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'Work For Care; Sexual and Domestic Violence During and After War, A Trainers' Manual'
is produced by Admira

Admira Foundation
Training and Consultancy
To Support Survivors of War
And Gender Based Violence

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Introduction

Rape, persecution and abuse are serious violations of human integrity. In times of war or social-political disintegration, sexual violence increases dramatically. The effect on victims, families and communities can be profound and lasting.

About Admira

In 1994 Admira was founded with the primary aim to train (mental) health professionals, social workers and volunteer care workers in the former Yugoslavia to help and assist victims of war and sexual violence.

It was initiated as a reaction on the news about the systematic rape of women and girls in war-stricken Yugoslavia.

Admira started out as a training and consultancy programme for the promotion of psycho-social care for victims of war and sexual violence.

In the aftermath of war, when care workers in the former Yugoslavia reported an increase of domestic violence, this topic was included in our training programme both with respect to care for victims and to working with perpetrators.

The objectives of Admira have developed over the years: firstly, to offer support to women's organizations that are active in the field of assisting victims of war and domestic violence from a gender perspective; secondly, to assist other NGOs and mainstream governmental organizations in the same field to recognize the value of gender-based work, and adopt it as their regular practice. And finally, to support cooperation and networking between various governmental bodies and non-governmental organizations in order to make the work in the field of care for victims of war and domestic violence better integrated and more effective.

Initially Admira worked mainly with non governmental women's organizations. Later, other NGOs and organizations from the regular health services were included. More recently organizations that (can) play an important part in creating 'a chain of safety', such as police and justice were also included.

Admira seeks to strengthen and support the efforts of local care workers and organizations to care for those individuals and families that suffer from the consequences of war and sexual and domestic violence.

In order to do so Admira:

- advances know-how and skills of care workers, aimed at the amelioration of the disintegrative effects of war trauma, sexual and domestic violence;
- promotes care workers' interest in trauma through sexual and domestic violence. As shame, fear, powerless rage and sometimes even feelings of guilt, prevent many women and girls to talk about their overwhelming experiences, it is important for care workers to recognize complaints and symptoms that may be indications for sexual abuse and/or domestic violence;
- promotes good care for care workers: many care workers - professional and volunteer - in situations of war and conflict have experienced traumatic events

themselves. They have to deal with their clients' as well as their own experiences. Self care, prevention of burn-out and secondary traumatization are therefore areas of special interest in Admira's trainings;

- supports autonomous women's organizations that promote continuous political, educational and institutional interest in the prevention of sexual and domestic violence and care for its victims. Admira operates on the assumption that the involvement of local health services in assisting victims of sexual and domestic violence can be stimulated through an active and powerful women's movement. For these reasons, Admira supports women's organizations through training and advice in the area of organizational development.

To advance theoretical and practical know-how with regard to the immediate and long-term consequences of sexual violence is an important objective of Admira.

However, we do not promote an isolated focus on sexual traumatization.

In situations of war or conflict, rape and sexual violence against women and girls are usually preceded and accompanied by other shocking events. Many people endure extreme existential fear and basic insecurities. Refugees and displaced persons suffer various hardships, such as loss of loved ones, homes, jobs, income and status; families are torn apart, and many witness or fall victim to extreme violence and cruelty.

This cumulative traumatization may induce a complex need for help and care. Treatment and care which concentrates solely on sexual violence is therefore inadequate.

As a consequence we treat the subject of war rape and sexual violence in the context of the immediate and long-term effects of war trauma and uprooting in general.

In Admira three Dutch organizations join forces:

- TransAct, national centre of expertise on gender issues in health care and the prevention of sexual and domestic violence (www.transact.nl);
- Pharos, national knowledge centre on refugees and (health) care (www.pharos.nl);
- ICODO, national centre of expertise on services to victims of war and organized violence, specialising in the (long-term) effects of war and prosecution (www.cogis.nl).

A pool of trainers, from various professional and personal backgrounds provides training programmes in the countries of the former Yugoslavia. All trainers are experts in their field and have a long history of working with survivors of gender based and/or organized violence. Some are pioneers and activists in the women's movement, others in the movement for human rights; there are psychologists, psychotherapists, gynaecologists, social workers, general practitioners, psychiatrists, teachers and organizational advisors.

Training programmes usually consist of a series of three day trainings over a number of years. With most organizations Admira has developed a long term relationship.

About this manual

This manual is a combined effort of professionals from the ex-Yugoslavian countries and from the Netherlands who have years of experience in training different groups of care workers on different topics. Parts have been developed by trainers of Admira who worked with different organizations in the countries of the former Yugoslavia and who have visited the region many times. Other parts have been developed by trainers and care workers from the region itself who participated in Admira programmes over the last ten years.

Point of departure of this manual is that trainers have basic training skills and experience in training. The manual does not describe the basics of training. It is written for trainers in the field of psycho-social care to learn how to offer training on the specific subject of sexual and domestic violence in a context of (post) war and/or organized violence.

Modules on the following topics are included in this manual:

1. War, Trauma and Recovery
2. Individual Counselling of Sexually Abused Women
3. Empowering and Healing Battered Women
4. Crisis Intervention and Group Work with Survivors
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How to use this manual

All training programmes for care workers, either volunteers, members of women's groups, psychologists, psychiatrists, therapists or other professionals should fit some criteria in order to be successful:

1. the aim and theme of the training should be clear;
2. it should fit the actual and local situation, and address real problems that the care workers face in their work with their clients or client population;
3. it should start from the knowledge and skills of the participants and move on from there.

It is not easy to write a manual that covers all the needs in the field of combating sexual and domestic violence and working with victims and perpetrators of war related violence. We, this is all the contributors to this manual, do not think that we could be totally complete. We can only hope that what we have written in this manual can be of use for those who choose to work

with it. Our first advice to you, as trainer using this manual, is please to be flexible and use your own judgement, your imagination and creativity and your own skills to change any of the modules to fit your needs and those of the people you are training.

Flexibility

Most modules are basically written for a two or three day training programme, but you may need more time to do everything you want. For some groups, for instance when the participants have little knowledge of systemic thinking, one morning of introduction is not enough. For others, who are already experienced, it might be possible to skip the introduction and move on. Some groups who have not yet worked with perpetrators might need more time to pay attention to their personal motivation and emotions around the possibility of working with violent men and men with combat trauma; others, who have already done work in this field might be disappointed with the module because it does not offer enough models of working with perpetrators. In both cases it is up to the trainer to change the programme.

Working with the unexpected

Most of the trainers who contributed to this manual have had the experience that some of the best moments in training were unforeseen. We advise every trainer to leave enough space in the programme to deal with feed-back from the participants, some of which you may have asked for, some of which may come as a surprise.

Variety and balance

Good trainings address the participants on several levels: theory, skills, and attitude. There should be a balance between thinking and feeling, between head, body and soul, between the professional and the personal.

Balance between attention for working with the clients, and for the worker themselves is also important. Especially in trainings dealing with war related trauma and violence some attention should be devoted to self care. There should also be a balance between the heavy stuff and pleasure and fun. A training without any laughs, even though the training is about violence and war, is not a good training.

In order to find some balance in your training we have included many exercises that can be included: thinking exercises, exercises for evaluating cases, for relaxation and body work.

We hope that you, the user of this manual, will choose the exercises that most fit your needs and the needs of your trainees.

Authenticity

All modules partly focus on how to work with clients, and partly on self experience of the trainee. An important principle of the health care that is developed from a feminist perspective is that we are not distant outsiders in the process of working with a client and supporting her, but that we are personally involved, as people with experiences and emotions. We do not see personal involvement as the opposite of professionalism, but we should be aware of ourselves, our strengths and weaknesses and blind spots.

In our opinion it is advisable that good care workers have worked through their own experiences and emotions, and will continue on the path of personal growth and development. The same goes for trainers. We do not think it is possible to teach body exercises without having some experience as a trainee yourself. You cannot ask participants to be open and honest about painful experiences if you yourself have not had some opportunity to work through your own experiences with the help of group members or a professional person. As a rule we would like to advise trainers: don't do anything with clients or trainees that you haven't experienced yourself, as a client or trainee.

If you would like to use some of the methods that are unfamiliar to you, you can form a group of colleagues and try out some of the exercises together.

Another suggestion to give your trainees the best you can is to work in couples, as we mostly do in our training programmes, where one trainer can be more experienced in theory, the other in practice, or bodywork.

Theory

In all the modules we have included the necessary theory in condensed versions. Here, we believe in authenticity as well: you take the risk of being not convincing when you use theory you do not really believe in yourself. So here we would also like to advise you not to use the theory too rigidly. If you feel unfamiliar with parts of the theory you may want to do some preparatory reading work. We have made lists of recommended literature that should be available. To become more familiar with the theory it is also possible to form study groups or reading groups of colleagues.

Format of the training

Depending on how much time you have and on the wishes of the people you are training, you can do a two or three day training for one module, but it is also possible to do a more extensive training, for instance a five or six day training. The first module in this manual gives a model for a six day training as developed by Edita Ostojic. It shows a build-up of a basic training about war and trauma, including all the necessary ingredients like group rules, safety, balance between thinking and feeling, self-care and ethics.

Instead of reproducing a complete framework with all ingredients in every module, the other modules are restricted to the specific theme of that module and where necessary we refer to those parts of the manual where you can find additional theory and/or exercises.

Limits

When we wrote the manual we were very aware of the time limits we had for every module. After using a module you might want to continue with your training group. To every module we have added some suggestions for possible follow-ups.

Plans and Wishes for the Future

While working on this module we were very aware of the gaps and of the next steps that could be taken after every training. However, we also realized that a manual like this will never be a finished product. First of all because reality catches up with us even while we are writing, second because we continue to develop new insights and skills.

These are important issues that we are aware of, issues that we would have loved to include, but that we will keep for future work:

- Children: most of the modules focus on adults. We think it is very important and necessary to put more focus on children as victims of war violence and domestic violence;
- In the field of sexual violence this manual lacks a module on sexual abuse of children by relatives and trusted persons. We know this is not a war issue per se, but we are aware of the fact that it does come up when we work with victims/survivors of other kinds of trauma;
- A family approach and a community based approach on trauma recovery;
- Models for working with perpetrators of domestic and sexual violence;
- Models for working with the police and judiciary in creating a chain of safety;
- Models for different therapeutical approaches in the treatment of abused women;
- Models for working with minority communities;

And we are sure after reading and using this manual you are able to enlarge this list with more issues.

Please communicate them with us and send us your reactions and suggestions. We can be reached by e-mail: admira@transact.nl

Who to thank

We were able to make this manual thanks to funding from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. So firstly we want to thank them.

Many people have contributed to this manual. We should like to express our appreciation to all of them. It has been a combined effort of people who have been working together over the last ten years. Some have written complete modules, others have contributed material of which Anja Meulenbelt created separate modules. A special thanks goes to her. She has made all the material accessible and developed the format of the modules as you find them in this manual. Apart from grouping and (re)writing material that was contributed by others she also contributed her own material. We would like to thank her for her generosity in time and energy that she has spent while working on this manual. Then, there are many others without whom this manual would not have been realized. The names of authors of the modules are mentioned at the end of every module but here we would like to thank everybody that contributed to the content of the manual: Edita Ostojic, Angeline Donk, Martine Groen, Gerda Aarnink, Veronika Ispanovic, Mia Groenenberg, Gerdie Eiting, Jan Andreae, Maja Danon, Nela Pamukovic, Djurdjica Kolarec, Maja Mamula, Jasna Belamaric, Marina Ajdukovic, Dean Ajdukovic, Marlies Bosch, Febe Deug and Els Ouborg.

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We hope it will inspire you!

On behalf of the board of Admira

Simone Kortbeek (TransAct)

Monica van Berkum (Pharos)

Thomas van der Heijden (ICODO)