below are available from our Web Version of *Real Tools: Responding to Multi-Abuse Trauma.* Group facilitators are free to photocopy as many of the handouts as they wish for educational use. However, we do ask that you please make sure all citations, references and copyright notices are included on each photocopied document. We understand that some support group facilitators or trainers may wish to alter *Real Tools* materials to make them culturally relevant to a particular audience. Permission to alter original materials written by *Real Tools* authors Debi Edmund and Patricia Bland may be requested from the Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. If you wish to alter materials by other authors that appear in *Real Tools,* such as the Power and Control Wheels, you will need to contact the original authors of those documents. Please feel free to contact the Network if you have any questions about copyright issues.
**Topic: Multiple Layers of Trauma**

Explain the concept of multi-abuse trauma. Give examples of *active abuse* and *coping abuse*, and discuss how these different forms of abuse interact with each other to make safety, sobriety and wellness more difficult to achieve. Explain how co-occurring issues such as mental illness or disabilities can make the situation more complex, and discuss ways the social services system and other systems may further traumatize individuals.

Use the “10 Tons of Trouble” exercises to help group participants identify overlapping elements of active abuse and coping abuse, and discuss other issues that impact safety, sobriety and wellness.

The Power and Control Wheels can be helpful for illustrating the abuses of power often involved in multi-abuse trauma.

**Handouts**

*Multiple Layers of Trauma*
*Trauma: The Common Denominator*
*Multiple Layers of Trauma Graphic*
*1+1=10 Tons of Trouble*
*Other Issues: What Else Impacts Safety and Sobriety?*
*Instruction Sheet for 10 Tons of Trouble Exercise*
*Abuses Endured by a Woman During Her Life Cycle (Wheel)*

**Topic: Examples of Abuse**

Discuss the different types of abuse that can happen to people with multi-abuse trauma issues. Examples include domestic violence, sexual assault or sexual abuse, child abuse, societal abuse and oppression based on gender, race or ethnic group, disability status, sexual orientation, etc. Explore some of the common elements of these different types of abuse. Example of common elements may include physical abuse, psychological abuse, sexual abuse, spiritual abuse, economic or financial abuse, use of privilege by a dominant group, etc.

**Handouts**

*Examples of Abuse*
*Manifestations of Violence*
*Power and Control Wheel for Women’s Substance Abuse*
*Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Trans: Power and Control (Wheel)*
*People with Disabilities and Their Caregivers: Power and Control (Wheel)*
*Violence Against Native Women (Wheel)*
*Immigrant Power and Control (Wheel)*
**Topic: The Relationship Between Substance Abuse and Violence**

Use the handouts “Woman Abuse/Substance Abuse” and “Survivors of Chemical Dependence, Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault” to discuss commonly-asked questions about the relationship between substance abuse and interpersonal violence. Does substance abuse cause a perpetrator to commit domestic violence or sexual assault? Will treatment stop the violence? If the victim abuses alcohol or drugs, does this mean the individual was asking for trouble?

Use the handout “Sorting Out Messages” to help those who are using services from both victim’s advocates and substance abuse counselors reconcile messages that seem to conflict or contradict each other. Key to this, for both group facilitators and participants, may be understanding that substance abuse and violence are different problems requiring different approaches.

Discuss overlapping elements of abuse and addiction using the “Merry-Go-Round of Violence” and “Merry-Go-Round of Addiction” handouts. Finally, discuss why it is usually necessary to address both substance abuse and victimization if both are part of an individual’s experience.

**Handouts**
- Women Abuse/Substance Abuse: What is the Relationship?
- Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault and Substance Use
- Sorting Out Messages
- Merry-Go-Round of Addiction
- Merry-Go-Round of Violence
- Instruction Sheet for Merry-Go-Round Exercise
- Power and Control Wheel for Women’s Substance Abuse

**Topic: Healing on Multiple Levels**

Tia M. Holley, ANDVSA statewide training team member, created “Stages of Addiction, Stages of Untreated Trauma,” a “dip chart” or “Likert scale” to show the parallel paths that untreated trauma and untreated addictions follow. In early recovery feelings begin to emerge and emotional numbing dissipates. If the multidimensional issues are not addressed concurrently there is a high risk of relapse because the emerging overwhelming emotions push the person back to the bottom of the vicious cycle.

On the upside is how healing on multiple dimensions; body, mind, spirit, and emotional levels can help survivors get beyond the vicious cycle of pain.

The three-dimensional treatment originally addressed with this scale was the combined strengths of providing integrated Traditional healing, mental health services and addiction treatment. The three-dimensional coping skills are mental, physical and spiritual.
Use this chart to discuss the multiple levels in which the “active abuses” and “coping abuses” of multi-abuse trauma occur, and the multiple levels in which healing can happen.

**Handout**  
*Stages of Addiction, Stages of Untreated Trauma*

**Topic: Using Support Groups**

People attending support groups together can serve as a safety net of caring individuals. Those facing similar struggles can reduce isolation, anxiety and fear through their connection with each other. However, individuals facing interpersonal violence may need to do the same kind of safety planning when they use support groups as they do when going to work, visiting relatives or using public transportation. Because of the difficulties many survivors of abuse have with boundary issues, they may also need some extra assurance that they have the right to protect their boundaries when in groups.

Discuss ways to interpret popular 12 Step concepts so they can be used in a way that is appropriate for people who have survived violence or abuse, or who have mental health issues. The handout “Using 12 Step Groups” makes numerous references to the *Big Book* of Alcoholics Anonymous and *The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, with page numbers, to provide support for people who use 12 Step groups and wish to use the suggested interpretations in that handout. Encourage participants who use 12 Step groups to discuss their own ways of interpreting the Steps as well.

In addition to 12-Step groups, other types of peer-led support groups are available in many communities to address a variety of issues. Make sure group members are aware of any of these groups that exist in your community.

**Handouts**  
*Ending Isolation: Reducing Anxiety Through Connection*  
*Safety at Community Support Group Meetings*  
*Etiquette in Groups*  
*Using 12 Step Groups*  
*Community Peer Support Groups*

**Topic: Who Can We Trust?**

To have healthy relationships and function in the world, we all need to be able to trust somebody. However, past experiences with interpersonal violence and other trauma may have made this difficult. Discuss some of these experiences, and how they might impact a person’s ability to trust others – including advocates, counselors and other service providers, as well as spiritual leaders, institutions and authority figures.

Also explore how legitimate ideas such as spiritual traditions, constructive criticism and
legitimate authority can be twisted and distorted by abusers to justify violence and other abuse. Discuss how we determine who is trustworthy and who is not, and point out that it’s perfectly appropriate to have people earn our trust.

**Handouts**

*Trust Isn’t Always Easy*
*Constructive vs. Abusive Criticism*
*Legitimate vs. Abusive Uses of Authority*

**Topic: Sorting Out Messages**

People with multi-abuse trauma issues may be receiving services from several different providers. For example, they may be seeing an advocate for domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking, a treatment counselor for substance abuse or dependence, a therapist or psychiatrist for mental health concerns, and a social worker for assistance finding housing if they are homeless. In the process, people experiencing multiple issues may begin to acquire multiple labels. People receiving help from a variety of sources may also hear messages that seem to conflict or contradict each other. In the skit, “Mary Has All Kinds of Troubles,” ask for several volunteers to play the part of the “helping professionals,” the part of “Mary” (the person seeking services) and the part of a volunteer who will tape labels on Mary while the helping professionals are speaking. Following this role-play exercise, use the skit and the other handouts to discuss how group members can better navigate conflicting systems and advice, as well as the pros and cons of using labels.

Note: You will need to do some advance planning for this group. For each role, you may want to use a highlighting pen to highlight each actor’s part in their copy of the script to make it easier to follow. (For example, you will highlight the substance abuse counselor’s part in the copy of the script that you give to the person playing the role of the substance abuse counselor, Mary’s part in the copy you give to Mary, etc.) Review the script and write assorted labels such as *victim, drug addict, borderline,* etc., on several sheets of 8 ½ X 11 paper. These can be taped on Mary by the volunteer while the “helping professionals” are verbally labeling this individual. Once you make up your labels, you may want to laminate them for future use.

**Handouts**

*Skit: Mary Has All Kinds of Troubles*
*Sorting Out Messages*
*To Label or Not to Label?*

**Topic: Normal vs. Healthy**

“Normal” simply means “the norm.” People who grew up in an abusive or violent environment may have gotten a number of distorted messages about what constitutes “normal” behavior and attitudes in relationships. Skewed messages from our larger
society compound the problem – behaviors and attitudes promoted by popular culture as “normal” or desirable may be anything but healthy. Discuss the difference between “normal” and healthy, and encourage group members to question what they may have learned from both their upbringing and society about relationships. Some of the Power and Control Wheels included in this manual may be useful to illustrate the difference between healthy and unhealthy relationships. For example, contrast the Power and Control Wheel with the Equality Wheel, or the Natural Life-Supporting Power Wheel.

**Handouts**

*Power and Control Wheel*
*Equality Wheel*
*Natural Life-Supporting Power Wheel*

**Topic: Healthy Relationships**

Naomi Michalsen, executive director of Women In Safe Homes in Ketchikan, AK, shares an exercise she uses to facilitate group discussion of healthy relationships:

Have group participants describe the qualities their ideal partner would have, with the proviso that “it can’t be lots of money or material things like a nice car. It has to be qualities.” Ideal qualities might include such things as “a good listener” or “trustworthy” or “willing to compromise.” As participants name positive qualities, write them down on a list. Often, Ms. Michalsen says, “They’ll have honesty, respect, all the things on the Equality Wheel. They came up with it themselves. Those are the tribal values. We already have all these things in our head, but we just don’t know how to do that.”

Once group participants have come up with all the good qualities they can think of, pick a different-colored marker, and have them come up with the opposite. What’s the opposite of respect? What’s the opposite of a good listener? “And those are all the warning signs,” Ms. Michalsen says. “Or the power and control.”

**Supplies**

*News print paper and markers*
*Power and Control Wheel*
*Equality Wheel*

**Topic: Getting Help**

Discuss the services offered by domestic violence/sexual assault programs, mental health professionals, substance abuse treatment providers, health care providers, organizations that assist people with disabilities, indigenous providers, etc., with an emphasis on resources within your own community. Invite some of these providers to make a presentation, explain their services and answer questions from group participants.

Advocates and other providers will want to have addresses and phone numbers handy so
they can make appropriate referrals, but also ask group participants to share information about resources they are aware of. Some groups have developed their own resource books to serve as an ongoing guide for both themselves and those who will follow. The books can be decorated with artwork to add a personal touch. Group participants may also want to add personal written comments about their experiences with various community resources they’ve used.

**Handouts/Supplies**

*Worksheet: Where Can I Get Help?*
*We Are Our Own Best Advocates*
*Continuum of Caring: Community Based Resources for Battered Women (Wheel)*
*Brochures/meeting schedules from agencies/support groups in your community*
*Loose leaf notebooks/other supplies if group is creating resource book for the first time*

**Topic: Safety Planning**

Advocates for victims of domestic violence encourage the people they serve to develop a safety plan. However, “safety” can mean different things for different people. For people with multiple issues, safety, sobriety, wellness and accessibility may all need to be priorities. Ask group participants to identify which issues they are dealing with and discuss what would help them feel safe.

Discuss how safety plans can be modified to include addiction recovery, mental health concerns, accessibility for people with disabilities, or other concerns. Also point out that group participants can ask their advocates or counselors to assist them individually in modifying their personalized safety plans to include those additional problems they may be facing, such as mental health issues, or substance abuse/addiction.

Mental health providers, substance abuse counselors, disabilities advocates and other providers may also help the people they serve develop treatment plans, recovery plans, or other types of service plans. Brainstorm ways to incorporate safety issues into the plans created by these other providers, and encourage group participants to discuss safety with the various providers from whom they receive services.

Note: In a residential setting, this exercise can help group participants gain understanding or empathy about additional barriers their peers may be dealing with.

**Handouts**

*Personalized Safety Plan*
*Mini-Safety/Sobriety/Wellness Plan (With Instructions for Use)*
*What Does Safety Mean?*

**Topic: Power and Control Dynamics**

Judith Herman, M.D., author of the book *Trauma and Recovery*, emphasizes that most
interpersonal trauma is embedded in a social structure that permits the abuse and exploitation of people in subordinate groups. Use Power and Control Wheels to illustrate all the various ways that power is used and abused – both in our society and in our personal relationships – to dominate and control others.

In addition to educating about interpersonal violence, the wheels can be useful for exploring issues such as mental health concerns, substance use disorders, disability issues and various kinds of social oppression, with an eye toward ways that power dynamics can impact an individual’s ability to address these issues. The Wheels can also be used to explore the use and abuse of power in various settings ranging from intimate relationships to schools, social service agencies, other institutional settings and communities.

Use the “equality” wheels and community collaboration and accountability wheels as a basis for discussion of ideal behaviors and responses in personal relationships, institutions and the community.

**Handouts**

*Power and Control Wheel*

*Abuse of Children*

*Children Coping With Family Violence Wheel*

*Power and Control Model For Women’s Substance Abuse*

*Mental Health System Power and Control: Escalating Danger*

*Medical Power and Control*

*People with Disabilities and Their Caregivers: Power and Control*

*Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Trans: Power and Control*

*Immigrant Power and Control Wheel*

*Power and Control Wheel for Women Involved in Street Prostitution*

*Violence Against Native Women: Battering*

*Bullying Power and Control Wheel*

*Power and Control in Dating Relationships*

*Abuses Endured By A Woman During Her Life Cycle*

*Equality Wheel*

*Nurturing Children*

*Mental Health System Power and Control: Empowerment*

*People with Disabilities and Their Caregivers: Equality*

*Natural Life-Supporting Power Wheel*

*Ideal Institutional Response*

**Topic: Parenting and Children’s Issues**

Children may not talk about problems they witness in the home, so it can be tempting to think they don’t notice what’s going on, or that it doesn’t affect them that much. But research tells a different story. Help group participants to recognize the impact of both substance abuse and violence on their children, and discuss how to create a more positive environment for children.
**Handouts**

*Children Exposed to Domestic Violence and Substance Abuse*

*Abuse of Children (Wheel)*

*Children Coping With Family Violence (Wheel)*

*Nurturing Children (Wheel)*

*Safety Planning Interventions for Children*

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**Topic: Working for Change**

Many people who have survived trauma, especially that caused by interpersonal violence or social injustice and oppression, find that working for social change aids their own healing process. People may call their efforts working for change, service to others, or carrying the message. Discuss contributions from a variety of social movements – the women’s movement, the recovery movement, the mental health movement, the disability rights movement and civil rights movement – that have made it easier for people to get help with problems often denied or stigmatized.

Also discuss simple things group participants might do to make a difference in society while maintaining their own safety. In a group setting, choosing an activity to do together as a group (such as writing letters to elected officials regarding an issue that concerns them) may be an effective hands-on way to engage participants in the art of “making a difference.”

**Handouts**

*Can One Person Make a Difference?*

*Writing a Letter That Gets Attention*

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**Topic: Messages from Society**

Naomi Michalsen, executive director of Women In Safe Homes in Ketchikan, AK, shares a group exercise she uses to help people understand social attitudes and their impact on the personal level. Make a list of a couple dozen or so behaviors and attitudes often seen in our society, or in movies or on television. Some examples may include:

- A coach telling boys, “You’re playing like a bunch of girls.”
- Assuming that girls are not as smart as boys at math.
- Insisting that a woman’s place is in the home.
- Mud flaps on a truck with the woman’s silhouette.
- A billboard that says, “Come see hot young chicks” and has pictures of baby chickens.
- Ads or movies or television shows with violent themes or imagery.
- Your partner calls frequently or drives by your house to check if you’re home.
- Being forced to have sex by someone you know on a date.
- Rape/sexual assault by a stranger.

For each attitude or behavior on the list, ask, “Is this harmful?” When the group has
discussed whether a particular item is harmful or relatively harmless, point out how things that may seem harmless or even funny can chip away at the value that society gives women, or can build tolerance for violence and abuse.

For this session, bring poster boards and a variety of old magazines that can be cut up – women’s magazines, sports magazines, news magazines, publications geared toward adolescents, etc. Have group participants look through the magazines for ads that promote unhealthy attitudes or behavior. Examples might include ads promoting the idea that women exist only to please men, or the idea that drinking alcohol or smoking cigarettes makes one look glamorous. Group participants may want to cut out the ads and make a collage.

**Supplies**

- Newsprint paper and markers
- Poster board
- A variety of magazines to cut up

**Topic: Sharing Personal Experience, Strength and Hope**

The handout “Women Talk About Substance Abuse and Violence” is based on a series of interviews with 10 women. All 10 had experienced some form of abuse: battering, rape or sexual assault, incest or child sexual abuse. In addition to the violence, all of them had experience with alcohol or drug abuse, either on their own part, on the part of their partner, or both. At the time of the interviews, all of the women had left their abusive relationships, and those with chemical dependency problems were in recovery. They talked frankly about the impact of the substance abuse on their efforts to escape the violence and heal from abuse. They also discussed how their experiences with violence affected their efforts to recover from alcoholism or other drug addiction. Ask participants to take turns reading the parts aloud. Pause between questions on the handout for comments from participants.

If you know people in the community who have successfully transcended multi-abuse trauma, you may also want to invite them to share their experiences with the group and, if they are comfortable doing so, answer questions from group members. Listening to someone who has been successful in resolving issues that group members are struggling with usually elicits a strong response.

**Handout**

*Women Talk About Substance Abuse and Violence*