

Four Lessons That We Can Learn From Abused Women

Do no harm

That means ensuring that blaming, judgmental attitudes are shelved because when abused women are confronted by such attitudes in any agency, they do real harm. Pretending not to see does real harm. It tells the woman the worker is embarrassed, it normalises the abuse, it colludes with the abuser to silence & disempower her.

Seek strategies to empower the abused woman

This is about working for long term social change while meeting the woman's immediate needs. It is about effective inter-agency communication & a commitment to creating a safer community. It is the equivalent to providing protective services for abused women.

Whatever you do, do it with her, not to her

By doing this you are creating an arena where the woman can regain a sense of control over her life, recognise her strengths & skills & recover her self-esteem. All of these are necessary for her safety & recovery.

Was this a success?

Ask yourself if your work practice serves to help diminish the abused woman's isolation, does it contribute to an arena of safety & freedom, does it seek to raise awareness & understanding of the issues of domestic abuse in agencies you work with in your community.