

INTRODUCTION

THE AIM OF THIS WORKSHOP IS TO PROVIDE AN OPEN AND SAFE PLACE FOR ALL IRISH WOMEN TO EXPLORE OUR FEELINGS AND EXPERIENCES ABOUT THE 6 COUNTIES.

IN PREPARING THE WORKSHOP WE WERE CONCERNED TO ACHIEVE TWO MAIN THINGS, ONE WAS TO PROVIDE A FEELING OF SAFETY AND THE OTHER TO ENSURE THAT ALL WOMENS' FEELINGS WERE LISTENED TO AND RESPECTED. WE HAVE DESIGNED THE GROUND RULES AND THE STRUCTURE OF THE WORKSHOP TO TRY AND ACHIEVE THESE AIMS.

THE WORKSHOP DOES HAVE LIMITATIONS. THE MAIN ONE BEING THE SHORT PERIOD OF TIME WE HAVE TO RUN IT. WOMEN HAVE SO MANY FEELINGS AROUND THIS ISSUE THAT IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO DEAL WITH OR EVEN TO SHARE ALL OF THEM AT ONE SHORT 3 HOUR WORKSHOP. THE STRUCTURE OF THE WORKSHOP AND THE EXERCISES IN IT ARE DESIGNED TO GET WOMEN IN TOUCH WITH SOME OF THEIR FEELINGS AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE, SO THAT WE CAN SPEND AS MUCH TIME AS POSSIBLE SHARING AND DISCUSSING THESE FEELINGS WITH OTHER WOMEN.

ANOTHER LIMITATION IS THE LACK OF SPACE AND THE NOISE LEVEL, BECAUSE THE SMALL GROUPS WITHIN THIS WORKSHOP HAVE TO BE HELD IN THE SAME ROOM. THIS WILL MEAN A LACK OF COMPLETE PRIVACY. WE WOULD IDEALLY HAVE LIKED TO OFFER EACH SMALL GROUP A SEPARATE ROOM, BUT THAT HAS NOT BEEN POSSIBLE.

DESPITE THE LIMITATIONS HOWEVER, WE HOPE THAT THE GROUND RULES WHICH EVERYONE HAS AGREED TO ACCEPT, WILL HELP US ACHIEVE OUR AIM OF PROVIDING A FORUM FOR WOMEN TO BEGIN TO SHARE THEIR FEELINGS AROUND THIS ISSUE. WE ARE AWARE THAT TODAY CAN ONLY BE A BEGINNING. HOWEVER WE ARE OFFERING A SERIES OF SUPPORT SESSIONS AFTER THE CONFERENCE. SO ANY WOMEN WHO WANT TO CONTINUE TO LOOK AT THEIR FEELINGS AROUND THIS ISSUE ARE WELCOME TO COME ALONG. IN ORDER TO PROVIDE A HIGH LEVEL OF SAFETY FOR THE WOMEN TAKING PART IN THESE SESSIONS, THE GROUP WILL BE CLOSED TO NEW MEMBERS AFTER THE FIRST MEETING. SO COME TO THE FIRST MEETING IF YOU ARE INTERESTED.

THE FIRST SESSION WILL TAKE PLACE ON 13th December 1989 WEDNESDAY 7.30PM

at The London Irish Women's Centre.

STRUCTURE/ TIME / FACILITATORS

EVERY WOMAN TAKING PART IN THE WORKSHOP MUST AGREE TO ACCEPT THE GROUND RULES.

1. AGREEMENT WITH THE AIMS OF THE WORKSHOP. THAT IS, TO PROVIDE AN OPEN AND

SAFE PLACE FOR WOMEN TO EXPLORE THEIR FEELINGS AND EXPERIENCES ABOUT THE 6 COUNTIES

2. COMMITMENT TO ATTEND THE TWO SESSIONS, MORNING AND AFTERNOON.

3. ONCE WORKSHOP HAS BEGUN, GROUPS WILL BE CLOSED.

WORKSHOP TITLE"WOMEN AND OUR EXPERIENCES AND FEELINGS ABOUT THE SIX COUNTIES"

THIS WORKSHOP IS OPEN TO ALL WOMEN.

THE AIM IS TO PROVIDE AN OPEN AND SAFE PLACE FOR ALL IRISH WOMEN, FIRST AND SECOND GENERATION, WOMEN FROM THE 26 COUNTIES AND WOMEN FROM THE 6 COUNTIES, TO EXPLORE OUR FEELINGS AND EXPERIENCES ABOUT THE 6 COUNTIES.

PROGRAMMEMORNING SESSION

1½ HOURS. TIME: 11.15-1pm.

11.15am. GENERAL INTRODUCTION (20mins.)

11.35am. SMALL GROUPS:

ROUND (5mins.)

11.40am. WRITTEN EXERCISE (10mins.)

11.50am. SHARING (25mins.)

FEEDBACK (25mins.)

1pm. LUNCHAFTERNOON SESSION

1½ HOURS. TIME: 2.30-4pm.

2.30pm. OPEN DISCUSSION (45mins.)

3.15pm. CLOSING EXERCISE (25mins.)

3.40pm. REPORT BACK (if agreed) EXERCISE (20mins)

4pm. FINISHGROUND RULES

EVERY WOMAN TAKING PART IN THE WORKSHOP MUST AGREE TO ACCEPT THE GROUNDRULES:

1. AGREEMENT WITH THE ONE AIM OF THE WORKSHOP, THAT IS, TO PROVIDE AN OPEN AND SAFE PLACE FOR WOMEN TO EXPLORE THEIR FEELINGS AND EXPERIENCES ABOUT THE 6 COUNTIES.
2. COMMITTEMENT TO ATTEND THE TWO SESSIONS, MORNING AND AFTERNOON.
3. ONCE WORKSHOP HAS BEGUN, GROUPS WILL BE CLOSED.

CONTINUED OVERLEAF.

GROUND RULES CONTINUED

4. WOMEN ARE ASKED TO TALK ABOUT ONLY THEIR OWN FEELINGS AND EXPERIENCES.
5. ALL WOMEN ARE GIVEN RESPECT AND THEIR FEELINGS ARE LISTENED TO IN SILENCE.
6. ALL WOMEN AGREE TO DO THE EXERCISES PLANNED FOR THE WORKSHOP.
7. CONFIDENTIALITY - WOMEN ARE ASKED NOT TO REPEAT WHAT OTHER WOMEN HAVE SHARED OUTSIDE OF THE WORKSHOP. (ie. not to identify by name womens individual contributions)
8. WOMEN ACCEPT THE PROCEDURE (outlined below) FOR DEALING WITH ANY CONFLICTS THAT MAY ARISE.

DEALING WITH CONFLICT

SUGGESTED PROCEDURE: COMMUNICATION EXERCISE

THE AIM OF THIS PROCEDURE IS NOT TO RESOLVE THE CONFLICT AND MAKE IT DISAPPEAR. THE AIM IS TO ACKNOWLEDGE WHEN A CONFLICT EXISTS AND TO CLARIFY WHAT THE CONFLICT IS ABOUT. THIS COMMUNICATION EXERCISE IS DESIGNED TO GIVE ALL THE WOMEN INVOLVED IN A CONFLICT AN EQUAL AMOUNT OF TIME TO STATE THEIR FEELINGS AND AN EQUAL MEASURE OF RESPECT FOR THOSE FEELINGS.

1. EACH WOMAN INVOLVED NEEDS TO AGREE THAT THERE IS A CONFLICT.
2. THE GROUP FACILITATOR ACTS AS THE MEDIATOR.
3. THE WOMEN INVOLVED EITHER AGREE OR TOSS A COIN TO DECIDE WHO STARTS THE EXERCISE.
4. FIRST WOMAN VOICES ONE RESENTMENT, ONE ~~FEELING~~ ^{request}, AND ONE APPRECIATION TOWARDS THE WOMAN SHE IS IN CONFLICT WITH.
5. THE OTHER WOMAN LISTENS IN SILENCE AND DOES NOT RESPOND TO WHAT THE FIRST WOMAN HAS SAID.
6. THE SECOND WOMAN VOICES ONE RESENTMENT, ONE ~~FEELING~~ ^{request}, AND ONE APPRECIATION TOWARDS THE WOMAN SHE IS IN CONFLICT WITH.
7. THE OTHER WOMAN LISTENS IN SILENCE AND DOES NOT RESPOND TO WHAT THE SECOND WOMAN HAS SAID.
8. EACH WOMAN CAN VOICE TWO RESENTMENTS, TWO ~~FEELINGS~~ ^{requests} AND TWO APPRECIATIONS, IF THIS IS AGREED BEFORE THEY START THE EXERCISE.
9. IF ALL THE WOMEN INVOLVED IN THE CONFLICT AGREE THEY CAN HAVE FEEDBACK FROM THE REST OF THE SMALL GROUP.
10. THE FEEDBACK CONSISTS OF EACH WOMAN SHARING ONE OR TWO FEELINGS SHE EXPERIENCED WHILE LISTENING TO THE COMMUNICATION EXERCISE

THE CONFLICT HAS NOW BEEN ACKNOWLEDGED AND CLARIFIED AND WE NOW MOVE ON WITH THE WORKSHOP.

STRUCTURE AND EXERCISES

OF THE WORKSHOP

MAXIMUM NUMBER OF WOMEN ABLE TO ATTEND-----

PLEASE BOOK FOR THE WORKSHOP AT REGISTRATION IN ORDER TO AVOID DISAPPOINTMENT

MORNING SESSION

1. GENERAL INTRODUCTION IN LARGE GROUP TO EXPLAIN AIMS AND STRUCTURE OF WORKSHOP.
2. WORKSHOP THEN DEVIDES INTO SEPARATE SMALL GROUPS OF 4 WOMEN WITH 1 FACILITATOR FOR EACH GROUP. TOTAL 5 WOMEN IN EACH SMALL GROUP.
3. FACILITATOR IN EACH GROUP WILL INTRODUCE HERSELF AND EXPLAIN THE ROUND, THE WRITTEN EXERCISE AND THE FEEDBACK PROCEDURES FOR THE MORNING SESSION.
4. ROUND. TOTAL 5 MINS. EACH WOMAN ASKED TO INTRODUCE HERSELF AND TO SAY BRIEFLY WHY SHE CAME TO THIS WORKSHOP. 1 MIN. ALLOWED EACH WOMAN. FACILITATOR WILL LET EACH WOMAN KNOW WHEN HER TIME IS UP.
5. FACILITATOR INTRODUCES THE WRITTEN EXERCISE. TOTAL 10 MINS.
6. WRITTEN EXERCISE: WRITE DOWN AT LEAST 5 FEELINGS OR MEMORIES YOU HAVE ABOUT THE 6 COUNTIES. IT MAY HELP YOU IF YOU THINK ABOUT :
 - ANY FOND MEMORIES / FEELINGS YOU HAVE ABOUT THE 6 COUNTIES.
 - " PAINFUL " " " " " " "
 - " FRIGHTENING " " " " " " "
 - ANY MESSAGES YOU WERE GIVEN BY YOUR PARENTS ABOUT 6 COUNTIES.
 - " " " " " " YOUR PEERS " "
 - " " " " " " THE MEDIA " "
 - ANY MEMORIES / FEELINGS YOU VALUE ABOUT THE 6 COUNTIES.
 - ANY CONFLICTING FEELINGS OR CONTRADICTIONS YOU FEEL ABOUT THE 6 COUNTIES.
 - WHAT IS ONE VIVID MEMORY YOU CARRY WITH YOU ABOUT THE 6 COUNTIES.
7. EACH WOMAN THEN SHARES HER WRITTEN WORK WITH THE REST OF THE GROUP. EACH WOMAN IS ALLOWED 5 MINS. DIRECTLY AFTER EACH WOMAN HAS SHARED SHE IS GIVEN FEEDBACK FROM THE REST OF THE GROUP.
8. FEEDBACK: IT IS LIMITED FEEDBACK BECAUSE OF SHORTAGE OF TIME. EACH WOMAN IS ASKED TO SHARE TWO FEELINGS SHE FELT WHILE LISTERING TO THE WOMAN WHO HAS JUST SHARED HER WRITTEN WORK. 1 MIN ALLOWED FOR EACH WOMAN.

BREAK FOR LUNCH

AFTERNOON SESSION

9. EACH SMALL GROUP VOTES ON WHETHER THEY WOULD LIKE TO STAY IN THE SMALL GROUP FOR THE OPEN DISCUSSION OR JOIN UP WITH THE LARGE GROUP.
 - OPEN DISCUSSION : FACILITATOR WILL INTRODUCE THIS SESSION AND CHAIR IT. TOTAL 45 MINS.
10. CLOSING EXERCISE : A ROUND --- EACH WOMAN SHARES WHAT SHE FELT WAS POSITIVE ABOUT THE WORKSHOP AND WHAT SHE WOULD LIKE TO COME OUT OF THE WORKSHOP. 5 MINS EACH WOMAN. TOTAL 25 MINS.
11. REPORT BACK (IF AGREED BY GROUPS) CONSISTS OF A GENERAL SUMMARY OF THE FEELINGS THAT CAME UP FOR WOMEN DURING THE WORKSHOP. THE FACILITATOR WILL NOTE DOWN THE KEY FEELINGS AND THEN EITHER EACH FACILITATOR REPORTS BACK TO THE CONFERENCE OR ONE FACILITATOR AGREES TO REPORT A SUMMARY OF ALL THE SESSIONS TO THE CONFERENCE. ALSO ANNOUNCES THE DATE OF THE FIRST SUPPORT GROUP SESSION TO THE REST OF THE CONFERENCE.

FACILITATORS ROLE

- X 1. INTRODUCE THEMSELVES TO THE SMALL GROUP AND CHAIR BOTH MORNING AND AFTERNOON SESSIONS.
2. INTRODUCE AND EXPLAIN THE ROUND, THE EXERCISES, THE OPEN DISCUSSION AND THE REPORT BACK PROCEDURE (IF GROUP DECIDE TO DO A REPORT BACK)
- X 3. RESPONSIBLE FOR TIMING THE WOMEN SPEAKING AND THE EXERCISES.
- X 4. FACILITATOR WILL TAKE PART IN ALL THE EXERCISES IN THE GROUP.
5. WHEN THE FACILITATOR IS CONTRIBUTING TO THE GROUP, ANOTHER WOMAN IN THE GROUP IS ASKED TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR CHAIRING THE SESSION AND FOR THE TIME KEEPING UNTIL THE FACILITATOR HAS FINISHED.
(THIS COULD BE DONE IN ROTA, OR LEFT OPEN TO ALLOW WOMEN TO OFFER TO TAKE ON THIS ROLE)
6. THE FACILITATOR WILL OFFER TO LEAD IN ALL THE EXERCISES IF OTHER WOMEN DO NOT WANT TO SHARE FIRST.
- X 7. REPORT BACK. (IF AGREED BY THE GROUP) FACILITATOR WILL NOTE DOWN THE KEY FEELINGS WOMEN HAD ABOUT THE WORKSHOP AND ABOUT WHAT THEY WANT TO COME OUT OF THE WORKSHOP ON A LARGE SHEET OF PAPER AND THEN EITHER EACH FACILITATOR REPORTS BACK TO THE CONFERENCE OR ONE FACILITATOR OFFERS TO REPORT A SUMMARY OF ALL THE SESSIONS TO THE CONFERENCE.
- X 8. REPORT BACK CONSISTS OF A GENERAL SUMMARY OF THE FEELINGS THAT CAME UP FOR WOMEN DURING THE WORKSHOP
- X 9. SOME SUGGESTIONS OF TOPICS FACILITATORS MAY WANT TO BRING UP FOR GENERAL DISCUSSION DURING THE OPEN DISCUSSION.
VIOLENCE -----HOW WE FEEL ABOUT THIS IN OUR PERSONAL EXPERIENCE
" " " " " WITHIN THE WIDER COMMUNITY
" " " " " IN THE 6 COUNTIES
" CONTRADICTIONS / IF ANY / THAT WE FEEL AROUND THIS ISSUE.
POSITIVE MEMORIES / FEELINGS / OR IMAGES OF THE 6 COUNTIES
NEGATIVE " " " " " "
GUILT ----- OUR EXPERIENCE OF IT
" ----- HOW WOMEN DEAL WITH IT
FEELING LACK OF KNOWLEDGE AND HOW WOMEN DEAL WITH IT
FEELINGS OF CONFUSION
RELATIONSHIPS OR LACK OF THEM BETWEEN WOMEN IN THE NORTH
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WOMEN FROM THE NORTH AND OTHER WOMEN.
BEING IRISH IN BRITAIN
WOMENS LEVEL OF ASSOCIATION WITH IRELAND OR IRISHNESS OR LACK OF ASSOCIATION.
WHAT WERE THE MESSAGES WOMEN GOT FROM THEIR PARENTS ABOUT THE 6 COUNTIES
" " " " " " THEIR PEERS " " "
" " " " " " THE MEDIA " " "
CHANGES / IF ANY IN WOMENS FEELINGS OVER TIME
" " " " EXPERIENCES " "
- X 10. THE FACILITATOR ACTS AS THE MEDIATOR IF A COMMUNICATION EXERCISE IS NECESSARY IN ORDER TO DEAL WITH A CONFLICT.