



Professional Facilitator's Guide

# Curriculum for Justice-Involved Women & Gender-Diverse People

*A Trauma-focused Approach to  
Heal Trauma and Support Healthy Relationships.*



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*A Trauma-focused Approach to Heal Trauma and  
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# “Metamorphosis”



# “Metamorphosis”

About the Artist: “I am a young artist that has endured challenges and struggles caused by physical and mental abuse. I learned to channel my frustrations and express my feelings thru my Art. My hope is that others, who may be struggling, will relate to my work and know they are not alone.”

—Sciley Neufeld



## Acknowledgments

This curriculum is a culmination of years working to end cruelty in relationships. The River of Cruelty model was originally formulated through our work with those who used violence in relationships. The opportunity for application with justice involved women occurred at the Topeka Correctional Facility (TCF). Warden Hope Cooper understood that the incarcerated people in her care needed a chance to address their historical trauma while being held accountable for their own behavior. Through the years, the participants of this program have helped to make this curriculum better. Their courage and commitment to improving their own lives and the lives of their fellow facility residents is inspiring.

Our approach to this work has been influenced by so many people, it is impossible to name and thank them all. We have been touched by determined survivors, passionate advocates, remarkable thinkers along with thousands of determined individuals working to get out of the River of Cruelty. Our work has evolved over the years thanks to influence of so many. In a field full of tragedy, pain and suffering, we have found love, connection and meaning. We are forever grateful.

Having the opportunity to support, guide, and listen to justice-involved women and gender-diverse people is humbling. Their courage in navigating danger while becoming dedicated to end the cruelty they have inflicted on their families is inspiring, and affirms that change is possible. We have experienced the contradiction of incredible acts of kindness from people who have committed incredible acts of cruelty. We have seen the struggle of learning to love when the fear of loss was overwhelming. We have seen the shame when the realization of “What have I done?” sets in. Getting out of the River of Cruelty is a difficult task, and we have the honor of seeing people find a way out, almost every day.

We will be forever grateful to the amazing staff of the Family Peace Initiative. Your creativity, commitment and courage has made a difference beyond measure. We will never know how much violence has been prevented as a result of your work, but your willingness to lead by example is creating a safer world for families, communities and beyond. Thank you for trusting, challenging and pursuing mastery of your craft.



## **A Curriculum Guide for Working with Justice-Involved Women and Gender-Diverse People**

This guide has been designed as a program for women and gender-diverse people in a justice-involved setting, such as a correctional facility, community corrections, or other system-based setting. The guide has been divided into sections. There are foundational sessions, along with additional optional sessions in some sections. Programs that are longer will utilize the optional weeks. Programs that are shorter will use the foundation sessions, with optional sessions used only as time permits. Consequently, the Midway Report and the Completion Process can be accomplished without all of the sessions written in this guide completed.

This curriculum can be used effectively in an open or closed format group. It has operated in a closed group format in a women's residential correctional facility setting, meaning all participants begin and end together. Participants are asked to make a commitment to complete the full course. Orientations were held with 3-4 participants at a time. If the curriculum is being operated in an open group format, meaning that people enter the program at different times, a different conversation about the challenges of the sessions will need to occur, and Orientation will happen with one or two people at a time. It has been our experience that closed groups seem to work best in the prison/facility setting and open groups seem to be more effective and practical in the community setting. Each program will have to make their own decision as to how they want to proceed. This curriculum can be used effectively either way.

In addition to the structure of the program, there is a corresponding Course Workbook for Participants, designed for use in conjunction with the Facilitator's Guide. This workbook contains most of the homework assignments that are made throughout the course. It has always been a challenge to create accountability for participants regarding workbook completion. When facilitated by the Family Peace Initiative, participant's workbooks are reviewed by facilitators at the time of the Midway Report. Participants are only asked to complete the sections that have been covered at the time of their report. This review enables the facilitators to determine if a participant needs additional support to successfully complete the workbook and the program. Participants who turn in incomplete workbooks are asked to complete all sections covered up to that point, after determining what type of assistance is needed. The remainder of the workbook should be completed and turned in for review prior to completion of the program. When possible, workbooks are returned to participants at the time of graduation from the program.

Finally, the success of this program depends on much more than implementation of this guide. The Family Peace Initiative believes that this guide is just that: a guide. Group processes are rich in opportunities for personal introspection, and once doorways into introspection are opened, the guide has fulfilled its mission. This guide is written with the intention of the facilitator also using the FPI Approach to Facilitation (see Appendix).

No matter the approach, the facilitator must work toward mastery of how to invite transformation once the doorway has opened. Ideally, facilitators build amazing relationships with their participants, participants are held accountable for the expectations of the program, and victims and survivors are taken into account every step of the way. A curriculum is only as good as the facilitator that puts it into use.

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# INTRODUCTION



There is a special responsibility in writing a curriculum for justice-involved women and gender-diverse people. Creating a process that engages and invites both participants and facilitators to self-examination without losing sight of those victimized is a challenge. Creating opportunities for those who have used violence to explore what has happened to them, without creating an excuse for what they have done to others is a delicate balance to say the least.

Incarcerated women and gender-diverse people commonly have a tremendous history of trauma in addition to the trauma they have inflicted on others. This curriculum offers a road map for both accountability and healing. To do so, it relies heavily on cognitive behavioral strategies in addition to strategies designed to assist in the recovery from trauma. This melding of strategies takes shape in our River of Cruelty Model. This model allows people to identify personal evidence that the CBT disruptive beliefs, or Golden Shadow Message, might be true: the use of the enlightened witness experience provides evidence that disruptive beliefs can be valid. In this way, we don't have to fabricate an alternative belief, but use an alternative belief that originates within the participant's personal story.

It is the foundational purpose for the Family Peace Initiative to create cruelty-free relationships and communities. Recognizing that cruel behaviors are often evidence of unresolved cruelty is foundational to how we interact with those we serve. We are asking participants to be accountable for the impact of their behaviors toward others, while also accepting responsibility for healing the impact of the cruelty that was inflicted on them long before they were able to protect themselves. It is a huge request to ask people to examine the parts of their lives that have been long repressed, hidden away and forgotten, but that is the task in this trauma-focused and cognitive-behavioral approach. There are processes designed to strategically create opportunities for vulnerability, as well as accountability. Within this curriculum, facilitators will have the chance to encourage, support, and guide participants into deeper emotional risks and more self-understanding that can create lasting change.

There are several key components to this material that facilitators must master. The impact of trauma is introduced through the **ACE Study**. The ability to manage **The Shadow Process** and the **Golden Shadow** offers facilitators the ability to guide participants into their adverse feelings and personal beliefs. Facilitators who understand the **Internal-Focused Dialogue** become experts at using **The Funnel Process** to assist participants in transformative conversations. Understanding the **Motives of Those Who Batter** gives the facilitator a template for examining the behaviors and thought patterns of persons who have experienced domestic violence—through victimization, perpetration, or both. This provides the key to predicting different dangers at different times under different circumstances. It will also give the participant an understanding of their own behavior, their personal red flags, and steps they can take to change.

As you can see, the curriculum alone is not enough. The skill and courage of the facilitator is the "x-factor" of this work. The knowledge and skill of facilitation that engages participants, creates a safe space for them to make lasting change is a fine art. This curriculum is a powerful road map for those leading others on the quest to end relationship cruelty.

# THE CHANGE PROCESS

## FROM CRUELTY TO FAMILY PEACE

DOMINATION AND CONTROL (Pre-Painful Shift)	PEACEFUL INTERACTION (Post-Painful Shift)
<p><b>CRUELTY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Imposing one's will on another; the blatant disregard for another</li> <li>⇒ Using physical violence</li> <li>⇒ Threatening behaviors that create fear of harm to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>self or another</li> <li>their family member/loved one</li> <li>their pet</li> <li>the person's identity/reputation</li> <li>the person's things</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>RESPECT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Acceptance of the right of others to have their own opinions, thoughts, and choices</li> <li>⇒ Validating the rights, thoughts, and feelings of others</li> <li>⇒ Using peaceful means to get needs/wants met</li> <li>⇒ Knowing physical triggers and taking responsibility for remaining peaceful</li> <li>⇒ Talking and behaving in a way that creates safety for others</li> </ul>
<p><b>MINIMIZATION, DENIAL, BLAME</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Avoids personal responsibility</li> <li>⇒ Says abuse did not happen or it was someone else's fault (pass the football)</li> <li>⇒ Believes that their stated intentions rather than behavior should count</li> <li>⇒ Believes if says "I'm sorry," others should forgive and forget</li> <li>⇒ Colluding with others who are violent</li> </ul>	<p><b>INTEGRITY, HONESTY, AND ACCOUNTABILITY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Doing what you say you are going to do</li> <li>⇒ Accepting responsibility for your own behavior</li> <li>⇒ Accepting responsibility for changing your own behavior</li> <li>⇒ Does not support others' dishonesty, minimization, denial, or blame</li> </ul>
<p><b>PROJECTION &amp; AVOIDANCE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Critical of others and/or self</li> <li>⇒ Negative self-soothing</li> <li>⇒ Highly judgmental</li> <li>⇒ Avoiding feelings and self-disclosure</li> <li>⇒ Hiding perceived weakness/vulnerabilities</li> <li>⇒ Focus on others to ignore/avoid needs of self</li> </ul>	<p><b>PERSONAL INTROSPECTION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Understanding &amp; accepting self &amp; others</li> <li>⇒ Positive self-soothing</li> <li>⇒ Examining adverse emotions</li> <li>⇒ Honest &amp; open: allowing others in</li> <li>⇒ Accept impact of our cruelty to others/self</li> <li>⇒ Acknowledging impact of cruelty done to us</li> </ul>
<p><b>COERCION, CRITICISM AND FORCE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Resolving conflict through control</li> <li>⇒ Winning at all cost</li> <li>⇒ Unwilling to compromise</li> <li>⇒ Resistant to, and sabotaging change</li> <li>⇒ Using aggressive or passive/aggressive behavior; violating others rights</li> <li>⇒ Disregarding interests of our partner</li> <li>⇒ Coercion through people-pleasing</li> <li>⇒ Too rigid or no boundary setting</li> </ul>	<p><b>NEGOTIATION AND FAIRNESS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Seeking mutually satisfying resolution to conflict</li> <li>⇒ Willingness to compromise</li> <li>⇒ Considering our partner's interests</li> <li>⇒ Accepting of requests for change</li> <li>⇒ Using assertive behavior; standing up for own wants/needs/rights without violating others</li> <li>⇒ Communicating and setting healthy boundaries in a nonthreatening way</li> </ul>

# THE CHANGE PROCESS cont'd. FROM CRUELTY TO FAMILY PEACE

## EMOTIONAL CRUELTY

- ⇒ Putting others down, degrading them
- ⇒ Calling them names
- ⇒ Humiliation
- ⇒ Playing mind games
- ⇒ Using guilt, fear, and blame to get our way
- ⇒ Isolation
- ⇒ Criticism and defensiveness
- ⇒ Using jealousy to justify actions

## TRUST & PARTNERSHIP

- ⇒ Valuing our partner's interests
- ⇒ Accepting our and our partner's strengths and weaknesses
- ⇒ Supporting dreams of partner
- ⇒ Owning insecurities
- ⇒ Embracing independence

## SELF-CENTERED PARENTING

- ⇒ Using fear tactics to have control
- ⇒ Physical, sexual, or emotional abuse
- ⇒ Vicarious parenting
- ⇒ Dehumanizing our kids
- ⇒ Using our kids:  
to get what we want  
as a weapon against partner  
as a co-conspirator  
as a spy
- ⇒ Escaping responsibilities regarding nurturance
- ⇒ Modeling violent behaviors and intolerance

## PARENTING WITH RESPECT

- ⇒ Ensuring safety and security for child
- ⇒ Interactions with child are focused on the child's needs/wants, not the adult's
- ⇒ Supporting other parent's parenting
- ⇒ Separates children issues from partner issues
- ⇒ Uses respectful discipline
- ⇒ Sharing equally in nurturance responsibilities
- ⇒ Being a positive, nonviolent role model
- ⇒ Acceptance of child

## SEXUAL DISRESPECT

- ⇒ Measuring self or other's worth by sexual appeal/willingness to sexually gratify
- ⇒ Discriminating against others due to their sexual orientation or gender identity
- ⇒ Using sexual gestures or terms to attract attention, degrade, or humiliate
- ⇒ Using force or coercion to obtain sexual interaction
- ⇒ Not letting potential partner know of safety risk

## SEXUAL RESPECT

- ⇒ Valuing social and sexual intimacy in relationship
- ⇒ Treating people with respect regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity
- ⇒ Valuing the rights, thoughts, and feelings of others
- ⇒ Engaging in only consensual sexual activity
- ⇒ Informing partner of safety risks
- ⇒ Understanding the harmful impact of objectification, sexism & homophobia

## POWER AND MIND GAMES

- ⇒ Using privilege and/or power to avoid certain duties and to assign roles
- ⇒ Using privilege and/or power to make money decisions to benefit self, at the expense of partner
- ⇒ Expecting partner's perfection in fulfilling assigned roles and responsibilities
- ⇒ Using Entitlement behaviors
- ⇒ Using Sadistic behaviors
- ⇒ Demanding perfection of partner

## HEALTHY FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

- ⇒ Agreeing to fair distribution of responsibilities
- ⇒ Sharing decision-making
- ⇒ Valuing partner as your equal
- ⇒ Making money decisions with equal consideration
- ⇒ Making family decisions together
- ⇒ Recognizes role conflicts for self and partner
- ⇒ Respectful problem solving