

FINDING YOUR VOICE

BCMF WOMEN'S PROGRAMMING



The Relationship Awareness, Raising the Red Flags Workshop

Summary

The **Relationship Awareness, Raising the Red Flags** workshop focused on relationship awareness, particularly aimed at helping women recognize early warning signs of potential abuse in relationships. This workshop is facilitated by **Lisa Matyszewski**.

Objective

The objective of the workshop was to educate participants on identifying early signs of potential abusers before entering relationships where they might feel trapped. Led by Lisa Matyszewski, Training & Development Specialist at the BC Society of Transition Houses with 15 years' experience in social services supporting vulnerable women and children, the workshop led the participants through the following:

1. Early Warning Signs of Potential Abusers

- » Controlling behavior
- » Self-centeredness
- » Quick escalation of relationship seriousness
- » Differential treatment (acting differently around others)

2. Debunking Myths

- » Addressing misconceptions about the causes of abusive and violent behavior in relationships.

3. Underlying Values & Beliefs

- » Exploring the values and beliefs that individuals who exert power and control over their partners typically share.
- » Understanding these beliefs provides insight into why abuse occurs.

4. Root Causes vs. Rationalizations

- » Encouraging participants to look beyond surface excuses (like tiredness or stress) and examine the deeper values and attitudes driving abusive behavior.

5. Factors Contributing to Abusive Behavior

- » Upbringing and what is considered normal behavior
- » Attitudes towards women and the desire for control

6. Entitlement & Narcissism

- » Highlighting the role of entitlement where abusers believe they have special status and rights that don't apply to their partners.
- » Narcissism was mentioned as a factor that drives a lack of accountability and justifies abusive actions.

Overall, this workshop aimed to empower women by equipping them with the knowledge to recognize potential signs of abuse early on, thereby enabling them to make informed decisions in their relationships. It emphasized the importance of understanding underlying beliefs and behaviors rather than rationalizing or excusing abusive actions.