

PARTICIPANT WORKBOOK

Beyond Violence

A Prevention Program for
Criminal Justice–Involved Women

Stephanie S.
Covington



WILEY

Beyond Violence

A PREVENTION PROGRAM FOR CRIMINAL
JUSTICE-INVOLVED WOMEN

WORKBOOK

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JUSTICE-INVOLVED WOMEN

Stephanie S. Covington

WILEY

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This book is dedicated to the women incarcerated for violent crimes who courageously shared their life stories with me. Listening to them gave me a greater understanding of the complexities of their lives. They are all survivors of abuse, and they are the inspiration for this work.

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Orientation Session

Introduction to the Program

Beyond Violence: A Prevention Program for Criminal Justice–Involved Women is designed to help you to look at the impact of violence in your life and to create an opportunity for you to make changes to prevent violence in the future. The program is divided into four parts: Self, Relationships, Community, and Society. These four content areas will guide you in understanding important issues relating to violence in the lives of many women, both inside and outside your program group.

During this program, you will attend this orientation session and 19 additional sessions with the members of your group. With them, you will have new experiences and learn new ways of looking at the world. The facilitator who will conduct the sessions has experience working with women who have reacted with force toward others, and she understands the issues.

Taking part in this group will allow you to explore how seeing and experiencing violence in your life has affected you and the decisions you have made. You will find support from the other women in your group. As you explore important issues together, you will learn new ways to cope and better ways to make decisions. You will experience a greater sense of power, inner strength, and peace.

Overview of the Program

The *Beyond Violence* program aims:

- To provide a place for you to reflect and learn more about yourself.
- To provide information in order to help you to better understand the relationships between your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.
- To help you to understand the effects of your family, your relationships, your community, and the larger society on your life.
- To help you understand more about the roles of anger and violence in your life.
- To provide an opportunity for you to learn new skills, including skills in communication, conflict resolution, decision making, and calming techniques.
- To help you become part of a group of women working to create a less violent world.

Your Workbook

This workbook is a place for you to record your experiences during the journey that you are about to begin in the *Beyond Violence* program. Using this workbook will help you to remember what you learn, think, and feel. The workbook contains:

- Some of the activities you will do during the group sessions.
- Summaries of information that you will receive in the group sessions.
- Questions and activities for you to do after each session.

The activities will help you to examine many parts of your life. There are no right or wrong answers, and your responses will not be checked. You may be asked to share some of your responses in the group sessions, but this is voluntary, and other group members will be sharing as well. You do not need to worry about your handwriting or spelling. This workbook is a tool to help you with your own growth and recovery.

You will keep your workbook to use between sessions. It is your responsibility to remember to bring your workbook to each group session.

If you are concerned about confidentiality by keeping your journal with you, please discuss this with the group facilitator.

Group Introductions

The following are questions you can answer as a way to introduce yourself to the group. This introduction allows you and the other group members to begin to get to know one another.

My name: _____

When and where I was born: _____

How I identify myself (including culture, ethnicity, race): _____

The people in my family (can include a husband or live-in partner, children, mother, father, brothers, sisters, or whomever you consider your immediate family):

If you are currently living in a prison and have been here for a very long time, you may want to share who you consider your “family” or best friends to be here in this facility:

One thing I like about myself or a special gift that I have: _____

Topics Covered in This Program

1. How our thoughts and feelings affect our behaviors.
2. How to better manage our feelings, especially the powerful and painful ones.
3. The impacts of families and relationships on our lives.
4. Information about abusive and healthy relationships.
5. The role of anger in women's lives.
6. The effects of our communities on our lives, including support for violence in our communities.
7. Making amends and restitution.
8. Envisioning a more peaceful world.

Group Agreements

Your facilitator explained the purpose of group agreements. These describe behaviors that will help the group to be a safe, respectful, and supportive space for each group member. Please add the agreements from your group.

Our Group Agreements

There are three agreements that are important to any group:

1. *Confidentiality.* Group members need to honor one another's confidentiality. What is said in this room stays in this room. No personal information revealed in this room may be repeated outside this room.
2. *Sobriety.* No one may attend a group session while under the influence of alcohol or another drug.
3. *Safety.* There will be no physical or emotional abuse. Part of safety is showing respect for one another and for the uniqueness of each person's thoughts, feelings, experiences, and responses. We will let people express themselves in their own ways. Being rude or abusive to another group member is *not* okay.

Here are some examples of other typical group agreements:

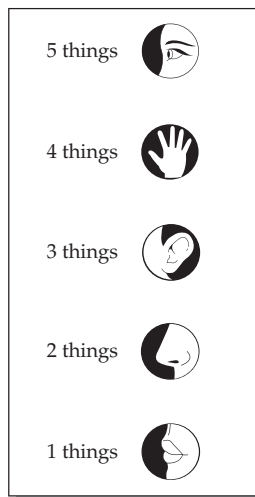
4. *Timing.* Our sessions will start on time and end on time.
5. *Attendance.* Regular group attendance is important. We all agree to show up at all the sessions.
6. *Eating or smoking.* There will be no eating or smoking during the group sessions. Drinking water may be permitted in some programs.
7. *Sharing.* Everyone in the group should have the time to contribute and share the experience. We will try to let everyone have a chance to talk. We will not interrupt other group members but will let them finish before we respond or add something.
8. *Participation.* We will try to assist one another in feeling safe enough to share and participate. We will ask questions to help us learn and grow. However, everyone is entitled to "pass" when asked a question or when asked to do an activity that requires participation.
9. *Socialization.* Contact with other group members outside the regular group session is permitted.

Triggers and Coping Tools

A trigger is a reminder of a traumatic event. It can be something you see, hear, smell, or feel. It can be a person, a place, or anything that reminds you of a traumatic event. It is important to have grounding or coping tools to help us stay in the present. Here are two coping tools you used in group.

Five Senses

1. Close your eyes or lower your eyelids.
2. Relax for a few moments. Take a few deep breaths and exhale slowly.
3. Open your eyes when you are ready.
4. Silently, identify five things you can see around you.
5. Now identify four things you could feel or touch.
6. Identify three things you can hear.
7. Identify two things you can smell.
8. Finally, identify what you can taste right now.



Breathing and Exhaling

1. Set your feet a little distance apart so that you feel stable. Take a few deep breaths.
2. Relax your shoulders and just drop your hands to your sides. Let your arms and hands just dangle, relaxed. Relax your shoulders and arms.
3. Take in a long, deep breath through your nose and blow it out through your mouth like a big gust of wind.
4. Inhale again and then let the air out by blowing it out of your mouth.
5. Remember to relax your shoulders and arms.
6. Do the inhaling and exhaling three more times.

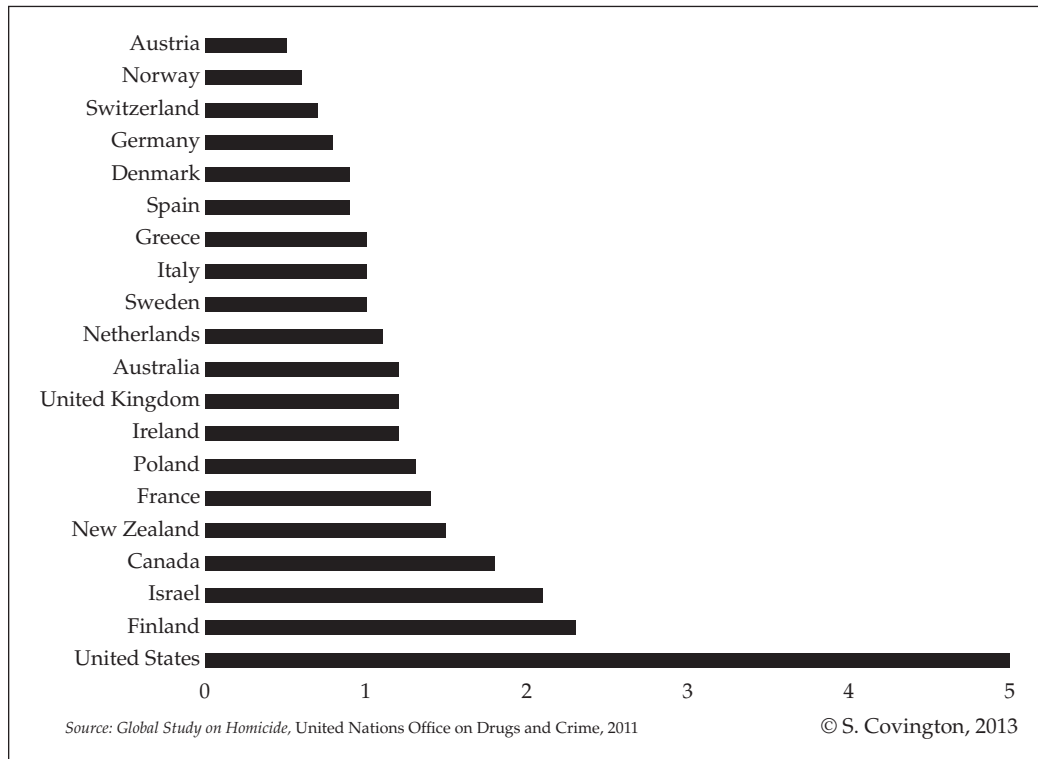
Statistics on Violence in the United States

Here are some of the statistics discussed in your group.

1. Children born into poverty risk exposure to violence that is so high they are almost certain to be affected by trauma (Women's Law Project, 2002).
2. More than 30 million children in the United States live in low-income families, and 14 million children live in poverty (Wight, Chau, & Aratani, 2010).
3. Three to ten million children are exposed to or witness domestic violence each year (Family Violence Prevention Fund, 2009).
4. In homes where domestic violence occurs, children are seriously abused or neglected at a rate that is 1,500% higher than the national average for the general population (Children's Defense Fund Ohio, 2009).
5. At least 50% of child abuse and neglect cases are associated with alcohol or drug abuse by parents (Every Child Matters Education Fund, 2008).
6. Children from violent homes have a higher tendency to commit suicide, abuse drugs or alcohol, and commit violence against their own partners or children (Whitfield, Anda, Dube, & Felitti, 2003).
7. One in five girls and one in ten boys are sexually victimized before adulthood (National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, 2008).
8. Eighty-four percent of spouse-abuse victims are women (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2005).
9. One in four women has been the victim of severe physical violence by an intimate partner (National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, 2010).
10. In 2010, a woman experienced rape or physical violence by an intimate partner approximately every 11 seconds (Black et. al. 2011).
11. Nearly one in five women has been raped (National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, 2010).
12. Women experience two million injuries from intimate-partner violence each year (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2008).

International Homicide Rates

(Rate per 100,000)



Source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), 2011. *Global Study on Homicide 2011: Trends, Context, Data*. Vienna: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Available online at: http://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/statistics/Homicide/Global_study_on_homicide_2011_web.pdf

Definition of Violence

“The intentional use of physical force or power—threatened or actual—against one-self, another person, or a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, inhibited development, or deprivation” (World Health Organization, 2004). Within this definition, violence is divided into three types, based on how it happens.

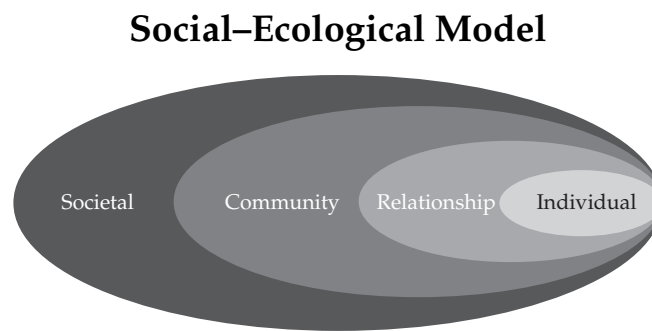
- *Self-directed violence* (the perpetrator and the victim are the same person) includes self-harm and suicide.
- *Interpersonal violence* (between individuals) includes family and intimate-partner violence and community violence.
- *Collective violence* (committed by larger groups) includes social, political, and economic violence. Examples are war and genocide.

Within each of these categories, violence can be inflicted in four ways: by physical, sexual, or psychological attack and by deprivation.

Here are some more definitions to help explain the differences between abusive behaviors that can happen in a relationship. “Use of force” is an overall term that refers to physically, verbally, and emotionally damaging behaviors used by one person toward another in order to gain short-term control of relationship dynamics. “Violence” refers to any force used with the intention of causing injury. “Abuse” refers to isolated and random acts of violence. “Battering” is a systematic pattern of violence, the threat of violence, and/or coercively controlling behaviors used with the intention of exerting power, creating fear, and/or controlling another person over a relationship’s long term. Coercive control is the cornerstone of battering, so battering does not need to include physical violence in order to be harmful.

The Social–Ecological Model (People in the Environment)

To try to understand violence, we need to look at the factors that put people at risk for experiencing or perpetrating violence. The *Beyond Violence* program is based on a social–ecological model. This means that there is no one thing that explains why violence occurs. The model considers the complex interrelationships between individuals, their interpersonal relationships, their communities, and societal factors. Cultural factors are included in these.



Source: Dahlberg, L. L. & Krug, E. G. (2002). "Violence—a global health problem." In E. G. Krug, L. L. Dahlberg, J. A. Mercy, A. B. Zwi, & R. Lorenzo (Eds.), *World report on violence and health* (pp. 1–56). Geneva, Switzerland: World Health Organization.

The first layer, Individual, is a person's biological history (for example, any mental-health and substance-abuse patterns in her family) and her personal history (for example, her life experiences and important events). It is important to think about how these influences increase a woman's chance of becoming a victim of violence and increase her chance of committing violence against (victimizing) another person.

The second layer, Relationship, is a woman's relationships with friends, family members, and intimate partners. Some of these may increase a woman's risk of becoming a victim of violence or committing violence against another person.

The third layer, Community, is where a woman lives and works (the neighborhood, schools, workplaces, and available services) and how these places and the relationships within them affect her likelihood of becoming a victim of violence or of committing violence.

The fourth layer, Societal, is the society a woman lives in. It includes social and cultural norms (things that are common in our society), such as whether the

environment encourages or discourages violence. Economic, educational, and class factors also are in this layer.

For each of these levels, the risk factors for being abused are the same as the risk factors for being an abuser.

Individual

1. The risk of having mental health issues greatly increases if a person has experienced multiple traumatic events in childhood (Messina and Grella, 2006).
2. Living in a family with multiple problems (such as violence, drug and alcohol abuse, and neglect) increases a child's chance of gang involvement (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2008).
3. Women who have experienced deprivation and dysfunctional or violent relationships in early life often have high levels of physical and mental health problems (Felitti & Anda, 2010).
4. Using alcohol and other drugs is a way of coping with feelings of hopelessness and despair. Many women who are arrested are substance abusers (Covington, 2007).

Relationship

1. Women who are victims of childhood abuse are more likely to react violently than women who are not (Pollock, Mullings, & Crouch, 2006).
2. Women often have their first encounters with the law as juveniles who have run away from home in order to escape violence and physical or sexual abuse (Covington, 2003).
3. Approximately 1.5 million women are raped or physically assaulted by an intimate partner each year in the United States (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2003).
4. In the prison population, twice as many women as men have reported childhood abuse. They report abuse as adults at a rate eight times higher than that for men (Messina, Burdon, & Prendergast, 2003).
5. Women who are violated or abused by people with whom they are in relationships—people whom they trust—often turn to alcohol or drugs as a way to numb the pain of being betrayed (Covington & Surrey, 2000).

Community

1. Sixty-one percent of people in the United States think that crime (such as muggings, shootings, rape, and burglary) has increased in their communities in the past 5 years (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2008).
2. Violent crime rates are highest in economically challenged communities (Pollock, Mullings, & Crouch, 2006).
3. The U.S. Department of Justice estimates that one in five women experiences rape or attempted rape during her college years, and that less than 5% of such rapes are reported (Taylor & Gaskin-Laniyan, 2007).

Society

1. African American and Native American women experience domestic violence more than White women do (National Organization for Women, 2009).
2. A person can be traumatized by witnessing violence as well as suffering it. Trauma also can result from the stigmatization that comes from poverty, incarceration, sexual orientation, and being of a minority race (Covington, 2007).
3. Women often suppress the anger they feel from experiencing economic and social inequality (Walley-Jean, 2009).
4. Historical or cultural trauma happens to groups of people who lose their culture. In the United States, this would include African Americans, Native Americans, Native Hawaiians, and the Japanese families put in internment camps in WWII (Duran, Firehammer, & Gonzalez, 2008).

All these statistics can be overwhelming. That is a normal reaction to this information. However, it is important to acknowledge the violence in our world. A quotation from Helen Keller may help in getting a sense of balance about these things.

Although the world is full of suffering, it is also full of the overcoming of it.

—Helen Keller