

# WOMEN

## *making waves*

VOLUME-16 :: ISSUE-1

www.bwss.org :: Fall 2005

**CONTENTS** THIS ISSUE: New Directions • Strengthening Our Networking Relationships



- P1** • Pacific DAWN: Planting the Seeds of Inclusion
- P2** • Women's Trauma, Recovery and Empowerment
- P3** • Different possibilities for learning and sharing
- P4** • FALL 2005, Support Group Programs
  - BWSS Donation Form

## WOMEN

### *making waves*

**Women Making Waves** is published by **Battered Women's Support Services**, a non-profit organization supporting women facing abuse and violence.

...  
**PO Box 21503**  
**1424 Commercial Drive**  
**Vancouver, BC V5L 5G2**  
...

**Business Line:** 604-687-1868  
**Fax:** 604-687-1864  
**Counselling:** 604-687-1867  
**Email:** information@bwss.org

**Executive Director:**  
Angela Marie MacDougall

**Graphic Design:**  
Alex Gonzalez 604-874-6654

**Editors:** BWSS Staff and Volunteers



## Pacific DAWN: Planting the Seeds of Inclusion

**Monika Chappell**  
Pacific DAWN

The Pacific Disabled Women's Network (Pacific DAWN) is a network of self-identified women with all types of disabilities. Pacific DAWN is a western regional affiliate of DAWN Canada, the national non-profit that represents the voice of women with disabilities across Canada. Formed in 1995 with the agreement of DAWN BC, Pacific DAWN is the feminist, pro-choice voice of women with disabilities throughout BC and the Yukon.

As a feminist grassroots cross-disability organization, Pacific DAWN works to end the isolation of women with disabilities. Pacific DAWN also fosters skill development aimed at increasing the participation of women with disabilities in public policy discussions, and encouraging and supporting the autonomy and self-realization of its members as women, as people with disabilities, and as citizens of Canada.

With a grant from the Western Regional office, Status of Women, the women of Pacific DAWN have embarked on a quest to revitalize the network. The goal to plant the seeds of inclusion for women with disabilities.



---

*We talked about the steps in starting a DAWN group through an excellent manual written by Joan Meister and began the process of strategic planning led by Angela MacDougall, ED of Battered Women's Support Services.*

---

In May of 2005, ten years after its inception, Pacific DAWN held the gathering "Nothing About Us: From Exclusion to Inclusion", in Richmond, BC. This gathering brought together over 40 women from across BC and the Yukon who were identified as leaders in their local communities. Women learned broad ideals about feminism and specific disability issues related to Aboriginal women, deaf women, and women with mental health issues in BC and the Yukon. Women also spent time learning the techniques of non-violent communication, diversity, internalized oppression and dominance, community networking, working with allies, advocacy, media skills, and how a similar successful disability group in Courtenay was formed.

We talked about the steps in starting a DAWN group through an excellent manual written by Joan Meister

(founding mother of DAWN Canada and Pacific DAWN, available on line at [www.dawncanada.ca](http://www.dawncanada.ca)), and began the process of strategic planning led by Angela MacDougall, ED of Battered Women's Support Services.

*Continues on Page 4*

---

# Women's Trauma, Recovery & Empowerment Group

Kathleen Whipp  
June 30, 2005

Women attending mental health services all over BC<sup>1</sup> have been asking for help with recovery from trauma and abuse. They and other women calling BWSS decry the lack of trauma services for those diagnosed with mental health issues. All of us want to be seen as whole, and to make sense of our pain.



*All of us want  
to be seen as whole,  
and to make sense  
of our pain.*

At the same time, recognition is slowly building in medical circles of the full impact of violence and trauma on mental health. For example, in a review of surveys, anywhere from 51 to 97 per cent of women diagnosed with serious mental illness disclosed histories of physical and/or sexual abuse.<sup>2</sup> Too many women have been lost in a maze of multiple diagnoses and excessive use of medications, often feeling more distant from themselves, their communities, and the prospect of full recovery.<sup>3</sup> Much less costly both in personal and financial terms, women are asking for “sustained inner healing, not merely the remediation of symptoms”, such as “healing centres in the community” and “complementary/alternative care”.<sup>4</sup>

**BWSS is responding to this need with several new programs.** One is a unique approach that blends a women-centred anti-oppression support group with enough focus and “containment” to enable women with high levels of emotional distress to maximize safety in their lives. The Women's Trauma Recovery and Empowerment Group<sup>5</sup> welcomes women with serious and complex mental health issues along with other women who want to overcome the effects of abuse.

We are finding that while this program was designed in a community mental health centre, it is based on — and very similar to — groups offered in women's programs for years. By providing a bit more structure, women who might be overwhelmed by another format are more able to manage their fears. Because this group is offered in a supportive setting, participants feel accepted, and that they can really “be themselves”. [*bwss*]

---

<sup>1</sup> Morrow, Marina and Monika Chappell (1999) “Hearing Women's Voices: Mental Health Care for Women”, BC Centre of Excellence for Women's Health.

<sup>2</sup> Goodman et al (1997) “Physical and Sexual Assault History in Women with Serious Mental Illness: Prevalence, Correlates, Treatment and Future Directions”, Schizophrenia Bulletin, 23 (4), 685-696.

<sup>3</sup> Sandra Burgess et al (2003) “I Couldn't Say Anything So My Body Tried to Speak for Me: The Cost of Providing Health Care Services to Women Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse”, Prairie Women's Health Centre of Excellence, online at [www.pwhce.ca](http://www.pwhce.ca).

<sup>4</sup> Op cit.

<sup>5</sup> Harris, Maxine (1998) Trauma Recovery and Empowerment: a Clinicians Guide to Working with Women in Groups, Toronto: The Free Press.

# Different possibilities for learning and sharing

Cynthia Lo

The Downtown  
Eastside Women's  
Centre



*Partnerships with organizations like BWSS are some of the ways that we can provide different kinds of possibilities for learning and sharing.*

The Downtown Eastside Women's Centre exists to support and empower women and children living in extreme poverty in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver, British Columbia. High levels of violence, homelessness, addictions and poverty characterize this community. Women and children are particularly vulnerable to exploitation, injustice and injury. We provide practical support to over 250 women and children daily to survive the conditions of ill health and violence that surround them. We work to provide security, basic needs and support to encourage them in making long-term change by identifying and removing barriers to full participation in the larger community. Over 900 individuals access the Centre annually.

The Centre is unique, in that it is one of the only safe spaces within the Downtown Eastside specifically and exclusively for women and their children. As well as providing crucial refuge, the Centre provides basic services including hot meals, laundry, a secure mailing address, phone access, functioning and secure toilet and showers, not often available in the area. To assist in alleviating the impact of extreme economic disadvantage we also supply toiletries, haircuts, sewing machines, clothing, computer access, condoms and first aid.

In the Downtown Eastside poverty is the greatest barrier to women's independence and the cause of women's exposure to violence. The mental, physical, emotional and spiritual stress of living in poverty and exposed to violence cannot be

underestimated. There are more and more women who are in need of our services and we are seeing an increase of young women in our community. We look forward to progressive changes in promises of a new ERA of a provincial government that should be accountable to the most vulnerable in our society.

Partnerships with organizations like BWSS are some of the ways that we can provide different kinds of possibilities for learning and sharing. We have been working with BWSS for over 6 years, over that time we have developed ways of working together that supports both organizations. BWSS staff and volunteers have an excellent understanding of the kinds of conditions and circumstances facing our members. DEWC is constantly evolving in response to the needs of our community and BWSS is always open to the challenges in organizational structural that emerge as a result of the constant change. In other words BWSS has always defended and prioritized women in the community and their access to services. Over the past 8 months the DEWC has undergone a physical, ethical, philosophical and organizational renewal that will continue for the next year. BWSS was constant in their support and actions to ensure that women in the community remained the focus. Presently we are in partnership to provide a weekly support group, weekly legal information workshops and weekly healing circles. Without this partnership the real work of systemic change could not happen. [bwss]

Continued from Page 1

Women's comments ranged from refreshing, to healing, to invigorating to thrilling.



Following the gathering women will return home and lead the development of Pacific DAWN local groups. Support will continue over the 1.5 year project through video-teleconferences that

enable the participation of those with all types of disabilities.

Thanks for the support of presenters Angela MacDougall, Raj Gill, Penny Goldsmith, Maureen Hoffart, May MacIntyre, Eileen O'Brien, Barbara Findlay, Pauline Rankin, Cyndi Cassidy, and Monika Chappell as well as volunteers Rickay Hogan, Jenna Nightsky and our tireless ally Kelly Derricott who videotaped the entire gathering. The support of the BC Coalition of Persons with Disabilities, the BC Aboriginal Network on Disabilities, Bright Place for Deaf Women of BC, and PovNet was invaluable in the success of the gathering.

Check out our new website at [www.pacificdawn.bc.ca](http://www.pacificdawn.bc.ca) for post conference materials and for information on our toll free line that opened in July.

# FALL 2005 Support Group Programs

## Empowering Mothers Parenting Program

Wednesday, September 28, 2005 to November 30, 2005  
From: 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

## Downtown Eastside Women's Center Ten-Week Group

Tuesday, September 13, 2005 to November 15, 2005  
From: 6 to 8 p.m.

## Ten-Week Support Group for Spanish Speaking Women who have experienced Abuse in an Intimate Relationship and Children Who Witness Abuse

Monday, October 17, 2005 to December 19, 2005  
From: 6 to 8 p.m.

## Ten-Week Support Group for Lesbian/Bi-Sexual Women who have experienced Abuse in Same Sex Relationships

Thursday, October 13, 2004 to December 16, 2005  
From: 6 to 8 p.m.

## Ten-Week Support Group for Women who have experienced Abuse in an Intimate Relationship

Tuesday, October 11, 2005 to December 13, 2005  
From: 12 to 2 p.m.

## Women's Trauma, Recovery and Empowerment Support Group

Monday October 3, 2005 to December 12, 2005  
From: 12:30 to 2:30 p.m.

For more information or to register call the Intake Co-ordinator at 604-687-1867



**Battered Women's Support Services** is a non-profit organization that relies on your donations to continue supporting women facing abuse and violence.

**Thank you for your gift!**

**yes!** I would like to support Battered Women's Support Services. *Please print your name and address below:*

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Last name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Province: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

I WOULD LIKE TO DONATE \$ \_\_\_\_\_  immediately to bwss  monthly or # \_\_\_\_\_ times per year

By monthly debit: I authorize BWSS to charge \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to my bank account/credit card on the \_\_\_\_\_ day

of each month or # \_\_\_\_\_ times per year. I attach a void cheque. Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

or PLEASE DESIGNATE MY GIFT TO:  My Sister's Closet  Building Fund  In honour of a friend

PAYMENT METHOD:  By Cheque/Money Order  By Credit Card:  Visa  Mastercard

Name of cardholder: \_\_\_\_\_ Credit card number: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry date: \_\_\_\_\_

Cardholder signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Charitable Registration No. 130361611 RR0001

Please send me information on:  Planned Giving  Including BWSS in my WILL  Gifts-in-Kind  I would like to receive your newsletter

Make cheque or money order payable to Battered Women's Support Services • PO BOX 21503 • 1424 COMMERCIAL DR. • VANCOUVER BC, V5L 5G2 • We will send you a tax receipt