

Center for Nonviolence & Social Justice

Healing Hurt People convenes S.E.L.F. group

5/4/2009

The [S.E.L.F. \(Safety, Emotions, Loss, Future\) psychoeducational group curriculum](#) is a component of the [Sanctuary Model](#). In the context of a group setting, S.E.L.F. addresses the fundamental problems surrounding exposure to violence without needing to focus on specific individual events. Victims of overwhelming life experiences have difficulty feeling safe, find emotions difficult to manage, have suffered many losses and have difficulty envisioning a future. As a result, they are frequently in danger, lose emotional control or are so numb that they cannot access their emotions, have many signs of unresolved loss, and are stuck in time, haunted by the past and unable to move into a better future.

The four concepts of S.E.L.F.—Safety, Emotions, Loss, and Future—represent the four fundamental domains of disruption that occur in a traumatized person's life. The curriculum is designed to provide clients and staff with an easy-to-use and coherent cognitive framework that can create a change momentum. It is not constrained by gender, age, race, religion, or ethnicity because the domains of healing that S.E.L.F. represents are human universals, unbound to any time, place, or person. In residential programs, children as young as four are comfortably using the S.E.L.F. language, and using it appropriately.

S.E.L.F. groups evolved organically from the need to help adult clients to:

- think differently about their problems;
- organize the changes they need to make into more manageable bundles;
- develop pattern recognition for the ways in which their present problems relate to past experiences;
- build a roadmap for the process of recovery.

Although this is a trauma-informed curriculum, the issues of trauma, maltreatment or abuse are not frequently addressed head-on. Words like "trauma" and "abuse" are highly charged for many people and are frequently misunderstood. Instead, the focus is on the results of exposure to trauma—experiences that everyone can relate to, whether they have been traumatized or abused in the past or not, such as: loss of safety, inability to manage emotions, overwhelming losses, a paralyzed ability to plan for or even imagine a different future.

To learn more about the **Healing Hurt People** violence intervention program, [click here](#).

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