
Empowering Excluded Women through Feminist Concepts

Beth Offer
Counseling Center for Women

Counseling Center for Women

- A Non Profit Organization
- We give individual and group therapy to women
- Projects connected to women and women issues
- Based on feminist ideology and theory

Feminist Therapy in a Nut Shell

- Can be integrated into any therapeutic approach
 - Though there have been many achievements over the years the values and concepts of many societies have not basically changed
 - In many societies and cultures women are treated differently than men whether it is implicit or explicit
 - A feminist therapist is always aware of these differences and of the emotional, cognitive and tangible influence these differences have on women's lives
 - A feminist therapist will aim for a woman to be aware of her inner world, how it is affected by the society she lives in and to develop a better understanding of herself and her strengths and so to develop the different options that stand before her
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The Concept Behind The Groups

- Raising awareness to the specific issues the women or the professionals are dealing with
 - ❑ Developing emotional awareness
 - ❑ Sharing like experiences
 - ❑ Discussing emotions, thoughts and perceptions
 - ❑ Through group discussions and greater awareness the individuals feel less isolated
 - ❑ Developing understanding and containing these feelings, thoughts and perceptions

Projects with Excluded Women

- Ultra orthodox professionals working with youth at risk and families with abuse
- Professionals working with youth at risk
- Social workers in peripheral areas
- Policemen's wives
- Women waiting for refugee status
- Female soldiers stationed in predominantly male environments
- Arab social workers working in East Jerusalem
- Women with disabilities

Female Soldiers Stationed in Predominantly Male Environments

- The army put the women in these jobs for lack of men
- The outcome – disempowered women
- The results from the intervention
 - Empowered women
 - Greater awareness to gender issues
 - More hope for future employment
 - Less isolation

Arab Social Workers Working in East Jerusalem

- The professionals themselves are also excluded culturally and socially
- The women they work with are excluded culturally and socially most of them belong to a traditional society which exclude women and some are physically excluded out side the wall
- The results of the intervention:
 - Greater awareness to gender issues such as sexual abuse, domestic violence, body issues etc.
 - Less isolation through group sharing
 - Empowerment through emotional sharing and containment

Women with Disabilities

- The community has difficulty accepting women with disabilities and they have trouble making themselves heard
- The results of the intervention:
 - ❑ Empowerment through sharing experiences and emotions
 - ❑ Community hearing their voices and finding some solutions such as a fun day for blind women and their children, ramps in Community Centers and more
 - ❑ Women with disabilities hearing the community and developing understanding while making their voices heard