



What's New At CASA!



CASA Staff and Volunteers Attend Training

By Cheryl Jacob, CASA Volunteer

In early January, 20 women gathered in a conference room to learn about some of the worst things that can happen to people. Most of those women were paid to be there, taking mandatory training to get certified for their jobs.

Five of them volunteered to be there on their own, so they could better help CASA serve their community.

FACT: "Until the 1970s and the advent of the Battered Women's Movement, the act of beating a woman by a male partner had no name." — Core Comp training manual.

STATISTIC: A woman is battered every 15 seconds in the United States.

Volunteers Ruth, Emma, Angie, Tiffany and Cheryl have helped CASA with various needs for a while: answering the phones at the outreach center, wrapping gifts for the Christmas program, sorting donations and working at fundraisers and community events. In order to become certified to interact with program participants, they needed to attend the Core Competency training.

Using a 300-page manual, plus handouts, videos and activities, the trainees from CASA and four other shelters and agencies spent eight to nine hours the first day learning the history (or HERstory, to be more accurate) of the Battered Women's Movement, definitions of oppression and privilege, empowerment-based advocacy.

FACT: Types of violence against women include harmful traditional practices from a variety of cultures: femal genital mutilation, dowry murder, honor killings and early forced marriage.

STATISTIC: Women of all ages are at risk for domestic and sexual violence, and those ages 20 to 24 are at the greatest risk of experiencing nonfatal intimate partner violence.

Once they had this base for their knowledge, the group dove deep into the dynamics of battering, domestic violence and sexual violence, including the legal definitions in the Florida Statutes.

FACT: Florida Statute 741.28 provides the legal definition of domestic violence as "any assault, aggravated assault, battery, aggravated battery, sexual assault, sexual battery, stalking, aggravated stalking, kidnapping, false imprisonment, or any criminal offense resulting in physical injury or death of one family or household member by another family or household member." There are separate statutes covering the definitions of sexual battery and strangulation.

STATISTIC: Four women are murdered by their partners each day in the U.S.

Confidentiality and privileged communication are important parts of an advocate's training. Just as doctors and lawyers must keep their clients' information confidential, there are sections of the Florida Statutes that spell out the exact nature of privileged communication between a victim of domestic/sexual violence and their advocate.

Trainees also learned safety planning and the complexities and realities of dealing with all types of survivors, including those with chemical dependencies or mental health issues and those who come from human trafficking situations.

FACT: The more frequently a batterer abuses his partner, the more likely he will abuse the children.

STATISTIC: Each year, 3-10 million children witness domestic violence.

A full section of the training covered working with children and teens, and the impact on these young minds of witnessing domestic violence even if they are spared direct physical abuse themselves.

For more information about CASA, visit our website at www.casafl.org. There, you will find links to other useful organizations and websites, including FCADV, the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence. To volunteer with CASA, call Volunteer Coordinator Carol Brown at 344-8111 or email carolb@casafl.org.



Our Economic Empowerment Program is in it's 2nd Year!

One of the main reasons that a victim may stay in an abusive relationship is due to the lack of means to support themselves and/or their children financially or lack of access to cash, bank accounts, health insurance, or assets. This is where the Economic Empowerment Advocates comes in to empower them to learn about their financial situations and how to deal with these obstacles.

CASA's Economic Empowerment Advocates provide training, information, and resources to address the economic conditions that create barriers to the long term independence and safety of survivors and their children. The group focuses on topics such as understanding financial abuse, keeping safe, starting over, learning financial fundamentals, mastering credit basics, building financial foundations, and creating budgets. This program is essential for the betterment of the survivor and their children. This is a six week structured class along with one on one support and advocacy specific to financial empowerment, successful employment, secure housing, and literacy.



Survivor's Corner

A Letter from a Survivor

"Words escape me, what should I say... When things happen and you've got to get away..from the pain and the strain of things gone bad... There's help for you is what they said and tell us what you want to do so we can help you start anew, with helping hands you never knew. They're smiles and hugs from people who care telling you they will always be there. How do I thank these angels for your life that until now knew only pain and strife. These angels have given from there hearts and minds to hold you up when most don't have time. By doing your best and giving back to others who have fallen off track.. By

living and loving and finding your heart which until now was broken and damaged and falling apart. So to you angels, you know who you are I say thank you. I will go far on golden wings you gave me, and teaching me a new way to fly. So thank you angels from up on high, for the gifts that I can never repay and showing me how to live another day, with wings and strength I never knew I had, and guess what it's not so bad....

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CASA shelter resident



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