

HEALTH

# eBULLETIN



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# EDITOR'S MESSAGE

Welcome to the first issue of the Health E-Bulletin, a semi-annual online publication that will replace Futures Without Violence's [Family Violence Prevention and Health Practice online E-journal](#). This new format reflects a paradigm shift in our vision for an e-publication that highlights innovative and emerging practices in addition to well-documented and rigorously evaluated interventions. This first issue of the Health E-Bulletin focuses on children and families experiencing domestic violence; the next issue will be released Spring, 2014 with a different theme.

The mission of the E-Bulletin is to create a venue to share the latest information on what is happening in our field, highlight best practices, and put a spotlight on "hidden gems."

We know more than ever before about best practices to help children and support families who have experienced domestic violence. This first issue of the Health E-Bulletin coincides with the creation of a new national resource on evidence-based and promising practices for children, youth, and parents experiencing domestic violence that is described in this issue. Futures Without Violence conducted a national scan to identify interventions for children and families exposed to violence. Profiles of these interventions along with other tools and information are available online: [www.promisingfutureswithoutviolence.org](http://www.promisingfutureswithoutviolence.org).

Also in this issue, the Parent-Child Trauma Recovery Program (PCTRP) describes their team approach using domestic advocates and mental health clinicians to provide dual advocacy and trauma treatment for protective parents and children exposed to domestic violence. PCTRP was recently added to Futures' Best Practices

website: [www.promisingfutureswithoutviolence.org](http://www.promisingfutureswithoutviolence.org)). This online resource is not a snapshot in time—it is a dynamic resource that will continue to update information about evidence-based and promising practices and innovations in our field.

With growing emphasis on prevention and community-based, culturally relevant initiatives that reach underserved populations, we are excited to feature an article on Discovery Dating in our inaugural issue. Discovery Dating is a skills-based, healthy relationship curriculum that has been implemented with Native American youth and adults in diverse settings. It is also being adapted for use with mothers and children exposed to domestic violence.

We hope you find the new format for Future's e-publication informative. We look forward to hearing your feedback and suggestions.

*Linda Chamberlain*, PhD, MPH

# DISCOVERY DATING

**Alice Skenandore,**  
*Executive Director*  
**& Jen Schanen,**  
*Program Outreach Specialist,*  
**Wise Women Gathering Place**

## ROOTS

Native American midwives founded Wise Women Gathering Place (WWGP), a small nonprofit organization, in 1998 on the border of Green Bay and Oneida, Wisconsin. Starting out as a grassroots women's circle around a kitchen table, we grew to become a community-based service agency staffed with educators and advocates. Discovery Dating, a

healthy relationship curriculum, was born from these beginnings. Alice Skenandore, founder and director of WWGP, created Discovery Dating as a method to engage youth and adults to explore and clarify their goals and values, discern character traits of others, and thereby develop criteria and skills for better decision-making.



## THEORY & REACH

Discovery Dating is built on the belief that people have their own best interests at heart, and if given complete information and access to choices, they will choose well. Discovery Dating enables participants to foresee both the predictable pitfalls of certain choices and the benefits of true partnership. Discovery Dating was designed to enhance participants' personal agency. Self-efficacy and self-regulation are the core elements of personal agency. Individuals with high levels of personal agency are more likely to understand the consequences of their actions, be more resilient to new challenges, be better able to constructively problem solve, and be less likely to pass on the hurt and pain of oppressive behaviors.



Discovery Dating is currently being applied with youth and adults as a broad-spectrum intervention tool to develop decisional skills to reduce risk behaviors including teen pregnancy, violence, substance abuse and unhealthy relationships. For over ten years, we have



implemented Discovery Dating in classrooms, parent programs, prisons, youth clubs, mentor-mentee programs, and support groups. A recent program brought together mothers and children harmed by domestic violence, using Discovery Dating as a lens to explore these past harms and create future avenues for family healing. Families were very engaged with the material and left the

course looking forward to applying those techniques that felt most comfortable in their own homes. Many remarked that this kind of clear and open communication is what their families really need.

## PROMISING PRACTICE

The implementation and evaluation of Discovery Dating as a pregnancy prevention tool with rural Native American adolescents was described in a recent article published in the Journal of Family Social Work (Hagen et al, 2012). During the four-year period following the intervention, there were five pregnancies among the 157 students who participated in Discovery Dating compared to 32 pregnancies among the 136 students who did NOT participate in Discovery Dating. We believe these findings are largely due to the impact of Discovery Dating on youth's increased personal agency. In an unpublished study conducted in 2010-2011, skills for personal agency increased by 12% ( $p = 0.006$ ) among middle school students who received Discovery Dating based on a comparison of pre- and post-test scores.

**Our greatest insights come from the students we work with. Some of the feedback that students and others have shared about Discovery Dating includes:**

*"I'll be taking caution in my relationships and life."*

*"I will think of what I do before I do it. Cause I usually don't think before I do anything."*

*"I would learn about a person b-4 I date them."*

*"One thing I learned about this class was to help others and be nice to others and also have respect for others."*

**One of our greatest sources of validation about the value of Discovery Dating is the following comment that we frequently hear from participants:**

*"Where was this when I needed it?"*

## CONNECTIONS



Discovery Dating offers a four-day Facilitator's Training for individuals interested in bringing the curriculum to their community. For more information about Discovery Dating, the Facilitator's Training, and ordering materials, please contact:

**Wise Women Gathering Place**  
2482 Babcock Rd, Green Bay WI 54313.  
**Phone:** (920) 490-0627  
**Website:** [www.wisewomengp.org](http://www.wisewomengp.org)



# PARENT CHILD TRAUMA RECOVERY PROGRAM

**Gail Arnold,**  
*M.Psych, LMHC,*  
*Clinical Director,*  
**Parent Child**  
**Trauma Recovery Program,**  
*MassGeneral for Children,*  
**North Shore Medical Center,**  
**Salem, Massachusetts**

**Peg Tiberio,**  
*Director of Trauma*  
*Recovery Services,*  
**HAWC (Healing Abuse,**  
**Working for Change),**  
**Salem, Massachusetts**

**T**he Parent Child Trauma Recovery Program (PCTRP) is an interagency, interdisciplinary model designed for protective parents and their children in the aftermath of domestic violence. The aim is to increase psychological and physical safety for at-risk parents and their children while providing relational treatment so that healing can take place in the context of the primary caregiving relationship.

PCTRP was created in a clinical setting that includes two key elements: a hospital-based advocacy program for victims of violence and an outpatient mental health department that supports a relational, child-parent method of trauma treatment. The program was developed to address the unmet needs of our mutual clients. Advocates were searching for a trauma-informed, culturally responsive resource for clients and their children still suffering from the impact of violence in the home. Clinicians recognized that it was a challenge for the parent and child to heal while they continued to be in danger after leaving the abusive relationship. The program design combines advocacy with child-parent psychotherapy. This is achieved through cross-training, twice monthly meetings for case review, family meetings with the

clinicians and the advocates, and clinical supervision as well as mentoring advocates.

Protective parents partner with their clinician and advocate to address the impact of violence on the family, working closely as a team throughout the course of 12 weeks to create, implement, and revise a safety plan. The advocate may, for example, accompany the caregiver to court and then join the clinician in the parent-child session so that together they can explain the outcome, in child appropriate terms, to the child and then listen to the child's emotional needs and safety concerns. Support from the advocate facilitates access to legal rights and resources, increasing stamina for navigating difficult systems.



For parents, a shift also occurs in their representation of themselves as a protective parent which is essential to their child's recovery. In the safety of the therapeutic room, where the parent and child are present, the true impact of the violence on the child can be heard and understood, sometimes for the first time. The child's current fears are addressed, while the caregivers' parenting strengths and their protective responses are recognized and highlighted. There is greater capacity for parents to understand the "inner world" of their traumatized children with the guidance of the trauma-informed clinician. Working with the advocate concurrently empowers parents to protect their children from further physical and psychological harm, which promotes earlier healing from the trauma.

The following comments from the program illustrates how advocates, parents, and clinicians work together to help children heal.

*"As parents in the Latin community, we don't always know how our struggles affect our children. We think about school, about activities for our children. That is why as an advocate, I know every child that witnessed their parent being abused should have this program."*

— Advocate

*"It was so painful for me to see how my daughter changed since she saw her father hurt me...now, after this program, I feel I have my daughter back."*

— Parent

*"It is wonderful to be able to focus on both the psychological and physical safety at the same time. It was not possible to promote a sense of safety for the parent and child unless the physical safety issues were also being addressed. You felt helpless as a clinician, so partnering with an advocate is so beneficial for our families."*

— Clinician

## CASE SCENARIO



Brianna was nearly 6 years old when she saw her father threaten to hurt her mother and then stand on a window sill saying he would kill himself. Brianna's mother reached out to PCTRP for help with her two daughters, Brianna, and Brianna's sister who was 7 years old when they came to the program. Brianna was having nightmares triggered by overhearing arguments on the telephone regarding visitation. Two of Brianna's drawings are shown on the right.

The advocate worked with the mother on a plan to reduce the arguments by making all communication through e-mail. The advocate then joined in the parent-child session. Together, the advocate and clinician supported the mother in explaining the safety plan in child appropriate terms while emphasizing that the mother, with all the strengths to do so, was doing all the right things to keep herself and her children safe. The plan was set in place and the nightmares stopped.

Working across disciplines, PCTRP combines advocacy with child-parent psychotherapy to promote healing for traumatized parents and their young children.

**For more information please contact:**

**Peg Tiberio**

**phone:** 978-354-4383

**e-mail:** [pegt@hawcdv.org](mailto:pegt@hawcdv.org)



When asked about her drawings, Brianna shared:

*“These are bombs (on the ground) and this is lightning. The sun and the clouds are fighting. My sister and I are on a shaky tower and we are scared.”*



# PROMISING FUTURES

Leiana Kinnicutt, MSW  
Program Manager  
Futures Without Violence



**P**romising Futures: Best Practices for Serving Children, Youth, and Parents Experiencing Domestic Violence is a new website developed by Futures Without Violence, formerly the Family Violence Prevention Fund, with funding from the Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. This online resource was designed to help domestic violence advocates enhance their programming for children and their mothers. If you are just starting to think about how your program's policies could better reflect an equal commitment to mothers and children or you have been delivering holistic services to all family members for years, this website has information and tools that can help you advance your practice. Domestic violence programs are constantly facing funding cuts and are under pressure to demonstrate positive outcomes. It is essential that we are strategic about prioritizing effective interventions that are trauma-informed, developmentally and culturally relevant, and also strengthen the mother-child relationship. Furthermore, as a field, we are at a pivotal moment in our movement history when we need to consider how partnering with researchers and documenting our successes can assist in advancing the field and securing essential resources. The website is organized around six major topics.

## The website includes:

- » A searchable database of evidence-based interventions and promising practices for serving children and youth
- » Information and resources on protective factors, resilience, and interventions that strengthen the mother-child bond
- » Strategies for strengthening program capacity to deliver developmentally appropriate, trauma-informed, and effective programming
- » Guidance on program evaluation and adaptation
- » Resources and guidance on working with culturally diverse families
- » Training curricula, research articles, and other tools for advocates & parents/caregivers

We envisioned this website as an evolving resource for advocates and programs so please share with us all of the innovative work and tools you have developed so that we can continue to highlight the work in our field. This website is for you, so please let us know how we can support and advance your practice.

[www.promisingfutureswithoutviolence.org](http://www.promisingfutureswithoutviolence.org)





**THE HEALTH E-BULLETIN IS PRODUCED BY  
THE NATIONAL HEALTH RESOURCE CENTER ON  
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.**

**For free technical assistance,  
and educational materials:**

**Visit:** [www.FuturesWithoutViolence.org/health](http://www.FuturesWithoutViolence.org/health)

**Call** (Monday-Friday; 9am-5pm Pacific Time): 415-678-5500

**E-mail:** [health@FuturesWithoutViolence.org](mailto:health@FuturesWithoutViolence.org)



#### **ABOUT THE NATIONAL HEALTH RESOURCE CENTER ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE:**

For more than two decades, the National Health Resource Center on Domestic Violence has supported health care practitioners, administrators and systems, domestic violence experts, survivors, and policy makers at all levels as they improve health care's response to domestic violence. A project of Futures Without Violence, and funded by the Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Center supports leaders in the field through groundbreaking model professional, education and response programs, cutting edge advocacy and sophisticated technical assistance. The Center offers a wealth of free culturally competent materials that are appropriate for a variety of public and private health professions, settings and departments.